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Flavius Josephus' Self-Characterization in First-Century Rome

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DOI:
[10.33612/diss.135980205](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.135980205)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Glas, E. (2020). *Flavius Josephus' Self-Characterization in First-Century Rome: A Literary Analysis of the Autobiographical Passages in the Bellum Judaicum*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.135980205>

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Flavius Josephus' Self-Characterization in First-Century Rome

A Literary Analysis of the Autobiographical Passages in the
Bellum Judaicum

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the
University of Groningen
on the authority of the
Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga
and in accordance with
the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on

Monday 2 November 2020 at 11.00 hours

by

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Printing house: GVO drukkers & vormgevers B.V.

Cover illustration: Miniature in the French translation of the *Bellum Judaicum* by Guillaume Coquillard made in 1460–63 (Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. fr. 1061, fol. 151; plate: J. Meurgey, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures du Musée Condé à Chantilly*. Paris: La Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures, 1930: pl. lxxxiv).

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Abstract

The *Bellum Judaicum*, which is often perceived as one of the most influential texts in Western history after the Bible, describes the history of the Judaeen revolt against Rome (AD 66-70). One of the most striking features of this work is that Flavius Josephus, its author, elaborately describes his actions during this conflict. Until recently, scholars have mainly studied these passages to recover Josephus' life and thinking. His controversial life story — especially his decision to surrender to the Romans through his interpretation of his own dreams and to write about the war in Rome under the protection of the emperor — has resulted in a clear bias of some scholars against this Judaeen historian and the intellectual merits of his work. Breaking with this trend, the present study asks how Josephus' self-characterization can be explained in the literary context of the *BJ* and in the historical context of first-century Rome. To this end, it uses Graeco-Roman literary conventions (historiographical, autobiographical, rhetorical) as a hermeneutical tool to investigate Josephus' presentation of himself as a character.

Preface and Acknowledgments

When I began my journey at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in the summer of 2011, I could not have imagined that I was cut out for academia, leave alone that I would submit my doctoral dissertation 9 years afterwards. Without doubt, I could not have produced this dissertation without the help I received from various sides.

For the present study, I am hugely indebted to my advisors Prof. Steve Mason and Prof. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta. This investigation would not have been the same without their patient help, challenging questions, thoughtful suggestions, and visionary guidance. Working with Steve and Lautaro has been a privilege, shaping my thinking and approach to scholarship in numerous ways. I could not have wished for better advisors.

My enthusiasm for the field of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism was fuelled first and foremost by Prof. Mladen Popović, who has been a mentor to me from the beginning of my studies. It is largely because of his passion and his ability to transfer it to his students that I decided to pursue a PhD. This entire journey would not have been possible without him. I also wish to thank Dr. Michaël van der Meer and Dr. Karin Neutel in Groningen, Prof. Holger Gzella and Prof. Jürgen Zangenberg in Leiden, and Prof. Martin Goodman in Oxford. The formative teaching of these great scholars, each in his own way, prepared me for the life of a PhD-student.

The Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in Groningen has been an inspiring place to work. I thank my academic colleagues, especially my office mates (Gemma, Ayhan, Ruwan, Joabson, Drew, Jason, Myles, Daniel, Slava), the supportive staff, and everyone else directly or indirectly involved in my work for their advice and support. I owe many of my current friendships (Addy, Enrieke, Robbert, Yentl, Maruja, Joanne, Roos, Iris, Aukje, Melissa) to my time at the Faculty.

I have presented parts of this project to several audiences. My work owes much to the discussions held during the 2018 Dirk Smilde Seminar on Comparative Studies, various OIKOS meetings (in particular the research groups “Ancient Rhetoric and Aesthetics” and “Classical Literature: Theory and Contexts”), and the 2019 Celtic Conference of Classics in Coimbra. The CRASIS research institute, where I served as volunteer and secretary, has offered many opportunities

for collaboration and conversation with fellow board members, volunteers, invited speakers, colleagues from different departments, and regular visitors.

I am tremendously grateful to the members of the assessment committee, Prof. Honora Chapman, Prof. Jan Willem van Henten, and Prof. Jacques van Ruiten, who offered valuable remarks and saved me from some embarrassing mistakes at the final stages of the project. Needless to say, any that remain are entirely my responsibility. Dr. Barry Hartog proved to be immensely engaged as an intellectual sparring partner, offering comments, suggestions, and advice on various occasions. I also wish to thank Prof. George Brooke for reading the entire manuscript, Dr. Jacqueline Klooster for her comments on an early draft of Chapter 2, Prof. Jan Bremmer for his thoughtful suggestions on various matters, Prof. Delfim Leão for introducing me to the Coimbra/Évora “Rome Our Home: (Auto)biographical Tradition and the Shaping of Identity(ies)” project, and Prof. Jose María Candau for his hospitality when I stayed in Sevilla.

Finally, but most importantly, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my family and friends for their continuous support, my parents for offering me the opportunity to study, and above all Michelle and Livia, who continuously remind me why life is worth living.

Eelco Glas

Groningen, August 2020

Conventions and Abbreviations

In the following study, translations of Josephus' corpus are my own, except where indicated otherwise. To inform my translations, I have made use of the Loeb volumes, the Dutch translations by Wes and Meijer, the new translation of Hammond, and in particular the Brill commentary and translation project, where available. Josephus' works are abbreviated as *BJ* (*Bellum Judaicum*), *AJ* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), *Vita*, and *CA* (*Contra Apionem*). Except when stated otherwise, I have made use of the Loeb volumes (abbreviated as LCL) for translations of other ancient works, sometimes with modifications. These ancient works, and other reference works, are abbreviated according to the SBL Handbook of Style (2nd ed. 2014). Where another translation is cited, the translator's name is included either in parentheses after the citation or in a footnote.

Flavius Josephus' Self-Characterization in First-Century Rome

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 “There’s no Such Thing as Bad Publicity”

People tend to dislike those who talk too much about themselves, especially in praise of their own virtues. Contemporary examples of those attracting such opprobrium are Donald Trump¹ or the Dutch politician Thierry Baudet.² In spite of conventions about self-praise, Thierry Baudet has gained himself a prominent place in the Dutch parliament. Donald Trump has become President of the United States. Even if their claims have caused strong responses in various media,³ for Baudet and Trump the media attention apparently outweighs the drawbacks to self-praise. The proverbial expression that “there’s no such thing as bad publicity,” frequently associated with the 19th century American showman Phineas T. Barnum, seems too apply in such cases: bad press is better than no press at all.⁴

¹ Twitter, the platform that President Trump regularly employs to share his thoughts about national and international politics, is fruitful hunting ground. He recently has called himself “so great looking and smart” and “a true Stable Genius (@realDonaldTrump) July 11, 2019.) and congratulated “Mr. President” because he had done so well regarding US energy policies (“Because we have done so well with Energy over the last few years (thank you, Mr. President!), we are a net Energy Exporter, & now the Number One Energy Producer in the World. We don’t need Middle Eastern Oil & Gas, & in fact have very few tankers there, but will help our Allies!” — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) September 16, 2019).

² The Dutch politician Thierry Baudet tends to call himself the greatest intellectual of the Netherlands: “Zeg @WilmerHeck & @DerkStokmans: ik publiceerd geen twee maar acht boeken. Ja, je wordt niet zomaar de belangrijkste intellectueel van NL!” — Thierry Baudet (@thierrybaudet), September 29, 2016.

³ Google search “Trump” in combination with “self-praise” and one comes across articles and videos about Trump’s “straightforward bragging” and “dubious,” “narcissistic” habits. See e.g. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/01/politics/how-donald-trump-sees-himself/index.html>, visited on November 25, 2018. <https://www.minnpost.com/eric-black-ink/2016/06/donald-trump-s-breathtaking-self-admiration/>, visited on November 28, 2018; or <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2019/09/13/opinion/donald-trumps-erratic-behaviour-hurting-global-democracy>, visited on October 8, 2019. Maarten van Rossem labels Baudet “een narcistisch fopintellectueel” with an “ego ... opgeblazen tot Himalayaanse afmetingen.” <https://www.maartenonline.nl/thierry-baudet-narcistische-fopintellectueel.html>, visited on April 12, 2019. See also <https://de-toestand-in-de-wereld.com/2019/03/12/thierry-baudet-dossier-van-een-narcistische-fopintellectueel/>, visited on April 12, 2019. The Dutch writer and philosopher Ger Groot claims that “er veel domheid voor nodig [is] om jezelf zo te bewieroken als Thierry Baudet.” <https://www.trouw.nl/home/er-is-veel-domheid-voor-nodig-om-jezelf-zo-te-bewieroken-als-thierry-baudet-a99f7c6e/> (press release March 19, 2017, 4 days after the general elections), visited on November 28, 2018.

⁴ James Poniewozik (2019) traces the history of television and mass media from the 1980s to show how Donald Trump used such media to become the forty-fifth president of the United States.

Even when loathing it in theory, most people recognize the need to praise oneself occasionally. For instance, we all try to sell ourselves when applying for jobs. This apparent contradiction is also (or especially) visible in academia. Self-advertisement and -aggrandizement are probably universal human traits, but the behaviours attracting these labels are weighed differently in various cultures and contexts. The cultural environment of the Roman Republic and Empire is infamous for such practice.⁵ Plutarch (AD 46 – c. 120) — ostensibly writing to the Greek aristocrat and future Roman senator C. Julius Eurycles Herculanus L. Vibullius Pius⁶ — aptly comments upon such practice (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 539A–B):

Τὸ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λέγειν ὥς τι ὄντος ἢ δυναμένου πρὸς ἑτέρους, ὧ Ἡρκλανε, λόγῳ μὲν ἐπαχθὲς ἀποφαίνουσιν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐ πολλοὶ τὴν ἀηδίαν αὐτοῦ διαπεφεύγασιν οὐδὲ τῶν ψεγόντων.

With regard to speaking about oneself to others, that is about one's status or power, dear Herculanus, although in speech everyone declares it offensive, in practice not many escape the shame or indeed the censures (trans. based on De Lacy and Einarson, LCL).

Plutarch notes various examples throughout the treatise of authors and political leaders intolerably singing their own praise, such as Euripides, Pindar, Timotheus, and Cicero. Another author he could have listed was the Judaeo-Roman historian Flavius Josephus, his older contemporary, who describes his achievements and importance during his public career elaborately and on multiple occasions.⁷ Consider the following statements:

⁵ See esp. Wiseman (1985); Most (1989) 124–25.

⁶ De Lacy and Einarson (1959) 113.

⁷ I will employ “Judaeo” rather “Jew” or “Jewish” throughout this investigation since in antiquity Greek Ἰουδαῖος or Latin *Iudaeus* reflected primarily one's ἔθνος or gens. For matters of consistency, this is also the case when referring to the views of other scholars, but not when referring to times when Jews and Judaism become recognizable *religious* labels. See more elaborately Mason (2007) 457–512. Mason returns to the subject in a recent article focusing on Paul's self-representation as a Christ-follower, see Mason (2021). Related arguments are found in the scholarship of Boyarin (2003; 2009; 2018). For an overview of the discussion and

Οὐεσπασιανῶ δέ τις εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν μετάβασιν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτόμολος καὶ κατήπειγεν ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν ὥς μετ’ ἐκείνης αἰρήσοντα πᾶσαν Ἰουδαίαν, εἰ λάβοι τὸν Ἰώσηπον ὑποχείριον. ὁ δ’ ἀρπάσας ὥσπερ μέγιστον εὐτύχημα τὴν ἀγγελίαν καὶ προνοία θεοῦ τὸν συνετώτατον εἶναι δοκοῦντα τῶν πολεμίων οἰόμενος εἰς εἰρκτὴν αὐθαίρετον παρελθεῖν.

A deserter brought Vespasian the good news of the man’s independent movement and urged a move towards the city because with it he would take Judaea entirely, if he could subdue Josephus. Vespasian seized this message as a sign of the greatest fortune, considering it God’s providence that the one he perceived to be the most sagacious of his enemies had deliberately walked into a prison (Josephus, *BJ* 3.143–44).

Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ τὸν Ἰώσηπον ἀναζητοῦντες κατὰ τε ὀργὴν σφετέραν καὶ σφόδρα τοῦ στρατηγοῦ φιλοτιμουμένου, μεγίστη γὰρ ἦν μοῖρα τοῦ πολέμου ληφθεῖς.

Now the Romans started to look for Josephus to satisfy their own anger and especially the eagerness of their commander, who considered it of the greatest importance because the destiny of the war depended on his capture (Josephus, *BJ* 3.340).

These statements are from Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum* (*BJ*). This work, which is “perhaps the most influential non-biblical text of Western history,”⁸ describes the first Judean revolt against the Romans from AD 66–74. Josephus produced it shortly after the events took place.⁹ In the prologue of the work, Josephus introduces himself as participant in and eyewitness of most events (1.3, 22).

a specific take focusing on the changing relationship between *Ioudaismos* and *Christianismos*, see Bremmer (2021). On the concept and origins of the word “religion” more generally, see recently Nongbri (2013) and Barton and Boyarin (2016). For alternative views see D. R. Schwartz (1992) 5–15; D. R. Schwartz (2005) 68–78; D. R. Schwartz (2007a) 3–27; Cohen (1999) 109–39; S. Schwartz (2011) 208–38.

⁸ Mason (2016e) 13. For the reception history of the *Judean War* and its influence from antiquity until the present day, see Goodman (2019).

⁹ For a recent discussion on the publication date of the *BJ*, see D. R. Schwartz (2011). See for an overview and references to earlier scholarship Bilde (1988) 79.

Throughout the *BJ* he describes his role in striking detail. His resistance against the future emperor Vespasian and the legions, ultimate surrender, and prediction of Vespasian's rule receive extensive treatment (3.141–408). Josephus' public achievements receive similar and even more explicit praise in his other autobiographical work, the *Vita*. He also boldly advertises his virtues throughout his corpus, for example in the closing sections of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*AJ*: 20.262–63):

λέγω δὴ θαρσύνοντας ἤδη διὰ τὴν τῶν προτεθέντων συντέλειαν, ὅτι μηδεὶς ἂν ἕτερος ἠδυνήθη θελήσας μήτε Ἰουδαῖος μήτε ἀλλόφυλος τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην οὕτως ἀκριβῶς εἰς Ἑλλήνας ἐξενεγκεῖν· ἔχω γὰρ ὁμολογούμενον παρὰ τῶν ὁμοεθνῶν πλείστον αὐτῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιχώριον καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν παιδείαν διαφέρειν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων καὶ ποιητικῶν μαθημάτων πολλὰ ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβὼν, τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκριβείαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσεν συνήθεια.

Encouraged by the completion of what I had projected [sc. the *Antiquities*], I would now say plainly that no other person who had wished to do so, whether a Judean or a foreigner, would have been able to produce this work so precisely for Greek speakers. For among my compatriots I am admitted to have an education in our country's customs that far surpasses theirs. And once I had consolidated my knowledge of Greek grammar, I worked very hard also to share in the learning of Greek letters and poetry, though my traditional habit has frustrated precision with respect to pronunciation (trans. Mason 2001, FJBC).

1.2 The Foundation of this Study

1.2.1 Developments in Josephus Scholarship and the Approach of the Present Study

Until recently, scholars have mainly studied Josephus' autobiographical texts to recover his life and thinking. His controversial life story — especially his decision to surrender to the Romans through his interpretation of his own dreams and to write about the war in Rome under Flavian protection

— has resulted in a clear bias of some scholars against this particular Judaeen historian and the intellectual merits of his work.¹⁰ By contrast, this study aims to offer the first systematic compositional and rhetorical analysis of his autobiographical narrative in the *BJ*. It asks how Josephus' self-characterization can be explained in view of the historiographical outlook of the *BJ* (its aims, structures, themes, and rhetoric), as a work written in Greek that deliberately and intelligently addresses an elite audience in Flavian Rome. The following paragraphs provide a map of the scholarship that have helped to shape the focus and approach of this study.

One way of accomplishing this is by looking at how scholars have used Josephus' corpus for historical and source-critical purposes, not infrequently at the cost of depriving him of his critical and creative abilities as an author. That they have done this is a perception not universally shared, to be sure. Daniel Schwartz, for example, argues that the recent tendency in scholarship to insist on studying Josephus for his own sake is unnecessary.¹¹ This need has always been recognized by good historians:

[A]ll who are interested in ancient Jewish history agree about the importance of studying Josephus as a whole, whether as an aim in and of itself and as a witness to the life of an interesting Jew of the first century, or so as better to understand how to learn from his writings about the events and processes he describes and reflects.¹²

For Schwartz, everyone knows that Josephus' works should be read as wholes, but the more interesting work of source analysis moves beyond that common base. Apparently, the way in which scholars present a history of scholarship at least to some extent revolves around how they define their problems and questions. Consequently, the following discussions should not be perceived as an attempt to offer a systematic overview of scholarship, but rather as singling out some developments and directions that have directly contributed to the outlook of the present investigation.

¹⁰ Cf. below, §1.3.

¹¹ D. R. Schwartz (2013) 4–5.

¹² D. R. Schwartz (2013) 5.

Until the 1990s, however, examining the historiographical and rhetorical outlook of Josephus' corpus was not an obvious path of investigation.¹³ Scholars primarily sought to use Josephus' narratives as if they were a short-cut to historical facts, without much consideration of Josephus' motives for writing what he wrote or the language, themes, structures, and historiographical outlook of his works.¹⁴ Where they focused on Josephus for his own sake, scholars usually condemned his character and literary talents. Many viewed him not as an independent author but as a mere compiler of sources and/or a Flavian propagandist.¹⁵ When scholars assigned any significant creative contribution to Josephus, they usually marked it as sloppy and capricious.¹⁶ When they recognised

¹³ More comprehensive and sophisticated examinations of Josephus scholarship can be found in Feldman (1984a); Bilde (1988) 123–71; Mason (2003c) 7–34; Mason (2011c); Chapman and Rodgers (2016). D. R. Schwartz (2013) 2–14 is less systematic but offers a different vision of the field.

¹⁴ Cf. Mason (2009c) 15–18, discussing various examples from Schürer (1973–1987). More recent examples include Seward (2009) 61 (compare with *BJ* 2.562ff.): “Meanwhile the independence party in Jerusalem prepared for war. Of those who still favored yielding to Roman rule, some were won over by argument, while others were bullied into accepting the new regime by threats of violence. A great public meeting was held in the Temple, attended by thousands, at which ten generals were chosen. To some extent the meeting seems to have been influenced—if scarcely dominated by—the Sanhedrin, despite the ingrained antipathy toward revolution of most of its members, whose families had prospered under the Roman regime.” Root (2014) 164: “During the revolt, Galilee’s political climate was characterized by unrest. Multiple revolutionary leaders (Josephus, John of Gischala, Jesus the son of Sapphias, etc.) constantly vied for control of the region, and banditry became a major problem. Although there were many Galileans who initially supported the revolt, a significant minority of Galileans actively opposed the rebellion. Thus, it appears that Galilee was embroiled in internal conflict from the revolt’s outbreak until Vespasian’s army re-conquered the region.”

¹⁵ For Josephus as a compiler of sources, see, e.g., Bloch (1879); Von Destinon (1882); Drüner (1896); Hölscher (1916); Weber (1921) largely perceived the themes and interests encountered in his compositions as the themes and interests of the sources used by Josephus. The view that Josephus was merely a copyist of sources was fundamentally challenged in Laqueur (1920), cf. §1.3. For an elaborate discussion of Laqueur’s contribution to scholarship, see Cohen (1979) 16–20. Feldman (1984) 102 calls Laqueur’s book “the most important single work on Josephus.” For a discussion of early German source-critical scholarship, see Lindner (1972) 3–16. More recent and sophisticated examples of source-critical approaches are Cohen (1979); S. Schwartz (1990); D. R. Schwartz (1990); and much of D. R. Schwartz (2013); D. R. Schwartz (2016a). For Josephus as Flavian propagandist, see esp. Bernays (1861); Laqueur (1920) 255ff.; Weber (1921). More moderately Cohen (1979); S. Schwartz (1990). For a bibliographic survey of early Josephus scholarship, see Bilde (1988) 191–200. For more recent expressions of this view, expressed mostly among non-specialists, see Beard (2003); Cotton and Eck (2005); Curran (2007); Overman (2009) 296; Curran (2011); Tuval (2013) 91–95; etc... The view has been challenged in Lindner (1972); Rajak (2002 [1983]); Mason (1991) 57–81; Mason (2003 [1992]); Den Hollander (2014).

¹⁶ See e.g. Cohen (1979) 38–39, 47, 233; S. Schwartz (1990) 209; Price (1992) 182; Curran (2007) 77.

signs of literary artfulness in his work, it was attributed not to Josephus but to his assistants.¹⁷ In short, before the last generation of research, scholars often classified Josephus as a mediocre author at best. At worst, he was marked as an individual with limited brain capacity, narcissist character traits, and a self-serving nature. This has resulted in an almost uniform lack of interest into the literary design of Josephus' work.

The impetus to take Josephus more seriously as an independent and intelligent author has come from various directions. While one should take note of early pioneering voices,¹⁸ scholars have embarked on systematic research in support of this point since the 1970s and 1980s. Notably, Louis Feldman offered detailed explorations of Josephus' procedures for composing the biblical paraphrase, where they can be checked in relation to its source: the Hebrew Bible.¹⁹ One of the more programmatic points of his agenda was to show that anyone who made a serious attempt to study the language and themes of Josephus' biblical paraphrase would encounter a coherent programme of rewriting, omission, and addition.²⁰ Likewise, Harold Attridge examined the manner in which Josephus shaped biblical history in the *AJ*. His interpretative attempt focused on key unifying themes.²¹ Tessa Rajak scrutinized Josephus' social position as an aristocrat working across cultures, challenging established views — most notably the view that Josephus' *BJ* should be perceived as a work of Flavian propaganda and Thackeray's assistant hypothesis — that until that point had hampered the study of Josephus as an intelligent author.²² Per Bilde was the first to offer a synthesis of the aims and themes of all of Josephus' compositions in what remains the only comprehensive

¹⁷ The British scholar Thackeray acknowledged the artfulness and Atticizing tendencies of Josephus' work — especially the *BJ* — but ascribed these not to Josephus but to his so-called literary assistants (referred to in *CA* 1.50). Thackeray (1929) 100–24. See more recently e.g. Smith (1999) 501–2. For criticism of this view, see esp. Rajak (2002 [1983]) 233–36. Likewise, Mason (1991) 48–51.

¹⁸ Already in the 1930s, Braun (1934) showed that novelistic elements permeate Josephus' retelling of the Potiphar story, on the basis of which he questioned whether one could separate novelistic fiction from historical fact in Josephus' narratives. Moehring (1957) applied Braun's procedures to Josephus' Herod narratives in the *BJ* and the *AJ* and drew similar conclusions.

¹⁹ Among Feldman's many contributions, see especially the synthesizing studies Feldman (1998a); Feldman (1998b). In addition to the scholarship of Thackeray, Feldman's work served as important source of inspiration for Chapman's dissertation focusing on tragic motifs in the *BJ*, see Chapman (1998) 8–10.

²⁰ Feldman (1982) 156; Feldman (1998a) 669. Yet see already Feldman (1968) 156.

²¹ Attridge (1976). See also Attridge (1984).

²² Rajak (2002 [1983]).

introduction to Josephus, each of his writings, and their interpretative contexts to date.²³ Collectively, these developments have led to an increasing awareness that Josephus' narratives deserve and require to be studied for their own sake.²⁴

The present study takes particular inspiration from the vast scholarly output of Steve Mason, which marked a new direction in the field. When Mason wrote his dissertation, scholars had recognized, to varying extents, that Josephus imposed his authorial stamp on parts of his works. This fundamental point was taken up by Mason.²⁵ Yet he added the specific point of studying Josephus and his works on their own terms and in their own world. He materialized this by numerous articles and various monographs in which he offered detailed examinations of Josephus' narratives as coherent wholes, in addition to initiating the literary-historical commentary series on Josephus.²⁶ We will exemplify his composition-critical approach by looking at his *Josephus and the Pharisees* and his more influential introductory "map" *Josephus and the New Testament*.²⁷

²³ Bilde (1988) 61–122. See now also Chapman and Rodgers (2016), which offers an up-to-date overview of Josephus' full corpus, its context, themes, and reception.

²⁴ These developments in Josephus studies should be placed alongside trends in the study of classical historiography, discussed in Laird (2009). Woodman (1988) argued that ancient historiography should be perceived primarily as a rhetorical genre and hence as fundamentally different from its modern namesake. In modern terms it is much better understood as literature than as history. See to various extents already Brunt (1979); Wiseman (1979); Fornara (1983). More distantly, one should also take note of the linguistic turn and Hayden White's landmark study about the rhetorical nature of all historical discourse. See White (1973). See also the collection of essays, idem (1987). Here, White provides a variety of perspectives on the role of rhetoric in modern historiographical thinking.

Scholars have raised caution against aspects of this current in research, in particular the too-radical dismissal of a concern for historical truth of historiographical approaches is not universally acknowledged among scholars. For early opposition to White's theories and their potential effects on the study of ancient history, see Momigliano (1984). Likewise, in response to the pioneering work of Woodman (and others) in this vein, J. E. Lendon (2009) 41 "weeps at ... the triumph of what now masquerades as "Roman historiography," the academic study of the ancient Roman historians as a discipline sundered from Roman history, the study of what happened in ancient Rome and why." For Lendon, the conclusion of scholarship as advocated by Woodman is that there is much less historical content in the writings of the ancient historians than scholars previously realized, because historians happily invented the materials for their narrative and did so to such a degree that the history underpinning historical narrative becomes almost unrecognizable.

²⁵ E.g. Mason (1991) 45–53.

²⁶ See Mason (2000–forthcoming). Contributors other than Mason include Louis Feldman, Paul Spilsbury, Jan Willem van Henten, John Barclay, Gaia Lembi, Chris Seeman, Christoph Begg, James McLaren, and Honora Chapman.

²⁷ Mason (1992a). I refer to the revised 2003 edition in this study.

In the former, Mason presents his goal as interpreting Josephus' evidence about the Pharisees in its compositional context, without immediately reaching for parallels in other texts.²⁸ This "composition-critical approach" rests on the methodological proposition that "[t]he narrative is assumed to contain within itself the keys to its own meaning." He justifies this effort of interpretation in relation to sound historical method and a philosophy of history, showing particular influence from R. G. Collingwood.²⁹ The task of the interpreter is to look at the words and phrases used by Josephus and attempt to determine their significance in light of the themes and structures of the composition as a whole. These are in turn determined by the motives and outlook of its author.³⁰ On this basis, Mason puts into practice Jacob Neusner's insistence that any attempt to recover the historical Pharisees should begin with an understanding of their meaning in each surviving source. In the case of Josephus, this means interpreting his Pharisees in the context of his narrative aims and the general historiographical outlook of his individual works. This is a necessary preliminary step in the method of historical research.³¹

Mason's 1991 study focused on the implications for using Josephus' corpus vis-à-vis the historical study of the Pharisees. The wider repercussions of Mason's propositions become evident when looking at his 1992 introduction to *Josephus and the New Testament*, which established Mason's views in a more accessible manner and to a much broader audience. Half of this comparative book (Ch. 1–3, pp. 7–145) is devoted to establishing the importance for understanding Josephus' "on his own terms."³² With this phrase Mason does not imply objective or immediate access to Josephus' life. He rather stresses the necessity of asking basic questions about Josephus and his work before interpreting it as historical evidence: "Who was this man? What did he do? What are his writings about?"³³ In other words, what is the nature of these sources so frequently employed as comparative evidence to explain the New Testament and its background? Mason insists that it is only in view of

²⁸ Mason (1991) 272, cf. 40–44.

²⁹ Esp. Collingwood (1946).

³⁰ Mason (1991) 43.

³¹ Mason (1991) 372.

³² Mason (2003c) 35, 147, 298.

³³ Mason (2003c) 298.

these questions that the relevance of Josephus' corpus for the study of the New Testament can be considered.

This he explores in the remainder of his book (Ch. 4–6). The basic points developed by Mason are those of *Josephus on the Pharisees*, but here he points to their wider impact for the study of Josephus and history more generally.³⁴

By definition, the past—Vespasian's campaign against the Jews, the career of Josephus in Galilee, or the aims of John the Baptist—no longer exists. So it is not immediately accessible to us. We have only traces of the past: occasional physical remnants, like a piece of pottery or papyrus, and literary interpretations of certain periods in texts such as Tacitus's, Josephus's, and Luke's. And these people did not write about their times merely to generate chronicles of facts; they carefully selected episodes that would help them make their points. Their accounts are thoroughly conditioned by: (a) the limited information available to them; (b) their assumptions and values; (c) their habits of thought and speech; and (d) their conscious literary purposes.³⁵

It is this fundamental interest in questions of method — usually skimmed over by historians — and the interpretation of Josephus' works as whole compositions that deserve and require to be studied on its own terms that has left a lasting impression on the field and on the present investigation.³⁶

The increasing awareness that Josephus' works are purposeful and thematically coherent raises the question to what extent such purpose and thematic coherence can be traced in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*.³⁷ Correspondingly, the present investigation will concentrate on

³⁴ Mason (2003c) 300–2.

³⁵ Mason (2003c) 301.

³⁶ The impact of Mason's scholarship becomes evident when looking at the considerable number of scholars taking one or more of his propositions as point of departure for their own investigations. E.g. Landau (2006); Gussmann (2008); Brighton (2009); Pummer (2009); Siggelkow-Berner (2011); Den Hollander (2014); Swoboda (2014); Krause (2017); Friis (2018).

³⁷ In addition to the work of the scholars discussed above, the present study has greatly benefited from the appearance of a variety of resources, which has made a more systematic literary investigation of Josephus'

examining Josephus' self-characterization in the context of the *BJ* as a whole composition. It will examine the words, phrases, and rhetoric employed by Josephus to fashion his narrative persona and analyse the ways in which they connect to the themes and literary techniques developed throughout the composition. This offers the opportunity to explore the potential aims, functions, and themes of the autobiographical passages as an intrinsic and significant part of the *BJ*.

1.2.2 The Sources of the *BJ*

The task set for the present study — which is to offer the first systematic literary analysis of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* in the view of the language, rhetoric, themes, and structures of the whole composition — needs to be clarified in view of two complicating factors: 1) Josephus' use of sources and 2) the dating of the *BJ*. In relation to the former, the eminent scholar Daniel Schwartz has phrased some important challenges to the ways in which some literary critics approach Josephus' corpus, most notably that they are reluctant to accept any sort of inconsistency and sloppiness in Josephus' work. In Schwartz's view, scholars who read Josephus' works compositionally tend to approach them "as timeless books," "as literature not history," and hence they allow themselves "to ignore history."³⁸ Studying Josephus' corpus in this fashion might enhance the understanding of the workings of literature more generally but hardly that of the person and work of Josephus specifically.³⁹

corpus much easier. Among these are the concordances produced by Rengstorf (1973–1983) and Schalit (1968) and the bibliographical work offered in Schreckenberg (1968; 1979); Feldman (1963; 1984; 1986; 1989). Another fundamental development is the birth of commentary projects in German of the *Vita* and *CA* (Siegert, Schreckenberg, and Vogel [2001]; Siegert et al [2008]) and in French on the *AJ* (1–11, Nodet [1995–2010]). Online tools are now also available, notably the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), based at the University of California, and the database *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* (PACE), set up by Mason and now based at the University of Groningen. In response to the appearance of these resources, a number of studies have appeared that are either more sensitive or entirely devoted to literary and rhetorical aspects of Josephus' work, ranging from investigations into the aims and themes of Josephus' compositions to studies of specific literary motifs (e.g. Chapman [1998], discussed in more detail §3.3.4) and narrative aspects (e.g. the numerous publications of Van Henten, cited throughout this study).

³⁸ D. R. Schwartz (2013) 13–14.

³⁹ Compositional approaches are frequently accused of offering ahistorical and timeless readings of classical literature. This is not necessarily the case. For instance, Van Henten (2018) attempts to offer a reading of Josephus' text according to narratological methods, while remaining sensitive to Josephus' intended

The approach taken in the present study does not imply a claim that Josephus did not use any sources for the composition of the *BJ*. On the contrary: he certainly did. The work of Nicolaus of Damascus features prominently among them. Josephus himself boasts about his use of the emperor's *Commentarii* for this purpose (*Vita* 358). He also implicitly and explicitly refers to a variety of other sources.⁴⁰ However, the fact that Josephus used sources does not imply that he slavishly copied them; nor does it account for every apparent inconsistency within or between Josephus' works.⁴¹ For instance, the contrasting historiographical outlooks of the *BJ* and the *AJ* help to explain why Josephus characterizes Herod the Great as a respectable Judaeen king maintaining good relations with the Romans in the former but as a tyrant violating the Judaeen constitution and customs in the latter.⁴² We need not rest with the explanation that the two works used different sources. Moreover, that Josephus chose to provide an elaborate discussion about Herod's life in *BJ* 1 cannot simply be explained on account of his potential use of Nicolaus of Damascus; nor does his more cursory discussion of the events taking place between 4 BC and AD 66 in *BJ* 2 imply that he did not have knowledge or sources about them. Like other historians in antiquity (or modern ones), Josephus will have relied on sources for much of his research, and not merely for those events that happened

readership (although we articulate this readership differently, cf. below). See also e.g. the review of Mason's *Josephus on the Pharisees* by S. Schwartz (1994b), esp. p. 86: "These conclusions, counterintuitive, self-contradictory, and simply wrong as many of them are, should serve to warn us against the assumption underlying Mason's book that there exists one straight path to meaning, and that this path consists of the application of a single rigorous methodology [= composition criticism]." This must perhaps be seen in view of an ongoing exchange between advocates of both approaches, frequently encountered in book reviews. See e.g. Rajak (1981); Cohen (1986); Mason (1992b); S. Schwartz (1994b).

⁴⁰ E.g. Hölcher (1916) 49–50; Thackeray (1929) 37ff.; and Grabbe (1992) 370–71 give special emphasis to the Roman currents in *BJ* and explain these in reference to Josephus' use of Vespasian's *Commentarii*.

⁴¹ In relation to the *BJ*, this is a point made most distinctively in the scholarship of Steve Mason. See e.g. his early work Mason (1991) 45–48; Mason (2003c) 7–34 (on source criticism specifically, see pp. 29–30). See more recently Mason (2016a) 130–35; Mason (2016e) 23–25. On the *AJ*, see e.g. Attridge (1976); Feldman (1998a). See already Feldman's early work, e.g. Feldman (1962); Feldman (1970); Feldman (1982); Feldman (1984b). For a full overview, see Feldman (1998a) 682–84.

⁴² The differences between Josephus' portrayal of Herod in the *BJ* and the *AJ* are already observed in Laqueur (1920) 128–221. The chapter consists of a detailed analysis of *AJ* 14. Laqueur used this as a test case to establish his claim that Josephus regularly expresses his own assessments and opinions. The differences between Josephus' portrayal of Herod in the *BJ* and the *AJ* is among the most fundamental questions that has occupied scholars dealing with the history and/or historiography of Herod the Great. On this subject, see recently e.g. Sievers (2009) provides an insightful discussion of Laqueur's views and arguments. See also Landau (2005); Landau (2006); Van Henten (2011b); Van Henten (2016). On Herod in the *BJ* see in more detail §2.4.

before his lifetime (e.g. Vespasian's *Commentarii*). Having acknowledged this, we should immediately clarify that his books are highly stylized in terms of structures and language use and essentially his own for that reason. They are tailored to suit his own interests, aims, and purposes.⁴³

1.2.3 The Date of the *BJ*

Studying Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* as a compositional unity also raises questions about the dating of the *BJ*.⁴⁴ One can determine with certainty that the *terminus post quem* is Vespasian's dedication of the Forum and Temple of Peace (*BJ* 7.158–162; cf. Pliny, *NH* 36.102). This event took place in AD 75, so Josephus will not have finished the *BJ* in its entirety before this year. If one accepts Josephus' claim that he presented his books to Vespasian (*Vita* 361, *CA* 1.50), one must assume a dating of the work between AD 75 and 79.⁴⁵ One should nonetheless allow some space at the margins. For example, Josephus also mentions that it was Titus (not Vespasian or Domitian) who eventually endorsed the presumably final version of the *BJ* (*Vita* 363), making it reasonable to extent the margin to AD 81.

While most of the texts under scrutiny in this investigation can be safely dated to this period (most of Josephus' self-characterization concentrates in *BJ* 2–3, with passing references and several speeches in *BJ* 4–6), scholars have offered a variety of arguments in favour of dating large parts of *BJ* 7 as late as the reign of Domitian or even Trajan. Most influential has been Thackeray's suggestion that the style and vocabulary of *BJ* 7 is much closer than the earlier volumes to the *AJ*. This, in addition to Josephus' claim at *AJ* 20.267 (a passage to be dated to ca. AD 93–94) that he is working on a running account of the conflict, prompted Thackeray to carefully suggest a later dating of *BJ* 7.⁴⁶

⁴³ For more elaborate discussion about source criticism from a composition-critical perspective, see Mason (2016a) 130–35; Mason (2016e) 23–25. While we do not necessarily adhere to the specific approach defended by Daniel Schwartz, at (2013) 10–14 he offers a moderate and sophisticated defence of source criticism.

⁴⁴ For recent discussions of the dating of the *BJ*, see Brighton (2009) 33–41; Siggelkow-Berner (2011) 25–33. As Steve Mason has pointed out, the “publication” of the *BJ* will have involved the circulation of drafts among *intimi*, public lectures, and rewriting. This makes it difficult to distinguish between the writing process and publication of the work. Mason (2005b), see for a brief discussion §1.4.

⁴⁵ Brighton (2009) 33.

⁴⁶ Thackeray (1929) 34–35, 105.

Thackeray's suggestions have been reinvigorated by many scholars. However, because there is no solid evidence, they have not been able to demonstrate the stylistic differences between *BJ* 7 and the preceding volumes and, on this basis, forceful arguments in favour of a later date of the work's final volume. None of these scholars explains Josephus' remark in the prologue of the *BJ* that the division into seven books is a deliberate part of his compositional plan (1.30). Josephus' reference to a running account of the conflict at *AJ* 20.267 can be understood as a reference to the *Vita*.⁴⁷ Other arguments have been raised in favour of a later dating of various passages in the *BJ*, yet none of them have found general acceptance in scholarship.⁴⁸ Hence, while we should acknowledge the possibility that Josephus might have finished drafts of the *BJ* before 75 and continued to alter details of the text after 81, the most plausible scenario remains that Josephus finished the bulk of the work somewhere between AD 75 and 81.⁴⁹

1.3 Josephus' Autobiographical Material: State-of-the-Question

Studying Josephus as a creative author has, in shifting our attention from verification of his facts to the nature of his writing, opened up many possible research questions. One such question, which would not have been broached two generations ago, concerns his self-fashioning as a character in the *BJ*. To define the originality of the approach and questions of this study, the following section offers an overview of the ways in which previous scholars have studied Josephus' autobiographical material.

⁴⁷ Cf. Barish (1978) 79; Mason (2001) xiv–xv; Brighton (2009) 38.

⁴⁸ See Brighton (2009) 37–41 for a more elaborate discussion of each of these arguments. Among other arguments, Cohen and Attridge take Josephus' praise of Domitian at 7.85–88 as proof that Josephus completed Book 7 in the time of Domitian. Cohen (1979) 85; Attridge (1984) 193. S. Schwartz (1986) proposes three significant interpolations in Book 7: a "Domitianic Book" in praise of the new emperor (7.63–99); the account of the King of Commagene, irrelevant to the rest of the account (7.219–43); and the Catullus episode closing the *BJ* (7.437–54). On the Catullus episode vis-à-vis the dating of the *BJ*, see also D. R. Schwartz (2011). Of these arguments, we consider Schwartz's suggestions about the Catullus episode as a later interpolation the most convincing, but his identification of the figure under description as the L. Valerius Catullus Messalinus still alive in AD 93 is questionable. Cf. Cotton and Eck (2005) 46. If we consider Mason's suggestions about the ring structuring of the *BJ*, it is reasonable to view the closing of the Judean temple of Leontopolis (7.409–36) as natural endpoint of the *BJ*, mirroring the opening scene of the work (1.31–33). Cf. Mason (2016a) 100.

⁴⁹ In agreement with Brighton (2009) 33–41.

Josephus has established himself among the best known *and* controversial figures from antiquity by virtue of his autobiographical practice. Apparently, his controversial story sells well. Many popular biographies have been devoted to him.⁵⁰ In addition to being recorded for posterity, the self-serving content of Josephus' statements about his role during Judaeen war against the Romans have gained him a reputation as unprincipled opportunist and arguably the most notorious traitor in Jewish history.⁵¹ The issue of Josephus' alleged treachery has continued to occupy public and scholarly debate to this day.⁵²

Throughout the history of scholarship, the negative judgment of Josephus' actions has been connected closely with a general condemnation of his character.⁵³ An example is Laqueur's extremely critical description of Josephus' career in Rome. He presents Josephus' writings as the result of a career defined by egoism, opportunism, unscrupulousness, mendacity, fraud, and treachery.⁵⁴ Wilhelm Weber marks Josephus' choice to abandon the Judaeen cause and surrender to

⁵⁰ E.g. Bentwich (1914); Hadas-Lebel (1989); Seward (2009); Jonquière (2009); Meijer (2015). Josephus' story is fictionalized by Feuchtwanger in his Josephus trilogy (1991).

⁵¹ See e.g. Bentwich (1914) 57: "Hard circumstances compelled him to choose between a noble and an ignoble part, between heroic action and weak submission. He was a mediocre man, and chose the way that was not heroic and glorious. Posterity gained something by his choice; his own reputation was fatally marred by it." D. R. Schwartz (2016b), focusing on 20th century Hebrew scholarship, nicely captures some of the tendencies outlined below. See also the website of the Oxford-based "The Reception of Josephus in Jewish Culture" project (<http://josephus.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>), with Martin Goodman as principal investigator. On the reception of Josephus in contemporary Jewish culture see now also Schatz (2019). For a survey of the reception of the *BJ*, see now Goodman (2019).

⁵² See e.g. Zeitlin (1934); Brandon (1958); Cohon (1970); Walbank (2002); Docker (2005); Seward (2009). See also C. Repka, 'Flavius Josephus: Hellenized Moderate or Traitor to the Jews?'. *STMU History Media* (September 8, 2016). <https://stmuhistorymedia.org/7450/>, visited at October 8, 2019. This reputation of treachery is also thematized in the insightful popular article written by David Laskin in the New York Times "Rome, Through the Eyes of Flavius Josephus," published on March 28, 2018. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/28/travel/rome-through-the-eyes-of-flavius-josephus.html> visited on November 29, 2019.

⁵³ In fact, this negative judgment of Josephus' character arose in the 19th century. On the changing perceptions of Josephus from the late 18th century onwards, see Goodman (2019) 71–83.

⁵⁴ Esp. Laqueur (1920) 245–78. The following quotes catch the flavour of Laqueur's analysis: "Mochten die Römer immerhin mit der Arbeit ihres Schützlings zufrieden sein, die eigene Landsleute konnten nur die tiefste Empörung über den Mann empfinden, der seinem neuen Brotherren zu liebe seine eigene Vergangenheit, seine Freunde und sein Vaterland verraten und verleugnet hat" (p. 258); and "Josephus stand erneut vor einer ernsten Katastrophe seines Lebens; darüber konnte er angesichts der gegen ihn eschleuderten Anklagen der Juden nicht im Zweifel sein, daß ihn seine Landsleute nicht in Gnaden

the Romans as motivated by “Egoismus und kalter Verrat.”⁵⁵ The British classicist G. A. Williamson even claims that Josephus’ “character is perhaps known too well” because he “enjoyed talking about himself and had a high opinion of his own excellences.”⁵⁶ Williamson certainly does not agree with Josephus’ claims:

Of Josephus himself we know nothing beyond what he tells us in his own writings. The picture that emerges is by no means a pleasant one. ‘The traitor of Jerusalem’, as Dr Cecil Roth calls him, has damned himself for all time by his own accounts of what he did at Jotapata — surely the most appalling story of cowardice, duplicity, and treason ever penned. What makes it the more horrifying is the absence of any sense of shame: Josephus vaunts his abominable behaviour; after claiming credit for all the heroic efforts of the Jews to hurl the Romans back, he treats his unspeakable act of desertion as his crowning achievement, the final proof of his greatness.⁵⁷

While perceptions have become somewhat friendlier in more recent scholarship, many scholars remain unaffected by the move toward separating interpretation from historical reality and still evaluate Josephus’ character on the basis of his autobiographical narratives.⁵⁸

aufzunehmen gewillt waren; zu schwer hatte er sich an ihnen versündigt. In dieser Lage fand Josephus geschmeidig und skrupellos, wie er war, den Anschluß an Epaphroditus und seinen Kreis” (p. 259); and “Ich glaube, daß die Loslöngen der Verbindung mit den römischen Kaisern genügt, um die neue Stimmung des Josephus voll zu erklären; nur der von mir allerdings sehr tief eingeschätzte Charakter des Josephus läßt mich die Frage aufwerfen, ob er nicht auch durch die starke Betonung seines gewisse Rehabilitation erhoffte. Egoismus und natürliches Nationalgefühl konnten nunmehr Hand in Hand gehen und brauchten sich nicht mehr zu kreuzen” (p. 260). Other illustrative examples Graetz (1888) 3.513–32; Hölscher (1916) 1934–2000; Bousset (1926) 3.39; Foakes-Jackson (1930) 18; Schalit (1933): 92–95. For discussion see Den Hollander (2014) 8–10.

⁵⁵ Weber (1921) 54.

⁵⁶ Williamson (1959) 9.

⁵⁷ Williamson (1959) 11.

⁵⁸ E.g. Shaye Cohen (1979) 91 notes that Josephus is “notorious for his vanity.” Likewise, Harold Attridge (1984) 188 explains Josephus’ self-description in the *BJ* as an account determined by “self-importance and vanity.” Seth Schwartz (1990) 5 adds that Josephus’ account of his own actions is just his “way of trying to convince us of his own importance.” See most emphatically Uriel Rappaport (2007), where the *BJ* is called a “tortuous”

The readiness of scholars to evaluate Josephus' character on the basis of these passages has led them to programmatically doubt the reliability of his writings, especially the autobiographical material in the *BJ* and the *Vita*.⁵⁹ This problem has been aptly phrased by Thackeray, who contends that for the reconstruction of Josephus' life "we are wholly dependent on the historian's statements, contained partly in an incomplete autobiography published towards the end of his life, partly in scattered notices in his *Jewish War*."⁶⁰ He continues: "The numerous inconsistencies, of a minor or a graver character, between the two accounts of his command in Galilee, betray either gross carelessness or actual fraud, and it is to be feared that he cannot be wholly exonerated from the latter charge."⁶¹

Underlying all such remarks is the scholar's impatience to move from literary statement to historical reality, which means above all deciding which statements are accurate and which are false or fraudulent. What this research fails to consider is that we know about Josephus and his position in Judaea and Rome only what he *wanted* to tell his audiences in particular contexts, and so it is not surprising, at the literary level, that his two accounts look very different. There are numerous discrepancies in the substance and order of Josephus' claims about his career and activities between the *BJ* and the *Vita*. This obviously means that Josephus' autobiographical statements should be used with extreme care when embarking on a historical investigation of his life. But that leaves unaddressed the question of first understanding each self-portrayal in its context.

narrative of the Judean revolt against the Romans (p. 68). Rappaport continues as follows: "In his activity as a public figure he clearly lacks some virtues, such as personal courage, real military talent and expertise, "learning" ..., fidelity (either national or personal), and as a historian he lacks the analytical and critical sense needed for good historical writing" (p. 69). Rappaport concludes that "These claims should be attributed to a psychological problem caused by frustration, the failure to achieve certain wishes, and to fulfil some aspirations." (p. 80). So also Rappaport (1977) and Rappaport (1994).

⁵⁹ The Jewish scholar I. M. Jost was the first to identify this problem in his nine-volume *Geschichte der Israeliten* (1820–1828). For discussion see Cohen (1979) 9–10.

⁶⁰ Thackeray (1929) 5.

⁶¹ Thackeray (1929) 5. See more recently e.g. Tuval (2013): "I would like to make it clear at the beginning of this study that I do not believe that very much of what he actually claims to have been or to have done can be trusted by a critical and responsible historian" (p. 13); and "I find it extremely difficult to trust Josephus on any of the above (as well as on many other points)" (p. 14); or "I think it is extremely hazardous to trust Josephus' statements concerning him" (p. 14).

Scholars have long recognized the challenge of the historical problem and attempted to solve it in different ways. Richard Laqueur's *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* was the first work to provide an analysis of Josephus' life and career that treated Josephus as an intelligent author.⁶² In reaction to the source criticism that dominated Josephus scholarship in the preceding half-century, Richard Laqueur pointed out that many differences between *BJ* and *AJ*, which scholars attributed to new source material, were no smaller than Josephus' differences in recounting his own career, where no one imagined him to be reliant on sources. Moreover, the differences between *BJ* and *AJ* are often more in 'colouring' than in the main content. This suggests a change of perspective and it means that one must look beyond sources alone, to Josephus' historiographical and apologetic interests, to explain the general shape of his accounts.⁶³

On the basis of this methodology, one of Laqueur's most important proposals is that the base text of the *Vita* was an administrative text ("Rechenschaftsbericht") that goes back to a source penned by Josephus in AD 67 and hence older than the *BJ*. Laqueur attempts to show that Josephus consistently revises this base text (reconstructed from the *Vita*) to serve the goals and purposes of the *BJ*. Our current *Vita* used the same source again, now framing the material as a response to Justus of Tiberias. However, Laqueur claims that it is easy to identify and remove the new material concerning Justus in this old administrative document of 67. This makes the reconstruction of the content and structure of the early nucleus possible.⁶⁴

In the section of his book called "der Werdegang des Josephus,"⁶⁵ Laqueur contends that Josephus began his career as a law-abiding priest with an important function in Jerusalem. He then abused his office as an emissary (not a general) in Galilee to establish his position as tyrant and general of the region.⁶⁶ Hereafter, Josephus betrayed the Judaeian cause, surrendered to the Romans, and became a Roman official and a propagandist.⁶⁷ He retained this position until he lost imperial favour after the death of Titus. Being forced to turn to other patrons, he befriended Epaphroditus

⁶² For an appreciative summary of Laqueur's work and its importance, see Cohen (1979) 16–20.

⁶³ See esp. Laqueur (1920) 230–45 (Ch. 7 "Eine methodische Grundfrage").

⁶⁴ Laqueur (1920) 57–96 (differences between *BJ* and *Vita*) and 96–128 ("Rechenschaftsbericht").

⁶⁵ Laqueur (1920) 245–78.

⁶⁶ Laqueur (1920) esp. 247–49.

⁶⁷ Laqueur (1920) esp. 255–59.

and his literary circles and attempted to regain the favour of his Judaeen countrymen.⁶⁸ The final stages of Josephus' career are marked by his rivalry with Justus of Tiberias. The latter proved to be superior as a historian and as an expert in Judaeen matters, and hence Josephus was dismissed by his patron Epaphroditus. This compelled him to turn to the Christians and sell his books to a wider Graeco-Roman public.⁶⁹

Although Laqueur received much criticism for his speculative proposals, his general point that the *Vita* was based on a document predating the *BJ* gained some acceptance, although usually in heavily adapted form. Thus, Thackeray rejected the idea of an early nucleus in Greek and argued that the language of the *whole Vita* closely corresponds to the language of the last book of the *AJ*, which in his view suggests contemporaneous composition.⁷⁰ However, he considered it "unobjectionable and not improbable" that Josephus published such an early report in Aramaic addressed to the Jerusalem authorities and later rewrote this document in Greek.⁷¹ Gelzer argued that the early document recognised by Laqueur was no administrative report but a *hypomnema*, a report containing field notes intended to be refashioned as a full history at a later stage.⁷²

Shaye Cohen's *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, published in 1979, is among the more influential studies dealing with this issue. Taking Laqueur's work as point of departure, Cohen analyses Josephus' way of handling his sources. He attempts to reconstruct the relationship between the autobiographical accounts of the *BJ* and the *Vita* on this basis.⁷³ Like most scholars working before him, Cohen works on the assumption that Josephus rarely invented new material and made use of sources for most of his text. Yet in contrast to traditional source-critical approaches, he argues that Josephus rewrote each of these sources heavily (if sloppily).⁷⁴

Having established this framework, Cohen turns to the question of the relationship between the *BJ* and the *Vita* and the early nucleus that allegedly served as the literary basis for both accounts.

⁶⁸ Laqueur (1920 esp. 259–60.

⁶⁹ Laqueur (1920) 272–78.

⁷⁰ On the dating of the second edition of the *AJ*, see Thackeray (1929) 17, following Laqueur.

⁷¹ Thackeray (1929) 18–19.

⁷² Gelzer (1952).

⁷³ Cohen (1979) 24–83.

⁷⁴ Cohen (1979) e.g. 43.

Following Laqueur, Cohen argues that the literary structure of the *Vita* corresponds more closely to the structure of the early nucleus than the *BJ*. His most important argument is that the chronology displayed by the *Vita* cannot be explained as arising naturally from the chronology of the *BJ*. The sequence of the Galilee narrative in the *Vita* appears to be *chronological*. It appears to be less polished and must therefore be closer to the original. Cohen contends that Josephus has rewritten his source text far more thoroughly in the *BJ*, most notably by replacing the *chronological* with a *thematic* scheme. Allowing a significant degree of uncertainty regarding its precise form, content, and amount of detail, Cohen says this hypothetical common source is most plausibly explained as a chronologically arranged *hypomnema*, an unpolished document containing an outline of the events in Galilee written down by Josephus before he turned to writing the *BJ*.⁷⁵

Cohen also investigates the aims and methods of the autobiographical accounts in the *BJ* and the *Vita* and Josephus' motives for writing these accounts.⁷⁶ This enables him to offer a historical reconstruction of Josephus' activities in Galilee, especially in the winter of AD 66–67.⁷⁷ This can be summarized as follows. Cohen contends that Josephus was a wholehearted supporter of the Judaeen revolt against the Romans until his defeat at Jotapata. It was only then that Josephus began to serve the Romans as propagandist. This was his most important agenda when writing the *BJ*. Josephus was forced to defend himself against accusations of cowardice and treachery raised against him by Judaeans and Romans.⁷⁸ Cohen regards it as natural that Josephus portrays himself in as favourable a light as possible, but identifies a change in attitude when Domitian came to power: Josephus' works suddenly take on a much more "religious," "nationalistic," and "pro-Pharisaic" outlook. Like Laqueur, Cohen observes a significant change in the interests and attitudes of Josephus, though he reconstructs these changes differently.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Cohen (1979) 67–84.

⁷⁶ Cohen (1979) 84–180.

⁷⁷ Cohen (1979) 181–231.

⁷⁸ Cohen (1979) 228–32.

⁷⁹ Cohen (1979) 232–42.

Four years later, Tessa Rajak published her monograph *Josephus: The Historian and his Society*.⁸⁰ Rajak challenges many established views on Josephus' corpus and their importance for reconstructing the Judaeen revolt against the Romans, but also Josephus' own life and career. Her aim is to study Josephus' life and career as an expression of "the ambivalences and conflicting forces to which prominent Jews of this kind were increasingly subject under Roman rule."⁸¹ She focuses on Josephus' early life and writings (up to finishing the *BJ*). She stresses that her study is not a biography in the traditional sense.⁸² Instead of the narrow focus on Josephus' autobiographical material, Rajak approaches Josephus and his writings as representative of their Judaeen and Roman political, cultural, and social environments.⁸³ She proposes, for example, that Josephus must have acquired competence in Greek from an early age and was generally accepting of Roman power, even if he was forced to rebel for a short time.⁸⁴ Although recognizing traces of propaganda, she rejects the hypothesis that the *BJ* should be interpreted as a work of Flavian propaganda.⁸⁵

Unlike Laqueur and Cohen, Rajak is not much interested in identifying the sources underpinning Josephus' writings.⁸⁶ She assumes that most of the text is produced by Josephus himself. As for the differences between the *BJ* and the *Vita*, she contends that they can (largely) be explained as the result of the different aims, themes, and generic outlook of both works. She holds that most differences are not really inconsistencies but "shifts in emphasis."⁸⁷ Both works contain the same general attitude, namely that of a representative of a member of the Jerusalem upper class. This translates into a strong emphasis on Judaeen cultural life and religious beliefs. Josephus' claims are always set in dialogue with Greek language and culture, and with a concern for political

⁸⁰ The first edition was published in 1983. I will cite from the second edition (2002) throughout our investigation, which is unaltered except the updating preface. Her 1983 monograph has grown out of a section of Rajak's 1974 dissertation, which also includes a pioneering analysis on the literary structures of the *AJ*.

⁸¹ Rajak (2002) 4.

⁸² Rajak (2002) 6.

⁸³ Rajak (2002) 6.

⁸⁴ Rajak (2002) 4. For Josephus' early life and education, see pp. 11–64. For Josephus' hesitant participation in the war against the Romans, see pp. 65–143.

⁸⁵ Rajak (2002) 185–222.

⁸⁶ The contrast in method becomes clear by looking at the fierce criticism of Rajak's monograph in Cohen (1986).

⁸⁷ Rajak (2002) 154ff.

accommodation to Roman power. Josephus displays this attitude consistently throughout his corpus. Against the scholarly consensus when she was writing, Rajak concludes that Josephus' personality and circumstances underwent only minimal changes over the years.

In his *Josephus and Judaeen Politics*, Seth Schwartz is more interested in establishing an intellectual biography of Josephus. His first aim is to offer a description of Josephus' personal development based on his own writings. His second aim is to illuminate the workings of Judaeen politics in the last decades of the first century AD.⁸⁸ I shall mainly concentrate on outlining Schwartz's questions, approach, and conclusions in relation to his first purpose.

For his analysis of Josephus' writings, Schwartz's work is strongly influenced by the approach and questions asked in Cohen's *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*.⁸⁹ Yet where Cohen's work focused on reconstructing Josephus' activities in AD 66–67, Schwartz mainly examines Josephus' life and intellectual development after his surrender at Jotapata. He asks questions about Josephus' social and political connections and intellectual affinities in the period after the revolt.⁹⁰ Schwartz uses an autobiographical sketch of Josephus to furnish an outline of his social and intellectual environment and identify the friends and enemies he had at different stages during his life.⁹¹ He uses this sketch to historically anchor his analysis of Josephus' writings and trace a development in Josephus' apologetic and propagandistic concerns, his attitudes and opinions, his knowledge and style.⁹² Subsequently, he attempts a historical reconstruction about different aspects of Judaeen politics and institutions based on Josephus' writings, supplemented by other sources.⁹³

Regarding Josephus' literary career, Schwartz concludes that Josephus served both the Romans (emperor and senate) and the Judaeans (Herodians and priestly elites) when producing the *BJ*. He addressed an audience of Greek and Oriental upper classes of the East within the confines of this task. He continued to write to these same groups at later stages of his career, but became an apologist of a different variety of Judaism and a different group of Judaeen leaders. Schwartz traces

⁸⁸ S. Schwartz (1990) 1–2, cf. 209ff.

⁸⁹ S. Schwartz (1990) ix.

⁹⁰ On methodology, see S. Schwartz (1990) 1–4, 21–22, 210.

⁹¹ S. Schwartz (1990) 4–22.

⁹² S. Schwartz (1990) 23–57.

⁹³ S. Schwartz (1990) 58–209.

a development in Josephus' intellectual viewpoints from an adherent of upper-class Jerusalem priesthood in the *BJ* towards a type of Judaism in the *AJ* closely resembling the views of the early Rabbinic movement.⁹⁴ During his career, he established various important Roman and Judaeian contacts and may have enjoyed some success in Rome because of these. Ultimately, Schwartz views Josephus more as a public figure than a scholar, "interested and informed about political developments in Rome and Judaea at the time when he was writing." Correspondingly, the specific features of each of Josephus' historiographical compositions must be explained against the backdrop of "his shifting political concerns and social connections."⁹⁵

Michael Tuval's *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew* has recently invigorated the approach and questions asked by Seth Schwartz, blending them with a model sketched by his mentor Daniel Schwartz.⁹⁶ Hence, the emphasis of Tuval's study is somewhat different. Whereas S. Schwartz approaches Josephus as a public figure and a politician, Tuval perceives Josephus' compositions as works of theology that reveal his changing perceptions about "the Jewish religion." Like S. Schwartz, Tuval particularly focuses on potential differences between the *BJ* and the *AJ* and attempts to trace a development in Josephus' thinking.⁹⁷ In Tuval's view, the *BJ* and the *AJ* "provide the raw material for the comparison and analysis" on the basis of which one can establish Josephus' early (*BJ*) and late (*AJ*) knowledge about the bible, his interests, and his religious worldviews.⁹⁸ His main argument is that Josephus' outlook underwent drastic changes (against e.g. Rajak): from that of a Jerusalem priest and adherent to Judaism emphasizing the centrality of the temple cult to a sophisticated intellectual Diaspora Jew in Rome advocating the universal value of the Torah in the Roman world. Josephus apparently lost any interest into subjects related to the temple cult in the process, the "religious" subjects he had valued so much in the *BJ*.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ See esp. S. Schwartz (1990) 209–16.

⁹⁵ S. Schwartz (1990) 210.

⁹⁶ See e.g. D. R. Schwartz (2007a); D. R. Schwartz (2007b); D. R. Schwartz (2014).

⁹⁷ Tuval (2013) 1–3.

⁹⁸ Tuval (2013) 19.

⁹⁹ Tuval (2013) 275–87. Tuval is following a path of which the outlines were established by D. R. Schwartz, Tuval's supervisor. See e.g. D. R. Schwartz (2007b); D. R. Schwartz (2013) 110–66.

William den Hollander has recently offered a systematic analysis of the last thirty years of Josephus' life, specifically in relation to the social and cultural context of the city of Rome. Like his mentor Mason (cf. above), he follows the methods proposed by the English philosopher of history R. G. Collingwood.¹⁰⁰ Den Hollander highlights the importance of understanding Josephus' autobiographical material in its broader Roman context and advocates the necessity of using historical imagination to attempt a meaningful reconstruction of Josephus' life and career. Like most other studies of Josephus' life and career, Den Hollander points out the limits of relying on Josephus' autobiographical material only. His solution to this problem is to assume that Josephus is somehow typical of his historical environments and contexts (thus to some extent resembling Rajak's approach).¹⁰¹ Hence, comparative study allows the historian to sketch plausible scenarios.¹⁰²

On the basis of these methodological propositions, Den Hollander traces the beginnings of Josephus' social life in Rome back to his trip to Neronian Rome in AD 64,¹⁰³ before turning to a discussion of Josephus' relationship with successive Flavian emperors¹⁰⁴ and other inhabitants of the city.¹⁰⁵ Presenting the results of his investigation as "possibilities rather than certainties,"¹⁰⁶ Den Hollander outlines the following scenarios as having the most explanatory force. Reacting against the view that Josephus should be regarded as a Flavian propagandist and a court historian (in agreement with Rajak and Mason), Den Hollander argues that Josephus' social situation was not determined by his affiliation to the Flavians or his presence at the imperial court. Instead, Josephus possessed the freedom to pursue his own intellectual interests and agenda, and his works should be judged along these lines. Moreover (against e.g. Laqueur and Cohen; with Rajak), Josephus' presentation of his life in Rome does not provide any indication that his situation changed with the accession of Domitian. Even if Josephus was no member of the socio-political elite of Rome, he had some connections with the imperial court and the opportunity to forge relationships with

¹⁰⁰ Den Hollander (2014) 8, 19–20, 22, 305–6. Inspired by his supervisor, Steve Mason, cf. §1.2.

¹⁰¹ For his appreciation of Rajak's approach, see Den Hollander (2014) 12–13.

¹⁰² Den Hollander (2014) esp. 19–23.

¹⁰³ Den Hollander (2014) 27–67.

¹⁰⁴ Den Hollander (2014) 68–138 (Vespasian), 139–99 (Titus), 200–51 (Domitian).

¹⁰⁵ Den Hollander (2014) 252–304.

¹⁰⁶ Den Hollander (2014) 305.

prominent other citizens. According to Den Hollander, Josephus' social position in Rome was much better than that of most in the city.¹⁰⁷

The contribution I intend to make is along the following lines. To date, scholars have mainly occupied themselves with looking *through* Josephus' autobiographical material instead of looking *at* it in its literary context. That is to say, most interpretative attempts have tried to recover the man behind the text, the historical Josephus. Josephus' text has primarily been studied as a means to achieve that purpose, not as a separate research goal.

That Josephus' self-fashioning in his works is a worthy intellectual pursuit for its own sake is shown by the publication of several contributions in this vein, especially in relation to the *Vita*. (cf. §1.5 and Appendix). Neyrey has compared Josephus' autobiographical practice there to the prescriptions found in rhetorical manuals or *progymnasmata*. On this basis he defines the *Vita* as an encomium in praise of Josephus' character.¹⁰⁸ Mason has explored the *Vita* as an elucidation of Josephus' character, in light of its Roman background and its literary relationship with the *AJ*, to which the *Vita* was originally appended.¹⁰⁹ Grojnowski has argued that the content and outlook of the *Vita* should be explained in light of what she perceives as an ancient genre of autobiography.¹¹⁰ Martin Friis has recently published a monograph focusing on Josephus' self-presentation as a historian in *AJ* 1-11. He draws attention to the numerous parallels between Josephus' practice and the strategies of self-presentation of various Graeco-Roman historians. On the basis of this, he argues that Josephus deliberately presents himself as an expert of ancient Judaeian culture who embodied the qualities Graeco-Roman historians usually attributed to themselves when writing ancient history, at least in the first half of the *AJ*.¹¹¹

To the best of my knowledge, only a handful of studies have been published that devote any significant attention to the literary aspects of Josephus' self-fashioning in the *BJ*. In a collection focusing on autobiographical writing in antiquity, Martina Hirschberger investigated the

¹⁰⁷ See the concluding overview in Den Hollander (2014) 305–10

¹⁰⁸ Neyrey (1994).

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Mason (1998); Mason (2001); Mason (2016c).

¹¹⁰ Grojnowski (2014); Grojnowski (2015).

¹¹¹ Friis (2018).

relationship between Josephus' use of the first person as narrator and his use of the third person to describe his own actions. She argues that Josephus' use of the first person as narrator should be explained in reference to Greek (methodological summaries and digressions) and Judaeen backgrounds (personal lamentations).¹¹² She also contends that Josephus successfully uses a third-person perspective to foreground his own deeds (esp. in *BJ* 2–3) in an ostensibly objective manner.¹¹³

Jan Willem van Henten has recently published an article that explores the ways in which Josephus fashions himself as a historian and a narrator throughout his corpus, and how this self-fashioning lends authority to his work.¹¹⁴ In relation to the *BJ*, he calls attention to two aspects of Josephus' authorial self-fashioning. First, he argues that Josephus adopts a classical Thucydidean profile as an eyewitness of the events he describes, although he connects this with his own mission and role as a Judaeen historian in Rome. According to Van Henten, Josephus' insistence on his Judaeen background allows him to describe the misfortunes of the Judaeen people from the perspective of an insider. Second, he advocates that Josephus' emphasis on his priestly background should be perceived in light of his claims to expertise and authority as a historian. Although the importance of these thematic currents has been pointed out by other scholars,¹¹⁵ Van Henten is the first to connect them in a narratological frame with Josephus' authorial self-fashioning.

In consideration of the *status quaestionis*, my aim is to offer the first systematic study of Josephus' self-fashioning as a character in the *BJ*. The contributions of Neyrey, Mason, and Grojnowski on Josephus' self-presentation, or explicit autobiographical material, concern the *Vita*. Hirschberger's article offers some important observations in relation to Josephus' self-fashioning as a character in the *BJ*. Yet her study limits its focus to aspects of grammatical person and the relationship between narrator and character. Friis (exclusively the *AJ*) and Van Henten (including the *BJ*) focus primarily on Josephus' self-presentation as an author, whereas the present study focuses on Josephus' self-fashioning *as a character*. By contrast, my contribution will investigate

¹¹² Hirschberger (2005) 153.

¹¹³ Hirschberger (2005) 170.

¹¹⁴ Van Henten (2018).

¹¹⁵ On Josephus self-fashioning as a priest, see most systematically Gussmann (2008) 198–266. On the Thucydidean currents in the prologue of the *BJ*, see e.g. Price (2010).

Josephus' self-fashioning as a character in the *BJ* in view of the historiographical outlook and rhetoric of the whole composition. Furthermore, the present study approaches the *BJ* as a work in which Josephus (as a self-conscious and intelligent author) consistently and deliberately draws on Graeco-Roman historiographical and autobiographical conventions to communicate with an audience in and around Flavian Rome, the city where he wrote it.

1.4 Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading the *BJ* Comparatively

Following Mason, this study emphasizes the importance of reading Josephus' books not as a source of data written in a vacuum but in a historical context.¹¹⁶ The way one approaches potentially relevant contexts is fundamental for textual interpretation. Josephus evidently wrote his texts to communicate with someone. He presumably expected this "someone" to understand and appreciate his communicative effort and will have employed familiar knowledge and values as a communicative basis. The *BJ* was produced in Rome. Josephus entrenched the work with classical allusions and he wrote it in the ambitiously Atticizing literary style that became increasingly fashionable in the first century among Greek elites.¹¹⁷ Correspondingly, this study takes it as fundamental that Josephus primarily aimed to reach an audience steeped in such learning (Romans, Greeks, Judaeans) in and around his geographical location.¹¹⁸

Because Mason's claims have not gone unchallenged, it is useful to briefly present the arguments that are foundational for the present study and some of the debate surrounding these issues.¹¹⁹ Mason stresses the importance of reconstructing a recognizable local audience in Flavian

¹¹⁶ E.g. Mason (2005b) 99–100.

¹¹⁷ Thackeray (1929) 34, 100–24; Ladouceur (1983) 36; Mason (2016e) 16. For the cultural context, see, e.g., Swain (1996); Hunter and De Jonge (2019).

¹¹⁸ Likewise, Den Hollander (2014) 7. Cf. the scholarship of Mason discussed below (esp. 2005b).

¹¹⁹ See, most substantially, Feeley (2017), who argues that Josephus "did not just formulate and shape his various political judgments in order to gain favor either for himself or for Judaism in the eyes of his immediate Flavian Roman audience" but "that Josephus harbored thoughtful and nuanced ideas about the nature of authority, and had considered which governing styles and forms of rule best served the interests of the governed" (p. 199). Feeley specifically develops his thesis in response to the hypothesis of Josephus' "anti-monarchical" views, as developed most elaborately in Mason (2009a). Davies (2017) approaches Josephus as an author who was very conscious that his work was likely to appeal to educated Judaeans audiences too (p. 107–9).

Rome for interpreting the texts of Josephus. His approach finds its roots in scholarship about the realia of ancient book production and dissemination. According to Mason, this might help scholars to understand many of the structures, themes, and rhetorical features that shape the historiographical outlook of Josephus' works.¹²⁰ Regarding the *BJ* specifically, he argues that it shows evidence of the familiar stages of ancient book production, that is, from the presentation of partial drafts and recitation to small and gradually expanding (but still essentially local) audiences (*BJ* 1.22; *Vita* 361–62) to the point where the author loses authorial control and sells copies to certain acquaintances (e.g. *CA* 1.50–51). Josephus primarily wrote this work with a sophisticated Roman audience in view, including some Judaeans living in Rome (Agrippa II and his circle).¹²¹

Few scholars would doubt that the Roman cultural context is *among* the most important explanatory windows for understanding Josephus' practice as a historian, as becomes evident from a variety of studies since the early 2000s.¹²² However, the explanatory framework developed for the purpose of this investigation is irreconcilable with the commonly encountered hypothesis that the *BJ* was produced to communicate with multiple and ultimately incompatible audiences. For example, Jonathan Price explains his approach as follows:

I take it as fundamental that Josephus' books address multiple audiences—the Greek-educated Roman upper class in Rome and the cities of the empire, the Greek-speaking intelligentsia of the eastern provinces and the Greek-reading Jewish inhabitants of the eastern provinces.¹²³

¹²⁰ See esp. Mason (2005b). So also Mason (2003b), which chiefly focuses on the *AJ*, but with some useful observations on the *BJ* as well; idem (2005a). Largely in support of Mason, see e.g. Brighton (2009) 41–47 and Den Hollander (2014). As opposed to more general views as expressed in e.g. Sterling (1992) 297–308; Bilde (1988) 77–78. This view is largely based on the preface of *BJ* (1.3: “subjects of the Roman empire”; 1.16: “Greeks and Romans”; cf. *BJ* 361–62 and *CA* 1.50–51); Feldman (1998a) 668.

¹²¹ Mason (2005b) 73. Mason (2005b) 71–100 (on the general point about the communicative nature of texts, see pp. 74–78. See for the implications of Mason's argument pp. 99–100.

¹²² As noted by Mason in a later article: “Now every scholar would concede that at least in certain respects Josephus was a Roman historian. He was a Roman citizen. He lived most of his adult life in Rome. And he wrote all of his known works—thirty volumes survive intact—there (*Life* 422–429).” Mason (2016d) 89.

¹²³ Price (2005) 102. So also Sterling (1992) 297–308.

According to Price, Josephus' attempt to address multiple and ultimately incompatible audiences results in numerous inconsistencies and a fundamental lack of coherence in his narratives. He claims that Josephus' persistent *persona* and literary project were ultimately Judaeian and thus "kept him isolated ... for the last thirty years of his life" in the very environment in which Josephus was living: Flavian Rome.¹²⁴ In another article, Price points out that Josephus' "varied oeuvre, with its multiple themes and purposes, addresses multiple audiences with different interests and backgrounds, and in this respect his themes do not always sit well with one another."¹²⁵ He subsequently lists *seven* different and clearly identifiable audiences to which Josephus wrote at the same time.¹²⁶ This explanation might be tenable if it proved impossible to identify much compositional coherence in the words, phrases, and motifs used by Josephus. This is indeed how scholars have sometimes explained the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*: whereas Josephus explicitly addresses Greeks and Romans, in fact he wrote so extensively about his own deeds to respond to Judaeians accusing him of cowardice and treachery.¹²⁷

This explanation becomes unnecessary, however, if one can satisfactorily explain the textual features of Josephus' self-characterization from a different angle. When approaching the autobiographical sections of the *BJ* on the basis of the proposed parameters, one might be able to see how they contain a set of well-developed aims, themes, techniques, and strategies consistent with the remainder of Josephus' communicative effort. This is my aim.

¹²⁴ Price (2005) 118.

¹²⁵ Price (2011a) 224.

¹²⁶ Price (2011a) 225: "For Josephus was writing at the same time for: A. An educated Greek-Roman audience with both apologetic and didactic purposes, explaining the Jewish revolt against Rome, and explaining and justifying Judaism, its practices, teachings, beliefs, institutions. B. That same audience, refuting the various slanderous attacks on, and misrepresentations of, Judaism. C. His Flavian patrons, to glorify their achievements and explain the war and its awful result (this applies mostly but not exclusively to *BJ*). D. Greek-reading inhabitants of the eastern Roman Empire, to justify accommodation with Rome. E. Both Romans and Jews, to offer his own apology and defence. F. Jewish audiences, with plainly polemical as well as dissuasive purposes; to invalidate on theological grounds calls for further rebellion, and to discredit his enemies (personal and ideological). G. Jewish audiences, to address the theological perplexities which were plaguing them after the destruction of the Temple."

¹²⁷ The motif of apology vis-à-vis a Judaeian audience is employed by Price to identify one of Josephus' many audiences, see (2011a) 225. So also e.g. Thackeray (1929) 5; Cohen (1979) 97ff.; Rajak (2002) 171; Gray (1993) 41; Hirschberger (2005) 170; Jonquière (2011) 217; Tuval (2013) 95.

Situating Josephus' autobiographical material in Flavian Rome allows the present study to set up numerous relevant but to date relatively unexplored comparisons. To obtain a better understanding of Josephus' self-characterization it proposes to compare it with the kind of literature Josephus could assume to be familiar to his audiences, or literature produced in roughly the same historical context under comparable circumstances. One can think of the canonical works of Thucydides and Polybius — widely recognised as Josephus' main models — but also, for example, Xenophon, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Diodorus of Sicily, and — if one assumes that Josephus at the very least read some Latin — Sallust, Livy, or Julius Caesar.¹²⁸ What is more, the Flavian era witnessed a significant rise of literary activity, with writers such as Sallustius Crispus, Egnatius Marcellus, Vibius Crispus, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Dio Chrysostom, and Plutarch. Quintilian even became the first “professor of rhetoric.”¹²⁹ He was among many others generously sponsored by Vespasian for their scholarly efforts, including Josephus.¹³⁰ The thriving literary culture of Flavian Rome offers a promising explanatory window for approaching Josephus' autobiographical material in the *BJ*.¹³¹ Hence, the approach of this study is comparative to a significant degree: it attempts to understand Josephus' text in relation to the Graeco-Roman intellectual discourses that were presumably familiar to his local audience in and around Rome.

1.5 Character and Self-Characterization

Character is among the subjects that might have drawn the interest of an audience in a Flavian Roman cultural context. Character and characterization are topics that nowadays belong to the field of narratology. Scholars increasingly recognize the potential applications of this field to classical

¹²⁸ See Mason (2003b) 566–67. Ward (2007) investigates the impact of Latin on Josephus' Greek, particularly in his later works.

¹²⁹ For a biographical sketch of Quintilian, see Clarke (1967).

¹³⁰ Tacitus, *Dial.* 9.8; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 18. For Josephus' stipend see *Vita* 423. An overview of the literature (prose, poetry, education, Latin and Greek) from the Flavian period with further references can be found in Zissos (2016) chapters 21–26. We also know that Quintilian was acquainted with the Judean Queen Berenice (*Inst.* 4.1.19). It is very likely that she also moved within Josephus' social circles (or Josephus rather in hers?) upon her arrival there in AD 75. Cf. Den Hollander (2014) 275–78.

¹³¹ Josephus' position in Rome may in some regards be perceived as similar to that of provincials like Dio of Prusa or Plutarch. See the brief discussion on friendship and patronage in Flavian Rome in Stadter (2015) 28–32.

studies, and it is evident that my use of language and analytical tools partially overlaps with narratological concepts developed for studying literature more generally. My study often looks at aspects of voice, focus (focalization), anticipation, narrative timing, plot, and other issues related to the composition of literature more generally.¹³²

Contrary to some of these studies, my investigation aims to approach character in Josephus' corpus, specifically his self-characterization in the *BJ*, in consideration of relevant literary and historical contexts, which includes ancient rhetoric (rather than modern literary theory).¹³³ In accordance with this principle, the words character and characterization need clarification: what do they mean when they are used in the present study? Notably, the Greek word *χαρακτήρ* has a different meaning than English character. It signifies something like an "impression," an "engraving," or a "distinguishing mark."¹³⁴ Much closer to "character" and "characterization" as applied throughout this study is Greek *ἦθος*, which has a distinctively moral connotation.¹³⁵ Scholars have made important contributions that have enhanced our understanding of ancient perceptions of this kind of character in classical literature and historiography. Thus, the volume *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* edited by Christopher Pelling explores various aspects related to this topic, with some observations on Latin literature as well.¹³⁶ A more recent volume edited by Rhiannon Ash, Judith Mossman, and Frances Titchener includes contributions covering both Greek and Latin practices of characterization.¹³⁷ René Nünlist has advocated the centrality of character in

¹³² The concept "narratologie" was coined by Tzvetan Todorov in his 1969 study. For the application of narratology in classical studies, see the recent survey in De Jong (2014). Particularly useful is the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, also edited by Irene de Jong. In relation to Josephus studies, see e.g. the contributions of Landau (2005); Landau (2006); Wiater (2010); Van Henten (2018); Van Henten and Huitink (2018).

¹³³ The potential of ancient rhetoric for analysing character and characterization in Greek narrative literature is explored most systematically in De Temmerman (2010).

¹³⁴ Cf. Korte (1929).

¹³⁵ On *ἦθος* and its relation to a person's "character," see notably Kroll (1918). See more recently the discussion in Nünlist (2009) 254–56. Nünlist emphasizes the problematic and elusive nature of the semantics of *ἦθος*. In his view the different shades of meaning as established by Kroll are rather problematic, and he shows that alternatives to Kroll's proposal are equally possible. Moreover, the word has more than just the connotation of "character." It should be translated frequently as "customs" or "habits," and originally even meant "dwelling place." Cf. Thimme (1935).

¹³⁶ Pelling (1990).

¹³⁷ Ash, Mossman and Titchener (2015).

Homeric epic and Attic tragedy, which “owe their deep and lasting effect not least to the prominence of fascinating and highly individualised characters.”¹³⁸ In Nünlist’s view, any ancient audience would immediately have recognized that character and cast were of central importance in narrative texts.¹³⁹ As will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2, every ancient historian writing in Greek or Latin shared this concern.¹⁴⁰

Scholars have identified patterns along these lines in Josephus’ books. Braun and Moehring have shown how Josephus embellishes some characters and narratives with erotic-novelistic features. Louis Feldman has made the most significant and systematic contribution to Josephus’ conceptualization and depiction of individual characters in the *AJ*, especially in his *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible* and *Studies in Josephus’s Rewritten Bible*.¹⁴¹ In these studies, Feldman demonstrates that Josephus programmatically models his portrayal of biblical figures in accordance with paradigmatic Greek cultural heroes.¹⁴² Along similar lines, in the introductions to the *AJ* commentary by Feldman (2000) and of his 2001 commentary on the *Vita*, Steve Mason emphasizes the centrality of character in each work. The structure of the autobiography is consistent with the patterns encountered in the *AJ*, to which the *Vita* was originally appended.¹⁴³ The observations of these scholars on Josephus’ portrayal of character in the *AJ–Vita* pair holds significant promise in

¹³⁸ Nünlist (2009) 238.

¹³⁹ Nünlist (2009) 238–56.

¹⁴⁰ On characterization in ancient historiography see e.g. Bruns (1898); Walbank (1972); Gill (1983); Pelling (1990); Woodman (1998); Ash (1999); Pitcher (2007); Ash, Mossman and Titchener (2015); De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018b). For a more detailed discussion about ancient perceptions of character, see Chapter 2. For characterization in Herodotus, see e.g. De Bakker (2013); Baragwanath (2015); De Bakker (2018). On characterization in Xenophon see several the contributions in Lane Fox (2004). For a somewhat unusual but insightful interpretation of Sallust’s Catiline, see Batstone (1988); Wilkins (1994). Useful observations can also be found in Kapust (2011) 53–80. On various techniques used by ancient historians to characterize individuals in their histories see e.g. De Bakker (2013); Toher (2015); Woodman (2015). See also Pitcher (2007) 107–12.

¹⁴¹ Feldman (1998a); Feldman (1998b).

¹⁴² Feldman (1998a) 221–657.

¹⁴³ Mason (2000); Mason (2001). See also Mason (1998); Mason (2016c). On the centrality of Josephus’ personality in the *Vita*, see also Neyrey (1994), pointing to parallels with the conventions of the ancient encomium form as described by the *progymnasmata*.

relation to Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ*, which remain yet to be explored systematically.¹⁴⁴

Among the most prominent characters staged in the narrative of the *BJ* is Josephus himself. Anticipating some of my conclusions, Josephus' self-characterization is more complex than his portrayal of any other character in the *BJ*. The reason is that to shape an authoritative narrative persona Josephus had to consider not only historiographical but also autobiographical conventions. One can imagine that he had to come to terms with shaping his own character in a fashion suiting his personal and intellectual interests while maintaining his role as objective and impartial historian of the Judaeo-Roman conflict. In other words, the autobiographical passages in the *BJ* potentially epitomize the intricacy and depth of Josephus' characterization practices in a unique and intriguing manner.

1.6 Scope and Outline of the Present Study

It is in light of these developments and on the basis of these parameters that this study will embark on a literary analysis of the autobiographical passages in the *BJ*. It will investigate Josephus' self-fashioning in view of the historiographical aims, structures, and themes of the *BJ*. Even if Josephus composed the *BJ* as a self-contained text with its own unique aims and themes, the present investigation approaches it as being written as a communicative effort that needs to be situated in a recognizable historical context to be understood properly, specifically tailor-made for an audience of cultural elites in and around Flavian Rome steeped in Greek learning.¹⁴⁵ With this approach, I will

¹⁴⁴ Some studies (though with a different emphasis than Feldman and Mason) highlighting different aspects of character and characterization in the *BJ* are Villalba i Varneda (1986) 69–88; Landau (2005); Landau (2006); Van Henten (2011b); Van Henten (2016); Van Henten and Huitink (2018). Moehring (1957) also contains significant observations about Josephus' characterization of Herod in *BJ* 1.

¹⁴⁵ The potential significance of the author as a validating principle has been vigorously debated among literary critics. Anti-authorial approaches have been fashionable since Roland Barthes published his famous "La mort de l'auteur" ("The Death of the Author") in 1968. See Barthes (1977). The view put forward by Barthes is that it is impossible and undesirable to recover the intentions of an author and by doing so "decipher" a text and recover its ultimate meaning. In Barthes' view one should put an impersonal reader ("the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted") at the place that has traditionally been assigned to the author. Barthes (1977) 147–48. At the other side of the spectrum, we encounter critics such as Eric Donald Hirsch, the

attempt to evaluate Josephus' practice of self-characterization within a series of literary discourses relevant in such a social and cultural environment.

Chapter 2 will examine the connections between Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ* and the moral-rhetorical approaches to character in Graeco-Roman historiographical discourses. It will begin with exploring Josephus' historiography in its historical context. Having established Josephus' works in their relevant historical context, it will turn to analysing the rhetorical, moralizing, and didactic undertones of character in Graeco-Roman historiography and identify some general developments within the genre of historiography. We will see that while history had been an essentially didactic enterprise since Herodotus and Thucydides, it is only in the late Hellenistic and early Roman period that we can observe an increasing emphasis among Greek historians towards a more personal and explicitly moralizing didactic engagement with their subject. On the basis of this comparative background, we will discuss how the moral-didactic and rhetorical features of Josephus' characterization practices, with the *BJ* as focal point, are connected to Graeco-Roman perceptions of character and characterization.

The survey of Josephus' characterization practices and their moral-rhetorical background in Chapter 2 will pave the way for examining how Josephus shapes his own character as one of the most prominent moral exempla in the *BJ*. Chapter 3 will attempt to explain the moral-didactic currents underlying Josephus' autobiographical narrative in view of the expectations of an audience situated in Rome steeped with Graeco-Roman historiographical conventions. In addition to this, we will investigate Josephus' self-characterization in the backdrop of the aims and themes developed throughout the *BJ* and determine how they are connected with other parts of the work. To materialize this, we will study how Josephus 1) frames the extended narrative of his personal experiences in *BJ* 2–3 in relation to the immediate narrative context and the plot development of the work as a whole; 2) fashions himself as an exemplary general in Graeco-Roman fashion and

author of the *Validity in Interpretation* (1967). In this work, Hirsch advocates the necessity of the author for any interpretative attempt. Abandoning it implies "to reject the only compelling normative principle that could lend validity to an interpretation" (p. 5). Correspondingly, "[i]f a theorist wants to save the ideal of validity he has to save the author as well" (p. 6). Our main reason for giving the author a central place is aptly phrased by John Marincola: "Where moderns might speak of a narrator or implied narrator, the ancients spoke of the man himself." Marincola (1997) 132.

representative of the Judaeen people; 3) applies an internal policy in *BJ* 2.569–646 that enables him to conquer civil strife, thus creating the preconditions necessary for a military campaign against the Romans in *BJ* 3; 4) makes his surrender to the Romans the tragic climax of the Galilea narrative while simultaneously highlighting his exemplary strength of character in spite of his misfortunes (esp. 3.392–98, 432–42); and 5) after his capture portrays himself as a mediator on behalf of Titus with great rhetorical skills and specialized knowledge of Judaeen history (5.362–423). On the basis of this specific combination — determining the place of the autobiographical passages in their immediate narrative context; systematically tracing the virtues Josephus ascribes to himself; and examining how specific challenges articulate different aspects of Josephus' character —, we will argue that Josephus portrays himself in accordance with Graeco-Roman models of exemplary leadership, though specifically adapted to the themes and aims of the *BJ*. In view of this, we will explain Josephus' confident self-presentation mainly as an attempt to exploit his unique personal experiences as adversary of the emperor Vespasian and advance his public image and social status in Rome.

Chapters 4 and 5 will investigate the techniques and devices by means of which Josephus attempts to moderate the overwhelming emphasis on his military and political virtues examined in Chapter 3. It will examine the specific problems related to autobiographical narrative in (allegedly) impartial and objective historiographical discourse. Hence, chapters 4 and 5 will focus on the autobiographical discourses relevant and its explanatory potential in relation to Josephus' self-characterization. Chapter 4 scrutinizes Graeco-Roman conventions related to personal narrative (written and spoken). It will identify some important chronological developments related to Graeco-Roman autobiographical practice that are of potential importance for understanding Josephus' self-characterization in the historical context of Flavian Rome. Subsequently, the evidence will show that (like us) ancients were in theory rather reserved about talking or writing about oneself, especially because such practice could easily turn into self-praise. Yet they also proposed a variety of rhetorical techniques and strategies that could be employed to remove the sharpest edges of self-praise and render it more acceptable.

Chapter 5 will investigate the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by Josephus to maintain an appearance of objectivity throughout his self-characterization in the *BJ*. First, it will survey choices of person and perspective used by Greek and Roman authors writing about themselves and situate Josephus' practice in this comparative context. Second, it will offer a discussion of the rhetorical characterization techniques potentially inserted for the purpose of enhancing the appearance of objectivity of Josephus' self-characterization. Most of the chapter will focus on the rhetorical strategies underpinning Josephus' self-characterization. It will analyse the apologetic aspects of Josephus' autobiographical narrative. In relation to this, it will also examine Josephus' references to the divine and fortune, especially his dream at Jotapata (*BJ* 3.351–54).

The composite portrayal arising from this investigation is that Josephus fashioned his autobiographical narrative in accordance with the historiographical outlook of the *BJ*, and — writing to reach a local audience in Flavian Rome — his understanding of Graeco-Roman historiographical and autobiographical conventions. Josephus wrote the *BJ* in Flavian Rome from a position of strength and pursued his own intellectual agenda and interests. Claiming that he wrote about the greatest conflict of all time, it should occasion no surprise that Josephus characterizes himself as one of the greatest generals of that conflict. The use of such a bold claim not only fits the compositional context of the *BJ* but also echoes the Roman Imperial context in which Josephus produced his books. Josephus praises his own virtues, capitalizing on his unique experience of fighting Vespasian in Galilee. This to increase his social position in Rome and enhance his authority as historian of the Judaeo-Roman conflict. Simultaneously, he shows himself to be aware of the problems inherent in self-praise and seems to employ many rhetorical techniques and strategies to render it rhetorically acceptable to his local audience.

Chapter 2: The Moral and Rhetorical Background of Character in the *BJ*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the importance of Graeco-Roman perceptions of character and characterization for understanding Josephus' presentation of characters in the *BJ*. It focuses specifically on the moralizing and didactic use of character in ancient historiography.¹⁴⁶

The chapter begins by making some fundamental observations about the Flavian Roman context of Josephus and the *BJ*. Taking these as a point of departure, it will offer a survey of Greek and Roman views on the relation between rhetoric and character and apply these insights to the chronological development of Greek and Roman historiography. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the writing of history in Graeco-Roman antiquity was a pursuit deeply conditioned by rhetorical values.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, the analysis concentrates on the relationship between rhetoric and character in the Graeco-Roman world, and historiography in particular. One of the central observations is that while historians such as Thucydides and Herodotus made history an essentially didactic enterprise, it is only in late Hellenistic and early Roman writings that we find an increasing emphasis on didactic moralizing. Moreover, it appears that Greek historians show an increasing personal engagement with their subject under Roman influence.

¹⁴⁶ The following studies have been particularly helpful for our survey of character and characterization in Graeco-Roman contexts: Nünlist (2009) 238–56; Pitcher (2007) 102–17; De Temmerman (2014) 1–45; De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018a). Other key-studies are Pelling (1990); Ash, Mossman, and Titchener (2015). On characterization in ancient historiography see e.g. Bruns (1898); Walbank (1972); Gill (1983); Woodman (1998); Ash (1999); De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018b). As we have touched upon in the introduction, modern theorists have developed a vast narratological toolbox for analysing character and characterization — usually framed as direct and indirect characterization — and its application to ancient texts as well as to ancient rhetorical theory. For “proto-narratology” in ancient literature, see De Jong (2014) 3–6. On — literature and rhetoric in Graeco-Roman discourse see Kennedy (1999) 127–36. For an overview of literary theory and narratology in classical studies, see De Jong (2014) 6–11. Notable examples are Hägg (1971); De Jong and Sullivan (1994); Hornblower (1994); Rood (1998); Wheeler (2000); De Jong (2001; Grethlein (2006); Grethlein and Rengakos (2009); De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018b). See further the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* series by Brill initiated by Irene de Jong, see Nünlist, Bowie, and De Jong (2004); De Jong and Nünlist (2007); De Jong (2012); De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018a); and the forthcoming volume on speeches. In Josephus studies, such narratological approaches can be found in e.g. Landau (2005); Landau (2006); Van Henten (2016); Van Henten (2016); Van Henten and Huitink (2018).

¹⁴⁷ See e.g. Wiseman (1979); Woodman (1988); Laird (2009).

The next section is devoted to the moralizing tendencies of Josephus' historiographical programme. It argues that in the *BJ* Josephus combines the interests of fifth century Greek historians with the highly engaging personal style of historiography written under the empire. While the *BJ* is not as explicitly moralizing as the *AJ*, Josephus' characterization practices are steeped into contemporary moral values. Moreover, Josephus employs a variegated register of literary techniques to shape the characters and lend his narrative its persuasive force and coherence.

2.2 The Historical Context of Josephus' *BJ*

Since the specific aim of this study is to interpret Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* in a Flavian Roman historical context, we need to consider the issue of Josephus' social position in that context. What was his relationship with the Flavian emperors? To which other members of Roman society did he have access? How do these factors shed light on Josephus' purposes when producing the *BJ*? Scholars have begun to take up questions of audience and social situation much more explicitly in recent years.¹⁴⁸ Taking this current in scholarship seriously has significant ramifications for the present investigation.

One of the positions that scholars tend to question lately is the consensus view that the *BJ* is a work commissioned by the Flavians for propagandistic purposes. This position implies that Josephus' intellectual agenda was to a large extent determined by his Flavian patrons. This view has gained broad acceptance since the early 20th century, with Richard Laqueur, Wilhelm Weber, and Henry Thackeray among its most vigorous defenders.¹⁴⁹ A survey of scholarship shows that this hypothesis remains influential among specialists and non-specialists. For example, John Curran claims that Josephus' is a "second-rate propagandist," that the *BJ* is "the product of "his closeness to

¹⁴⁸ So e.g. Mason (2005a); Mason (2005b); Price (2005); Spilsbury (2005); McLaren (2005); Cotton and Eck (2005); Jones (2005); Barclay (2005); Brighton (2009) 41–47; Kaden (2011); Den Hollander (2014); Kaden (2016) 254–55.

¹⁴⁹ The classical statements are Laqueur (1920); Weber (1921); Thackeray (1929).

the Flavians,” and that his “depiction of Vespasian is adulatory and that of Titus little short of sycophantic.”¹⁵⁰

In more recent decades, Josephus’ stay in Rome and his relationship with the Flavian emperors has been investigated in a more sophisticated manner.¹⁵¹ As a result of this, the thesis that Josephus wrote Flavian propaganda has come under increasing scrutiny.¹⁵² While many scholars still hold that the *BJ* contains aspects of Flavian propaganda, they also recognize that these aspects do not necessarily explain Josephus’ deeper reasons for writing it. Thus, Helgo Lindner has argued that Josephus connects ideas about the inevitable Flavian victory to the will of God. This renders it impossible to perceive the *BJ* as *merely* Flavian propaganda.¹⁵³ Tessa Rajak has programmatically questioned the thesis that Josephus originally produced the *BJ* in Aramaic for Flavian propagandistic purposes addressed to the East of the Empire and the Parthians. For one thing, the message that the Romans had suppressed a revolt in a small province would hardly have impressed the Parthian rulers. She also claims it to be unlikely that the Flavians would have perceived the Parthians as a serious threat.¹⁵⁴ Rajak contends that while the work contains propagandistic aspects, the *BJ* can hardly be understood as propaganda as such.¹⁵⁵ Steve Mason goes much further. He questions

¹⁵⁰ Curran (2007) 77. So also e.g. Shaye Cohen (1979) 86: “If any historian was a Flavian lackey, it was Josephus.” Beard (2003) 545, 556; Uriel Rappaport (2007) 68 summarizes the state-of-the-art as “a wide consensus that Josephus served his patrons, the Flavian family and especially Titus, by depicting them usually in a favorable light.” Tessel Jonquière (2011) 225 claims that the Flavians were “his Roman patrons, who had commissioned him to write the history and who wanted him to convince the Jews with it to accept the Roman governance.” Michael Tuval (2013) 94 holds that “that Josephus was striving to present the Flavian emperors, especially Titus, in the best possible light.”

¹⁵¹ In addition to the scholarship outlined below, significant observations are made in e.g. Barclay (2000); Barclay (2005); Spilsbury (2005); Chapman (2009); Niehoff (2016); Niehoff (2018b).

¹⁵² Especially since the publication of Rajak’s monograph in 1983.

¹⁵³ Esp. Lindner (1972) 142–45.

¹⁵⁴ Rajak (2002) 174–84. So also e.g. Barclay (1996) 351–56, who acknowledges that the *BJ* contains is more complex than simple Flavian propaganda. On the Aramaic version of the *BJ*, see in more detail §3.2.

¹⁵⁵ Rajak (2002) 204–7 still recognizes *elements* of propaganda in the *BJ*, but also stresses the following (1985, cf. 181): “It has been taken for granted that the *Jewish War* is to be explained as a wholly Flavian history; but that too is perhaps little more than a prejudice, harboured in this case by the historian of modern times.” So also Attridge (1984) 200–3. This position has been reinvigorated in the thesis of Jonathan Davies (2017). The originality of Davies’ analysis consists of the depth of his focus on the problem of writing contemporary history vis-à-vis regime representation in Flavian Rome, his analysis of Josephus’ characterization of the Flavians, and his examination of the ways in which his representation of the Flavians serves Josephus’ agenda (rather than the other way around, as most scholars have done).

whether it contains any propagandistic elements at all. Instead of characterizing Vespasian and Titus in adulatory fashion, Mason argues, Josephus implicitly leaves room for criticism. Spelling such criticism out would obviously not have been without dangers, and so Josephus left it to his audience to draw such conclusions from more subtle hints. But his work is remarkably free of anything that looks like sycophancy.¹⁵⁶

If we do not understand the *BJ* as Flavian propaganda, how can we explain it in relation to Josephus' place in Rome? An underlying issue here concerns the relationships with members of the Flavian house.¹⁵⁷ As William Den Hollander argues within the confines of his broader project (cf. §1.3), for example, Josephus declares only that Vespasian and Titus confirmed *BJ*'s accuracy as witnesses when he presented the books to them.¹⁵⁸ There is little evidence of ongoing social and political contact between Josephus and the Flavians (*BJ* 3.399–402 is most explicit). Passages that suggest contact reflect Josephus' typical concern with issues of accuracy, truth, and impartiality that can also be observed elsewhere in his corpus (e.g. *BJ* 1.1–2; 7.454–55; *AJ* 20.258, 261; *CA* 1.50–51). That Vespasian and Titus granted their testimony to Josephus (*Vita* 359–61; *CA* 1.50–1) does not imply that they cared very much about the details of Josephus' work. Other Greeks and Romans make similar claims of imperial endorsement, not least in the Flavian period (e.g. Pliny the Elder, *NH* praef. 6, 8; Statius, *Silv.* 4 ep.28–29).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Mason has questioned this hypothesis programmatically on multiple occasions, see e.g. Mason (2005a); Mason (2005b); Mason (2016a) 121–30; Mason 2018. But see already his earlier work, e.g. Mason (1991) 59; Mason (2000) 64–99. The question of audience is intrinsically related to the purposes of the *BJ*. Presently, the more common view is that Josephus produced the *BJ* as political apology addressing multiple audiences, aiming at absolving the Judaeen nation from war guilt and shifting the blame to the Judaeen revolutionary movement. See e.g. Luther (1910) 15; Farmer (1956) 14; Rhoads (1976) 12, 56; Rajak (2002) 78–83; Goodman (1987) 20–21, 166–68; Bilde (1988) 77–78; S. Schwartz (1990) 15; Mason (1991) 64–67; Price (1992) 32–33, 187; McLaren (1998) 55–56; Mader (2000) 10–17; Brighton (2009) 29–33, 80–81, 123, 137; Klawans (2013) 188; Tuval (2013) 97–98. See more elaborately §3.2.

¹⁵⁷ These questions drive William den Hollander's recent monograph *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome* = Den Hollander (2014).

¹⁵⁸ So e.g. Den Hollander (2014) 134–37. Feldman (1984b) 784, suggests that Vespasian and Titus would not have taken the time to properly read the *BJ*.

¹⁵⁹ For the former, see Rajak (2002) 201. For the latter, see the detailed analysis of Flavian poetry in Nauta (2002) 374ff. Nauta's book includes 3 chapters on the issue of imperial patronage and dedication (pp. 327–440).

Nor should one put much weight on Josephus' declaration about Titus' insistence that knowledge about the Judaeen-Roman war should be made public via Josephus' work alone (*Vita* 363). The statement occurs in an apologetic digression against Justus of Tiberias (336–67). Josephus' main concern is (again) to confirm the accuracy of his books about the Judaeen-Roman conflict. He does not say that the Flavians were his literary patrons or that they commissioned his literary projects.¹⁶⁰ The prologue of the *BJ* suggests the contrary: Josephus aims to correct popular but erroneous opinions about the conflict based on pro-Roman and anti-Judaeen histories. His claims about why he wrote the *BJ* in the first place are not related to Flavians and seem to serve his own intellectual interests and agenda (*BJ* 1.1–3, 6–8; cf. 1.13–16; *AJ* 1.4).¹⁶¹

An important consequence is that although Josephus clearly had contacts with the Flavians, there was considerable social distance between them. Josephus notes that he had access to Vespasian's *Commentarii* (*Vita* 358). He also received some benefactions from the Flavians (*Vita* 423, 426, 428–29), though not those of the grandest sort. These benefactions would clearly have singled Josephus out from the common people, which might be one of the reasons why he mentions them.¹⁶² He would evidently have been careful enough to make sure that what he wrote could not be perceived as blunt criticism, and wise enough to bestow some *gloria* on the emperors.¹⁶³ The Flavians will certainly have been familiar with Josephus and his work, but it is unlikely that they would have cared about Josephus' opinion, as he did not belong to the kind of circles that might present a threat to them. Although subtle ways of exerting influence would have been a realistic possibility, research on the historiographical outlook of the *BJ* decisively shows that the contents and themes of the *BJ* are deeply Judaeen and thus not suitable for Flavian propagandistic purposes (cf. §3.2). It is therefore unlikely that the Flavians exerted any direct influence on Josephus' literary agenda.

Returning to Den Hollander, he considers it plausible that Josephus already had a significant footing in Rome before he settled there in AD 71. This can be traced to his mission to Rome in AD 64 (*Vita* 13–16; cf. *BJ* 2.270). That stay will have aided Josephus in building a social network at the

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Den Hollander (2014) 183–86.

¹⁶¹ Den Hollander (2014) 306–8. Cf. Mason (1991) 61–75.

¹⁶² Den Hollander (2014) 308–9. Pace Cotton and Eck (2005) 52; Price (2005) 118.

¹⁶³ Cf. Kraus (2005).

imperial court and perhaps have gained him contacts with the local Judaeen community.¹⁶⁴ When arriving in Rome in 71, his literary production may have offered him an entry into other privileged social circles. The prologue of the *BJ* witnesses a lively exchange between Josephus and his competitors (*BJ* 1.1–16).¹⁶⁵ Elsewhere Josephus emphasizes the importance of his later literary patron Epaphroditus, that man's friends (*AJ* 1.8–9; 20.268; *Vita* 430), and others (*CA* 1.50). Josephus' claims show that he maintained an excellent relationship with Herodians such as Agrippa II (esp. *Vita* 364–66; *CA* 1.51) and Julius Archelaus (*CA* 1.51). These notable Judaeans will have been among those Josephus aimed to address with the *BJ*.¹⁶⁶

The reception of Josephus' person and work indicates that he was a presence prominent enough to be remembered. Suetonius and Cassius Dio remember Josephus as a noble captive who predicted Vespasian's rule (Suetonius *Vesp.* 5.6; Dio *Hist. Rom.* 44.17–18; see also Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 3.9.2). There is reason to assume Tacitus used Josephus' work as a source for his *Histories*.¹⁶⁷ Thus, although Josephus was not among the leading scholars in Rome, he was a recognizable intellectual and public figure.¹⁶⁸ He may have attracted envy by individuals such as Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 336–67) or Jonathan of Cyrene (*BJ* 7.437–53; *Vita* 425–26). Yet he wrote from a position of relative strength.¹⁶⁹ His position was stable enough to ensure protection and his social position and network were much better than that of most in the empire, even if Josephus did not belong to the political elite of the city.¹⁷⁰

If these suggestions are accepted, this raises important questions about the issue of Josephus' purposes and aims when writing so extensively about himself in the *BJ*. If Josephus wrote his

¹⁶⁴ Den Hollander (2014) 306.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Den Hollander (2014) 292–93, in support of Mason (2005b) 88–89. Additionally, however, this exchange might also have served to inflate the importance and urgency of Josephus' task in the *BJ*.

¹⁶⁶ See more elaborately Den Hollander (2014) 293–304, who argues that there is strong evidence for members of the Judaeen community in Rome “steeped in Greek wisdom” (p. 296–99) in support of Mason (2005b) 99. He adds, however, that most of Josephus' Judaeen acquaintances “were likely illiterate and may have spoken primarily their native tongue” (p. 303).

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Mason (2016a) 49–50; Mason (2016d) 90.

¹⁶⁸ Schwartz claims that Josephus was more a public figure than an intellectual. S. Schwartz (1990) 210.

¹⁶⁹ As is claimed in relation to Josephus' *Vita* in Mason (2001) xlix, in response to the (still) commonly accepted hypothesis that Josephus wrote the *Vita* as personal apology. See for further discussion below.

¹⁷⁰ Den Hollander (2014) 309–10.

autobiographical narrative from a position of strength, one might ask to what extent parts of his narrative must be understood as self-justification in response to his (esp. Judaeans) critics, as some scholars have suggested.¹⁷¹

2.3 Writing History in Josephus' Rome

As outlined in Chapter 1, the point of departure for this investigation is that Josephus probably wrote in the first instance for a local audience in and around Flavian Rome familiar with “Greek wisdom.” This premise requires further qualification and clarification. Which modes of history would have been familiar to Josephus and have formed his opinion about the norms and values shared by his literary circles?

The Graeco-Roman historiographical background of Josephus' histories is a subject that has received ample attention among scholars since the 1980s. In the introductory chapter I have discussed the contributions of Louis Feldman (character in the *AJ* and its Hellenistic backgrounds) and Steve Mason (study of Josephus' narratives as coherent wholes; Roman context; character in the *AJ* and the *Vita*). Since Feldman recognized the need of extended study of Josephus' relationship to Greek and Roman historians in 1984, numerous contributions to and major advancements have

¹⁷¹ The question of apology is elaborately discussed in Chapter 5. As aptly remarked in S. Schwartz (1990) 13 n. 41: “Josephus' description, in *BJ*, of his administration in Galilee seems motivated by vanity, which was, in turn, perhaps inspired by the security of his position; it is not a self-defense against accusations or a response to gossip.” Ironically, Schwartz refers to Cohen (1979) 91–97 to back his claim up, although Cohen ultimately explains Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* as ultimately written to serve apologetic motives. So more elaborately in relation to the *Vita* in Mason (2001) xlvii: “At the same time, we may now dispense with some old and unwarranted assumptions: that Josephus' profession of peaceful sentiments and description of military actions are contradictory; that he would only have troubled to write about his life in self-defense; that his occasional criticism of others means that he wrote in order to respond to them; that *Life*'s focus on his only period of prominent public life (in Galilee) must have been forced on him by a critique of just that time; that *Life*'s changes vis-à-vis the *War* must be telling concessions to his critics—since otherwise he would not have contradicted himself; that the *Life* is a patchwork made of pieces and layers from different periods of Josephus' career; and indeed that its tone is apologetic.”

been made in the field.¹⁷² Each of the contributions significantly furthers our understanding of the Graeco-Roman backgrounds of Josephus' historiography.¹⁷³

Nevertheless, the question of Josephus' knowledge of classical culture remains a matter of debate. Most recently, Erkki Koskenniemi has investigated Josephus' (and Philo's) practice of quoting, mentioning, and referring to Greek writers and philosophers.¹⁷⁴ He asks what this practice shows about Josephus' Greek education and contacts with classical culture. Koskenniemi perceives Philo as deeply educated in classical Greek culture. Yet he also argues that Josephus' failure to quote historians in the *BJ* is evidence for his *ignorance* of them. He sees all potential influence of Greek historiography as arising from his use of Nicolaus of Damascus, who mentions his sources only rarely. For Koskenniemi, this means that "Josephus himself did not even know which Greek historians he relied on."¹⁷⁵ While doing so, however, he ignores research that finds profound echoes of Thucydides, Plato, Polybius, and many other authors in parts of the *BJ* where Josephus could not

¹⁷² Feldman (1984) 889.

¹⁷³ Villalba i Varneda (1986) — originally published in 1981 in Catalan — was among the first to systematically examine Josephus' relationship with Greek historiography. He focused on Josephus' conception of historiography and the *ars narrandi* by means of which he arranges his material. His work includes a section on character (pp 69–89), which takes Abraham and Herod as prime examples. Gregory Sterling (1992) examines Josephus' *AJ* as an example of what he calls apologetic history. He argues that this genre found its origins in fifth century BC Greece — in the ethnography of Hecateus and the ethnographic history of Herodotus — and developed in different phases and places, with Judaeans tradition as most extensive specimen. Sterling sees the apologetic character of Josephus' rewriting of the Hebrew Bible (and Luke-Acts) in Hellenistic form — especially by using Dionysius of Halicarnassus as a model — as the pinnacle of this tradition. Chapman (1998) investigates Josephus' use of Graeco-Roman literary devices related to spectacle and theatre in *BJ*. She argues that he uses spectacle language — in a manner that resembles Polybius' practice — along with tragic themes to communicate his message effectively to an audience of Romans, Greeks, and Hellenised Judaeans. Gottfried Mader (2000) aims to provide "a clearer picture of the historian who stands intellectually between Jerusalem and Rome" (p. ix). Mader argues that Josephus uses classical themes and conventions to further his political agenda. He argues in particular for Josephus' systematic appropriation of thematic elements from Thucydides. Shahrar (2004) examines the classical background of Josephus' geographical conceptions and use of geographical descriptions. He argues that Josephus follows Polybius and Strabo in his approach to geography, over against the methods usually exemplified in early Latin historiography (e.g. Livy and Tacitus, see pp. 3–4). Tamar Landau (2006) investigates Josephus' use of rhetoric in his two Herod narratives. She advocates that Josephus' borrowed from an available set of Graeco-Roman historiographical conventions but in a fashion that suited his aims. Martin Friis (2018) offers a historiographical investigation of Josephus' self-presentation as a non-contemporary historian in the first half of the *AJ*, and finds that Josephus' practice is comparable to that of many other Graeco-Roman historians.

¹⁷⁴ Koskenniemi (2019).

¹⁷⁵ Koskenniemi (2019) 247.

have relied on Nicolaus. Additionally, one might raise against Koskenniemi's argument that Josephus' infrequent citations of named sources, especially in the *BJ*, can be explained as a stylistic choice. Some historians, such as Herodotus or Polybius, regularly mention their sources. Others, such as Thucydides or Xenophon (or Nicolaus of Damascus, as Koskenniemi points out), rarely do.¹⁷⁶

Thus, determining Josephus' knowledge and use of classical literature depends on one's question and methods. By shedding light on the Graeco-Roman background of Josephus' characterization, the next sections will offer some further arguments that corroborate the depth of his learning of Graeco-Roman historiographical and rhetorical conventions. The main aim of this survey of the Graeco-Roman background of Josephus' historiography is to provide the necessary background for the remainder of the present study. The originality of the following consists of its focus on character and its moral-rhetorical outlook in Graeco-Roman historiographical discourse and its relevance for understanding Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ*.

2.3.1 Rhetoric and Character in Graeco-Roman Historiography

Character (Greek: ἦθος; Latin: *mos*) occupies a central place in Greek and Roman cultures. Expressions of and reflections on character are encountered frequently and in many different forms. Notably, character formation was a fundamental part of the Greek and Roman educational systems. Special weight was given to rhetorical training in this regard.¹⁷⁷ It is helpful to provide a survey of the relationship between character formation and rhetoric in this educational context.

Already in the secondary stage of their schooling, students were invited to read major authors such as Homer and Herodotus in Greek or Virgil and Ovid in Latin to familiarize themselves

¹⁷⁶ On the function of Thucydides' references to anonymous sources ("it is said"), see Gray (2011c). She suggests a variety of ways in which the narrative functions of these references can be understood, most conspicuously to confirm his own point of view.

¹⁷⁷ On the teaching of rhetoric, see especially Kennedy (2003). For education in ancient Greece and Rome, standard treatments are Marrou (1956); Bonner (1977); Cribiore (2005). See for brief overviews Corbeill (2007b); Pernot (2017). Corbeill focuses on rhetorical formation in the Late Republic and early Empire and observes that rhetorical education changed from a means for improving one's social and political position to a didactic enterprise which focused on rehearsing existing imperial values. Exercises were designed to show how hierarchies were unchangeable and stable. Pernot focuses on aspects of rhetorical formation in relation to the so-called Second Sophistic.

with the persuasive potential of their language and literary artistry. In the later stages of their training, when studying with a rhetor, students were expected to practise themselves in rhetorical composition by completing a variety of exercises, consisting of the production of orations, narratives, descriptions of fictive and historical events, or law proposals. This education followed a progressive principle that allowed students to move from easier descriptive exercises to more difficult and argumentative efforts, although all were directed towards teaching the five foundational components of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memorization, and delivery.¹⁷⁸

Rhetorical education was not only instruction but also cultural formation. It was believed to prepare the student for all aspects of public life. As such, rhetorical training entailed much more than promoting the knowledge of language, literature, and history. Through memorization of literature, students were familiarized with cultural values.¹⁷⁹ Especially in the Roman system, the programme of rhetorical exercises was designed to foster moral *exempla* for the young, which in turn were aimed towards the replication of virtues exhibited by previous generations.¹⁸⁰ Thus, rhetorical training cherished traditional moral values and taught the young what kind of a man one should be in society. After completing this training, one was prepared to pursue a political, administrative, or literary career.¹⁸¹

The crux for understanding ancient perceptions about success in oratory and in life can be illuminated by looking at perceptions of character. Aristotle ponders the idea that an orator's moral and intellectual outlook are among the most important ingredients for producing a credible speech (*Rhet.* 1.2.3–6, 2.1.16).¹⁸² Likewise, Seneca writes that a man's speech is mirrored by his life (*Ep.* 114.2). Cicero notes that a speaker's "moral codes, customs, conduct, and course of life" (*mores et instituta*

¹⁷⁸ Pernot (2017) 205–6.

¹⁷⁹ With regard to Roman rhetorical culture, Corbeill in particular argues that rhetorical education was steeped in the promotion of traditional Roman cultural practices. See Corbeill (2007a). About Roman culture as promoting traditional cultural values and practices more generally, see e.g. Connolly (2010).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Corbeill (2007a).

¹⁸¹ This paraphrases Pernot (2017) 206. It is unknown whether Josephus went through a comparable system. It has been suggested that Josephus' knowledge of Greek literature was largely self-taught. Cf. Rajak (2002) 11–64. Koskeniemi (2019) rejects the possibility that Josephus had gone through any systematic form of Greek education in his youth (see e.g. p. 254, 277–91).

¹⁸² On the place of character within Aristotle's rhetoric, including further references, see Robinson (2006). For ἦθος in Aristotle's ethics see e.g. *Eth. nic.* II.1, 1103a14–b25; VI.2, 1139a31–34. See further Irwin (1999) xvii–xix.

et facta et vitam eorum) allow him to secure the favour of the audience (*De orat.* 2.182–83).¹⁸³ Quintilian adds that a good orator is a good speaker, but above all a good man (*Inst.* 12.1.1). In short, it was believed that the character of a speaker was arguably his most important means of persuasion.

The importance of character also becomes evident in Graeco-Roman historiography, a genre steeped in rhetorical values. As John Marincola aptly notes, in classical historiography the character most on display in any history is that of the historian himself.¹⁸⁴ A historian could and would be judged on the basis of his work. This is how Dionysius of Halicarnassus is able to assess the character of historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, and Theopompus (*Pomp.* 3–6) simply by reading their work.¹⁸⁵ Likewise, Dionysius claims that a historian's work becomes “a memorial of his own mind” (μνημεῖα τῆς ἑαυτῶν ψυχῆς) in his *Roman Antiquities* (1.1.2). Accordingly, the creation of an authoritative self-portrayal as a narrator will have been a priority to any historian.¹⁸⁶

A significant reason why a historian needs an immaculate character pertains to his ability to be an adept judge of the characters he describes in his narrative. Cicero expresses this relationship between the moral task of the historian and the importance of rhetoric most clearly.¹⁸⁷ He famously argues that the composition of history is a task tailor-made for the orator (*De orat.* 2.35–36, 51–64). Using the voice of Marcus Antonius, he links oratory and history in terms of function and style: the orator's task is to exhort men to bravery and turn them from vice, to criticize the wicked and to praise the good (2.35). The functions of history — which is to “bear witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence, and brings tidings of ancient days” (2.36: *Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*) — are remarkably similar.¹⁸⁸ In Cicero's view, early Roman writers could not fulfil the didactic potential of history because their narratives lacked stylistic ornamentation (2.51–

¹⁸³ Trans. Sutton and Rackham, LCL.

¹⁸⁴ Marincola (1997) 131–32. I return to this statement in the introduction of Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁵ Marincola (1997) 132.

¹⁸⁶ On this, see Marincola (1997) 128–74.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Cape Jr. (1997) 178.

¹⁸⁸ Trans. Sutton and Rackham, LCL.

53).¹⁸⁹ In other words, to obtain its full didactic potential, historical narrative should be adorned with choices of plot and diction (2.62–64). This has impact on how characters are described within such a narrative. A historian is required to explain particulars about the lives of individuals and explain why they became famous and dignified, not merely to describe what the audience already knows (2.63). For Cicero, historical narrative reaches its full potential only when adorned with oratory.¹⁹⁰

On a slightly different note, Dionysius highlights how the delineation of characters is of fundamental importance for the historian's pursuit. He prefers Herodotus' delineation of character to Thucydides' practice (*Pomp.* 3.18) and admires Xenophon for choosing to display characters adorned with all praiseworthy virtues: piety, justice, determination, and kindness (4.2). Simultaneously, he criticizes Xenophon's style of characterization as wanting in vividness, which makes him ultimately less successful in his *delineation of characters* (πρόσωπον) than some other historians (4.4). Thus, the task of the historian is not simply to inform his audience about the past. The historian needs to supply it with concrete examples of virtue that deserve imitation in a style befitting this purpose.¹⁹¹

2.3.2 Moral Didacticism and Roman Imperial Historiography

With these considerations in mind, I will consider various developments in Greek and Roman historiography that might have had a significant impact on Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ*. Obviously, Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch wrote in social settings very different from those of Herodotus or Thucydides. It is important to grasp these differences. This makes it possible to explain Josephus' practice specifically in view of the historiographical conventions of his time.

¹⁸⁹ Cape Jr. (1997) 180.

¹⁹⁰ On the rhetorical aspects of historiography, see Woodman (1988). Woodman holds that historiography is a branch of rhetoric (pp. 99–101). On the formal distinction between the two genres see Brunt (1979). See also the helpful discussions in Fleck (1993) 15–37; Cape Jr. (1997); Marincola (1997) 158–74; Laird (2009).

¹⁹¹ As has been shown by Reinhart Koselleck, such views of the past ceased to exist around AD 1800. Koselleck (1979) 38–66. See also the contributions on Greek and Roman uses of the distant past in Ker and Pieper (2014).

To begin with the historiography of fifth-century Athens, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus display strongly didactic currents. However, whereas Roman historians would focus on the *mos maiorum* and the social norms to which contemporary leaders should adhere, Thucydides and Herodotus highlight the importance of military and political events.¹⁹² As Jonathan Grethlein argues, this focus on the structure of events in Greek historiography can be perceived as a response to the contingency existing in Greek genres such as poetry, tragedy, and epic.¹⁹³ Thucydides' famous statement about the nature of his investigation in the proem exemplifies this development (1.22.4):

καὶ ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες αὐτῶν ἀτερπέστερον φανεῖται· ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται
τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον
τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούντως ἔξει. κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ
μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρήμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται.

And it may well be that the absence of the legendary will seem less pleasing to listen to; but whoever shall desire to see clearly both the events which have happened and those still to happen at some time again, in accordance with what belongs to mankind, in the same or a similar way—for these to judge it profitable will be enough for me. And, indeed, it has been composed, not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time (trans. Smith LCL, with adaptations).

Thucydides rejects any expectation that historical narratives should include legendary tales for amusement. The study of the past is serious business and should be designed entirely to be of utility to the reader. In this respect, Thucydides' work has a clearly didactic approach. He stresses that he

¹⁹² Recently Alan Gowing has claimed that prior to Plutarch the Roman *exempla* tradition is distinctive from its Greek counterpart in that it has a specific political purpose. Gowing (2009) 333–36. On the importance of exemplarity in Roman culture and historiography, see e.g. Litchfield (1914); Earl (1967); Mayer (1991); Hölteskamp (1996); Mellor (1999) 10–11; Walter (2004), 51–62; Bücher (2006); Mehl (2014) 264.

¹⁹³ See e.g. Grethlein (2010), 149–290; Grethlein (2011); Grethlein (2014) 245.

will be looking at past events and that his investigation has explanatory value for contemporary and future events.

Herodotus had written his inquiry so that “the great and admirable deeds produced by Greeks and foreigners” were not lost from memory (*Hist.* 1.1),¹⁹⁴ which implies an interest in the deeds of great men. Xenophon, following Thucydides, also displays a strong inclination towards more explicit and moralizing didacticism.¹⁹⁵ This is exemplified by Xenophon’s contemplations in the *Cyropaedia*, where he develops a framework of ideal military and political leadership.¹⁹⁶ Xenophon extends his interest in this subject in his historical writings. For example, in the *Anabasis* Xenophon elaborately describes the virtues and vices of Cyrus the Younger at the end of Book 1 and the Greek generals at the end of Book 2. What is more, he makes himself the most important representative of virtuous leadership in this work.¹⁹⁷

The Hellenistic material before Polybius is fragmentary. We therefore need to refrain from drawing firm conclusions about conventions from this period. Nonetheless, scholars usually see the work of Polybius as marking a decisive shift in Greek historiography under the influence of Rome.¹⁹⁸ Polybius is the first extant Greek historian to *explicitly* elaborate the idea that it is the task of the historian to provide the audience with teaching for the exercise of public life — rather than general utility, such as found in Thucydides, or the elaborate descriptions of political virtues and vices by Xenophon — and to judge the characters staged in his narrative along such lines, although he presents this practice as common knowledge.

¹⁹⁴ Trans. Godley LCL, with adaptations.

¹⁹⁵ On moral instruction in Xenophon’s historiography see esp. Gray (1989); Pownall (2004). On character judgments in Xenophon’s corpus see Gray (2011) 70–118.

¹⁹⁶ Charles Fornara places this feature of Xenophon’s work in the larger context of the fourth century BC. Fornara (1983) 107–8. See also the discussion on paradigmatic history in Dillery (1995) 127–30.

¹⁹⁷ See Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.9; 2.6. On the obituary as a technique of characterization see most recently Rood (2018) 180–86. See Flower (2012) 47–51. On Xenophon’s self-characterization in the *Anabasis* see Chapter 5 and 6 in Flower (2012). On Xenophon as moralizing historian, see also e.g. Meister (1990) 74. On Xenophon’s *Hellenica* as containing moral instruction see Gray (1989); Pownall (2004); Hau (2016) 216–44.

¹⁹⁸ Perhaps because of the fragmentary nature of evidence before Polybius? Lisa Hau (2016) attempts to trace such moralizing didacticism from Polybius and Diodorus to Hellenistic and then back to fifth century historiography.

On the one hand, we clearly observe continuation with the focus on political events as encountered in Thucydides: for Polybius, the only valuable kind of history is truly pragmatic history (*Hist.* 1.2.8: ὁ τῆς πραγματικῆς ἱστορίας τρόπος).¹⁹⁹ He claims that “the most reliable education and training for the exercise of public life is the instruction from history” (1.1.2: ἀληθινωτάτην μὲν εἶναι παιδείαν καὶ γυμνασίαν πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας μάθησιν).²⁰⁰ It is indeed “the most distinct and only teacher” (ἐναργεστάτην δὲ καὶ μόνην διδάσκαλον) to learn about how to bear the reversals of fortune as a man (cf. 9.1–2; 12.25e).

On the other hand, when it comes to the description of moral character Polybius also shows a strong interest in its didactic potential. When he discusses Philopoemen in Book 10, Polybius emphasizes that the depiction of virtuous characters like Philopoemen is valuable because of its didactic potential. Those who encounter such examples are invited to imitate and emulate them (10.21.2–4). Elsewhere Polybius presents himself as an instructor. He explains that he expands about figures like Philopoemen, Hannibal, and Scipio Africanus “to incite their successors to achieve noble deeds” (23.14.12: τῆς τῶν ἐπιγινομένων παρορμήσεως πρὸς τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἔργων).²⁰¹ Scholars usually explain this emphasis on moral exemplarity of Polybius’ *Histories* as the result of Roman cultural influence.²⁰² Polybius was a Greek, but he lived in Rome for a considerable period and developed intimate friendship with the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus. Among his audience were educated Romans with a deep knowledge of their own history (31.22.8–11).²⁰³ Polybius recognizes that Roman society is entirely directed towards the promotion of traditional customs. He notes how funerary practices are shaped in such a way that the young are inspired to undergo every kind of difficulty for the Republic and acquire greatness like the great men of the past (6.54.3). Considering this, it may

¹⁹⁹ On which see further McGing (2010) 66–70.

²⁰⁰ Translations of Polybius are based on the translation of Paton, rev. Walbank and Habicht, LCL.

²⁰¹ See also *Hist.* 30.9.20: “If I am asked why I have dealt at such length with the case of Polyaratus and Deinon, it was not in order to gloat over their misfortunes — that would be wholly inappropriate — but that by exhibiting clearly their lack of wisdom, I might make those who happen to find themselves in a similar situation better prepared to act advisedly and wisely.”

²⁰² So e.g. Fornara (1983) esp. p. 114. Hau (2016) traces the moral-didactic focus of Greek historiography back to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, although she recognizes that their moralizing is much more subtle and less intense than that of Polybius and Diodorus of Sicily.

²⁰³ McGing (2010) 67.

be that Polybius' categorical focus on moralizing exemplary history was inspired by what he saw in Rome.²⁰⁴

This moralizing didacticism is among the defining features of Roman culture. The focus on great individuals combined with the competitive nature of Roman Republican society resulted in a strong emphasis on the didactic and moralizing functions of history.²⁰⁵ What underpins this view is that past and present are intrinsically connected. This is exemplified by Cicero's words that "history is a teacher for life" (*historia magistra vitae*; *De orat.* 2.36).²⁰⁶ Livy's monumental *History of Rome* is among the main exponents of this tradition of exemplary history.²⁰⁷ His preface explains his programmatic use of examples of virtue and vice and their utility for his readers. The subject of his history — "to commemorate the deeds of the foremost people of the world" (*Praef.* 3) — gives Livy himself not a little pleasure. His history, then, is a history of the deeds of great *men*. However, the more important part is that the audience (addressed by Livy in the second person plural) can learn from these examples (*Praef.* 10):

Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu, foedum exitu, quod vites.

What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of example set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result (trans. Foster LCL).

²⁰⁴ Following Fornara (1983) 114–15.

²⁰⁵ For moralizing didacticism as characteristic for Roman historiography see e.g. Leeman (1963), 67: "this idea formed the *raison d'être* of historiography and determined its patterns." See also Mellor (1999) 10–11, 44, 51; Mehl (2014) 263–64. This in turn culminated in the almost exclusive focus on the *exemplum* of the Roman *princeps* during the Imperial period. On which see Kraus (2005).

²⁰⁶ On Cicero's own use of exempla in his letters see esp. Oppermann (2000). See for Cicero's use of past *events* to predict the future, especially with regard to the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, pp. 170–213.

²⁰⁷ See e.g. Mehl (2014) 272 n.20.

For Livy, the utility of history relates to its potential to furnish moral lessons to the reader. This perception of history features prominently throughout his work. The emphasis is clearly different from what we encountered in Herodotus and Thucydides, and to a lesser extent from Polybius.²⁰⁸

That Greek historiography written under the Roman era witnessed a subtle shift in emphasis under Roman cultural influence is supported by various other examples.²⁰⁹ In the preface of his work, Diodorus of Sicily emphasizes that education through examples of behaviour (παραδείγματα) is one of his main goals (*Lib.* 37.4).²¹⁰ Likewise, Dionysius of Halicarnassus makes history's ability to provide inspiring models its most important function (e.g. *Rom. Ant.* 1.5.3; 1.6.40). This idea also features prominently in the corpus of Josephus' contemporary Plutarch.²¹¹ His *Parallel Lives* showcase techniques and interests very similar to those of contemporary historiography, for example, in the prologue of the *Alexander* (1.2):

οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἥθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων.

Because we are writing not histories, but lives: there is not always a clear revelation of virtue and vice in the most outstanding deeds; sometimes some small matter, sentence, or a joke provides a better impression of character than battles with countless deaths, the greatest battle lines, or the sieges of cities (trans. based on Perrin LCL).²¹²

²⁰⁸ On the nature of Livy's exemplary history see especially Chaplin (2000). Other Roman examples of the moralizing approach are e.g. Sallust, *Jug.* 4.7; Julius Caesar, *Gal.* 5.44; *Civ.* 3.53, 91, 99; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.* 2.3.4; and Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.3.1; *Ann.* 3.65.1; 14.64.3.

²⁰⁹ See e.g. Fornara (1983) 115–16.

²¹⁰ See for other a collection of such programmatic passages Sacks (1990) 25 n.3 and 30 n. 24.

²¹¹ For a systematic discussion of the programmatic statements see Duff (1999) 13–51. See also Valgiglio (1992) 3963–4051. Nikolaides (104) provides a helpful overview of issues pertaining to characterization and the moral purpose of the *Lives*. The bibliography on moralizing and pedagogical aspects of Plutarch's in light of the *exempla* tradition is vast. See e.g. Jones (1971) 103–9; Wardman (1974) 18–26; (1983); Swain (1996) 138; Duff (1999) 52–71; Pérez Jiménez (2002) 105–14; Brenck (2008).

²¹² This translation is based on Perrin, LCL.

Plutarch's statement has frequently been interpreted as programmatically distinguishing history proper from biography.²¹³ However, as Timothy Duff argues, Plutarch makes no generic distinction but uses the contrast to explain the striking absence of great battles and sieges in a biographical pair focusing on the greatest Greek and Roman generals: Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar.²¹⁴ Plutarch confidently places his biographical programme within the confines of history in other *Lives* (e.g. *Thes.* 1.1–3; *Lyc.* 1.3; *Galb.* 2.3; *Aem.* 1.1, 2, 5; cf. *Them.* 32.2).²¹⁵ For this reason, it is problematic to use *Alex.* 1.2 as a text that represents Plutarch's approach in other biographies, which many scholars have done. Plutarch's argument is occasional. More important for my present purpose is the observation that Plutarch's aim is to provide impressions of virtue and vice in the prologue of the *Alexander*. This biographical pair is entirely directed towards moral education.²¹⁶ Examples such as these strengthen that the cultural encounter with Rome sparked new questions and debates on which Greek historians had to reflect in their works.²¹⁷

Also illustrative are the writings of Philo of Alexandria, which appear to bear witness to a parallel development in Graeco-Judaean literature. Maren Niehoff argues that Philo's visit to Rome as the head of a Judaean embassy had a major impact on his intellectual development, suggesting that Philo may have stayed in Rome for at least three years. In contrast to the works that can be

²¹³ Recently, Chrysanthou (2017) has argued that the prologue of the *Alexander-Caesar* serves to bolster and advertise his unique and individual literary genre.

²¹⁴ Duff (1999) 52–53 (focusing on the *Lives*).

²¹⁵ On which see Duff (1999) 14–22.

²¹⁶ The didactic use of history by means of *exempla* features prominently in Plutarch's other major project, the *Moralia*. This becomes manifest from their titles alone (e.g. *On Virtue and Vice*; *Is Virtue Teachable?*; *On How a Man Becomes Aware of His Progress in Virtue*; etc...). In *On Tranquillity of Mind* Plutarch urges his reader to imitate (μιμέομαι) models from the past who bore changes of fortune with composure, and to look for examples of misfortune fitting one's own situation (467D–E). On this see Duff (1999) 50. Plutarch has written various historical essays (notably *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*; *On the Fortune of the Romans*) in which he explores the successes of Greeks and Romans along the lines of the opposite pair virtue and fortune and a particular emphasis on comparing Greek and Roman culture.

²¹⁷ For more elaborate treatments of ἥθος and its moral connotation in Greek and Latin literature, see Gill (1983) 473–78; Gill (1996) 1–18; Gill (2006) 338–42. Gill explicitly distinguishes “character” from “personality.” For a critique of Gill's views, see esp. Sorabji (2006) 17–31. See also e.g. Halliwell (1990) 50.

dated with relative certainty to his early Alexandrian career,²¹⁸ most of Philo's post-Roman works deal with historical subjects and contain explicitly moralizing tendencies. His treatises *On the Embassy to Gaius* and *Against Flaccus* demonstrate this most clearly. Both works belong to the post-Roman stages of Philo's career. In the former, Philo describes his travels to Rome and the meetings of his compatriots with Emperor Gaius. The latter deals with the violence against Judaeans in Alexandria during the pogrom of AD 38. Because they reflect similar interests and compositional principles, Niehoff also argues that Philo's biographical works should be dated to Philo's later career. She adds that these texts (*On the Life of Moses*, *On the Life of Joseph*, *On the Life of Abraham*) closely follow the conventions of life writing encountered in contemporary Greek and Roman historiography and biography.²¹⁹ In summary, Philo's interest in moralizing history seems to have been inspired by his encounter with Rome and Roman culture.²²⁰

2.4 Exemplarity and Didacticism in Josephus' Corpus

2.4.1 Josephus' Historical Writings: Some General Observations

Three points need to be drawn out before we proceed to discuss Josephus' characterization practices. First, in Graeco-Roman historiography the depiction of character is a rhetorical enterprise that involves choices of plot and diction. Second, it should mainly be understood in moral terms and as directed towards furnishing lessons of virtue and vice to readers and hearers. Third, although we should attribute some of the variation from author to author, we have observed subtle differences between the Greek histories produced in the fifth century BC and those written under Rome.

²¹⁸ These works, e.g. Philo's commentaries on the *Books of Genesis*, are permeated with well-known techniques of Alexandrian scholarship, on which see further Niehoff (2011a).

²¹⁹ For instance, in *The Life of Moses* Philo describes Moses as a paradigmatic model of virtue by means of which he "intends to write down the life of the greatest and most perfect among all men and to display it to those worthy not to remain ignorant" (*Mos.* 1.1). He also blames the Greeks for ignoring "the instruction of good men and their lives" (τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ βίῳν ὑφήγησιν) and will therefore make known to the Greeks the history of Moses as he has learned it himself (*Mos.* 1.1). This translation is based on Colson, LCL.

²²⁰ See especially Niehoff (2016); Niehoff (2018a). Niehoff mostly focuses on later biographers such as Plutarch and Philostratus. For the development and different manifestations of Graeco-Roman biography (including the New Testament Gospels) see Hägg (2012).

Along general lines, we can find similar currents in Josephus' corpus. It is nonetheless important to distinguish between his two major historical compositions, the *BJ* and the *AJ*, concerning their moralizing tendencies. The *AJ* clearly displays the moral didacticism characteristic of Greek historiography produced under Rome. For the composition of this work, Josephus used the moralizing biographical approach to history also encountered in Dionysius' *Roman Antiquities*.²²¹ In the prologue of his *Judaean Antiquities* Josephus claims that an investigation into the ancient history and the political constitution of the Judaeans is of value (ἄξια) for all the Greeks (*AJ* 1.5). He claims to have undertaken this history because certain people urged him to pursue this enterprise, most notably his apparent literary patron Epaphroditus (1.8). Epaphroditus, Josephus continues, is a man devoted to all kinds of learning (παιδεία), but he takes special pleasure in the experiences of public affairs (ἐμπειρίαις πραγμάτων). After putting his own task into historical perspective and claiming to imitate (μιμήσασθαι) the Judaeans high priest Eleazar's great-mindedness (μεγαλόψυχος) by translating Judaeans history to Greeks (1.10–13), Josephus moves to the most important moral lesson of the *AJ* (1.14):

τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστά τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν, ὅτι τοῖς μὲν θεοῦ γνώμη κατακολουθοῦσι καὶ τὰ καλῶς νομοθετηθέντα μὴ τολμῶσι παραβαίνειν πάντα κατορθοῦται πέρα πίστεως καὶ γέρας εὐδαιμονία πρόκειται παρὰ θεοῦ· καθ' ὅσον δ' ἂν ἀποστῶσι τῆς τούτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας, ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα, τρέπεται δὲ εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους ὅ τι ποτ' ἂν ὡς ἀγαθὸν δρᾶν σπουδᾶσιν.

But the lesson that stands out from this history, for the one willing to go through it, is that those who follow the will of God and do not dare to transgress the good things ordained by law, will have success in everything beyond expectation and will be granted the gift of happiness by God. Likewise, for those who depart from strict diligence in

²²¹ The similarity between Dionysius and Josephus has long been recognized by scholars. See Thackeray (1929) 56–58; Shutt (1961) 92–101; Attridge (1976) 43–60; Feldman (1998a) 7–8; Jones (2005). On the *AJ* as personal and moralizing history, see Feldman (1998a) 192–97; Mason (2000) xxxii–xxxiv. The recent article of Cowan (2018) furnishes a useful overview of the debate.

relation to these laws, even the possible becomes impossible. Everything they take upon themselves in striving towards accomplishing greatness will end in irreversible disasters.

This instruction (παίδευμα) is entrenched in the Judaeian constitution, which the wise lawgiver Moses aimed to teach (παιδεύω) his fellow citizens (1.21): to first study the nature of God and then, after contemplating God's work with reason, "to imitate the best example of all" (1.19: παράδειγμα τὸ πάντων ἄριστον μιμεῖσθαι). Josephus regularly employs this language of imitation (μίμησις, μιμέομαι) and models of behaviour (παράδειγμα) throughout his investigation. He systematically adds explicitly moralizing and didactic comments when assessing the characters staged in his narrative, typically in the form of obituaries.²²² Josephus' attempt to achieve balance in his moral assessments of characters is noteworthy.²²³ This permits him to furnish extensive morally didactic judgments about the characters staged in his narrative to his audience.²²⁴ In other words, the intrinsic relation between writing history and moral instruction is among the focal points of the *AJ*.

The focus of the *BJ* is different. The language that invokes the moral didactic framing in the *AJ* (παράδειγμα, μίμησις, μιμέομαι, etc...) is rarely employed in this work.²²⁵ This can perhaps be explained by the different themes and historiographical outlook of the work. The *AJ* celebrates the Judaeian political constitution and showcases examples of virtue brought forward by this

²²² For examples, see Mason (2000) xxxii.

²²³ Mason (2000) xxxii. This is somewhat closer to Livy's procedure than to Dionysius, who tends to praise his characters and put a strong emphasis on examples of success. See e.g. Livy's description of Hannibal's character in Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 21.4.9. For a full list of *exempla* in Livy see Chaplin (2000) 203–15. On the one hand Herod was a great statesman, paradigmatic in his martial virtues, (*AJ* 14.390–491; 15.108–60) his energy as a builder (*AJ* 15.293, 331–41; 15.380–425), and his ability to keep the peace with the Romans in times where the Romans suffered from severe political instability (*AJ* 14.265–67; 15.165–82). Herod was brave, and capable of virtue and piety (*AJ* 14.430; 15.305). Yet Herod's ambitions and pride eventually lead to a tyrannical regime in which Judaeian constitution is repeatedly violated (*AJ* 15.267, 274–77; 281, 288, 17.150–51, 158), inevitably leading towards divine punishment at the end of Herod's career (*AJ* 17.168–71). For Herod's image in Josephus see Van Henten (2016) 235–46, including references to further literature. For Herod in relation to moralizing history in the *AJ*, see Mason (2000) xxxii–xxxiii.

²²⁴ Feldman (1998a) 5, 74–75.

²²⁵ Only in *BJ* 7.351, in Eleazar's speech at Masada before the mass suicide. Instead, Josephus tends to use the word ὑπόδειγμα for similar cases, a word that occurs exclusively in *BJ*. Josephus uses the word six times in total. See also his use of ὑποδείκνυμι (also used in the *AJ*) in e.g. 2.384 (speech Agrippa).

constitution throughout Judaeen history. It moreover deals with a much larger portion of history than the *BJ*: from the creation story until the outbreak of the Judaeen revolt against the Romans. This makes it much easier to choose from a wide range of examples and exploit these for moral didactic purposes. The compositional outlook and structures of the *BJ* reveal different patterns. Although Josephus anchors his analysis of the revolt in the history immediately preceding it — he starts his narrative in ca. 170 BC with the conflict that created Onias' temple in Heliopolis and the revolt and rise of the Hasmonaeans — the *BJ* focuses on a single cataclysmic event: the fall of the temple in Jerusalem, to which the entire narrative builds.

The excellence of the Judaeen *ethnos* is an important thematic current in Josephus' presentation of the Judaeen-Roman conflict (cf. §3.3.2.1).²²⁶ Examples of Judaeen virtue abound in the narrative (e.g. Hasmonaeans and Herodians in Book 1; Essenes in Book 2; Josephus in Books 2 and 3; Ananus in Book 4; etc...). Nonetheless, Josephus lends the *BJ* a gloomy Thucydidean flavour.²²⁷ It focuses on the greatest conflict that has occurred in history to date (*BJ* 1.1–3). Among its main points is that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed not by the Romans but by the tyrants and bandits that started a civil war, thus forcing the Romans to intervene (1.9–12).²²⁸ One regularly encounters virtuous Judaeans (among which Josephus himself) struggling to uphold the honour of the Judaeans and keep the hydra of civic unrest in check (cf. 3.3.3) to prevent the impending disaster. We find various speeches revolving around this point (e.g. 2.345–404; 5.362–419; 6.99–110).²²⁹

Ultimately, the narrative of the *BJ* is a story of failure. This becomes especially evident in the famous obituary of Ananus and Jesus. Here, Josephus laments the death of the last virtuous Judaeen leaders (4.318–25): “it seems virtue herself groaned over the case of these men and lamented that she had been so greatly defeated by vice” (αὐτὴν ἐπ’ ἐκείνοις στενάξαι τοῖς ἀνδράσι δοκῶ τὴν ἀρετὴν,

²²⁶ For discussion see Mason (2016a) 101–6.

²²⁷ On Josephus and Thucydides see e.g. Rajak (2002) 91–94. Mader (2000) 55–103; Price (2010; 2011b); idem (2011a) 226–27.

²²⁸ Cf. §3.2.

²²⁹ On speeches in Josephus see esp. Lindner (1972) 21–48; Villalba I Varneda (1986) 89–117; Rajak (2002) 80; idem (1991); Runnalls (1997) Van Henten (2005) Price (2007) Mason (2008; 2011; 2012); idem (2016a) 73–80; Rodríguez Horrillo (2013); Nagy (2014). See also the helpful overview of direct and indirect speech in Josephus' *BJ* in Landau (2006) 83–89 (speeches in the Herod narrative), and 246–47 (speeches outside the Herod narrative).

ὄλοφυρομένην ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἦττητο τῆς κακίας).²³⁰ This is further invigorated by, for instance, Josephus' condemnation of the wicked generation of the Judeans responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (7.259–74). The upshot of this is that the explicitly moralizing, didactic, and celebratory tone of the *AJ* would hardly have suited the tragic vision of contemporary Judean history put forward by Josephus in the *BJ* (cf. §3.3.4).

2.4.2 Moral Character in the *BJ*

Although the *BJ* does not contain the explicit moral didacticism we find in the *AJ*, Josephus clearly describes his characters along moral-political lines. He frequently furnishes his narrative with explicit comments of praise and blame. He is arguably among the most explicit Greek historians in his character judgments.²³¹ This outspokenness is one of the defining features of Josephus' narrative.²³² We already came across Josephus' obituary of Ananus and his companion Jesus (4.318–25).²³³ The extensive digression about the wicked generation of the Judeans contains devastating

²³⁰ On the Thucydidean echoes of this passage, see Mader (2000) 99–100; Price (2011a) 226–27. On the importance of political realism in the *BJ*, specifically in relation to *polis* leadership, and its strong resemblance of Plutarchan perspectives see especially Mason (2016a) 106–13. Adam Kemezis has some useful observations on the context of “the new rhetoric of an aristocracy in transition” as exemplified by both Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom and the necessity of their emphatic focus on civic rather than imperial politics. See further Kemezis (2016) 460–63. Yet even though Kemezis briefly deals with Josephus in this chapter, he attributes such rhetoric to Dio and Plutarch: “it is rhetoric unique to them within Second Sophistic literature, not because they were uniquely patriotic or politically engaged, or because the realities of politics were especially different any other time, but because their contemporary audience had a unique interest in the subject” (p. 461).

²³¹ Though such praise and blame are common practice among Greek historians, see e.g. Herodotus, 3.1–38, 3.64–65; Polybius, *Hist.* 8.36.2–3. On the authorial voice as characterization tool in Herodotus see esp. De Bakker (2013; 2018). For characterization in Herodotus more generally see, in addition to De Bakker, e.g. Baragwanath (2015). On Polybius' explicit comments about how to depict characters, see Walbank (1972) 92–93; Eckstein (1995) 239. On characterization techniques in Polybius, see Pitcher (2018). See more generally Pitcher (2007).

²³² Landau and Van Henten/Huitink emphasize the prominence of the narrator in Josephus' narrative art. See Landau (2006) 70–71, 106–13, 116; Van Henten and Huitink (2018) 254. In addition to adding comments about individuals, groups, or specific events, Josephus digresses extensively about the Judean philosophies (*War* 2.119–66), the geography of the Galilee (3.69–109), the Roman army (3.506–21), and Jerusalem and its temple (5.142–247). For the digressions in the *Vita* (336–367) and *CA* (1.46–57) see especially Chapters 4 and 6. For a brief treatment of digressions in ancient historiography, see Walter (2012).

²³³ For other obituaries in the *BJ* see 1.68–69 (John Hyrcanus I); 226 (Antipater); 271–3 (Phasael), 665 (Herod); and 4.491–3 (Nero); 652 (Vitellius).

remarks about John of Gischala (7.263–64) and Simon son of Gioras (7.265–266).²³⁴ Other examples include Josephus' praise of Herod (1.428–30) or his character introduction of John of Gischala (2.585–89).²³⁵ Josephus furnishes the *BJ* with a distinctively moralizing tone by adding such praise and blame.

While Josephus is outspoken about the characters staged in his narrative, this outspokenness appears to be a deliberate compositional and rhetorical strategy (i.e. not primarily impulsive or emotional). The purposefulness of Josephus' characterization becomes clear when comparing his descriptions with familiar Graeco-Roman character types, which are important to understand their thinking about character more generally. Illustrative is Theophrastus' discussion of thirty bad character types in his *Characters*.²³⁶ These types were also exploited in historiography to make patterns of behaviour recognizable (and hence repeatable).²³⁷ We have already come across Xenophon's idealized description of Cyrus the Great as an example of virtuous statesmanship in the *Cyropaedia*.²³⁸ Stereotypical descriptions of tyrants by Herodotus — most notably his description of Cambyses in the *Histories* 3.80–83 — and Xenophon became paradigmatic in later periods.²³⁹ Note, for example, Plutarch's description of Julius Caesar as a popular leader coming to power through demagogic means: when Caesar installs himself as a tyrant, the people inevitably turn against him.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ E.g. *BJ* 7.264: "But it might not be the right place to properly lament upon those who fell into the hands of savages. Accordingly, I will return again to the remaining part of the narrative" (τοὺς δὲ ταῖς ἐκείνων ὤμότησι περιπεσόντας οὐ τοῦ παρόντος ἀν εἴη καιροῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ὀδύρεσθαι πάλιν οὖν ἐπ'ἀνέμι πρὸς τὸ καταλειπόμενον μέρος τῆς διηγήσεως).

²³⁵ For Josephus' outspokenness as historian, see also e.g. 1.9–12; 4.137; 5.19–20, 256–57; 6.408.

²³⁶ For a discussion of Theophrastus' character types in Greek context, see e.g. Diggle (2004) 5–9.

²³⁷ For a similar point on the ancient scholia, see Nünlist (2009) 252–53.

²³⁸ On the *Cyropaedia* and Xenophontian biographical practices, see especially Hägg (2012) 10–66. On ideal leadership in the *Cyropaedia* more generally see Tamiolaki (2017) 189–93; on genre issues see pp. 180–89. On characterization and the *Cyropaedia*, see Huitink (2018). Modern scholars disagree on the precise implications of Xenophon's description of Cyrus the Great. See the elaborate discussion and different viewpoints expressed in e.g. Tatum (1989); Due (1989); Gera (1993); Nadon (2001); Sandridge (2012).

²³⁹ For stereotypical tyrannical behaviour and paradigms of tyranny see Berve (1967); Ferrill (1978); Farega (1981); Dewald (2003). For Herodotus' portrayal of Cambyses in the *Histories*, mostly focusing on Cambyses' non-tyrannical aspects, see Brown (1982). Pownall (2016).

²⁴⁰ See Duff (1999) 303. On the models of the demagogue and the tyrant in Plutarch's *Lives* see Wardman (1974) 49–57. Plutarch's corpus abounds at any rate with paradigmatic descriptions of virtuous and vicious leaders from the past. These examples are called upon in the *Moralia* because of the different essential virtues they displayed and investigated more systematically in the *Lives*.

Likewise, Josephus shapes his characters according to familiar character types. He uses the model of the stereotypical tyrant regularly: his description of Herod the Great in the *AJ* is a good example.²⁴¹ In the *BJ*, by contrast, Herod is rather portrayed as an exemplary and successful statesman who excels in maintaining a good relationship with the Romans, at least in the narrative of his public career (1.204–430). Josephus rather ascribes stereotypical tyrannical behaviour to the persons partially responsible for the outbreak of the Judaeen revolt and, much later, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, in addition to the bad procurator Gessius Florus and his cohorts (e.g. 2.282–83, 293, 299, 305–122, 318, 333, 420, 531). The first is Menahem, the son of the demagogical preacher Judas (2.433–48). Together with his companions, Menahem overthrows existing priestly leadership in Jerusalem. However, his successes “puffed up Menahem towards brutality” (ἐτύφωσεν εἰς ὠμότητα) in such a fashion that he became an insufferable tyrant (2.442: ἀφόρητος ἦν τύραννος). Together with the people, Menahem’s companions turn against him and Menahem is captured and tortured to death (2.448). The pattern closely resembles Plutarch’s depiction of Julius Caesar.

Along similar lines, scholars have recognized Thucydides’ Pericles in Josephus’ portrayal of Ananus. They have noted that both characters possess the virtue of foresight (πρόνοια) and both prioritize common instead of personal interests.²⁴² Likewise, they both serve as a final check before civil war (στάσις) breaks out and gets beyond control.²⁴³ Thucydides evaluates Pericles’ importance as a statesman not merely by referring to his virtues but also by explicitly linking them with the lack of virtue among his successors. In this regard, Pericles’ death marks a decisive and irreversible change in Athenian politics (Thuc. 2.65.7, 10). Similarly, the Judaeen leaders taking the place of Ananus in the *BJ* lack the chief priest’s foresight and merely act out of personal interests. With the

²⁴¹ For discussion and bibliography see further below.

²⁴² Cf. Mader (2000) 99–100; Price (2011a) 226–27. Compare *BJ* 4.318–25 with Thuc. 2.65.6; cf. 2.65.13. On Pericles’ virtue see further Price (2001) 52–53. Thucydides attributes these qualities not only to Pericles, but also to Themistocles. Both possess intelligence and foresight (Themistocles: *Thuc.* 1.93.3–4, 1.138.1–3; Pericles: 2.65.6, 2.65.13) and both are successful generals and leaders of the Athenian people (Themistocles: 1.14.3, 1.74.1, 1.90.3–7, 1.136.3–4; Pericles: 1.116–117, 2.65.8). Furthermore, after their priceless service for Athens both were punished, albeit in different ways, because Athens proved unable to keep up with the intelligence and foresight of these two persons (Themistocles: 1.135.3; Pericles: 2.65.3). Cf. Pelling (2000) 90–91; Foster (2010) 129–31.

²⁴³ Compare especially *BJ* 4.131–133, 364 with Thuc. 3.81–84. See further Rajak (2002) 91–94; Feldman (1998a) 140–48; Mader (2000); Price (2011b). More generally: Canfora (2006) 749–52; Price (2011a) 226–27.

moderate Ananus removed, the way is open for unchecked Zealot excess, catalysed by the malicious leadership of John of Gischala and Simon bar Giora (*BJ* 4.355–56).²⁴⁴

Josephus' introduction of John of Gischala singles this character out as a uniquely dangerous villain (2.585–89):

Διοικοῦντι δ' οὕτως τῷ Ἰωσήπῳ τὰ κατὰ τὴν Γαλιλαίαν παρανίσταται τις ἐπίβουλος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ Γισχάλων, υἱὸς Ληΐου, Ἰωάννης ὄνομα, πανουργότατος μὲν καὶ δολιώτατος τῶν ἐπισήμων ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς πονηρεύμασιν ἀπάντων, πένης δὲ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ μέχρι πολλοῦ κώλυμα σχῶν τῆς κακίας τὴν ἀπορίαν, ἔτοιμος μὲν ψεύσασθαι, δεινὸς δ' ἐπιθεῖναι πίστιν τοῖς ἐψευσμένοις, ἀρετὴν ἡγούμενος τὴν ἀπάτην καὶ ταύτῃ κατὰ τῶν φιλτάτων χρώμενος, ὑποκριτῆς φιланθρωπίας καὶ δι' ἐλπίδα κέρδους φονικώτατος, αἰ μὲν ἐπιθυμήσας μεγάλων, τρέφων δὲ τὰς ἐλπίδας ἐκ τῶν ταπεινῶν κακουργημάτων· ληστής γὰρ ἦν μονότροπος, ἔπειτα καὶ συνοδίαν εὗρεν τῆς τόλμης, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὀλίγην, προκόπτων δ' αἰὲ πλείονα. φροντὶς δ' ἦν αὐτῷ μηδένα προσλαμβάνειν εὐάλωτον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς εὐεξία σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς παραστήματι καὶ πολέμων ἐμπειρίᾳ διαφέροντας ἐξελέγετο, μέχρι καὶ τετρακοσίων ἀνδρῶν στίφος συνεκρότησεν, οἳ τὸ πλεόν ἐκ τῆς Τυρίων χώρας καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ κωμῶν φυγάδες ἦσαν· δι' ὧν πᾶσαν ἐλήζετο τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ μετεώρους ὄντας ἐπὶ τῷ μέλλοντι πολέμῳ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐσπάρασσεν.

So while Josephus was thus governing the affairs throughout Galilee, some treacherous man from Gischala appeared, called John, being the son of Levi. He was the most cunning and deceitful among all of those who gained notoriety for evil trickery. His poverty kept him from developing his scheming for a long time. Yet already then, he was eager to speak lies, being skilful in making them sound credible. He considered deceitfulness a virtue and practised this even against his friends. He pretended love for humanity, but the chance of profit would instantly make him bloodthirsty. His personal desires had always been great, but he nourished his hopes from low-profile crimes. In

²⁴⁴ For some Polybian threads that underpin this passage, see Mason (2016a) 108–11.

the beginning he was a lonely robber, but after some time he found companions in his undertakings. These were a few at first, but when he advanced, they grew more numerous. He was careful not to pick people that would let themselves get caught easily but picked those who distinguished themselves with good physical condition, courage of mind, and military experience. Eventually he managed to gather a well-trained group of four hundred men, most of which were exiles from Tyre and the villages in that country. He used them to plunder the entire Galilee and unsettle those who were absent-minded because of the impending war.

This description marks the inherent viciousness of John's character and explains much of his later actions as the archenemy of Josephus in Galilee and tyrant responsible for the outbreak of civil war in Jerusalem. Scholars have recognized stock features in Josephus' characterization of John, especially in reference to Sallust's description of Catiline (*Cat.* 5.1–8):²⁴⁵

L. Catilina, nobili genere natus, fuit magna vi et animi et corporis, sed ingenio malo pravoque. Huic ab adulescentia bella intestina, caedes, rapinae, discordia civilis grata fuere, ibique iuventutem suam exercuit. Corpus patiens inediae, algoris, vigiliae supra quam quoquam credibile est. Animus audax, subdolus, varius, quous rei lubet simulator ac dissimulator, alieni adpetens, sui profusus, ardens in cupiditatibus; satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum. Vastus animus inmoderata, incredibilia, nimis alta semper cupiebat. Hunc post dominationem L. Sullae libido maxuma invaserat rei publicae capiundae, neque id quibus modis adsequeretur, dum sibi regnum pararet, quicquam pensi habebat. Agitabatur magis magisque in dies animus ferox inopia rei familiaris et conscientia scelerum, quae utraque eis artibus auxerat quas supra memoravi. Incitabant praeterea corrupti civitatis mores, quos pessuma ac divorsa inter se mala, luxuria atque avaritia, vexabant.

²⁴⁵ As has been observed by Thackeray (1929) 119–20. See also Thackeray's notes in his translation of *BJ* 2 (LCL 203, p. 549). Cf. Rajak (2002) 160–61; Villalba I Varneda (1986) 70–71; Mason (2008) 394 n. 3512; Mason (2016d) 98–100.

L. Catiline was born in an aristocratic family. He was a man of great strength, both mental and physical, but his nature was wicked and perverse. From early adulthood on, he took pleasure in civil wars, murders, plunder, and political discord, and this was where he exercised his youth. His body could endure hunger, cold, sleep, deprivation beyond what one would believe; his mind was arrogant, clever, unstable. He could pretend or dissemble whatever he liked. He coveted others' property but was profligate with his own; he burned with passionate desires. He had some eloquence, but little wisdom. His mind was vast, always longing for the extravagant, the unbelievable, the things beyond his reach. After the 'Domination of Sulla' he was overcome by an extraordinarily powerful desire to seize control of the state. He did not care at all about how he attained his goal as long as he got a 'realm' for himself. Daily he grew more agitated. His family's poverty and his own guilty conscience made his spirit violent, and both of these problems were exacerbated by the practices I have mentioned above. He was further encouraged by the corrupt moral character of the state, which was depraved because of two destructive and internally contradictory evils, extravagance and greed (trans. W. W. Batstone 2010).

The similarities between Sallust's Catiline and Josephus' John are compelling. For example, both are schemers, cunning and deceitful. John gathers a crew of followers powerful in body and mind. Sallust's Catiline also possesses these qualities. Both have an unrestrained ambition to take over the established political government; both deploy all means, no matter how vicious, to achieve that end; and both have endured poverty during their youth. Clearly, Josephus fashioned his characters in such a way that his audience would recognize familiar character types in them.

However, while the characters in the *BJ* closely correspond to existing types, Josephus does not slavishly copy existing models. Regarding his description of John, there are marked differences with Sallust's Catiline too. Most notably, Sallust's Catiline belongs to an old Roman aristocratic family and, by extension, he epitomizes the problems of Roman elite culture that form a central

thematic current in Sallust's works. Josephus rather implies John's undistinguished background and denies him all ties to Judaeen aristocracy. His description fits the work's larger thematic schemes of portraying (most of) the Judaeen aristocrats as moderate and sensible leaders. Civil strife, as one of the most basic themes of the war (cf. §3.3.3), also plagues the Judaeen ruling class in *BJ* 2 (outbreak of Judaeen-Roman conflict) and 4 (civil war in Jerusalem, eventually leading to the destruction of the city and the temple).²⁴⁶ However, Josephus usually exculpates them from blame both in relation to the outbreak of the conflict and civil war in Jerusalem. *Aristocrats* such as Agrippa II, Ananus, and of course Josephus himself understand the importance of maintaining ties of friendship with the Romans and do everything in their power to solve the Judaeen-Roman conflict via peaceful means.²⁴⁷ It seems that Josephus attempts to deny the character John some of his legitimacy by subtly dissociating him from the traditionally powerful groups of Judaeen society. That this is a deliberate compositional choice becomes evident if we compare this characterization with Josephus' portrayal of John in the *Vita*, where he is allowed various significant connections with the Jerusalem elite (esp. *Vita* 43–44, 189–92).²⁴⁸ Josephus clearly employs existing character types, but he adapts them in light of his specific compositional aims.²⁴⁹

2.4.3 Rhetoric and the Presentation of Character in the *BJ*

So, Josephus fashions the characters staged in his narratives in terms of familiar moral character types. In addition to this, the choices of disposition and arrangement show that Josephus vastly

²⁴⁶ Note Josephus' description of the revolutionary Eleazar — son of the *high priest* Ananias — at *BJ* 2.409–10, 424, 443–56. Likewise, Josephus notes how the Zealots abominate the customs related to electing the high priests with the cooperation of one of the more influential priestly clans (4.151–57).

²⁴⁷ Absolving himself and the Judaeen aristocracy — and blaming the tyrants — has indeed been taken as Josephus' most important aim when composing the *BJ*. Discussed by Josephus in the preface: *BJ* 1.9–11. The theme of absolving Judaeans and the aristocrats from responsibility of the conflict is frequently perceived to have been the main apologetic aim of Josephus when he wrote *BJ*. See most prominently Bilde (1979); idem (1988) 87–88; Rajak (2002) 78–83; Goodman (1987) 20–21; Mason (1991) 64–67; Price (1992) 64–67; McLaren (1998) 55–56; Mader (2000) 10–17; Brighton (2009) 29–33; Tuval (2013) 97–98; Sören (2014) 2014, *passim*. For the problems of this position see esp. Mason (2016a) 94–95; idem (2016e) 17.

²⁴⁸ Mason (2016d) 99–100.

²⁴⁹ As pointed out, particularly in relation to the *AJ*, by Van Henten and Huitink (2018) 253, 270

borrowed from Graeco-Roman rhetorical arsenals to shape his characters.²⁵⁰ The previous analysis also indicates that Josephus is sometimes very outspoken in his judgment of characters and groups. However, in many cases he uses more subtle means to ascribe certain character traits to a character.²⁵¹

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the structures of Josephus' characterization practices, it is important to distinguish between "showing" and "telling." The ancient scholia explain that the former relates to characterization through action and speech and the latter to overt evaluations about a character, either by the narrator or by another character.²⁵² In *On Style* 288 Demetrius cites Plato's *Phaedo* (59C) to illustrate how to embellish a narrative with tact (εὐπρέπεια). Demetrius notes about this passage that Plato wishes to reproach two of Socrates' friends for not visiting him in prison prior to his execution. Yet instead of directly attacking them, Plato uses Phaedo's voice to ask who *were* present. Cleombrotus and Aristippus are missing from the list summed by Phaedo. When someone asks whether Cleombrotus and Aristippus were present, Phaedo answers: "No, they were in Aegina." For Demetrius, the interpretation of the entire passage is conveyed in this simple statement:

πολὺ δεινότερος ὁ λόγος δοκεῖ τοῦ πράγματος αὐτοῦ ἐμφαίνοντος τὸ δεινόν, οὐχὶ τοῦ λέγοντος.
τοὺς μὲν οὖν ἀμφὶ τὸν Ἀρίστιππον καὶ λοιδορῆσαι ἴσως ἀκινδύνου ὄντος ἐν σχήματι ὁ Πλάτων
ἐλοιδόρησεν.

²⁵⁰ Much scholarship on techniques of characterization in ancient Greek and Latin literature focuses on distinguishing direct from indirect characterization. See De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018a) 20–23; De Temmerman (2014) 26–41. For a brief survey of various techniques of indirect characterization in ancient historiography see Pitcher (2007) 107–15.

²⁵¹ See for a broader discussion on this technique in ancient historiography, Pitcher (2007) 107–8.

²⁵² On this distinction among ancient scholia see Nünlist (2009) 32, 246, 248; on ancient rhetoric see De Temmerman (2014) 31–41. For references to this distinction in modern literary theory see De Temmerman (2014) 29 n. 188. Some ancient discussions would judgment of someone by another individual in the narrative (i.e. not the narrator) as explicit characterization, i.e. "telling" instead of "showing." See further Nünlist (2009) 246. I will maintain to categorize this feature as indirect characterization, however, because ancient Greeks and Romans do separate this technique specifically from an author's or speaker's own statements in relation to speaking or writing about oneself. See for further discussion and references to ancient texts Chapter 4.

[T]he passage seems far more forceful because the force is produced by the fact itself and not by an authorial comment. So, although he could presumably have openly insulted Aristippus and his friends without any personal risk, Plato has done so allusively (trans. Innes LCL).

Likewise, Plutarch relates that blunt and explicit statements are not only more dangerous than figured speech but less effective too (*Flatterer* 66E–74E). Quintilian explains that the technique of *emphasis* is a “very common device” in which an author drops “a hint to show that what we want to be understood is not what we are saying ... but something hidden and left to the hearer to discover” (*Inst.* 9.2.65). Such figures can be used “(1) if it is unsafe to speak openly, (2) if it is unseemly to do so, (3) when it is employed simply for elegance and gives more pleasure by its freshness and variety than the straightforward statement would have done.”²⁵³ Thus, in Graeco-Roman rhetoric putting *emphasis* on something implies a reliance on the reader’s ability to extract an author’s meaning from a text.²⁵⁴

If Josephus indeed wrote the *BJ* in accordance with such rhetorical principles, we should be sensitive to hidden meanings conveyed through subtle hints in his narrative web. Consider for example Josephus’ introduction of Vespasian and Titus in reference to Nero’s thoughts (3.3–7):

διηλέγχετό γε μὴν ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς θόρυβος ὑπὸ τῶν φροντίδων σκεπτομένου τίνι πιστεύσει κινουμένην τὴν ἀνατολήν, ὃς τιμωρήσεται μὲν τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπανάστασιν, προκαταλήψεται δ’ αὐτοῖς ἤδη καὶ τὰ περίξ ἔθνη συννοσοῦντα. μόνον [οὖν] εὕρισκει Οὐεσπασιανὸν ταῖς χρεῖαις ἀναλογοῦντα καὶ τηλικούτου πολέμου μέγεθος ἀναδέξασθαι δυνάμενον, ἄνδρα ταῖς ἀπὸ νεότητος στρατείαις ἐγγεγηρακότα καὶ προειρηνεύσαντα μὲν πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις τὴν ἐσπέραν ὑπὸ Γερμανῶν ταρασσομένην, προσκτησάμενον δὲ τοῖς ὅπλοις Βρεττανίαν τέως λανθάνουσαν, ὅθεν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ Κλαυδίῳ παρέσχε χωρὶς ἰδρώτος ἰδίου θρίαμβον καταγαγεῖν. Ταῦτά τε δὴ προκληδονιζόμενος καὶ σταθεράν μετ’ ἐμπειρίας τὴν

²⁵³ This example is also used by Mason (2005a) 252.

²⁵⁴ A point made in Ahl and Roisman (1997) 14.

ἡλικίαν ὁρῶν, μέγα δὲ πίστεως αὐτοῦ τοὺς υἱοὺς ὄμηρον καὶ τὰς τούτων ἀκμὰς χεῖρα τῆς πατρώας συνέσεως, τάχα τι καὶ περὶ τῶν ὅλων ἤδη τοῦ θεοῦ προοικονομουμένου, πέμπει τὸν ἄνδρα ληψόμενον τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῶν ἐπὶ Συρίας στρατευμάτων.

He was in commotion of mind and was pondering to whom he should entrust the care of the disturbed east: someone to take vengeance on the Judaeen uprising, and also to prevent the sickness from spreading to surrounding people. He found only Vespasian equal to the task and capable of undertaking such a great war. He was a senior man who had been campaigning from his youth. Previously he had also pacified the west for the Romans when it was disturbed by the Germans. In the meantime, he had conquered Britain — a region passed over before — by his arms. By means of this, he granted Claudius, his [Nero's] father, to secure a triumph without breaking any sweat of his own. Considering these circumstances to be a favourable omen, perceiving that he came into an age fit for calmness, having great faith in his sons as hostage, whose prime would be the hand of their father's sagacity — and perhaps also something should be attributed to God who was already arranging the whole — he sent the man to take command over the armies that were in Syria.

First, the opening and closing frame the passage as Nero's thinking. Vespasian is presented as the ideal candidate to lead the Judaeen campaign because of his past achievements, especially on account of the triumph he had won for Nero's father Claudius. Josephus leaves it unmentioned (but perhaps implies) that Nero might plan to use Vespasian's prospective victory in Judaea to earn a future triumph for himself. Both Josephus and the audience know that reality would turn out to be different: all the factors Nero considers in favour of Vespasian to conduct the campaign in Judaea eventually turn Vespasian into the ideal candidate to become emperor and earn him a military triumph (7.123–157). This is underlined by the casual remark that *perhaps* (τάχα) God might have pushed Nero to appoint Vespasian.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ On the use of irony in Josephus' work see most notably Mason (2005a).

Second, Josephus appears to use Nero's thinking to introduce Vespasian's past achievements with a certain degree of flattery. This framing can perhaps be explained in reference to the close connection of Josephus' personal fate and the rise of the Flavian dynasty, which was well known among the Romans (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 5.6; Cassius Dio 65.1). Praising the imperial family too explicitly might have made him vulnerable to accusations of partiality.

So, when interpreting Josephus' characterization practices, we should try to look beyond explicit authorial statements and be sensitive to implicit and figurative language. It is reasonable to assume that Josephus expected his audience to grasp subtle hints hidden in his texts. Josephus did not write in a cultural or social vacuum. It might not always have been wise for him to speak or write openly for a variety of reasons.²⁵⁶

2.4.3.1 *Speech*

One of the tools frequently used by ancient historians to substantialize individual characters is the use of speeches.²⁵⁷ As for instance Quintilian recognized, speech was generally held to be an important index of character (*Inst.* 11.1.30). Diodorus of Sicily emphasizes the significance of using speeches in historical narrative. While he disparages the insertion of speeches for the purpose of displaying the historian's rhetorical skills, he does not disregard the use of such speeches altogether. Diodorus notes that it is sometimes necessary to introduce them for the purpose of variation (ποικιλία). Moreover, it is important that speeches in historical narrative match the greatness and glory of the events to which they relate (*Bibl.* 20.1.1–2.2).

As is expressed most powerfully by Polybius, speeches are ideally connected to the narrative action in the immediate literary context.²⁵⁸ For Polybius, the historian's duty is to find out what was said or done on a certain occasion and to ascertain why something succeeded or failed. This means that within historical narrative the speech of an actor should have immediate consequences for the

²⁵⁶ Mason (2005a) is entirely devoted to this point. On the art of safe criticism among Greeks and Romans see more generally Ahl (1984).

²⁵⁷ For the use of speeches in ancient historiography see Avenarius (1956) 149–57; Walbank (1985) 242–61; Fornara (1983) 142–68; Brock (1995); Laird (1999); idem (2009) 204–8; Marincola (2007).

²⁵⁸ Marincola (2007) 123–26.

actions following the speech.²⁵⁹ The utility of a speech derives from its power to explain actions that occur immediately afterwards. It is intrinsically related to the pragmatic function of history to teach lessons to future politicians.²⁶⁰

Josephus regularly features speeches in the *BJ*, most of which have a deliberative nature.²⁶¹ They are usually delivered at moments of crisis that require immediate action or radical change of political direction. Usually the speech is designed to fit the speaker, the listeners in the narrative, and the occasion. As will become evident below, Josephus creates a strong correlation between speech and the subsequent narrative action. Speeches are integrally part of Josephus' historical narrative and should primarily be interpreted on those terms.²⁶²

The characterizing force of speeches in the *BJ* can be illustrated by looking at the short speeches delivered by Herod in Book 1. In the first part of the narrative, Herod is characterized as a successful statesman (1.204–430). His speeches mirror the qualities he displays throughout the narrative. For instance, after Herod's troops are defeated in battle by the Arabs and subsequently hit by an earthquake, Herod boosts the poor morale of his troops by a speech. He observes that his words have the desired effect and leads his troops in battle against the Arabs, beating them by a landslide (1.364–85; speech 1.373–79).²⁶³ Immediately afterwards, Herod faces a dangerous political challenge when Augustus defeats his Roman patron Mark Antony at the battle of Actium. He immediately

²⁵⁹ Polybius, *Hist.* 12.25a.3, 25b.1, 25i.3–9. Polybius' criticism of Timaeus is frequently taken as point of departure in regard to discussing the function of speeches in classical historiography. For a more elaborate discussion of these passages, cf. Walbank (1957–1979), 2.385–86.

²⁶⁰ As observed in Marincola (2007) 123–26. See for a more extensive discussion on Polybius' views on the relation between word and deed Sacks (1981) 79–96. For the view that speeches should adhere as closely as possible to what was actually said and be kept appropriate to the occasion see also Thuc. 1.22.1. On the influence of Thucydides on Polybius' remarks on and use of speeches see Nicolai (1999). Dionysius expresses a similar view yet stresses the importance of the causal aspect of speeches, see e.g. *Rom. Ant.* 7.66.2–3 and 11.1.3–4. Cf. Schultze (1986) 127; Gabba (1991) 68–73.

²⁶¹ On speeches in Josephus see esp. Lindner (1972) 40–48; Rajak (1991); Runnalls (1997); Van Henten (2005); Price (2007); Mason (2008) 265–68; Mason (2011b) Mason (2012); Mason (2016a) 73–80; Mason (2016e) 30–32; Rodríguez Horrillo (2013); Nagy (2014). Landau (2006) 83–89 (speeches in the Herod narrative), and 246–47 (speeches outside the Herod narrative). On deliberative speech in ancient historiography see Marincola (2007) 128; for Josephus see Mason (2016a) 77.

²⁶² Cf. Mason (2008) 265–68; idem (2016a) 77.

²⁶³ The parallel speech in the *AJ* is much more elaborate and sophisticated. On the speech in *AJ*, see Van Henten (2005). See also briefly Runnalls (1997) 743 (difference between *BJ* and *AJ*), 746–50 (stylistic aspects).

travels to Rhodes to swear his allegiance to Augustus, until that point his enemy. He dresses like a commoner, but has the disposition of a king (ὁ δὲ φρόνημα βασιλεύς). This disposition is mirrored by the speech delivered before Augustus. As a result, Herod is crowned king again, receives additional rewards for his loyalty, and becomes one of the emperor's closest friends.²⁶⁴ These examples highlight Herod's ability to turn disaster into opportunity by virtue of his speeches, a quality that adds to his successes as a general and statesman.

This changes in the second part of the narrative (1.431–673). Herod's mind turns into a pathological state. Envy causes Herod to spy on his wife Mariamme. This leads to gossip, conflict, and eventually Mariamme's death (1.443–44). After this, Herod no longer displays the calculated energy that distinguished him from his peers in the first part of the narrative. The court is dominated by intrigues and Herod fails to accurately deal with them. The lack of persuasive power of Herod's speeches probably reflects the pathological state of his mind, especially if we consider the persuasive power of Herod's speeches in the first part of the narrative. For instance, when attempting to deal with the rivalry between Antipater and Mariamme's sons Alexander and Aristobulus, Herod assembles the people and delivers a speech (1.457–66). While, some of the people share Herod's hopes and concerns, most of them do not listen at all. Strikingly, Herod's aim is to increase harmony (ὁμόνοια), but he achieves the exact opposite (1.467): "strife departed with the brothers, and they removed from each other holding a more severe suspicion against each other" (Συναπῆει δὲ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἡ στάσις, καὶ χείρους τὰς ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ὑπονοίας ἔχοντες ἀπηλλάγησαν). Herod's words closely mirror his mental disposition.

These principles also apply to other speeches in the *BJ*. When interpreting them, we should look at how each speech fits its immediate narrative context and potentially sheds light on the character delivering the speech and the consequences of the speech on narrative action following it.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ *BJ* 1.386–400 (speech 388–90; and Augustus' response 391–92).

²⁶⁵ E.g., the grand speeches of Agrippa II and Josephus are at least partially successful, at least on the short term. Both initially fail (Agrippa: *BJ* 2.402; Josephus: 3.383–84), but eventually succeed (Agrippa: 2.405; Josephus: 3.397–91). Success is measured only in terms of the immediate effect. Characters such as Agrippa II and Josephus both fail to prevent or stop the Judeans from fighting the Romans on the long run. Agrippa

2.4.3.2 Action

In addition to the use of speeches, Josephus lends the characters staged in the *BJ* depth by the ways in which he depicts their actions (πράξεις). Greek and Roman theorists highlight the importance of action as a characterizing tool.²⁶⁶ Aristotle explains that in tragedy the qualities of one's character and disposition are revealed through action (*Poe.* 1449b35–1450a7 and 1454a17–19).²⁶⁷ Dionysius praises Theopompus' unparalleled ability to describe every action (ἐκάστην πράξιν) in such a manner that it reveals “the hidden reasons for actions and the motives of their agents, and the feelings in their hearts, and to reveal all the mysteries of apparent virtue and undetected vice” (*Pomp.* 6.7: ἀλλ' ἐξετάζειν καὶ τὰς ἀφανεῖς αἰτίας τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν πραξάντων αὐτὰς καὶ τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς).²⁶⁸ In the prologue of the *Alexander*, Plutarch notes that minor actions are important indicators of virtue and vice, over against much more obvious places to look such as large-scale battles (*Alex.* 1.1–3).²⁶⁹ In other words, individuals can be characterized as much by what they do as by overt commentary on their character by the narrator.

When looking at the narrative action in the *BJ*, we can see subtle juxtapositions set up by Josephus between different events and characters. A good illustration is the disparity between John Hyrcanus II and the young Herod the Great. Antipater, the father of Herod, rightly assesses that Hyrcanus has a dull (νωθῆ) character (1.203). Throughout the narrative Hyrcanus' character is marked by his passiveness and incapability to adequately respond to occurring threats. This shortcoming endangers not only his own position as king but Judaea as a whole.²⁷⁰ Consequently,

fails to persuade the Judaeans to keep their peace until Nero appoints a successor for Florus but he fails (2.406). Josephus, although he persuades many through his blistering and emotional speeches, fails to persuade the Jerusalem tyrants: 5.420–23; 6.111–16. Likewise, Ananus delivers a speech that stirs up the Jerusalem people against the Zealot (4.163–92). The speech has its desired effect, thus showcasing Ananus' ability to steer the masses with his rhetorical ability (4.193–95; cf. 4.321).

²⁶⁶ For discussion see De Temmerman (2014) 37.

²⁶⁷ See also e.g. Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 443D–D.

²⁶⁸ Trans. Usher LCL.

²⁶⁹ See for discussion of this passage Duff (1999) 14–22.

²⁷⁰ Cf. *BJ* 1.109. At this point in the narrative, this character trait is already recognized by Hyrcanus' mother Alexandra, using the comparative form νωθέστερον. She concludes that Hyrcanus II is not suitable for a public career.

Antipater appoints his sons Phasaël and Herod to take care of public affairs in the region. At this point, the narrative focus shifts to Herod. The audience immediately learns that Herod is *active by nature* (1.204: φύσει δραστήριος). Reflecting this character trait, he immediately (εὐθέως) takes measures against the gang of robbers led by a certain Ezechias (1.204–5). The juxtaposition of Hyrcanus' passivity and Herod's energy inflates the already existing contrast between both characters. Josephus appears to invite his readers to compare and judge the actions of Herod and John Hyrcanus II for themselves.²⁷¹

This is a rather obvious example. However, in many instances such juxtaposition is more difficult to identify, not in the least because multiple volumes separate it. Nonetheless, the compositional structures of *BJ*'s narrative provide us with various leads to make meaningful comparisons that potentially shed light on Josephus' characterization practices. For example, it is striking how frequently Josephus narrates very similar circumstances and records in detail how individuals respond to these circumstances. Comparing these cases potentially explains aspects of characterization that we might otherwise not have been able to extract from Josephus' narrative. This can be illustrated by looking at Josephus' description of how Vespasian claims imperial power (4.588–91):

Οὐεσπασιανὸς δὲ ὡς τὰ πλησίον Ἱεροσολύμων καταστρεψάμενος ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἀκούει τὰς κατὰ τὴν Ῥώμην ταραχὰς καὶ Οὐιτέλλιον αὐτοκράτορα. τοῦτο αὐτόν, καίπερ ἄρχεσθαι καθάπερ ἄρχειν καλῶς ἐπιστάμενον, εἰς ἀγανάκτησιν προήγαγεν, καὶ τὸν μὲν ὡς ἐρήμου καταμανέντα τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἡδόξει δεσπότην, περιαλγήσας δὲ τῷ πάθει καρτερεῖν τὴν βάσανον οὐχ οἷός τε ἦν καὶ τῆς πατρίδος πορθουμένης ἐτέροις προσευσχολεῖν πολέμοις. ἀλλ' ὅσον ὁ θυμὸς ἡπειγεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμυναν, τοσοῦτον εἶργεν ἔννοια τοῦ διαστήματος· πολλὰ γὰρ <ἀν> φθάσαι πανουργήσασαν τὴν τύχην πρὶν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν Ἱταλίαν περαιωθῆναι, καὶ ταῦτα χεიმῶνος ὥρα πλέοντα, <καὶ> σφαδάζουσιν ἤδη κατεῖχεν τὴν ὀργήν.

²⁷¹ For some general reflections on individuation vs. typification in relation to characterization in Greek literature see further De Temmerman (2014) 8–14; De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018a) 8–9. See also Pitcher (2007) 102–3.

When Vespasian had destroyed all places near Jerusalem and had returned to Caesarea, he heard of the disturbances in Rome and that Vitellius had become emperor. Even though he knew both how it was to be ruled as to rule himself, this caused indignation. He could not honour a master who had so madly seized imperial government as if simply vacant. He was so greatly pained by his passion that he was not able to fully endure the torment, nor to give his attention to another war when his fatherland was destroyed. However, as great as the wrath urged him forward to its defence, so much was he restrained by the thought of the great distance. For before he could successfully make it to Italy, fortune could catch him with some villainy, especially because he had to sail in time of winter. Thus, while he struggled to do so, he held back his wrath.

On the face of it, we might interpret the passage as displaying Vespasian's mental strength and self-control. Despite the overwhelming strength of his emotions, Vespasian has the ability to keep his composure. Scholars have indeed frequently taken Josephus' narrative about the year of the four emperors as saturated with pro-Flavian bias. Mary Beard is representative of that approach in her claim that "Josephus goes out of his way to assure his readers that everything is absolutely kosher."²⁷²

²⁷² Beard (2003) 554. Other examples are as follows. Rajak (2002) 215: "As for the detail of his account, it clearly represents a version of the story which is highly favourable to the Flavians, and sometimes untrue. Their seizure of power is described as a direct response to the state's needs: the inadequacies manifested by Vitellius during the few months of his rule had greatly distressed Vespasian; the rest was due to the troops". Further, "Josephus' version of these political machinations is more pro-Flavian than any other which survives. But its twists and details are due as much to the author's source as to any deliberate argument on his part, and I do not think that Josephus personally had any concern with the finer points of the Flavian case or that he consciously contradicted other, less favourable accounts." Morgan (2006) 270 (summarizing the narrative of the year of the four emperors in Josephus' *Bf*): "there has been a wide-spread tendency to dismiss Josephus as a Flavian hack, and to invent a chimaera entitled 'Flavian propaganda.'" Hurlet (2016) 21–22: "A concern with recent history is reflected in Josephus' other major work, the *Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*), describing the conflict of 66–73 CE, which pitted his homeland against his adopted country. The Flavian dynasty is at the heart of this account, and it is not surprising that it is presented in a positive light. The proximity of Josephus to the new regime makes him a valuable witness, capable of understanding the Flavian political program, and of transmitting elements of its "official" version." Kemezis (2016) 460: "Vespasian and Titus are major characters in the *Jewish War*, and references to the dynasty and its ideology are far more frequent than in any other Greek author. The references are uniformly positive, which is not surprising given that the Flavians were in power at the time, but awkward given that Josephus had begun his career fighting against them as a rebel in Judea only to end it in Rome as their favored dependent."

More recently, Jonathan Davies argues that Josephus' description of the year of the four emperors is "a highly convenient version of events from Vespasian's perspective" and "in many ways [the] most consistently pro-Flavian" that can be found in the *BJ*.²⁷³ He highlights 1) how Josephus distorted the early chronology of the events and the ways in which this potentially exonerates Vespasian from starting a civil war; 2) Josephus' characterization of Vespasian as Galba's avenger; and 3) Josephus' emphasis on Antonius Primus and Vitellius as the scapegoats of the narrative. In regard to the last point, for example, one could argue that the overt comments in the narrative suggest that Vespasian counterbalances Vitellius' viciousness and is cherished by Josephus as a protector of the interests of the Roman people (cf. 4.588–91, 593–94, 596, 616, 630, 544, 654–56).²⁷⁴

This positive characterization of Vespasian is further backed by Thackeray's observations about potential Thucydidean allusions in the passage.²⁷⁵ According to Thackeray, Josephus invokes Thucydides' description of the naval battle between the Athenian and the Spartan fleet in Book 4 of the *Histories* (Thuc. 4.14–15). In the relevant episode, Thucydides outlines how the Spartans are defending their harbour. The Athenians inflict great damage upon them. Seeing that the Spartan fleet is losing, the Spartans standing at the shores are "greatly pained by emotion" (περιαλγούντες τῷ πάθει; compare with περιαλγήσας ... τῷ πάθει in the *BJ*). As a result, they rush forward in full armour into the sea to rescue their companions, although fortune (τύχη) is on the side of the Athenians. The tumult (θόρυβος) that follows is great, leaving the outcome unpredictable: the Spartans wage a sea fight from land and the Athenians fight a land battle from the sea. The Spartans manage to rescue some empty ships but remain stuck on the island. In Sparta, the news is received "as a great disaster" (ὡς ἐπὶ ξυμφορᾷ μεγάλῃ). The emotion felt by Vespasian when hearing of the disturbances in Rome is similar to the emotion of the Spartans when seeing how their comrades are slaughtered. Yet while the Spartans rush forward headlong without thinking about the potential consequences and the

²⁷³ Davies (2017) 182–93. Quotes are from p. 192 and p. 193.

²⁷⁴ As I have done myself, see my academia page for the unpublished paper "Josephus among the Graeco-Roman Historians Character Judgment and "Bias" in *Judaean War* 4.585–663 and its Literary Context." On Josephus' negative characterization of Vitellius, see also Davies (2017) 183–84.

²⁷⁵ See the note ad loc. in Thackeray (1927).

fortune of the Athenians on this occasion, Vespasian holds back his anger and shows awareness that fortune might turn against him. Vespasian remains in control, whereas the Spartans lose it.

But other aspects of the text might qualify the glowing picture. Steve Mason has found the potential for a more guarded picture of Vespasian in *BJ* 4.588–91 than most scholars suggest. He emphasizes aspects of Josephus' characterization that are usually overlooked, such as the remark that Vespasian is paralyzed with fear. Vespasian displays a "passive-aggressive" stance throughout the narrative: he is subject to unbearable torment, anger, and rage but is unable to act on his own initiative. Eventually, Vespasian's soldiers and officers take control of the situation and force Vespasian to accept his responsibility, threatening to kill him if he refuses (4.592–604).²⁷⁶ Mason draws a contrast between this picture of Vespasian and the autobiographical episode in the Jotapata cave, where Josephus is threatened with death by his companions (3.355–60). Josephus manages to escape by using rhetoric (3.361–82), the sheer force of his personality (3.383–86), and his characteristic inventiveness (ἐπινοια: 3.387–91).²⁷⁷ Josephus clearly comes off the better in such a comparison, which is invited by the comparable scenes of soldiers demanding what they consider brave action. This renders it unlikely that Josephus intended simply to flatter Vespasian in *BJ* 4.588–91.

Likewise, we might compare Vespasian's behaviour with that of Herod when seizing his kingdom (1.277–85). The general setting, the stakes, and the language are remarkably similar in this episode. Both Herod and Vespasian are under significant political pressure, with respectively the kingdom of Judaea and the Roman Empire at stake. Emotion management occupies a significant place in both episodes: Herod experiences strong emotions when receiving the news about the death of his brother. Vespasian experiences strong emotions when receiving the news about the disturbances in Rome. Most conspicuously, both characters are facing the unattractive prospect of having to sail the Mediterranean during winter season. Vespasian uses the winter season as an excuse not to take action, even though the fate of the entire empire is at stake. By contrast, Herod takes immediate action in spite of his emotions and the threats he faces. When he is put under

²⁷⁶ See Mason (2016a) 126. See recently also idem (2018), on the passages quoted above see pp. 221–24).

²⁷⁷ Mason (2018) 224.

military and political pressure by Antigonus and his Parthian allies, Herod realizes that he needs external help to secure Judaea. The Arabs are unwilling to help (1.274–76) and so Herod decides to retreat to Egypt. At this point, he receives the news about the death of his brother Phasaël (1.277). Herod is hurled from anxiety (φροντίς) to grief (πένθος), but nevertheless decides to march to Egypt. He sails to Rome, undeterred by the fact that it is midwinter and that there are the problems in Italy (1.279: μήτε τὴν ἀκμὴν τοῦ χειμῶνος ὑποδείσας μήτε τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν θορύβους ἐπὶ Ῥώμης ἔπλει) in order to gain Roman support against Antigonus, the Parthians, and the Arabs. Herod evades Cleopatra's impertinent request to become her general; he is almost shipwrecked and strands at Pamphylia, lacking the funds to build a new ship. He nonetheless manages to get one and sails to Brundisium, from where he finishes his journey to Rome. In Rome he makes his appeal to Mark Antony, stressing that he had “sailed midwinter to secure his protection” (1.281: διὰ χειμῶνος πλεύσειεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἰκέτης). Herod's great efforts have considerable payoff: Mark Antony pities Herod and greatly admires his virtue (ἀρετή). Caesar sees (ὁράω) his energetic disposition (δραστήριος). They lead him before the Senate and crown him king of Judaea (1.282–85). Given that Herod secures his kingdom under very similar circumstances, even if it is necessary to take risks, Herod comes off better in this remote comparison.

We might carry this comparative enterprise one step further. We have already observed that Vespasian receives the news about trouble in Rome (τάς κατὰ τὴν Ῥώμην ταραχάς) and Vitellius' becoming emperor. The stakes could not be higher, but Vespasian takes no immediate action because of the risks involved: fortune might trick him before he can cross to Italy (πολλὰ γὰρ φθᾶσαι πανουργήσασαν τὴν τύχην πρὶν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν περαιωθῆναι), especially because he would be forced to sail the Mediterranean in winter (4.591: καὶ ταῦτα χειμῶνος ὥρα πλέοντα). Vespasian accepts imperial rule only after his soldiers threaten to kill him (4.603–4) and under severe pressure by his commanders (4.605).

In what follows, Vespasian secures Egypt by dispatching a letter to the Judaeian governor Tiberius Alexander (4.616–19). He receives support from the legions in Moesia and Pannonia (4.619), and the Syrian and other provinces (4.620–21). He then travels to Antioch (4.630). Upon his arrival there, Vespasian's thoughts are disclosed by Josephus (4.631):

καὶ βουλευόμενος ποῖ τρέπεσθαι, προυργιαίτερα τῆς εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ὁρμῆς τὰ κατὰ τὴν
 Ῥώμην ἔκρινε, τὴν μὲν βέβαιον οὔσαν ὁρῶν, τὰ δ' ὑπὸ Οὐιτελλίου ταρασσόμενα.

Moreover, when considering in which direction to turn, *he judged* that going to Rome, which was thrown into disorder under Vitellius, was *more important* than a rapid motion to Alexandria, which he perceived to be *secure* already.

In brief: Rome is Vespasian's priority, not Alexandria. He decides to send his trusted general Mucianus to Rome. Josephus does not inform his audience about why Vespasian does not go himself, nor what kind of extremely important business kept him from going to Rome. Vespasian disappears from view until the end of *BJ* 4 (656–63). In turn, also Mucianus is anxious about sailing in midwinter (ὁ δὲ διὰ τὴν τοῦ χειμῶνος ἀκμὴν δείσας τὸ πλεῖν). Yet he solves the problem by travelling over land via Cappadocia and Phrygia (4.632), whereas Vespasian decided not to take action at all.

The subsequent narrative subtly underlines that Vespasian's passivity has destructive consequences in Rome. Civil war develops fully between Mucianus' departure from Antioch and his arrival in Rome. Troops led by Antonius Primus, loyal to the Flavians but acting without Vespasian's consent, battle and defeat the legions of Vitellius near Cremona. Vespasian's brother Sabinus is killed in an attempt to defend the Capitol against Vitellius. Domitian barely escapes. The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus is destroyed in the skirmishes (2.649). Only *one day later* (μετὰ μίαν ἡμέραν) Antonius' men march into the city and annihilate Vitellius' troops. Thousands are killed, and they even turn against the innocent citizens of Rome (4.650). Mucianus and his army arrive *one day* (τῇ δ' ὕστεραίᾳ) after Antonius Primus and his legions have violently captured and plundered Rome (4.654) and hence *two days* after the great clash between Sabinus' revolutionaries and Vitellius' troops (4.645–49). Josephus' emphasis on the precise chronology of the events prompts a fundamental question: would Mucianus and his troops have been able to prevent this disaster if Vespasian had not lingered and taken up his responsibilities immediately? The narrative framing

suggests that the worst of the civil war in Rome could have been prevented *if* Vespasian had acted more decisively.

The closing scene of *BJ* 4 sheds light on Vespasian's whereabouts. Vespasian receives the news of his great victory in Rome upon his arrival in — of all places — Alexandria (4.656), the city that had no priority for Vespasian because it had already been secured. Now that all the dangers and risks are removed, Vespasian suddenly makes haste to get to Rome and secure his newly acquired position (4.658). The irony is subtle but unmistakable.

In light of these considerations, it is difficult to see this narrative as unrestrained praise of Vespasian. His actions betray considerable passiveness, lack of inventiveness, and fear to take risk. The deeper meaning of Vespasian's actions becomes clear only when reading these actions in the context of similar events narrated elsewhere in the *BJ*.²⁷⁸ This stands out especially when comparing Vespasian's decisions and actions with those of other characters, such as Josephus, Herod, or Mucianus. That Josephus also structures his narrative in a manner that allows positive comparisons to be made — such as Vitellius and Thucydides' Spartans — might be explained in light of Quintilian's advice referred to in the beginning of this section. In explanation of his remark, Quintilian notes that — if done subtly — it is possible to blame the powerful “so long as what you say can be given a different interpretation” (*Inst.* 9.2.67). Setting his narrative up in an ambiguous fashion would have allowed Josephus to avoid the danger of offending the emperor (and, by extension, certain death). The immediate attention is drawn towards the contrast between vicious Vitellius and virtuous Vespasian. Yet when looking closely at Josephus' carefully spun web of narrative actions and decisions, it appears that more unconventional and urbanely critical messages are hidden underneath the surface of the narrative. When perceived in this light, we can perhaps appreciate the complexity and depth of Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ*.

²⁷⁸ In addition to Mason, Wiater (2010) 149 explores similar structures in Josephus' narrative from a narratological viewpoint in relation to the theme of civil strife: “Instead of explaining the deeper significance of the events directly to his readers, Josephus invites his recipients to discover it themselves by leading them to discover the connections and parallels between events, or series of events, on different levels of his text.”

2.4.3.3 *Emotion*

Ancient theorists distinguish between permanent characteristics (ἡθος) of an individual and his emotions (πάθος).²⁷⁹ Emotions can be influenced more easily than more permanent characteristics through external stimuli. When it comes to classical historiography, emotions displayed by and ascribed to characters by a historian may therefore provide the audience with information about their temporary mental disposition.²⁸⁰

When it comes to the *BJ*, Josephus uses emotions in a variety of manners. For instance, when attacking Gischala, Titus is aware that a direct assault of the city will end in a massacre. Thus, he shows pity (οἶκτος) towards the innocent majority inside the city and decides to offer terms first. Titus' decision points to his remarkably mild, humane, and compassionate character, something he consistently displays throughout the narrative.²⁸¹

Josephus uses Titus' emotions to delineate relatively positive character traits. Yet in many cases he tends to emphasize the destructive workings of emotions, for instance, with John Hyrcanus I (1.57–60), who is conned by his enemies because “he proved inferior to his justified emotion” (1.57: ἡττᾶτο δὲ δικαίου πάθους). This scene demonstrates an important principle underpinning the historiographical programme of the *BJ*: a statesman should be governed by reason rather than by his emotions. Even if his emotions are justified, Hyrcanus' inability to master them exemplifies a lack of self-control. In the relevant scene, Hyrcanus' mother and brother are held hostage by his brother-in-law Ptolemy in the siege of the fortress Dagon. Hyrcanus has the upper hand, but every time Ptolemy is under pressure, he tortures Hyrcanus' mother and brother in full view on the walls. This view robs Hyrcanus from his rational capacities: “*he was unmanned and completely overcome by emotion*” (1.59: ἐθηλύνετο καὶ τοῦ πάθους ὄλος ἦν). When Hyrcanus lifts the siege temporarily because of the Sabbath

²⁷⁹ On the application of emotions in Graeco-Roman history writing, see Marincola (2003) 293–94.

²⁸⁰ For a discussion of this distinction in ancient literary criticism see Gill (1984). See also Pitcher (2007) 116; De Temmerman (2014) 36; De Temmerman and Van Emde Boas (2018a) 22.

²⁸¹ Josephus, *BJ* 4.117–120, 5.450, 522; 6.115–116, 182–184, 324, 345, 383. On the potential weakness of Titus' character see Mason (2016a) 129–30.

Year, Ptolemy still decides to execute his family. Hyrcanus' emotions resulted merely in a siege that dragged on for too long.²⁸²

This is one example in the *BJ* that shows the destructive workings of passions — such as fear, hatred, envy, mistrust, and anger — when political leaders fail to control them.²⁸³ One of Josephus' favourite themes is the disruptive nature of love for a woman.²⁸⁴ Mark Antony and Herod are the most notable victims in the *BJ*. Both allow themselves to be corrupted by their love/desire (ἔρως, ἐπιθυμία, etc...) for a woman.²⁸⁵ Especially the case of Herod is deeply ironic. Herod witnessed (and realized) the destructive power of women in the case of his Roman patron Mark Antony (1.389–90). In the end, however, he falls victim to that very same power himself (1.431–44), losing control over his emotions and by consequence his rational capacities.

By contrast, Josephus portrays good statesmen as thinking and acting rationally, without capriciousness.²⁸⁶ When Herod still is his rational self in Josephus' narrative of his public career (1.204–430), he displays exactly this capability. Illustrative is Herod's response to receiving the news of the death of his brother Phasaël (1.277–85): he is hurled from anxiety to grief, but nonetheless takes the necessary action and travels to Rome. We find a similar response when Herod receives the news of the death of his brother Joseph (1.328). Herod briefly laments Joseph's death but puts aside his emotions. Proper mourning should wait for a more suitable occasion. He quickly turns to pursuing his enemies and forces his army to move at an extremely high pace. The question to what extent a character has control over his emotions is of great importance for understanding Josephus' evaluation of character in the *BJ*.

Having said this, it must be noted that the visible display of emotion is not always identical to the real feelings of a character in Josephus' narratives. In some cases, one can wonder about the

²⁸² For a discussion of this episode, see Wilker (2017). She traces the differences between Josephus' accounts of the events in the *BJ* and the *AJ*, and 1 Maccabees (pp. 73–75), explaining the former in reference to oral traditions popular during Josephus' lifetime. In addition to this, she argues that the popularity of oral traditions highlighting the heroic qualities of Simon's wife confirms her prominence as a member of the Hasmonean dynasty.

²⁸³ Van Henten and Huitink (2018) 252–53 (discussing Josephus' corpus in general).

²⁸⁴ Van Henten and Huitink (2018) 253.

²⁸⁵ E.g. Josephus, *BJ* 1.243, 359, 436, 441, 442, 444.

²⁸⁶ Mason (2016a) 112. See Chapter 3 for further discussion vis-à-vis Josephus' self-characterization.

sincerity of the emotions displayed. In ancient rhetoric, emotions were thought to add significantly to the persuasive power of a speech. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle notes that there are cases where it is useful for a speaker to present himself as being in an emotional state to arouse emotions among the audience (Aristotle, *Poet.* 17).²⁸⁷ Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian elaborate on the importance of a speaker's ability to adapt his emotions to the words of his speech: to properly move the audience, the speaker needs to be moved himself (Horace, *Ars* 101–107, Cicero, *De orat.* 2.189; Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.26).²⁸⁸ A good speaker has the ability to use emotions in a way that strategically aids to the achievement of his goals.

This also appears to be the case in the *BJ*. While Josephus does not always comment on the rhetorical purpose of emotions,²⁸⁹ in many cases they appear to carry considerable persuasive force. For instance, Agrippa II and his sister burst out in tears immediately after Agrippa has delivered an elaborate speech (2.402): “Having thus spoken he wept along with his sister, and *he stopped much of their impulse with his tears*” (Τοσαῦτα εἰπὼν ἐπεδάκρυσέν τε μετὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς καὶ πολὺ τῆς ὀρμῆς αὐτῶν ἔπαυσεν τοῖς δακρύοις).²⁹⁰ Incredibly, Agrippa II's tears have more persuasive power than his eloquent and memorable speech. Similarly, in the second part of his speech at Masada Eleazar complains *angrily* (7.341: σχετλιᾶζω) to his audience, perceiving that sentiments of pity and tears take them over. This softness might prevent them from committing suicide, as Eleazar plans them to do (7.337–39). The angry tone clearly aids him to achieve his purpose: even before the end of Eleazar's speech, his audience is filled with an *impulse* (ὀρμή) to commit suicide (7.389). It appears that the statesmen

²⁸⁷ On the latter see Russell (1981) 81–82. The idea is expressed somewhat less emphatically in Aristotle, *Rhet.* II.21.13 (1395a 23–24).

²⁸⁸ Cf. Russell (1981) 108–10. One of Longinus' main concerns in *On the Sublime* is to develop emotionally persuasive rhetoric. A means to achieve this is by using “visualisations” (φαντασίαι), enabling a speaker to vividly see and describe — *through inspiration and emotions* (ὑπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους) — what he wants to carry over to the eyes of the audience (Longinus, *Subl.* esp. 15.1ff). As Christopher Gill argues, in early Imperial literary criticism we regularly encounter the idea that *pathos* is associated with a distinctively emotional style of writing and speaking, especially in the works of Quintilian and Longinus. The latter is in explicit contrast to most notably Aristotle's work, where *pathos* is mostly associated with the emotion aroused among the audience. See Gill (1984). Aristotle recognizes an emotional style but does not elaborate about it, see *Rhet.* 1408a10–b20. See further Gill (1984) 155 and the conclusion at pp. 165–66.

²⁸⁹ But see our discussion about Josephus' own use of manipulative techniques in §3.3.2.2.

²⁹⁰ Other notable examples are Josephus' speeches, esp. *BJ* 5.420 and 6.111–12, or Eleazar's second speech at Masada (note esp. 7.339–41).

staged in the *BJ* by Josephus bring into practice the rhetorical principles and oratorical skills they were expected to have in real life.²⁹¹

2.5 Conclusions

The main purpose of this chapter has been to outline Graeco-Roman perceptions about and manners of delineating character and determine how these are important to explain Josephus' characterization practices. While far from exhaustive, my observations provide a solid point of departure for approaching Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*.

The most important results can be summarized as follows. The first section offered a discussion of Josephus' social position in first-century Rome. According to my interpretation of the available evidence (in agreement with recent scholarship), Josephus' texts assume familiarity with Graeco-Roman literary conventions (also among compatriots reading or listening to his texts). In addition to this, Josephus probably wrote from a privileged social position, although with a relative distance to the emperor and the politically powerful in Rome (except Agrippa II and his circle).

To understand Josephus' characterization practices in the *BJ*, we proposed to set up a variety of comparanda with Graeco-Roman views about and approaches to character and characterization. Graeco-Roman perceptions of character should be explained in view of the importance of rhetoric and rhetorical training in society. Graeco-Roman rhetorical training not merely provided instruction

²⁹¹ This point has significant implications for Josephus' emotional self-presentation as a historian in *BJ* 1.9–12, which scholars have frequently interpreted as a slip of the pen and an emotional outburst unique and out of place in Graeco-Roman historiography. See e.g. Weber (1921) 9–10; Lindner (1972) 113, 132–41; Villalba I Varneda (1986) 208; Bilde (1988) 73, 205–6; Mader (2000) 3–4; Price (2005) 109–11; Price (2010) 142; Hirschberger (2005) 149–50. Considering the subtlety of his characterization practices, however, we must be alert to any sign of calculation on Josephus' part. Yet because of the focus of the present investigation, it is not necessary to address this issue in depth at this point. For the tendency in Roman literature to approach society “from within,” see Otis (1967). See Fornara (1983) 105–20 and Marincola (1997) 158–59 for the possible influence of Roman emotional and engaged styles of writing on contemporary Greek historiography. On the possibility that Josephus rhetorically attempts to draw the audience into an emotional state similar to his own, see Mason (1991) 64–69; Mason (2016a) 114; less directly Mason (2020). The scholarship of Swoboda (2014; 2016; 2017) discusses arousing pity as among Josephus' central goals in the *BJ*. For the parallels between Josephus' practice and Polybius' presentation of the destruction of Corinth in *Hist.* 38.1–4, see Eckstein (1990) 182–83. For similar emotional outbursts in Graeco-Roman historiography, see Diodorus, *Lib.* 32.26.1–2, which heavily relies on Polybius but with some significant differences (cf. Sacks [1990] 140–42), and Velleius, *Hist. Rom.* 2.66–67.

but fostered moral values as well. The key to becoming a successful orator was to be a good person as well. This complex interplay between rhetoric and moral character is also fundamental for understanding the delineation of character in ancient historiography. Characters are portrayed in such a fashion that they resemble societal norms and mirror recognizable moral character types. Such tendencies are clearly identifiable in the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, but they become more explicit and didactic in Roman historiography and Greek historiography written under Rome. The historian's task is to provide judgment about characters and present them in such a way that their didactic potential is fully utilized.

These insights apply in varying degrees to Josephus' corpus, in which we must distinguish between the moralizing tendencies in the *BJ* and the *AJ*. In the *BJ*, we regularly find explicit and engaged praise and blame of individuals and groups. Yet whereas the *AJ* lends itself excellently for furnishing moral lessons, the lack of explicit didacticism in the *BJ* can perhaps be attributed to the specific compositional outlook and focus of the work. Simultaneously, like other historians, Josephus uses an extensive repertoire of rhetorical techniques and strategies to delineate characters in the *BJ* and communicate moral-didactic lessons underlying this delineation in a more subtle manner than by explicit authorial comments. Graeco-Roman historiographical and rhetorical conventions can serve as important comparative tools to unveil at least some of the principles underpinning Josephus' characterization practices. In the next chapter, these conventions will serve as the guiding principle in explaining the aims, themes, and moralizing outlook of the autobiographical passages in the *BJ*.

Chapter 3: The Moralizing Themes of Josephus' Self-Characterization in the *BJ*

3.1 Introduction

Now that the importance and use of Greek and Roman conceptions of character and characterization in the *BJ* have been established, we are in a position to appreciate Josephus' self-characterization on these terms. John Marincola's statement that "the character most on display in any history was that of the historian himself"²⁹² offers a suitable point of departure. Marincola implies that the character of historians would be judged on the basis of their works. Correspondingly, it will have been of central importance to historians to shape an authoritative narrative persona for themselves in their narratives, especially if writing about their own deeds and achievements, as Josephus does.²⁹³

The aim of this chapter is to investigate Josephus' self-characterization in the compositional context of the *BJ*. The premise developed is that Josephus' self-characterization as a general and statesman: 1) naturally arises from the historiographical outlook of the *BJ*; 2) serves to reinforce Josephus' authority as a military-political historian of the Judaeo-Roman conflict; and 3) exploits his unique experience as the military adversary of the emperor in consideration of his Roman audience. In addition to this, I suggest that the currents of civil war in the Galilee narrative and the tragic outlook of the autobiographical passages correspond to the themes Josephus develops elsewhere in the narrative.²⁹⁴ As we will see, the use of these themes allows Josephus to articulate

²⁹² Marincola (1997) 131–32.

²⁹³ Marincola makes the formal methods of such self-presentation one of the subjects of his monograph. See Marincola (1997) 175–216. For Josephus' self-presentation as narrator in the *BJ* and the *AJ*, see recently also Van Henten (2018). Van Henten particularly focuses on Josephus' methods of self-presentation in the prologues of his works and extends this to his practice throughout his narratives. See also Friis (2018), focusing on the *AJ*.

²⁹⁴ As I have observed in the introduction of this investigation, scholars have long displayed a tendency to downplay Josephus' merits as author. This is also the case pertaining to the autobiographical sections of the work. Thus, Wilhelm Weber (1921) 99 assesses the autobiographical passages (specifically those in *BJ* 3) to be a "geschlossenes Ganzes" in which "alle Fäden sind zerschnitten; alle Voraussetzungen anders; seine eigene Lage ist so dass an Zusammenhänge zwischen jenen und diesen Stücken nicht gedacht werden kann." He also argues that the contents of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* should be explained as "eine Rechtfertigungsschrift mit einer Selbstverherrlichung dank der richtigen Auslegung der Prophetie, die den

the excellence of his character and its exemplary potential in a variety of ways. On the basis of this, I argue that Josephus' self-characterization corresponds to the moral-didactic outlook of the *BJ* and is fashioned in accordance with Graeco-Roman models of exemplary leadership (cf. Chapter 2). These features can be explained in the backdrop of Josephus' attempt to enhance his status as an expert of Judaeian matters and exploit his personal experiences in Galilee in view of a local audience in Rome.

The survey of Josephus' characterization practices and its moral-rhetorical background in Chapter 2 will pave the way for examining how Josephus shapes his own character as one of the most prominent moral exempla in the *BJ*. Chapter 3 will focus on explaining the moral-didactic currents underlying Josephus' autobiographical narrative in view of the expectations of his local audience in Rome of a work of political and military history. We will investigate Josephus' self-characterization in the backdrop of the aims and themes developed throughout the *BJ* and determine how they are connected with other parts of the work. To materialize this, we will study the ways in which Josephus 1) frames the extended narrative of his personal experience in *BJ* 2–3 in such a manner that it becomes indispensable for the plot development of the narrative as a whole and his explanation of affairs in Jerusalem; 2) fashions himself as an exemplary general in Graeco-Roman fashion and a representative of the Judaeian people; 3) applies an internal policy in *BJ* 2.569–646 that enables him to conquer civil strife, thus creating the preconditions necessary for a military campaign against the Romans in *BJ* 3; 4) makes his capture by the Romans the tragic climax of the Galilee narrative while simultaneously highlighting his exemplary strength of character in spite of his misfortunes (esp. 3.392–98, 432–42); and 5) after his capture portrays himself as a mediator on behalf of Titus with great rhetorical skills and specialized knowledge of Judaeian history (5.362–423). The composite portrayal that will arise from our analysis is that Josephus portrays himself in accordance with Graeco-Roman models of exemplary leadership, though specifically adapted to the themes and aims of the *BJ*. We will explain this confidently fashioned narrative persona in light of Josephus' attempt

Leser von der Richtigkeit seiner Auffassungen und seiner Beurteilung der politischen Situationen überzeugt." Likewise, Georg Misch (1973) 322 singles out the autobiographical sections in the *BJ* as dramatic composition that "stands out from the historical work as a self-contained section of a personal character." So also e.g. Schalit (1933) 255.

to exploit his personal experiences in Galilee as opponent of the emperor Vespasian to boost his public image and social status in Rome.

A survey of existing scholarship shows the promise of such an investigation. In his attempt to explain the literary relationship between the *BJ* and the *Vita* (cf. Chapter 1), Shaye Cohen observes that Josephus' self-fashioning in *BJ* 2–3 closely corresponds to Graeco-Roman descriptions of ideal generals. He also argues that the *BJ* is systematically arranged along thematic lines (over against a chronological arrangement in the *Vita*).²⁹⁵ In her attempt to understand the links between Josephus and the society around him, Rajak takes up Cohen's observations but seeks to explain them not in terms of literary dependency on a common source. Instead, she advocates that the contrasting accounts of the civil war in Galilee in *BJ* 2 and the *Vita* are explained by the contrasting outlooks and purposes of the works.²⁹⁶

Steve Mason has taken up the question of the meaning of the Galilee narrative (*BJ* 3.1–4.120) and its function in the compositional context of the *BJ*.²⁹⁷ He does this in view of his effort to understand available evidence before making a historical reconstruction of the war in Galilee on the basis of that evidence (cf. Chapter 1). He also discusses some aspects of Josephus' self-fashioning as a Judean general in this context. Focusing on the development of plot, leading motifs, and characters, Mason observes that the Galilee narrative is an integral and substantial part of the work.²⁹⁸ He also highlights the purposeful arrangement of Josephus' account and the kind of "psychological" tactics used to draw attention to complicate the character of Judeans and Romans.²⁹⁹ In addition, Mason refers to various autobiographical sections to illustrate central thematic currents of the *BJ*.³⁰⁰

Some scholars have made important observations on the autobiographical passages in the *BJ* in their attempts to interpret other themes or motifs in the *BJ*. Most notably, Honora Chapman uses the story of Josephus' surrender in the Roman camp (*BJ* 3.392ff.) to illustrate how Josephus uses

²⁹⁵ Cohen (1979) 91–100, 232ff.

²⁹⁶ Rajak (2002) 144–73.

²⁹⁷ Mason (2016a) 358–88.

²⁹⁸ Esp. Mason (2016a) 360—70, 386–88.

²⁹⁹ Esp. Mason (2016a) esp. 386–88.

³⁰⁰ Mason (2016a) 101ff.

language of spectacle and theatre.³⁰¹ Each of these scholars offers useful comments related to aspects of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*. Collectively, their observations indicate the promise of a systematic literary examination of the moralizing currents in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*, which I will undertake in the present chapter.

To accomplish this, I propose the following plan of investigation. The first part will introduce the aims and themes of the *BJ* in dialogue with recent scholarship on the subject. The second and most substantial part will investigate how the autobiographical passages relate to this broader compositional outlook and foreground the moral-didactic currents of these passages. First, it will provide an outline of the autobiographical passages in the *BJ* and their literary context and look at the opening and closing of the autobiographical parts of the Galilee narrative. Second, it will investigate Josephus' self-characterization as Judaeen general in light of his description of other Judaeans and Judean leaders in the *BJ*. Third, it will analyse issues of civil strife and pollution in Josephus' self-characterization, focusing on *BJ* 2. It will also attempt to explain the absence of such themes in *BJ* 3. Fourth, it will consider the tragic tone of Josephus' self-characterization in *BJ* 3 and ask how this ties in with similar currents developed elsewhere in the *BJ*. Fifth, it will investigate the rhetoric and *topoi* of Josephus' speech before the walls of Jerusalem (5.362–423) in relation to his role as mediator on behalf of Titus.

3.2 Josephus as a Historian in Flavian Rome and the Aims of the *BJ*

The previous chapter discussed the importance of positioning Josephus' characterization practices in a Roman context. We observed that Josephus uses a confident tone throughout his corpus. He boasts about his influential connections on various occasions and assumes knowledge of Greek literature among his audience. This reflects his strong social position in the city of Rome and sheds light on his local audience. This observation has a significant impact on our understanding of Josephus' compositional aims with the *BJ*. Exploring these is instrumental for analysing Josephus' self-characterization.

³⁰¹ Chapman (1998) 16–17. See in more detail Chapman (2005a) 293–96.

As observed in Chapter 2, many scholars have explained the main purpose of the *BJ* in terms of Flavian propaganda. Nowadays, hardly any scholar supports the most extreme expressions of this hypothesis, such as voiced in the works of Richard Laqueur or Wilhelm Weber. Yet we also observed that many, in particular colleagues in other areas of ancient history, still consider flattery of the Flavians to be among Josephus' most important motives when writing the *BJ*. A view intrinsically connected to the hypothesis that Josephus wrote as a Flavian propagandist concerns the nature of the alleged Aramaic original of the Greek text of the *BJ*. Josephus refers twice to an Aramaic precursor that he apparently "translated" (or "changed" or "reworked")³⁰² to Greek for the purpose of reaching the inhabitants of the Roman empire (1.3, 6). Laqueur and Thackeray explained this Aramaic version as the first literary project of Josephus after his arrival in Rome under Flavian sponsorship. Thus Thackeray:

Josephus was commissioned by the conquerors to write the official history of the war for propagandistic purposes. It was a manifesto, intended as a warning to the East of the futility of further opposition and to allay the after-war thirst for revenge which ultimately found vent in the fierce outbreaks under Trajan and Hadrian.³⁰³

Even if Thackeray does not perceive the Greek version as a literal translation of the Aramaic original,³⁰⁴ he takes the Aramaic as point of departure to explain the Greek text. An example is Josephus' claim that he wrote the digression on the Roman military to deter others to revolt (3.108).³⁰⁵ The ideas of Thackeray gained considerable influence through the remainder of the twentieth century.³⁰⁶

³⁰² On the interpretation of μεταβάλλω, see Hata (1975).

³⁰³ Thackeray (1929) 27.

³⁰⁴ Thackeray (1929) 34. See also Laqueur (1920) 28.

³⁰⁵ Thackeray (1929) 28–29.

³⁰⁶ Laqueur (1920) 125–28, 255; Thackeray (1929) 27–29. So also e.g. Smith (1956) 74–5; Shutt (1961) 26; Yavetz (1975) 421; Curran (2005) 79.

Nonetheless, as has been pointed out by other scholars, this hypothesis creates more problems than it solves.³⁰⁷ First, Josephus never mentions that the Flavians commissioned this Aramaic version. Rather, he associates his translation project with his purpose to counter the pro-Roman bias of historians that have thus far written about the Judean-Roman war (1.2, 6–8). Second, it is a questionable method to interpret the purpose of Josephus' Greek composition based on a text of which no single word has been preserved. Any interpretation of the date, purposes, scope, and historical context and audience of an Aramaic work written by Josephus rests on mere speculation. Moreover, the Greek text of the *BJ* is clearly permeated with Graeco-Roman literary and historiographical traditions.³⁰⁸ These features can be satisfactorily explained only if we consider them in the context of Josephus' attempt to communicate with an audience that could appreciate such learning.³⁰⁹ Thus, the present study follows the current scholarly consensus that the Greek *BJ* is not a translation of an Aramaic propagandistic original but a new work with its own unique themes and purposes.³¹⁰

As an alternative (or sometimes in addition) to the aforementioned views, most scholars nowadays hold that Josephus produced the *BJ* as a work of political apology in which his main aim was to absolve the Judeans and especially the Judean elite (including himself) by shifting the blame for the outbreak of the revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple to a small group of brigands.³¹¹ In support of this view, scholars have put particular weight on Josephus' emotional outburst in the prologue of the *BJ* (1.10–12):

³⁰⁷ See esp. the discussions in Rajak (2002) 174–84; Mason (1991) 57–62.

³⁰⁸ In addition to the illustrative parallels highlighted in this investigation, see e.g. Ladouceur (1980); Ladouceur (1983); Ladouceur (1987); Eckstein (1990); Chapman (1998); Mader (2000); Shahar (2004); Mason (2008) *passim*; Price (2010).

³⁰⁹ The Atticizing tendencies are already recognized by Weber (1921) 13–18 and Thackeray (1929) 100–124, though they explain them differently. For the refutation of Thackeray's assistant hypothesis, see Rajak (2002) 233–236.

³¹⁰ So also e.g. Rajak (2002) 174–84; Mason (1991); Mason (2005a) 90 n.55; Tuval (2013) 92; Den Hollander (2014) 105 n.179; Mason (2016e) 15–17.

³¹¹ See e.g. Luther (1910) 15; Farmer (1956) 14; Rhoads (1976) 12, 56; Rajak (2002) 78–83; Goodman (1987) 20–21, 166–68; Bilde (1988) 77–78; S. Schwartz (1990) 15; Mason (1991) 64–67; Price (1992) 32–33, 187; McLaren (1998) 55–56; Mader (2000) 10–17; Brighton (2009) 80–81, 123, 137; Klawans (2013) 188; Tuval (2013) 97–98. The contrast with earlier scholarship is evident, note e.g. Thackeray (1929) 16, who claims that it is only *after*

ὅτι γὰρ αὐτὴν στάσις οἰκεία καθεῖλεν, καὶ τὰς Ῥωμαίων χειράς ἀκούσας καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸν [ἅγιον] ναὸν εἴλκυσαν οἱ Ἰουδαίων τύραννοι, μάρτυς αὐτὸς ὁ πορθήσας Καῖσαρ Τίτος, ἐν παντὶ τῷ πολέμῳ τὸν μὲν δῆμον ἐλέησας ὑπὸ τῶν στασιαστῶν φρουρούμενον, πολλάκις δὲ ἐκὼν τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς πόλεως ὑπερτιθέμενος καὶ διδοὺς τῇ πολιορκίᾳ χρόνον εἰς μετάνοιαν τῶν αἰτίων ... πόλιν [μὲν] γὰρ δὴ τῶν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις πασῶν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐπὶ πλείστον τε εὐδαιμονίας συνέβη προελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς ἔσχατον συμφορῶν αὐθις καταπεσεῖν. τὰ γοῦν πάντων ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἀτυχήματα πρὸς τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἡττηθῆναι δοκῶ κατὰ σύγκρισιν, καὶ τούτων αἴτιος οὐδεὶς ἀλλόφυλος, ὥστε ἀμήχανον ἦν ὀδυρμῶν ἐπικρατεῖν. εἰ δέ τις οἴκτου σκληρότερος εἴῃ δικαστής, τὰ μὲν πράγματα τῇ ἱστορίᾳ προσκρινέτω, τὰς δ' ὀλοφύσεις τῷ γράφοντι.

For civil war ruined its affairs, and the Judaeen tyrants brought on the unwilling power of the Romans and the fire on the temple — Caesar Titus, who destroyed it, is himself a witness, having throughout the entire war shown pity to the people held in subjection by the insurgents, and having often deliberately put off the conquest of a city and drawn out a siege so that those responsible might repent. Now, if someone criticises us when we speak accusingly about the tyrants or their robbers, or in lamentation over my country's misfortunes, let him make allowance for feeling contrary to the law of history. For it came to pass that our city – of all those under the Romans – advanced to the greatest prosperity and then dropped to the most extreme of disasters. Indeed, I think that all the misfortunes that happened of old are inferior in comparison to those of the Judaeans. Also, no foreigner is responsible for them, and so it is impossible to contain expressions of lamentation. But if someone is too bitter a judge for compassion, let him assign the events to history and the lamentations to him who wrote it down.

Josephus produced the *BJ* that “he shakes off the Roman fetters and becomes the historian and apologist of his nation.”

In reference to this passage, Harold Attridge emphasizes Josephus' tendency to blame the revolt on the revolutionary leaders, presumably in an effort to absolve the Judaeen elite and population as a whole.³¹² Martin Goodman finds in this passage Josephus' main historiographical purpose,³¹³ and James McLaren takes it to represent Josephus' views about the Judaeen-Roman conflict as a whole.³¹⁴ Per Bilde refers to this statement to explain the main theme of the *BJ*, namely the inconceivable disaster that happened to the Judaeen people as the consequence of the actions of a small group of revolutionaries and tyrants.³¹⁵ In light of this theme, Bilde proposes the *BJ*'s aim to be along the following lines: first, it addresses the Roman ruling class in a political-apologetic attempt to absolve the Judaeen nation and to mend the broken relationship between Romans and Judaeans. Second, it develops a theological-political interpretation of the disaster that happened to the Judaeans, addressed to Josephus' compatriots to offer an alternative to the programme of the Judaeen revolutionary party.³¹⁶

This interpretation offers various possibilities in reference to explaining Josephus' self-characterization in the compositional context of the *BJ*. In Book 2 we find a strong emphasis on the dichotomy between Josephus (as member of the Judaeen elite) and the villain and prospective tyrant John of Gischala (cf. §2.4.2 and §5.4.2). This might be perceived as inherently part of Josephus' broader apologetic argument to a Roman audience that the Judaeen ruling class (including himself) should be absolved from any responsibility for the stubborn resistance against the Romans.³¹⁷

Nonetheless, this leaves us with a variety of questions. What should we do, for example, with motifs of personal apology in the context of the *BJ* as a whole? What are we to make of Josephus' overwhelming emphasis on his virtues as a general fighting against the Romans? Explaining this collective apology to be Josephus' main purpose forces us to either leave most text of Josephus' self-

³¹² Attridge (1984) 195–96. Also Shaye Cohen classifies the *BJ* as an apologetic attempt “to the Romans for the Jews” explaining that “[n]ot all the Jews revolted, only a small band of mad fanatics” who “were in no way representative of the Jewish people or bearers of Jewish tradition.”³¹²

³¹³ Goodman (1987) 412–13; cf. 20–21.

³¹⁴ McLaren (1998) 55–56, 80–81, 88.

³¹⁵ Bilde (1988) 71–75.

³¹⁶ Bilde (1988) 75–78.

³¹⁷ Suggested in e.g. Cohen (1979). See more recently e.g. Tuval (2013) 97ff.

characterization unexplained, or it obligates us to explain the narrative as largely inconsistent with the remainder of the *BJ* (cf. Chapter 1).

Other interpretative frameworks are available. I agree with Mason that seeking to identifying a single thesis statement does not do justice to a complex and long work of classicizing military-political history.³¹⁸ Mason contends, further, that *BJ* 1.10–12 anticipates the civil war in Jerusalem led by the tyrants John and Simon, which becomes an important narrative current from Book 4 onwards *but not before*. Hence, the statement does not relate to *BJ* 1–3 and, by extension, the bulk of Josephus' self-characterization.³¹⁹

In addition to this, there are other passages in the prologue that are at least as important, which are usually not accentuated by scholars in reference to Josephus' aims with the *BJ*. He confidently frames his work as intended to educate the inhabitants of the Roman Empire about the greatest conflict of all time, in correction of existing accounts based on hearsay, flattery, or hatred (1.1–2, 6–8). Such a great subject requires a great historian, and Josephus has the character and experience equal to this task (1.3):

προυθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν, Ἑλλάδι γλώσση μεταβαλὼν ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον, ἀφηγήσασθαι, Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς, [γένει Ἑβραῖος,] ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεὺς, αὐτός τε Ῥωμαίους πολέμησας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τοῖς ὕστερον παρατυχὼν ἐξ ἀνάγκης·

I have set before myself to change into the Greek language that which I had composed earlier in my native language and sent to the Upper Barbarians for those subjected to Roman rule. I am Josephus, son of Matthias, a Hebrew, a priest from Jerusalem. At first, I waged war against the Romans and later I became a spectator out of necessity.

³¹⁸ For discussion see Mason (2016a) 208–9.

³¹⁹ Mason (2016a) 208–9.

Josephus emphasizes his background as a Judean and a foreigner elsewhere in the prologue, when he contrasts the excellence of his character and his subject with the habits of Greek historians (1.13–16). Echoing Roman stereotypes, Josephus criticizes contemporary Greeks for their disregard for matters of truth, their talkative nature, and concern for style.³²⁰ By contrast, Josephus presents — as a *foreigner* (ἄλλοφυλος) — “a memorial of virtuous achievements” (τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων) to Greeks and Romans. He has worked on the subject at great personal expense and effort (ἀναλώμασι καὶ πόνοις μεγίστοις; cf. φιλόπονος at 1.15) and will honour (τιμάω) the truth throughout his history (1.16). If the prologue of the *BJ* conveys any concrete messages, one should include among them, first, Josephus’ claim that the Judean conflict against the Romans is a pursuit worthy of investigation and, second, the emphasis on his own moral excellence as its historian. Both points are advertised from the very first sentence, and Josephus ends his work along similar lines (7.454–55). In sum, Josephus presents himself as the best possible advocate of the Judean people in the face of lies and slander in Rome.³²¹

Instead of attempting to determine a single thesis, Mason traces various overlaid structures and thematic clusters in the *BJ*.³²² He suggests that Josephus employs numerous structuring devices to frame his narrative of the Judean conflict against the Romans, such as the deliberate division in seven volumes, the use of opening and closing panels, prolepses and analepses, and ring composition.³²³ The thematic clusters that run throughout the *BJ* in different forms give the work its specific narrative colour and significance. Mason focuses on Josephus’ use of words and phrases and identifies four prominent complementary and interconnected thematic currents on this basis, although he immediately qualifies that “[d]ifferent readers would characterize *War*’s themes differently”:

³²⁰ See briefly Rajak (2001) 142–43. On Roman stereotypes about Greeks, see e.g. Wardman (1976) 1–16; Isaac (2004) 381–405.

³²¹ Mason (2016a) 95–96.

³²² Mason (2016a) 94–95, 101, 208–9.

³²³ Mason (2016a) 95–101.

By themes I mean words, phrases, and situations that reoccur in many places and lend coherence to the story, without representing a simple idea, proposition, or claim. They sustain an atmosphere, as in a novel or a film, but can be turned and twisted in complex and unexpected ways to create tension and texture. In *War* these themes are drawn from the shared language of Josephus' time ... I suggest four large thematic clusters, which are present from beginning to end and thus reveal the work's most durable fibres. (1) the character of the Judean *ethnos*; (2) familiar problems of managing a *polis* in distress; (3) tragic situations in human and inter-*polis* relations; and (4) the Jerusalem temple cult, its pollution, and purification.³²⁴

Formulating the rationale underpinning the *BJ* in terms of themes and general outlook instead of restricting ourselves to essay-like theses or propositions offers various benefits. While the themes as formulated by Mason are obviously contingent, we can use them as a sounding board to explore the different narrative currents in the autobiographical passages and their connections with other sections of the *BJ*. Additionally, they also allow us to interpret these currents as complementary rather than inconsistent with each other. In correspondence with this, and in line with the methodological propositions outlined in Chapter 1, the following will analyse Josephus' use of vocabulary, phrases, and literary motifs in an attempt to explain his self-characterization in the context of the broader thematic outlook of the composition as a whole.³²⁵

3.3 The Composition of Josephus' Self-Characterization

3.3.1 Josephus' Self-Characterization: Outline and Compositional Framing

An outline of the structures and focal points of Josephus' self-characterization will help to connect them with the broader compositional context of the *BJ*. It will also show how his framing of his autobiographical narrative underscores the significance of his personal story for the development of

³²⁴ Mason (2016a) 101, elaborated at pp. 101–30.

³²⁵ On the thematic arrangement of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in Galilee, see already Cohen (1979) 235. See in more detail below.

the narrative as a whole and Josephus' explanation of why the Judaeans persisted to fight the Romans.

The autobiographical sections are scattered over *BJ*'s seven volumes, but most relevant passages can be found in *BJ* 2 and 3. Josephus is introduced in the narrative close to the end of Book 2, as the general appointed to defend Galilee. The autobiographical passages encountered in books 2 and 3 can be separated in three thematically arranged parts.³²⁶ The first focuses on Josephus' political and military organization of the region and his successful attempt to stay on top of civic struggles (2.569–646). The second concentrates on Josephus' brave but ultimately futile defence of the region against the Roman invasion led by Vespasian (3.1–339), with a special emphasis on the siege of Jotapata (3.141–339). The third narrates the story of Josephus' surrender to the Romans and its impact on the Judaeian cause (3.340–442).³²⁷ The remainder of this chapter argues that Josephus uses distinctive themes in each of these parts, though each of these themes is tuned towards the broader historiographical outlook of the *BJ*.

In addition to reminders of his building achievements (3.464; 4.9, 56), Josephus features occasionally in the narrative after his defeat at Jotapata.³²⁸ In Book 4 we read about his release by Vespasian (4.622–29). After his release, Josephus acts as a mediator between the Romans and the

³²⁶ For the observation that Josephus' autobiographical story is arranged thematically, see Cohen (1979) 235 (and *passim*): "The Galilean narrative was constructed around two themes: Josephus the ideal general and Josephus the conqueror of sedition. Josephus the ideal general established a Galilean judicial system, won the loyalty of the populace, fortified the cities, recruited and drilled a large army. His troops were not brigands or Galilean peasants but well-trained and well-behaved professionals. Since a general of this caliber could not be troubled with small encounters and minor skirmishes, the fighting did not begin until Josephus (in *BJ* 3) confronted Placidus, a lieutenant of Vespasian. Soon the inevitable confrontation took place between the two ideal generals, the Roman and the Jew. Josephus embellished the account with some ingenious tricks which he cribbed from a poliorketic manual. Josephus the conqueror of sedition was opposed primarily by John of Gischala. John was from the start an unscrupulous brigand and there was no possibility of cooperation between him and our hero. He embarked on a series of attempts to kill or remove Josephus: the Dabaritta affair, the episode at Tiberias, and the delegation from Jerusalem. Josephus also had to overcome the revolts of Tiberias and Sepphoris. This theme is really part of the portrait of Josephus as an ideal general because ideal generals should know how to escape from difficult situations and should behave mildly towards opponents."

³²⁷ Mason proposes a (more general) tripartite division of the Galilee narrative, see Mason (2016a) 358. He divides the narrative into three "acts": *BJ* 3.1–444; 3.445–542; 4.1–120. I largely agree with Mason's proposal but consider 3.442 the closing of the first "act" for reasons I shall consider in more detail below.

³²⁸ So also Rajak (2002) 155–56; Marincola (1997) 199.

Judaeans (5.114, 261, 325–26; 5.541–47; 6.118, 365). In this role, he delivers two elaborate speeches before the walls of Jerusalem (5.361/375–423; 6.94–113). He reappears in the closing paragraphs of the *BJ* (7.448), where he is falsely accused of involvement in a revolt led by the *Sicarius* Jonathan of Cyrene. Vespasian (7.437–53) absolves Josephus from any guilt immediately.

A cursory analysis of the contents of the autobiographical passages shows a general thematic continuity with their immediate literary contexts. The episode at the end of *BJ* 2 relates Josephus' struggles to take control of Galilee (2.569–646). He is frequently forced to deal with local resistance and strife. Most problems can be ascribed to John of Gischala's vicious quest to remove him (e.g. 2.585–94, 2.614–31). This coincides with the general setting sketched in *BJ* 2, which is dominated by civil tension and banditry in Judaea.³²⁹

The second volume begins with a description of civic disorder and succession struggles, breaking out in Judaea immediately after the death of Herod the Great, with Archelaus' failed attempt to keep unrest in check (2.1–118). It is in this context that we find the reoccurrence of bandits, beginning with Judas terrorizing the countryside of the Galilee (2.56). In what follows Josephus elaborates on the increasing tensions between Roman procurators and the Judaeans populace (2.272–83, 293–308, 330–35). Judaeans aristocrats and other notables, especially Agrippa II (2.336–407), attempt to prevent conflict between Judaea and Rome. After Agrippa II's withdrawal to his kingdom, a significant increase of revolutionary and tyrannical activity can be observed (2.408–56). Special attention is given to *polis* conflicts between Judaeans and non-Judaeans, with disturbances in Caesarea, (2.266–70, 284–92, 457) Syrian cities (2.458–65), Scythopolis (2.466–76), Syrian cities again (2.477–80), Alexandria (2.487–98), and Damascus (2.559–61). Civic unrest *even* (καί) occurs in Agrippa's kingdom (2.481–83).

Shortly before Josephus' appointment in Galilee we learn of the increasing influence obtained by Zealot leader Eleazar (2.564–65), who would eventually become one of the tyrants responsible for dragging Jerusalem in civil war. Josephus' struggles to gain control over the different *poleis* in Galilee as the result of John of Gischala's vicious scheming, the second prospective tyrant,

³²⁹ For a comprehensive overview of the contents of the *BJ*, see Bilde (1988) 65–70. Also Mason (2016a) 97–98.

can be viewed in continuation of this.³³⁰ Josephus closes the second volume by transitioning from the end of civic uproar (2.647: κινήματα) in Galilee to affairs in Jerusalem, Acrabata, and Idumaea (2.647–54). This brief interlude focalizes Ananus' attempts to change Judaeian policy towards the Romans (2.651) and his struggles to get rid of the third prospective tyrant: Simon bar Giora (2.652–54). In view of this outline, significant thematic continuity can be discerned between Josephus' self-characterization in the book and its general themes.

We rarely encounter traces of civic unrest in *BJ* 3. Instead, Josephus puts the conflict between Judaea and Rome in full view. The setting is one of warfare, even if there is not much fighting except in Jotapata.³³¹ Josephus turns first to Rome and Nero's considerations for dispatching Vespasian to Galilee (3.1–8). He continues by narrating several smaller skirmishes in Judaea (3.9–28), Flavian preparations for campaigning in Galilee (3.29–34, 64–69), and the first military altercations in the region (3.59–63). Josephus furnishes his audience with extensive digressions about the geographical setting of the conflict (3.35–58) and the Roman military (3.70–109). We find an elaborate description of the Roman conquest of Galilee (3.110 ff.), which proceeds until well in *BJ* 4 with the conquest of Gamala and Gischala (4.1–120). The brave Judaeian defence of Jotapata (3.141–339) under Josephus' outstanding supervision and its aftermath (3.340–91, 392–408, 410–11, 432–42) occupies a central place in this setting.³³² In other words, also the autobiographical passages in *BJ* 3 illustrate Josephus' care to provide thematically coherent volumes and his effort to ensure that his self-characterization is not out of place in its immediate literary context.³³³

This is also noticeable when looking at the openings and closings of the autobiographical sections in *BJ* 2–3. Josephus introduces himself on occasion of the decision of the Jerusalem leaders to appoint generals responsible for the defence of different regions in the country immediately after the Judaeians have defeated Cestius Gallus (2.562–68). Particular attention is drawn to Joseph son of

³³⁰ On John's viciousness and ambitions, see 2.585–94. For the revolts in the Galilee *poleis*, see 2.595–613 (Tarichaeae); 2.614–25, 632–44 (Tiberias); 2.629 (Sepphoris, Gabara, Gischala, Tiberias); 2.645–46 (Tiberias and Sepphoris).

³³¹ As observed in Mason (2016a) 358ff.

³³² With digressions to the conflict around Japha (3.289–306) and at Mount Gerizim (3.307–15)

³³³ For a more elaborate discussion of this "first act" in Galilee (and its overlaps and differences with the *Vita*), see Mason (2016a) 360–70.

Gorion and Ananus the high priest as ultimately responsible of the defence in Jerusalem at the expense of Eleazar, the initial leader of the Zealots and tyrant in the making (2.564–65). We then read about the appointment of generals for other parts of the country, including Josephus as the general responsible for both parts of Galilee and the city of Gamala (2.568). This arrangement allows Josephus to switch focus from affairs in Jerusalem to Galilee (2.569):

Τῶν μὲν οὖν ἄλλων στρατηγῶν ἕκαστος ὡς εἶχεν προθυμίας ἢ συνέσεως διώκει τὰ πεπιστευμένα· Ἰώσηπος δὲ εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ἐλθὼν ῥῶτον ἐφρόντισεν τῆς εἰς ἑαυτὸν εὐνοίας τῶν ἐπιχωρίων, εἰδὼς ὅτι ταύτῃ πλείστα κατορθώσει, καὶ τὰλλα διαμαρτάνῃ

Thus, each of the other generals managed what was entrusted to him to the best of his ardour and intelligence. As for Josephus, when he arrived in Galilee, he made sure to first secure himself of the goodwill of the local people, perceiving that success mostly depended on this even when other things would fail.

This smooth transition marks the beginning of a different storyline: Josephus indeed encounters many setbacks when trying to prepare Galilee for the impending Roman invasion. However, as he had hoped, on one occasion the people of Galilee flock together in Josephus' defence with the intention of attacking his adversaries (2.622–23; also in Jerusalem: 2.630–31). In view of this plot development, *BJ* 2.569 subtly underlines Josephus' foresight. Yet, by noting that Josephus was only one of the Judaeans generals, the passage also situates the storyline into broader Judaeans affairs.

Likewise, the closing of the Jotapata panel makes Josephus' surrender to the Romans a focal point in the development of the Judaeans-Roman conflict as a whole (3.432–42).³³⁴ News of the tragedy of Jotapata and especially the rumour that Josephus is among those killed during the siege plunges Jerusalem into a state of mourning (3.432–37). Yet when the rumours about Josephus turn

³³⁴ Scholars usually take this passage as evidence that Josephus faced various accusations in Jerusalem and Judaea for his dubious choice to side with the Romans. E.g. Thackeray (1929) 50; Lindner (1972) 55 n.2; Cohen (1979) 229; Bilde (1988) 181; Gray (1993) 41; Gussmann (2008) 240–41; Den Hollander (2014) 8–9, 92 n.116. For potential Vergilian influence on Josephus' description of this scene, see Thackeray (1929) 118–19.

out to be fake and it becomes clear that he is not only alive but among the most privileged prisoners of the Romans, the mood in Jerusalem changes drastically (3.438). Josephus is accused of cowardice and treachery, and the city is filled with vexation against him (3.439). The narrator explains the situation along the following lines (3.440–41):

παρωξύνοντο δὲ ταῖς πληγαῖς καὶ προσεξεκαίοντο ταῖς κακοπραγίαις· τό γε μὴν πταίνειν, ὃ γίνεται τοῖς εὖ φρονούσιν ἀσφαλείας καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων φυλακῆς αἴτιον, ἐκείνοις κέντρον ἑτέρων ἐγίνετο συμφορῶν, καὶ τὸ τέλος αἰεὶ τῶν κακῶν αὐθις ἀρχή· μᾶλλον γοῦν ὥρμων ἐπὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὥς καὶ Ἰώσηπον ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀμυνόμενοι.

They [the people of Jerusalem] were provoked by strokes of calamity and inflamed by failures. Indeed, a mistake induces caution among the moderate and guards them for causing something similar to happen, but it produced a spur to further disasters for [the people in Jerusalem], and the end of evils was always the beginning of the next. They were stirred up even more against the Romans because they thought that by taking revenge on them, they would also take it on Josephus.

By making the end (τέλος) of the Jotapata story the beginning (ἀρχή) of evils in Jerusalem, Josephus entrenches his autobiographical narrative in his larger explanatory scheme of the Judaeen war against the Romans.³³⁵ This impression is confirmed when we look at other passages that highlight the strategic importance of Josephus for the Judaeen cause as a whole (3.143–44, 200, 340, 347–48), or his remark at the end of the Galilee narrative that the Roman campaign in the region had prepared the Romans for what was to come in Jerusalem (4.120).

To sum up, this outline of autobiographical narrative in the *BJ* 2–3 suggests that Josephus made a serious effort to thematically connect it to its immediate narrative context. Moreover, Josephus' framing of the autobiographical sections in *BJ* 2–3 shows how he attempts to make his

³³⁵ The “beginning of evils” motif appears already in Homer and Herodotus. For the idea to look into the literary motif of “beginning of evils” I am indebted to a lecture by Irene de Jong, “The ‘beginning of evils’ in Herodotus’ *Histories*”, delivered at the CRASIS Ancient World Seminar on 18 June 2019 at the University of Groningen.

personal story significant for the plot development of the narrative as a whole and his explanation of the Judaeen-Roman conflict.

3.3.2 Josephus as a Political and Military Leader

In the context of this narrative framework, Josephus often boasts about his own virtues and attempts to present himself as a great general. This point has frequently been observed by scholars. James McLaren classifies the autobiographical passages as “a colourful description of [Josephus’] prowess in outwitting the Romans at Jotapata and in gaining the respect of the Galilean population.”³³⁶ More recently, Michael Tuval notes that Josephus makes the point that he was an excellent general in many words and on numerous occasions.³³⁷

To date, Shaye Cohen’s *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* contains the most systematic discussion of the subject, although this discussion focuses on the discrepancies between Josephus’ self-portrayals in the *BJ* and the *Vita*. In this context, Cohen observes that “Josephus displays his greatness by portraying himself as the ideal general” matching Graeco-Roman ideals as outlined by Cicero and Onasander.³³⁸ Cohen’s observations will serve as a point of departure for my examination of Josephus’ self-characterization as ideal general in Graeco-Roman fashion. Yet instead of focusing on explaining the discrepancies between the *BJ* and the *Vita*, as Cohen did, the following section focuses on Josephus’ self-fashioning as a character in the literary context of the *BJ*.

3.3.2.1 Josephus as a Representative of Judaeen Values

As previously observed, some scholars have put a strong emphasis on how Josephus introduces themes of civil strife and disaster in the prologue of the *BJ* and develops these in subsequent the subsequent. There has been significantly less attention to the potential significance of Josephus’ magnification of the Judaeen-Roman conflict and his promise to highlight the virtuous achievements of both Romans and Judaeans. In his 2016 monograph, Mason provides the outlines

³³⁶ McLaren (1998) 53.

³³⁷ See Tuval (2013) 95–96.

³³⁸ Cohen (1979) 91–98. Referred to but not questioned in e.g. Rajak (2002) 159; S. Schwartz (1990) 7–8; Mason (1991) 358; Mader (2000) 8; Tuval (2013) 96; Den Hollander (2014) 159.

of this theme and highlights its importance for Josephus' characterization of Judaeans in the *BJ*.³³⁹ The following section offers a brief survey of this theme based on Mason's observations, before using it to explain Josephus' autobiographical passages of the *BJ*.

In true Thucydidean fashion, Josephus puts the importance of his subject on central display at the beginning and the end of the prologue (1.1–16).³⁴⁰ He calls it “the greatest war ... that has ever broken out between cities and nations” (1.1: πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον ... ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἐθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων) and “the greatest possible political uproar” (μέγιστου ... τοῦ κινήματος).³⁴¹ Elsewhere he presents his work “a memorial of great achievements” (1.16: τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων). In correction of other historians who have merely highlighted the greatness of the Romans (1.7: μεγάλους τοὺς Ῥωμαίους) or bullied (καταβάλλουσιν) and disparaged (ταπεινοῦσιν) the Judaeans, Josephus points out that Roman greatness can be understood only when considering the achievements (κατόρθωμα) of their Judaeian enemy. This explains why it took the Romans so long to conquer Jerusalem, and why they sent such an impressive force with the greatest generals to command it (1.8). The challenge the Judaeans posed to the Romans must have been formidable.³⁴²

Josephus' use of the Greek term κατόρθωμα — which can be translated as “virtuous achievements” or “successes” — is potentially significant. Aristotle distinguishes between having good fortune (εὐτύχημα) and obtaining success (κατόρθωμα). He explains the former as pure luck and the latter as deliberate excellence (*Mag. Mor.* 1199A: εὐβουλία). So too, Plutarch explains Alexander's conquest on the basis of his good fortune (εὐτύχημα) and “his brilliant achievements through irresistible daring and purpose” (*On the Fortune of the Romans* 326A: κατορθώμασι λαμπροῖς ὑπὸ θάρσους ἀμάχου καὶ φρονήματος).³⁴³ Diodorus uses κατόρθωμα in reference to the benefit of teaching (διδασκαλία) through history (*Lib.* 1.1.2): history enables the audience to get a comprehension about

³³⁹ E.g. Mason (2016a) 101–6, 208–17.

³⁴⁰ That is, before providing a summary of his investigation from 1.17–30.

³⁴¹ For an exegesis of the Thucydidean currents in the first sentence of the *BJ*, see Price (2010).

³⁴² Yet Josephus promises to give a balanced account of Roman and Judaeian virtue (1.9): “I surely will not distinguish the deeds of my compatriots in envious strife against those who magnify those of the Romans, but I will go through the actions of both sides with accuracy.” Cf. Mason (2016a) 95–96.

³⁴³ Trans. Babbitt LCL, with adaptations See also Plutarch, *On the Fortune and the Virtue of Alexander* 326E.

the “failures and successes of others” (τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἀποτευγμάτων τε καὶ κατορθωμάτων) without having to experience the evils themselves.

Although the term is multivalently used by Josephus, he also puts an emphasis on the disparity of unexpected fortune and virtuous achievements in the narrative of Sabinus the Syrian. He adds the generalizing note that fortune envies virtuous enterprises and “always hinders incredible achievements” (κωλύουσιν αἰεὶ τὰ παράδοξα τῶν κατορθωμάτων).³⁴⁴ Even though unexpected reversals of fortune and the divine are given a prominent place in the *BJ* (as in many other histories written in Greek or Latin), by presenting his history as focused on the κατόρθωμα of the Judaeans, Josephus implies that his people have impressive virtues that deserve treatment.

Accordingly, motifs of Judaeans courage and bravery predominate much of the narrative action in the *BJ*.³⁴⁵ In the first volume Josephus ascribes courage and contempt of death to the Hasmonaeans (e.g. 1.42–43, 45, 50–53, etc.).³⁴⁶ He makes the Judaeans king Herod a paragon of virtue (1.204–400) and extensively praises Herod’s unparalleled strength of mind and body at the midpoint of the narrative (1.428–30). In Book 2 Josephus makes the Essene philosophers the hallmark of Judaeans toughness, describing this group in terms of Spartan qualities (esp. 2.151–58).³⁴⁷ While the Essenes are superior to the Judaeans like the Spartans to other Greeks, bravery and contempt for death (θανάτου καταφρόνησις) are qualities innate to Judaeans character in general (e.g. 5.315, 337–43, 458, 478, 484, 493–94). Josephus even recognizes such qualities in Simon bar Giora and John of

³⁴⁴ Compare with e.g. Polybius, *Hist.* 15.15.5; 31.30.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 3.19.6; Plutarch, *Aem.* 22.9.2.

³⁴⁵ Josephus frequently singles out the excellence of individual characters who do not play a major role in his narrative, recognizing examples of Roman bravery (e.g. *BJ* 5.312–14, 340–41; 6.81–91, 161–63, 187) and he puts cases of Roman and Judaeans bravery alongside each other on multiple occasions (3.152–54; 268; 6.148, 159). Yet most of Josephus’ praise concentrates on Judaeans individuals and groups, sometimes even at the expense of frightened and undisciplined Roman legions. Cf. Mason (2016a) 103–6. Examples noted by Mason are *BJ* 3.471; 5.55–58, 76–79, 86–87, 109–27, 285–88, 291–95, 322–30, 336–41, 466–72, 480–85, 490, 548–61; 6.9–14, 31–38, 88–89, 169–71, 179, 190, 252, 257, 260.

³⁴⁶ There is also balance here: e.g. the exemplary leader John Hyrcanus I shows to be manipulatable on account of the love he has for his family (1.57–60). See in more detail Chapter 2.

³⁴⁷ On the Spartan qualities of the Essenes, see Mason (2007). More briefly Mason (2016a) 104.

Gischala (2.590; 4.503),³⁴⁸ or the fighters loyal to them (6.92).³⁴⁹ In desperate situations Judaeans have a tendency towards senseless daring and suicide (e.g. 1.312–13, 4.424; 5.85–90; 7.389–401). But mostly Judaeans' determination proves to be a formidable challenge (1.349–50; 5.274, 287, 306, 315, 484–85; 6.153, 170–71), causing the Romans to admire their enemies (1.148; 5.121; 6.12–14; 7.406). In short, Josephus makes Judaeans' toughness and bravery a central *topos* in his narrative.³⁵⁰

Similar motifs feature prominently in Josephus' description of the events in Galilee, especially in Book 3. In the geographical digression we read that because of the favourable natural circumstances, the Galileans “are *fit for war* from birth and there are always many of them: cowardice never inhibited the men nor was the country short of men” (3.42: μάχιμοί τε γὰρ ἐκ νηπίων καὶ πολλοὶ Γαλιλαῖοι πάντοτε, καὶ οὔτε δειλία ποτὲ τοὺς ἄνδρας οὔτε λιπανδρία τὴν χώραν κατέσχευεν). In the narrative that follows, Josephus highlights Galilean bravery in battle on various occasions. For instance, in the early skirmishes the inhabitants of Jotapata show themselves to be ready for combat and fired up to resist the danger that threatens their city, women, and children (3.112). The desperation of being besieged by the Romans generates a conspicuous daring (τόλμα) among the Judaeans (3.149; cf. e.g. 3.152–53, 208–12, 268). We are informed about Eleazar the son of Sameas — a Judaeans' native of Saba in Galilee whose actions are “worthy of memorial” (3.229: μνήμης ἄξιος)³⁵¹ — and the display of excellence (ἄριστος) by the Galilean brothers Netiras and Philip (3.233). Romans also recognize the excellence of the Judaeans. Vespasian perceives that he needs to intensify the siege to meet the challenge of Judaeans' daring (3.161). He also tells his legions that desperation is the source of the *extreme bravery* (ἀλκιμώτερον) currently displayed by the Judaeans (3.209). Thus, bravery and courage feature centrally in Josephus' description of fighting between Judaeans and Romans in Galilee.

³⁴⁸ John recognizes that Josephus admires his enterprising character (δραστήριον), and Simon is said to “excel [John] in physical strength and daring” (ἀλκῇ δὲ σώματος καὶ τόλμῃ διαφέρων).

³⁴⁹ Cf. Mason (2016) 105–6.

³⁵⁰ Swoboda (2014) examines the motif of death and dying in Josephus extensively.

³⁵¹ During his fearless display, Eleazar, carrying no armour, takes five arrows in his unprotected body. Note the ironical contrast with the subsequent scene: Titus and the Roman legions are panic-struck when they see that Vespasian has been hit by one arrow, causing a superficial wound in his foot (*BJ* 3.236–39).

As the general appointed to command the daring Judaeans in Lower and Upper Galilee (2.568), one would expect Josephus to epitomize the same character. Josephus indeed shows himself to be an exemplary leader with outstanding martial virtue.³⁵² The most conspicuous proof of his bravery is given shortly before the fighting at Jotapata reaches its climax, when Josephus overturns his decision to depart from the city. On this occasion, Josephus gives a blistering speech that spurs his soldiers to die a glorious death (3.204):

μένειν τε ἔγνω, καὶ τὴν κοινὴν τῆς πόλεως ἀπόγνωσιν ὀπλίσάμενος, “νῦν καιρός,” εἰπὼν,
 “ἀρχεσθαι μάχης, ὅτ’ ἐλπίς οὐκ ἔστι σωτηρίας· καλὸν εὐκλειαν ἀντικαταλλάξάμενον τοῦ βίου
 καὶ δράσαντά τι γενναῖον εἰς μνήμην ὀψιγενῶν πεσεῖν,”

He therefore decided to stay, and to make the general despair of the city into a weapon:
 “now is the time,” he said, “to start combat, when there is no hope of deliverance. It is
 honourable to exchange life for glory and to fall when accomplishing something noble
 for the memory of future generations!”³⁵³

Josephus brings his own words into practice and puts his life in hazard by leading his men in daring raids (3.205–6):

ἐπ’ ἔργα τρέπεται. καὶ προελθὼν μετὰ τῶν μαχιμωτάτων διεσκίδνα τε τοὺς φρουροὺς καὶ
 μέχρι τοῦ στρατοπέδου τῶν Ῥωμαίων κατέτρεχεν, καὶ τὰς μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν χωμάτων δέρρεις, αἶς
 ὑπεσκήνουν, διέσπα, τοῖς δὲ ἔργοις ἐνέβαλλεν πῦρ. τῇ θ’ ἐξῆς ὁμοίως καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ καὶ ἐπὶ
 συχνὰς ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτας πολεμῶν οὐκ ἔκαμνεν.

³⁵² Pace Marincola (1997) 215, who claims that Josephus’ actions do not deserve superlative treatment because they are hardly backed up by the narrative.

³⁵³ Hirschberger (2005) 158–59 notes a potential literary borrowing to Hector’s speech before his last stance against Achilles (*Illiad* 22.304–5).

He turned to action. He leaped forward with his best fighting men and scattered the guards, ravaged the Roman camp, tore up the tent skins on the riverbank under which they were hiding, and set fire to the siege works. He continued to fight like this without growing weary on the next day, and on the third, and for many days and nights.

Note Josephus' use of the historical present and third person singular *τρέπεται*. This form makes it seem as if Josephus' past actions are conducted in the present and indicates their decisiveness and urgency. While in most scenes Josephus highlights the bravery of the Judaeans collectively, he now focuses attention on himself as the one leading his men into battle, *even though* he is accompanied with his best fighters.³⁵⁴ This focus is maintained throughout the scene by the use of singular participles: "after *he* came forward" (*προελθών*), "*he* scattered" (*διεσκίδνα*) the guards, "*he* ravaged" (*κατέτρεχεν*) the Roman camp, "*he* tore up" (*διέσπα*) the tent skins, "*he* put" (*ἐνέβαλλεν*) the siege works to fire, "*he* did not grow weary" (*οὐκ ἔκαμνεν*) and kept up the fighting for days. Josephus does not provide any overt comment about his actions, but clearly puts his own bravery and courage on central display in this scene. His actions speak for themselves.

A similar example occurs immediately after the Romans breach the wall of Jotapata, though it is much more subtle than the previous example. Josephus reorganizes the defence and distributes the strongest fighters in groups to defend the places where the wall is broken. Six men are chosen to lead the different groups. Josephus is among them: "he himself had also been appointed by lot to fight in the frontline" (3.258: *καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὸ προκινδυνεύειν ἐκλήρωσατο*). The remark is made casually, but it is nonetheless important. The Greek verb *προκινδυνεύω* has the connotation of being the first to engage in battle and bear the danger of the fighting before or on behalf of the others (e.g., Thuc. 1.74.4; Xenophon, *Anab.* 7.3.31). In the scene that follows, the narrator notes how especially those fighting in the frontline suffered in the combat (*BJ* 3.268–70). Even if he does not significantly

³⁵⁴ Where one would normally expect an aorist. On the historical present see e.g. Von Fritz (1949), comparing Xenophon's use of the historical present with Caesar's Latin use; Rijksbaron (2002) 22–25. Also Thucydides makes frequent use of this historical present, see esp. Lallot et al (2011). For a brief discussion of the historical present, see Van Emde Boas et al (2018) 430–31. It is also employed frequently in Greek tragedy. Compare also Julius Caesar, whose Latin is full of similar uses of the historical present, e.g. *BC* 1.6.8.

elaborate about it, Josephus subtly indicates that he displayed exceptional courage and risked his life in battle, more than most of his (already brave and tough) compatriots.

Josephus not only displays courage himself but is a source of inspiration for others. For instance, the Judeans beg Josephus to stay “because they depend upon him alone” (3.193: ἐπ’ αὐτῷ μόνῳ κειμένους) and “no one would have the daring to stand up against the enemy as no one would continue to resist the enemy if the one inspiring their boldness would be gone” (3.196: μηδενὸς ἔτι τοῖς πολεμίοις τολμώντος ἀνθίστασθαι, δι’ ὃν ἂν θαρσοῖεν οἰχομένου). This is backed up by the narrative that follows. As I have already discussed, Josephus decides to stay, gives a blistering speech, and starts raiding the Roman camp (3.204–6). The Roman general Vespasian recognizes that he fights men willing to die (3.208: θανατῶσιν ἀνθρώποις). In the battle that follows, the Judeans fight the Romans “without taking care of their soul and body” (3.212: καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀφειδούντες). It is left unsaid that Josephus inspired them to do so.

Josephus’ courage and toughness are acknowledged even by his enemies. In the elaborate story of his surrender, Josephus’ old friend Nicanor ensures him that he is more admired than hated among the Roman commanders because of his virtue (3.347: δι’ ἀρετὴν).³⁵⁵ When Josephus decides to hand himself over to Nicanor, his compatriots crowd around him and urge him to take his own life, exclaiming that if he fails to do so his reputation of courage (δόξαν ἀνδρείας) will prove to be fake (3.358). The point is made in polemic against Josephus, but it confirms his current reputation among his compatriots. Immediately after Josephus’ surrender, Titus is said to admire his endurance in misfortunes (3.396: τό τε καρτερικὸν ἐν ταῖς συμφοραῖς). Josephus uses the Greek word καρτερικὸν rarely in the *BJ*. Yet observe how he describes Judean motivation during the siege of Jerusalem as caused by “their innate endurance in misfortunes” (5.306: τὸ φύσει καρτερικὸν ἐν συμφοραῖς). Josephus’ innate toughness is typically Judean.³⁵⁶

In short, Josephus makes the greatness of the Judean-Roman conflict a focal point of his history. He gives special attention to the numerous occasions in which Judeans display their characteristic courage, toughness, and contempt for death. He ascribes similar character traits to

³⁵⁵ On some of the rhetorical tropes of this passage, see Mason (2016a) 124; Mason (2018) 205–6.

³⁵⁶ See also Titus’ speech (*BJ* 6.34–53 at 38) in which he compares Roman innate training for war and accustomedness to victory in battle with Judean forbearance (μακροθυμία) and endurance (καρτερικόν).

himself as general of the Judaeans appointed to organize the defence in Galilee. By doing so, he makes himself an important representative of Judaeian values.

3.3.2.2 *Josephus as a Judaeian Statesman and General*

Thus far I have argued that Josephus personifies the character innate to the Judaeians. However, to be a successful general one needs qualities other than toughness and bravery. Josephus shows himself to represent not merely the character of the Judaeian people but more specifically the values of the Judaeian aristocracy. As I will show in the following section, he presents these Judaeian values in terms of the character types that would have been recognizable for readers steeped in Greek and Latin literature (cf. §2.4.2).

Shaye Cohen has examined some of Josephus' most important character traits in the *BJ* in view of Graeco-Roman discourses of leadership. He suggests that Josephus must have been familiar with Graeco-Roman models of military leadership as described in the works of Cicero and Onasander and portrayed himself in accordance with these models.³⁵⁷ According to Cohen, Josephus' self-characterization closely resembles descriptions of the ideal general by Cicero and Onasander, an older contemporary of Josephus.³⁵⁸ This becomes clear from the description of his actions as general at the beginning of the Galilee narrative (2.569–84), where Josephus establishes his *innocentia*³⁵⁹ or εὐνοία.³⁶⁰ In the civil war in Galilee (2.585–647) he emphasizes his *humanitas* and *ingenium*. During the siege of Jotapata Josephus displays his *virtus bellandi* and *ingenium* (3.141–339) through the many stratagems that enable him to defend Jotapata for 47 days. The various tricks employed by Josephus are examples from the book.³⁶¹ His surrender story emphasizes his *felicitas*

³⁵⁷ Cohen (1979) 92.

³⁵⁸ The paragraph below, including the Latin terminology, largely depends on Cohen's analysis. See Cohen (1979) 91–97, devoting special attention to the Cicero parallel. Cohen refers to Cicero, *Leg. man.* 13.36; Onasander, *Strat.* 1.1, 2.2.

³⁵⁹ Cohen's comparison concentrates on Cicero's description, which is why he uses Latin to describe Josephus' self-characterization.

³⁶⁰ On εὐνοία in Josephus' autobiographical narrative in the *BJ* see also Cohen (1979) 70.

³⁶¹ See especially the military handbook of Josephus' contemporary Frontinus. See Cohen (1979) 95–96. On Josephus and Frontinus' *exempla* see Mason (2001) xx–xxi and briefly Mason (2016d) 100.

(3.340–91).³⁶² Using Cohen’s observations as a point of departure, the following section suggests how Josephus’ self-fashioning as a general is specifically tuned towards the broader compositional context of the *BJ*.

Some scholars have explained Josephus’ strong emphasis on divine agency in the *BJ* as an emphatically Judaeon feature.³⁶³ Yet Graeco-Roman models of leadership provide ample comparative material that potentially sheds light on this aspect of Josephus’ self-portrayal. Particularly interesting are Xenophon’s reflections on the importance of piety in the *Cyropaedia*. Xenophon provides a highly philosophical and idealized picture of Cyrus the Great as paradigmatic leader and his quest to achieve ultimate happiness/prosperity (εὐδαιμονία).³⁶⁴ In *Cyr.* 1.6 Xenophon furnishes an extensive dialogue between Cyrus and his father Cambyses. The section concludes with Cambyses’ most important advice (1.6.44–46): the most important (1.6.44: τὰ μέγιστα) lesson Cyrus should draw from the past is that one should listen to the gods and never go against any of their omens and auspices. Ignoring the gods might result in a statesman’s or even a nation’s destruction. For this reason, humans should always look for what the gods pre-signify (προσημαίνουσιν) because the gods know what is fated and what is not (1.6.46: ἃ τε χρὴ ποιεῖν καὶ ἃ οὐ χρὴ).

Cyrus proves to be a good student. He frequently seeks counsel from the gods through sacrifice. Presumably as a result of this, the gods shower their favour upon Cyrus.³⁶⁵ At the end of the work, Xenophon subtly invokes the dialogue between Cambyses and Cyrus: Cyrus thanks the gods for having signified to him (ἐσημαίνετε μοι) what he “should and should not have done” (8.7.3: ἃ τ’ ἐχρὴν ποιεῖν καὶ ἃ οὐκ ἐχρὴν).³⁶⁶ In his prayer to the gods, he asks them to give his children the same

³⁶² Cohen (1979) 96–97.

³⁶³ A recent example is Michael Tuval (2013) 90–128, who approaches the *BJ* as a book on Jewish theology, partially on the basis of some of the literary motifs outlined below.

³⁶⁴ The search for ideal leadership is something that permeates Xenophon’s entire corpus. Many of the qualities displayed by Cyrus the Great are also found in Xenophon’s descriptions of other leaders in the *Hellenica* and the *Anabasis*, not in the least Xenophon himself. See Flower (2012) 30. For an investigation of the *Cyropaedia* as a literary composition, especially emphasizing its Socratic background, see Gera (1993). Various studies challenge the consensus that Xenophon’s picture of Cyrus the Great is idealized and rather emphasize Xenophon’s implicit criticisms. See e.g. Tatum (1989); Nadon (2001). For a recent overview of the portrayal of ideal leadership in the *Cyropaedia*, see Tamiolaki (2017).

³⁶⁵ E.g. Xenophon, *Cyr.* e.g. 1.5.14; 1.6.1; 2.4.18; 3.2.3; 3.3.21, 34; 6.2.40; 6.3.1.

³⁶⁶ Translations of the *Cyropaedia* are based on Miller LCL.

prosperity (εὐδαιμονία) as they have given him. Thus, in Xenophon's presentation of ideal leadership, piety is arguably the most important ingredient of being successful as a statesman.³⁶⁷

The virtue of piety is as indispensable for political and military leaders in Josephus' narratives as it is in Xenophon's.³⁶⁸ Josephus regularly comments on the fact that some Judaeen leaders bend predictions in their favour and deliberately ignore God's signs. This is one of the main reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (4.386–8; 6.109–10, 300–9, 311). Instead, virtuous leaders are always pious. Josephus highlights the loyalty and affection of the high priests Ananus and Jesus towards Jerusalem, temple, and worship (3.323–24). Especially illustrative is Josephus' characterization of Herod the Great. In the *AJ* he is portrayed as a frequent and impious violator of Judaeen customs (and hence God's constitution).³⁶⁹ However, in the thematically arranged narrative of Herod's public career in the *BJ*, Josephus makes the king the embodiment of ideal leadership. Josephus notes that Herod keeps his troops from plundering the temple in Jerusalem (*BJ* 1.354). Herod offers sacrifice to God before going to battle (1.380). He advances to the height of his prosperity (εὐδαιμονία), raises the dignity of his mind (φρόνημα) to its fullest extent, and focuses his magnanimity (μεγαλόνοια) towards works of piety (1.400: εὐσέβεια). This correlation between prosperity and piety is a clearly recognizable pattern for Greeks and Romans.

It should occasion no surprise that similar patterns can be traced in Josephus' self-characterization. In the beginning of his autobiographical narrative Josephus recognizes the importance of having a good conscience towards the divine and emphasizes that those who are “paltry on the inside” (τοὺς ... οἴκοθεν φαύλους) will not only have to face worldly enemies but also God (2.582).³⁷⁰ Moreover, Josephus shows an understanding of God's purposes with the Judaeen

³⁶⁷ On Cyrus' piety see esp. Gera (1993) 57–59. Xenophon himself shows the very same attitude as a character in the *Anabasis*. He is spurred to action on account of divinely inspired dreams (ὄναρ) twice (3.1.11–13; 4.3.8–9, 13), receives various other signs from the gods (e.g. 3.2.9; 5.6.29), and makes sure to always consult the gods before he makes an important decision (e.g. 6.1.22–24). On the importance of the divine and gods in the *Anabasis* see Flower (2012) 203–16.

³⁶⁸ Also in the prologue of the *AJ* (1.14–15) Josephus elaborates on the main lesson to be learned from his history is that anyone that lives in accordance to the will and laws of God is will obtain success (εὐδαιμονία), whereas the actions of those departing from God's laws will irrevocably end in disaster (σύμφορα).

³⁶⁹ On the contrasting characterizations of Herod in the *BJ* and the *AJ* see Landau (2006) and Van Henten (2011b); Van Henten (2016).

³⁷⁰ Josephus emphasizes a similar attitude towards God in the *Vita*, esp. at 208–12.

people on various occasions. At the most critical point of his life he suddenly remembers a dream in which God pre-signified (προσημαίνω) the disasters of the Judaeans and the destiny of the Roman emperors. This urges him to surrender to the Romans (3.351–354). His compatriots push him to commit suicide, but Josephus is determined to escape because he “considered it a betrayal of God’s commands if he would die before delivering his message” (3.361: προδοσίαν ἡγούμενος εἶναι τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ προσταγμάτων, εἰ προαποθάνοι τῆς διαγγελίας).³⁷¹ In the speech that follows Josephus makes the *impiety* (3.369: ἀσέβεια) of suicide a central topic. In his grand speeches before the walls of Jerusalem, he makes the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as the result of impiety and pollution an important subject (esp. 5.362–63, 399–402; 6.99–102, 108–9). He argues that the Judaeans are not only waging war against the Romans but also against God himself (5.376–78; compare with 2.582). In all the examples he lists to prove his point, Josephus returns to the issue of the sacredness of the temple, the place of the temple, and cultic worship in the temple (5.380, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391–93, 394, 395–98, 403–406; 6.103–7). Reverence towards God is among the character traits that drive Josephus’ words and actions.

Josephus not only recognizes this but actually claims to be aided by the divine. In his speech before the wall of Jerusalem, Josephus makes the following claim: “so it is madness to think that God appears to the just in the same way as to the unjust” (6.407: μανία δὴ τὸν θεὸν προσδοκᾶν ἐπὶ δίκαιοις οἷος ἐπ’ ἀδίκους ἐφάνη). As we have seen in the case of Herod the Great, Josephus develops a scheme in which God rewards the pious and punishes the impious. As becomes especially clear in the closing scenes of the Jotapata narrative, Josephus’ own story in the *BJ* exemplifies this principle.³⁷² He sneaks away from the Romans, “with the help of some divine being” (3.341: δαίμονίῳ τινὶ συνεργίᾳ).³⁷³ After his failed attempt to persuade his compatriots through philosophy (3.361–82), Josephus eventually comes up with a risky plan to determine the order of the suicides, “trusting in God as his protector” (3.387: πιστεύων τῷ κηδεμόνι θεῷ). His plan eventually works, and the narrator adds that this might

³⁷¹ Rather than τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ νόμων. The noun πρόσταγμα has a clear military and political connotation, in contrast to νόμος referring to concrete instructions or commands. Josephus usually uses the word to denote the commands of kings, governors, and generals, see e.g. *BJ* 1.234–35, 361, 474, 551. Cf. Ladouceur (1980) 248–49.

³⁷² With Cohen (1979) 96–97.

³⁷³ Compare *BJ* 3.144, where Vespasian hopes to prevent such a thing from happening.

have been caused by two things: “should one say by fortune or by God’s providence” (3.391: εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας). These passages flag Josephus’ privileged treatment by the divine, presumably as a reward of his own reverence towards God.³⁷⁴

Piety is among Josephus’ most important virtues, but it is certainly not the only one. A character trait that is uniquely ascribed to Josephus in the narrative of the *BJ* is his willingness to labour together (συμπονέω) with his men when preparing fortifications for the impending Roman invasion (2.575).³⁷⁵ As elsewhere in the narrative (e.g. 3.204–6, 258), Josephus leads not merely by command but by example. Greek and Roman authors ascribe this virtue to their greatest military leaders.³⁷⁶ Particularly revealing are Plutarch’s reflections on Gaius Marius in his role as legate serving under Caecilius Metellus on occasion of the war against Jugurtha (*Mar.* 7.1–6). Marius displays every kind of bravery and makes a point of “earnestly striving with the soldiers in sobriety and endurance” (7.3: πρὸς δὲ τοὺς στρατιώτας ὑπὲρ εὐτελείας καὶ καρτερίας διαμιλλώμενος).³⁷⁷ By doing so Marius earns the goodwill of his soldiers. Plutarch comments that this kind of leadership offers solace and takes away compulsion among those that actually should do the work. He continues that *especially the Romans* admire and love those who labour together with them (συμπονέω) more than those who lead them to an easy life (*Mar.* 7.6.5).³⁷⁸ Josephus thus exemplifies a style of leadership tailor-made for a Roman audience.

In addition to invoking Graeco-Roman models of leadership, Josephus’ description of his task as contemporary historian is perhaps another reason that he highlights his willingness to suffer in the toils of his men. In the prologue Josephus claims that the production of contemporary history requires an industrious person (*BJ* 1.15: φιλόπονος) able to work with new materials and construct an innovative framework. Likewise, Josephus produced his history at great personal expense and effort

³⁷⁴ Cohen (1979) 97 mentions these examples in relation to Josephus’ *felicitas*.

³⁷⁵ Josephus uses the verb only once throughout his corpus.

³⁷⁶ See for discussion Flower (2012) 132–33. A famous example is Alexander’s refusal to drink water when his men have none (Plutarch, *Alex.* 42.3; Arrian, *Anab.* 6.26.1–3). Xenophon characterizes himself in the *Anabasis* as a friend of the soldiers. He dismounts from his horse when he learns that some soldiers complain to be exhausted (3.4.47–49; cf. 4.4.12–13, 7.3.45). On the importance of this character trait in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, see Buxton (2017).

³⁷⁷ Trans. Perrin LCL, with adaptations.

³⁷⁸ So also e.g. Plutarch, *Ant.* 43.6.

(1.16: ἀναλώμασι καὶ πόνοις μεγίστοις). That he subtly underscores his willingness to make his own hands dirty in his narrative might enhance the credibility of this claim.

Josephus' commitment to working together with his men underlines his self-characterization as a man of action. He possesses an energetic disposition and the ability to get things done (δραστήριον). Josephus identifies this as a significant character trait for politicians and generals. Herod the Great is the most important example (1.204, 283). His strong sense of purpose as general and politician greatly contribute to his successes. Illustrative is the example of Herod's travels to Rome to secure the patronage of Mark Antony and Octavian (1.277–85; discussed in Chapter 2). Vespasian recognizes this same character trait in Josephus (4.624). This is implicitly backed up by the narrative. For instance, immediately after taking up command Josephus starts to organize the political and military structures in impressive fashion. He rearranges the country's political structures (2.569–71), starts the fortification works (2.572–76), and trains an army from scratch (2.577–84). Josephus manages to achieve a lot with limited resources and time.

Josephus presents himself as a benefactor of the people that has earned their goodwill (εὐνοία), indeed not unlike Herod (εὐνοία, 1.213, 238; εὐεργετέω, 1.428). Josephus' authority in Galilee is based on the favour (εὐνοία) of the people and support of the local aristocracy (2.569–71).³⁷⁹ Josephus is extremely influential in Galilee (2.621–23) and Jerusalem (3.432–37). The passage in which Josephus narrates the secret mission from Jerusalem to depose him is illustrative (2.626–31). John spreads lies in Jerusalem that invokes envy (φθόνος) among the powerful (δυνατοί), but the people (δῆμος) do not pay attention to John's gossiping. The powerful decide to send an army led by men of distinction (τῶν ἐπιφανῶν ἄνδρας) to Galilee with the purpose of deposing Josephus and to dissuade the people from their goodwill (εὐνοία) towards him. Yet when the δῆμος of Jerusalem hears about this, they are furious at those who joined the mission: “at them the people were not moderately vexed” (2.632: πρὸς οὓς ὁ δῆμος οὐ μετρίως ἡγανάκτησεν).³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ These virtues are explicitly praised on occasion of Ananus' obituary (2.569–71; compare with 4.318–25; cf. 7.267). As is noted by Jonathan Price, Josephus frequently and explicitly praises characters similar to himself. Price (2011a) 230. On this literary technique, see §5.3.3.

³⁸⁰ This constant struggle for influence and the φθόνος of Judaeans to Josephus is something we encounter in the *BJ*, but it is a leitmotif in the *Vita*: on Josephus' struggle for *auctoritas* in the *Vita* see Mason

The virtue arguably highlighted most in the autobiographical passages is Josephus' intelligence. He is said to have "power of thought/inventiveness" (ἐπίνοια: 3.175, 271, 387) and "quick comprehension/sagacity" (σύνεσις: 2.623; 3.144, 358). These virtues imply a mental quickness that enables Josephus to be one step ahead of every situation, anticipate problems, and quickly come up with solutions when they occur. In Greek historiography this is one of the desirable qualities of a good general.³⁸¹

Josephus' handling of new and often complex situations underlines this aspect of his character. Thus, immediately upon his arrival in Galilee, Josephus perceives (*BJ* 2.569: οἶδα) that he needs the support of the local aristocrats and the people. He reorganizes the government and judicial system to achieve this. By doing this, he secures the favour of the Galileans and his position as governor and general despite significant resistance.³⁸² Likewise, Josephus recognizes (2.573: γιγνώσκω) that the Romans will strike first in Galilee and understands (2.577: συνοράω; 2.578: ὁράω) the principles upon which Roman military superiority are founded, arranging the Judaeans army in similar fashion. Josephus already *sees* (ὁράω) the final outcome of the Judaeans cause before it materializes (3.136) and that Jotapata is lost before the city actually falls (3.193). When the Romans breach the walls of Jotapata, Josephus understands (συνήμι) that they will use various diversion strategies to lure the Judaeans away from the breach in the walls. He adapts his own strategy accordingly and puts the strongest fighters, himself included, in the front line (3.258). Josephus shows his best self when under pressure, always coming up with speeches, tricks, and stratagems (e.g. 2.604, 611, 635; 3.171, 187, 190, 222, 227, 271).

Even when Josephus' measures fail, he showcases the ability to adapt his strategies on the spot. Josephus' bipartite speech before the walls of Jerusalem in Book 5 (5.362–74, 376–419) exemplifies this principle. The first part of the speech consists of *topoi* closely resembling the speech

(2001) 36 and 40. On *auctoritas* see in more detail Galinsky (1996) 1996), 10–41. See also my observations in Chapter 4 about the destructive power of φθόνος, specifically in reference to Plutarch. Plutarch discusses its importance vis-à-vis autobiographical discourse but also more generally. See also e.g. Quintilian about Cicero, *Inst.* 11.1.17–18.

³⁸¹ This is also noted in Davies (2017) 196–97 in reference to Josephus' characterization of Vespasian. For some compelling parallels in Greek literature, cf. below.

³⁸² Subsequently in the narrative the Galileans flock together in his support (*BJ* 2.622–23), on which see briefly the previous section.

of Agrippa II in Book 2 (2.345–401).³⁸³ However, Josephus' arguments only infuriate those listening on the walls (5.375): "Many of those on the city-walls made fun of Josephus when he gave this advice, many cursed at him, and some tried to shoot him" (Ταῦτα τὸν Ἰώσηπον παραινούντα πολλοὶ μὲν ἔσκωπτον ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους, πολλοὶ δ' ἐβλασφήμουν, ἔνιοι δ' ἔβαλλον). He thus changes his strategy: "Seeing that he could not persuade them with plain advice, he switched to employing the history of his people" (ὁ δ' ὡς ταῖς φανεραῖς οὐκ ἔπειθε συμβουλίαις, ἐπὶ τὰς ὁμοφύλους μετέβαινεν ἱστορίας). This proves to be more effective (5.420): "However, although Josephus called upon them in tears, the insurgents neither conceded nor judged it without risk to change their course. *But the people were set in motion towards desertion*" (Τοιαῦτα τοῦ Ἰωσήπου μετὰ δακρύων ἐμβοῶντος οἱ στασιασταὶ μὲν οὔτ' ἐνέδοσαν οὔτ' ἀσφαλῆ τὴν μεταβολὴν ἔκριναν, ὁ δὲ δῆμος ἐκινήθη πρὸς αὐτομολίαν). As happens often in the *BJ*, the insurgents are insensitive to reason. But the people — a group among whom Josephus has great influence in general — respond to his reasonable appeal.³⁸⁴

Another illustration of Josephus' mental quickness is the narrative of his surrender after the siege of Jotapata. Motivated by a dream, Josephus decides to hand himself over to the Romans (3.351–54). When his compatriots attempt to force him to commit suicide (3.355–60), Josephus first tries to philosophize (φιλοσοφῶ) his way out of the situation (3.361) by means of an elaborate speech in which he appeals — as has been pointed out most recently by Maren Niehoff — to Stoic notions of Nature (3.362–82).³⁸⁵ The Judaeans are only infuriated by this attempt and launch themselves at him. Yet Josephus miraculously escapes all their attacks (3.385): "But he, summoning one by name, looking another in the face with his commander's glare, seizing the hand of a third, shaming the next by entreaty, and dividing them by using all kinds of emotions in this moment of need, turned the blades of all away from his throat, like the surrounded wild animals ever turning towards the next attacker." In the scene that follows, Josephus is said to be "not without his usual inventiveness in his

³⁸³ As is widely recognized among scholars, see e.g. Lindner (1972) 40–48; Villalba (1986) 99–100; Rajak (1991) 124–25; Den Hollander (2014) 144.

³⁸⁴ Likewise, in the scene of his speech to John of Gischala, where Josephus' Hebraizes Titus's instructions and by doing so spurs many of the Judaeian aristocracy to action (6.93–116). Even the Romans admire Josephus' disposition (6.111: προαίρεσις) amid his sufferings, although he converses in Hebrew or Aramaic (6.96: ἑβραϊζων). Because the Romans do not speak his language, they could not have admired the speech itself.

³⁸⁵ Niehoff (2018b) 100.

hardships" (3.387: Ὁ δ' ἐν ταῖς ἀμηχαναῖς οὐκ ἠπόρησεν ἐπινοίας). He takes a gamble and proposes to draw lots to determine the order of the killing so that no one must die by committing suicide. They agree with his proposal. Josephus remains with one other man and "also persuaded the other in a pledge of good faith to stay alive" (3.391: πείθει κακέϊνον ἐπὶ πίστει ζῆν). Josephus' maintains his willpower even when his compatriots threaten to kill him. He displays the ability to switch between all kinds of tools from his vast arsenal — philosophy, rhetoric, tricks, personal authority, emotions, physical strength — to obtain the goals he believes to be worthy of pursuit.³⁸⁶

As Shaye Cohen has observed, the overall image of Josephus as general in Galilee closely resembles Graeco-Roman descriptions of exemplary military and political leadership.³⁸⁷ It is perhaps useful to furnish some other examples to illustrate how deeply Josephus' self-characterization is entrenched in Graeco-Roman discourses of leadership. For example, in the cave episode Josephus' compatriots refer to his "reputation of courage ... and sagacity" (3.358: δόξαν ἀνδρείας ... δὲ καὶ συνέσεως). These are the virtues typically referred to by Diodorus of Sicily when describing excellent generals.³⁸⁸ For example, the Persian Mardonius is "greatly admired for his sagacity and courage" (*Bibl.* 11.1.3: σύνεσιν καὶ ἀνδρείαν μάλιστα θαυμαζόμενος) among the Persians. The famous Theban general Epaminondas is praised for surpassing not merely all Thebans but all Greeks in "courage and sagacity in the art of warfare" (*Bibl.* 15.39.2: ἀνδρεία τε καὶ στρατηγικὴ συνέσει).³⁸⁹ Diodorus claims that Alexander the Great's σύνεσις and ἀνδρεία in the art of warfare transcends (ὑπερβάλλω) that of all kings from the beginning of history (*Bibl.* 17.1.3). Thus, Josephus' reputation among the Judaeans is remarkably similar to that of the greatest Greek generals as described by Diodorus of Sicily.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁶ Mason (2018) 224–25 has compared this scene to Vespasian's response to threats in *BJ* 4 (cf. Chapter 2), arguing that Josephus portrays himself much more positively than he portrays Vespasian.

³⁸⁷ Cohen (1979) 91–100.

³⁸⁸ See also e.g. Chabrias (*Lib.* 15.69.4); Datames (15.91.7); the Spartan Agesilaus (15.92.3); Nysius the Neapolitan (16.18.1); Timoleon of Corinth (16.65.2); Alexander the Great (17.1.3); Memnon of Rhodos (17.7.3); Tiberius Gracchus (29.26); Sulla (37.25 = Posidonius frg. 237), etc...

³⁸⁹ This translation is based on Oldfather LCL. Cf. Diodorus, *Lib.* 15.56.3; 15.88.3.

³⁹⁰ The combination remains relatively rare after Josephus. See most notably Plutarch, *Luc.* 36.5–5; *Tim.* 3.5.2; *Sayings* 200A; Dio 75.2.4. Also Josephus himself rarely uses it, see Hyrcanus the son of Joseph (*AJ* 12.190). Moses has ἀρετή and σύνεσις (*AJ* 3.12).

Plutarch provides numerous examples of virtuous generals in both his *Lives* and the *Moralia*. Philopoemen is famous for his σύνεσις and δραστήριον (*Phil.* 3.1.4), character traits also displayed by Josephus.³⁹¹ In Plutarch's *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* — a collection of sayings by generals and statesmen — we find Alexander the Great admiring the σύνεσις and ἀνδρεία of the Indian king Porus after the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC (*Sayings* 181E). In that same work Plutarch notes that Scipio Aemilianus even as a young man (νέος; compare with *BJ* 3.396) had a reputation (δόξα) of σύνεσις and ἀνδρεία (*Sayings* 200E). In his treatise *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* Plutarch asks whether anyone has ever paralleled Alexander's virtues: "For who has ever put forth with greater or fairer equipment than he: greatness of soul, sagacity, temperance, manly courage, with which Philosophy supplied him for the expedition (*Fortune or Virtue* 327E: τίς γὰρ ἀπὸ μειζόνων ἢ καλλιόνων ἀφορμῶν ἀνήγετο, μεγαλοψυχίας, συνέσεως, σωφροσύνης, ἀνδραγαθίας, αἷς αὐτὸν ἐφωδίαζε φιλοσοφία πρὸς τὴν στρατείαν)?"³⁹² These are stock virtues referred to by Plutarch for their exemplarity and recognizability. Josephus' cumulative self-portrayal as ideal general closely corresponds to this image.

3.3.2.3 Concluding Reflections: The Moral-Didactic Currents of Josephus' Self-Characterization

At this point, it is necessary to draw the different argumentative currents together into a coherent picture. Because Shaye Cohen focuses on explaining the discrepancies between the *BJ* and the *Vita*, it is beyond his scope to analyse how Josephus anchors his self-characterization in the compositional context of the *BJ*. He rather attempts to link the perceived discrepancies to changing historical circumstances of Josephus in Rome. In addition to citing Josephus' notorious vanity,³⁹³ Cohen points

³⁹¹ Plutarch notes that Philopoemen's model was the famous Theban general Epaminondas, and that these particular character traits were successfully imitated by Philopoemen.

³⁹² Trans. Babbitt LCL, with adaptations. Note also Plutarch's presentation of Alexander in *Fortune or Virtue* 343A–B, or Philo's presentation of Moses as an ideal ruler throughout his *Moses* (e.g. 1.153–54). On Philo's portrayal of Moses see Niehoff (2018a) 110–20.

³⁹³ Cohen (1979) 91. So also e.g. Thackeray (1929) 19, who calls Josephus an "egoist, self-interested, time-server and flatterer" on the basis of his autobiographical material. Schürer (1973–1987) 1:57 claim that "the basic features of his [Josephus'] personality were vanity and complacency" and "no-one would wish to defend his character." For similar expressions, see Chapter 1 of this investigation. In Chapter 4 we will offer a survey of autobiographical discourse in Graeco-Roman antiquity. This survey shows how Josephus' confident self-

to motives of personal apology to explain the themes of the Galilee narrative: “The account in *BJ* 2–3 is more than a concession to Josephus' vanity. It also explains how Josephus was different from the nefarious tyrants whom he blames for the war itself and the destruction of the temple.”³⁹⁴ Cohen explains Josephus' self-portrayal as great general is inherently part of an apologetic theory that underpins his autobiographical narrative as a whole.³⁹⁵

Instead of looking at the social circumstances *behind* Josephus' text, I have asked to what extent Josephus' self-portrayal as ideal general fits the broader compositional scheme of the *BJ*. As observed in the beginning of this section, this scheme is partially determined by its focus on allegedly the greatest conflict between cities and nations to have ever occurred in history (1.1; cf. 1.4–6, 16) with Roman impressive forces led by the most distinguished generals (1.8). This conflict can be truly great only if Judaeans valour matches Roman force. Josephus makes the bravery and toughness of the Judaeans prominent *topoi* in the *BJ*, with the Galilee narrative as one of the theme's highpoints, and so shapes his narrative of the Judaeans-Roman conflict in accordance with the moral-didactic character of contemporary Graeco-Roman historiography (cf. Chapter 2). In correspondence to this, Josephus' claim that he was among the most as impressive generals of this conflict (and hence to ever live) arises naturally from this historiographical outlook.

Since Josephus decided to write about his own military and political achievements so extensively, it would have been necessary for him to present himself in the best possible manner to his audience. His credibility and authority as a historian were at stake.³⁹⁶ Josephus ascribes character traits to himself that will not only have served him during military campaigning but also as a historian of contemporary political-military history. In addition to being courageous and tough, Josephus describes himself as a man of action, willing to labour together with his men, possessing mental quickness, and having an inventive nature. He recognizes similar character traits as necessary for the disposition (προαίρεσις) of a good historian (1.13–16). Certainly, Josephus could have

promotion strongly echoes the Roman context in which he produced the *BJ*. This might problematize Cohen's claim that Josephus' claims should be ascribed to his vanity.

³⁹⁴ E.g. Cohen (1979) 236. See also e.g. pp. 97–100, 232.

³⁹⁵ Cohen calls this an “apologetic theory” at p. 239.

³⁹⁶ See in relation to the practice of classical historians more generally Marincola (1997), also cited in the beginning of this chapter.

scored points for honesty by admitting that his time spent as a “general” (scholars doubt whether Josephus was a general properly) in Galilee was not much of a success and not really part of an organized campaign at all. Nonetheless, such confessions would not have done much to support Josephus’ self-acclaimed expertise as a military and political historian. Having decided to write about his actions so extensively, Josephus could not hold back about his virtues.

Considering this, what could have been the possible interest of Graeco-Roman elites in a foreign and exotic war captive like Josephus? Could he not — like his model Thucydides — have glossed over his own conduct in passing, rather than making it a central episode of his narrative (cf. Chapter 5)? Evidently, it is impossible to prove whether the Greek or Roman elites would have had any significant interest in Josephus’ person or work, but Josephus’ prologue makes it clear that he had audiences in Rome and that these were cultured enough to make sense of his work (cf. §1.4, 2.2). At any rate, Josephus was famous enough to be remembered as the noble captive that predicted Vespasian’s rise to power (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 5.6; Cassius Dio 65.1). The second-century grammarian Aelius Herodian cites Josephus on various occasions. There are also indications that Tacitus may have used the *BJ* for his descriptions of Judaea, Judaeans, and the destruction of Jerusalem (*Hist.* 2.101; 5.1–2, 10–13).³⁹⁷

This modest fame should not surprise modern interpreters. It is reasonable to claim that many in Rome would have had a natural interest and curiosity in Josephus’ person and work. The Flavians boasted about their achievements as generals during their campaign against the Judaeans and used it as propaganda to legitimize their rule.³⁹⁸ Even if Josephus remained an outsider to Rome’s most powerful political circles (cf. Chapter 2), it is perfectly plausible that he could assume a considerable eagerness among the cultured elite in Flavian Rome to learn about the details of his military campaigning: he had the unique experience of fighting in a famous war against the most powerful Roman general and surviving it. Fashioning himself as an ideal general in Graeco-Roman

³⁹⁷ Cf. Mason (2016a) 49–50; Mason (2016d) 90; Van Henten (2018) 122.

³⁹⁸ On Flavian self-fashioning, see e.g. Weiler (1968); Beard (2003); Millar (2005); Lindsay (2010). Mason (2016a) 4–43 also discusses literature, monuments, and coins as potential media for the purpose of Flavian propaganda.

fashion, Josephus clearly exploited his experiences of fighting Vespasian to create a public persona according to the tastes of an audience in Rome.³⁹⁹

3.3.3 Civil War, Purity, and Pollution in the *BJ* (2.569–646)

Scholars often identify the theme of civil war (στάσις οἰκεία) as a major one in the *BJ*. It is singled out by Josephus as the main cause for the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (1.10).⁴⁰⁰ Various contributions have scrutinized Josephus' use of this theme in relation to his model Thucydides. Most notably, Gottfried Mader investigates the extent, complexity, and function of Josephus' reception of Thucydides' description of the Corcyran civil war (Thuc. 3.82–84) in *BJ* 4.121–282. He argues that Josephus consciously introduces Thucydidean strands and by doing so places himself in the tradition of *Krisenhistoriker*. He also observes that Thucydides' attempts to shed light on the typical dynamics of the historical process related to civil war, whereas Josephus' implicit aim is to offer a value judgement about those responsible for the outbreak of the civil war. Mader explains Josephus' implicit aim in terms of his attempt to negotiate Greek historiographical theory and Judaeon practice.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ This suggestion has independently been raised in Mason (2019a) 50–51: “It is understandable that Josephus, now writing in Rome, milks his personal conflict with Vespasian for his own image-construction. Who else could claim such experience? His aim is not to praise the Flavian ruler, but to display his own mettle as he had to face the world's greatest commander and army.”

⁴⁰⁰ See e.g. Goodman (1987) 19–20; Bilde (1988) 71–73; Rajak (2002) 91–92; Mason (2005a) 97; Parente (2005) 48. The prominence of the theme is indicated by a simple word count. The word civil war (στάσις) occurs four times in the prologue (1.10, 27, 29) and 73 times throughout the *BJ*. Josephus also makes στάσις the first word of his entire investigation (1.31). He regularly employs semantic cognates such as πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος (prologue: 1.4; 11 occurrences in the *BJ*) or (more distantly) κίνημα (15 occurrences). Josephus frequently speaks about insurgents (στασιαστής; prologue: 1.10; 70 occurrences throughout the *BJ*), tyrants (τύραννοι; prologue: 1.10, 11, 24, 27, 28; 44 occurrences throughout the *BJ*), robbers (ληστρικός; prologue: 1.11, 22 occurrences; cf. ληστής, 38 occurrences and ληστεία, 7 occurrences), and revolutionaries (νεωτερίζοι; prologue 1.4; Josephus uses the rare infinitive form νεωτερίζον on this occasion; 34 occurrences incl. cognate νεωτερισμός).

⁴⁰¹ Mader (2000) 55–103. To this I might add that Josephus' tendency to offer value judgments can be explained in view of the comparative context as I have outlined it in the previous chapter, namely the engaging and explicitly moralizing style that became increasingly common in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, cf. §2.3–4. For Josephus' reception of the Corcyran civil war, see also e.g. Feldman (1998) 140–48; Rajak (2002) 91–94; Price (2010); Price (2011b). For a detailed analysis of Thucydides' description of the Corcyran civil war, see Price (2001), demonstrating how Thucydides organized his work around this concept and uses the episode of Corcyra as model for every civil war mentioned in his *History*.

Although Thucydides is fundamental for understanding Josephus' use of the theme of civil war in the *BJ*, some scholars — while recognizing its importance — have shown the one-sidedness of approaching this theme in exclusively Thucydidean terms. Steve Mason highlights the merits of situating it in a Roman comparative background. He gives special attention to how the phenomenon will have been fresh in the memories of Josephus' contemporaries by recent events in Rome (e.g. the year of the four emperors).⁴⁰² Using Mason's research as a point of departure, Mark Brighton shows the central role of the Sicarii in Josephus' descriptions of civil war in the *BJ*. He illustrates that Josephus presents this group as exclusively fighting against its own people, omitting them from his descriptions when the killing of Romans is involved. According to Brighton, Josephus subtly employs the case of the Sicarii to underscore his point about submission to divine authority, whereas the importance of submitting to Roman authority is highlighted in other passages.⁴⁰³ Honora Chapman proposes to read Josephus' description of the civil wars in the final years of the Roman Republic in *BJ* 1 in dialogue with the classical sources more commonly used to reconstruct the history and historiography of the civil wars of the Late Republic.⁴⁰⁴ It is this specifically Roman background of Josephus' use of the theme of civil war that furnishes the most relevant background for my analysis.

Before turning to the theme of civil war in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of Josephus' use of it elsewhere in the work. As various scholars observe, Josephus makes civil war the very first word of his actual investigation (1.31).⁴⁰⁵ He frequently comments upon the frequent civil wars in Rome (1.10, 24, 1.218–22, 242–44, 277–85, 288–91, 297–302, 309, 317–22, 358–400) and describes Herod's court intrigues in *stasis* language. Likewise, in Book 2 he characterizes the problems between the Judaeans and the Greeks in Caesarea as *stasis* (2.266, 267, 269, 270, 274, 288, 289, 290, 291, 324). The theme becomes increasingly prominent when Josephus embarks on his narrative of the civil war in Jerusalem and Rome in the latter half of the *BJ*. He frequently elaborates on civil war as a disease spreading in Jerusalem (4.131–3, 364, 388, 397;

⁴⁰² Mason (2001) notes ad loc.; Mason (2003b) 566; Mason (2003c) 79–81; Mason (2009a) 326–30; Mason (2005a) 272; Mason (2005b) 97.

⁴⁰³ Brighton (2009).

⁴⁰⁴ Chapman (2019).

⁴⁰⁵ E.g. Mason (2005b) 97; Brighton (2009) 25; Van Henten (2018) 125 n.25.

4.406–9; 5.19, 28, 442–5; 6.128–30, 228) and in Rome during the year of the four emperors (4.440–41, 491–502, 545–49, 588–663; cf. 1.24).⁴⁰⁶ This causes all kinds of other societal problems. Josephus connects it with issues of purity, pollution, and temple (e.g. 1.31–32; 2.210–14, 441–55; 4.147–50, 196–201, 323, 562; 5.10).⁴⁰⁷ In short, Josephus approaches civil strife as a broader phenomenon that affects different societies.

Within this general framework, it is the task of the statesman to keep the peace and prevent problems of civil strife. This issue is of crucial importance for understanding Josephus' use of the motif in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*. Mason discusses how the issues raised by Josephus reflect the ideas put forward by Roman authors (e.g. Sallust and Tacitus) and Greek authors writing under Roman rule (e.g. Polybius and Plutarch).⁴⁰⁸ For instance, Plutarch recognizes that the task of the local statesman under Roman rule is to keep the peace and to prevent problems of civil war at all costs, as this would result in intervention by the Roman military (*Precepts* 814f–16A, 824C). Such reasoning closely corresponds to Josephus' presentation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the prologue (1.10; and elsewhere in the *BJ*): “For civil war ruined its affairs, and the Judaeans tyrants brought on the unwilling power of the Romans and set the temple on fire” (ὅτι γὰρ αὐτὴν στάσις οἰκεία καθεῖλεν, καὶ τὰς Ῥωμαίων χεῖρας ἀκούσας καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸν [ἅγιον] ναὸν εἴλκυσαν οἱ Ἰουδαίων τύραννοι).⁴⁰⁹ Accordingly, moderate Judaeans aristocrats recognize the importance of keeping the Romans at bay in function of advancing Judaeans public interests. To accomplish this, it is necessary to prevent civil war.

Josephus' characterization of Herod the Great epitomizes this principle. Herod immediately (εὐθέως) takes measures against the bandit leader (ἀρχιληστής) Ezekias (1.204–5).⁴¹⁰ Herod deals with a civil war in Samaria shortly afterwards (1.229). While the Romans are busy fighting each other in numerous internal conflicts (1.216–19, 225, 242, 364, 386; also 1.183–86), he deals with potential problems before they get beyond his control and affect the general welfare of Judaea. He eventually

⁴⁰⁶ On the question of how Josephus connects Judaeans and Roman society through his use of the motif of civil war, see esp. Mason (2005b) 97–99.

⁴⁰⁷ On which see Mason (2016a) 116–21.

⁴⁰⁸ Mason (2016a) 106–13.

⁴⁰⁹ Mason (2016a) 107.

⁴¹⁰ Similar attempts are made by Agrippa II (*BJ* 2.424) and the high priests Ananus and Jesus (4.215, 242).

succeeds in conquering all his internal enemies. This gives him the freedom to concentrate on external threats (1.354).⁴¹¹

That the repression of civic unrest should be connected with Herod's successful policy becomes evident after his death. The revitalization of banditry in Judaea is epitomized by a certain Judas. This is the son of "the one who had oppressed the country and had been subdued by Herod" (2.56). The remark does not appear to be coincidental. The fact that Josephus mentions him probably serves to emphasize Herod's success and highlights the importance of his successful management of civic unrest.⁴¹² Josephus uses this idea of a correlation between successful statesmanship and the (relative) absence of civic unrest elsewhere the *BJ*, most notably in the cases of Agrippa II's departure to his kingdom (2.407 to 2.408–56) and even more conspicuously the murder of Ananus the high priest by the Idumaeans (2.652–54 and 4.314–25; cf. 4.326, 389–97, 503–4, 508 4.389–97).

There are reasons to think that Josephus also uses this scheme in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*. As Shaye Cohen observes, no significant cases of tyranny and pollution occur in Galilee from the introduction of the character Josephus in the narrative (2.562–68) until the fall of Jotapata (3.442).⁴¹³ The fact that tyranny and pollution do not gain any significant foothold in Galilee

⁴¹¹ That is, in the narrative of his public career (1.204–430).

⁴¹² This (among other reasons) may also explain why, unlike in the *AJ*, Josephus does not call Herod a tyrant in the *BJ*. In the *BJ* Josephus closely associates civil war with tyranny and banditry. We find only posthumous accusations by unhappy Judaeans during the reign of Archelaus (*BJ* 2.84). On the differences between Josephus' presentation of Herod in the *BJ* and the *AJ*, see Laqueur (1920) 128–221; Mason (1991) 187; Mason (2003c) 117–19; Van Henten (2011b). Landau (2006) is entirely devoted to Josephus' characterization of Herod in both works. She explains the differences between both accounts largely on the basis of Josephus' potential changes in view (e.g. on p. 117). In line with Mason's scholarship, and the broader aims of the present investigation deeply influenced by Mason's scholarship, I rather emphasize the importance of taking into account the compositional features of Josephus' individual works. Taking this into consideration, reference to potential changes of view over time usually become redundant (if not impossible: we all change our views frequently over time). Also Rajak (2002) advocates the consistency of Josephus' outlook throughout his works, although on different grounds.

⁴¹³ Although his primary interest is not in compositional matters, Cohen (1979) 100 observes the change of scenery at the point of Josephus' character introduction (*BJ* 2.562–68): "From this point until the fall of Jotapata we hear nothing of tyranny, pollution, and coercion. In Galilee Josephus was valiant and popular, an ideal figure. Only after Josephus was in the hands of the Romans does *BJ* claim that the inhabitants of the Galilean cities were basically pro-Roman but were forced by John and his ilk to participate in the war." He

might be ascribed to Josephus' virtuous leadership and attempts to remain in control of the region, in spite of considerable resistance.

Of the newly appointed generals, Josephus is introduced as the one responsible for the defence of both Galilees and Gamala, the strongest city of the region (2.568). The scene immediately after Josephus' appointment creates the appearance that Josephus is on top of the civic situation in Galilee as the official representing the leadership of the revolt in Jerusalem. Immediately after receiving his mandate, Josephus turns to preparing Galilee for the Roman invasion (2.569–84). He obtains the favour (2.569: εὖνοια) of the local inhabitants and makes provisions for their safety (αὐτῶν ἀσφάλειαν) against external threats (2.572). Josephus organizes the army in Roman fashion (2.577–79), prepares the soldiers both physically and mentally (2.580–82), and levies a great number of troops, including 4.500 mercenaries (2.583). He creates an inventive system that divides military and supportive tasks, ensuring that the soldiers have enough food and that the supply lines are protected by the soldiers (2.584).⁴¹⁴ Hence, Josephus' skilful preparations and efforts on behalf of the Judaeans underscore the legitimacy of his mandate in Galilee.

Josephus nonetheless encounters significant opposition. This arises immediately after the opening scene with the introduction of John of Gischala (2.585–94). From John's introduction onwards, Josephus is repeatedly forced to respond to cases of civic disturbance. The focus shifts from the conflict against the Romans to Josephus' struggle to maintain in control of the region. The narrator describes the Dabarittha affair in Tarichaea (2.595–613), a revolt in Tiberias (2.614–25), a

explains this as follows (p.100): “to explain his own participation in the war, Josephus has created a period of moderation and legitimacy sandwiched between periods of terror and anarchy. It is this apology which has caused so much difficulty for modern historians.” Cohen touches upon this literary question to highlight what he perceives as a logical-historical contradiction, namely that Josephus eagerly served as a champion of the revolt even though he programmatically disdains those who led the revolt. For Cohen, the fact that Josephus allowed these two conflicting motifs to coexist illustrates his sloppiness as historian. This in turn warrants a critical analysis in search of material that runs counter the main aims and motives of Josephus' *BJ* for historical reconstruction. Similar approaches are taken in e.g. Goodman (1987); Price (1992); and McLaren (1998). This position is confronted in Rajak (2002) and Mason (2003a). Wiater (2010) also discusses this issue, and “proposes to shift the focus from the historical facts contained in Josephus's narrative to the “thick thematic frame work” in which Josephus embeds them, thereby making them constituents of his interpretation of the Jewish War” (p. 146).

⁴¹⁴ Note the parallels with Polybius, *Hist.* 10.16.1–4.

secret mission from Jerusalem with the aim to replace Josephus (2.626–31), another revolt in Tiberias (2.632–44), and a joined revolt of Tiberias and Sepphoris (2.645–46).⁴¹⁵

In the relatively quiet opening scene of the narrative, where Josephus prepares the Galileans for the impending war against the Romans, we find him training his army both physically and mentally. Josephus is aware that the Galileans have a history of banditry and emphasizes the importance of containing such habits (2.581–82):⁴¹⁶

ἔφη δὲ πείραν αὐτῶν λήψεσθαι τῆς κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον πειθαρχίας καὶ πρὸ παρατάξεως, εἰ τῶν συνήθων ἀδικημάτων ἀπόσχονται, κλοπῆς τε καὶ ληστείας καὶ ἀρπαγῆς, τοῦ τε ἐξαπατᾶν τὸ ὁμόφυλον, τοῦ τε κέρδος οἰκεῖον ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν βλάβην τῶν συνηθεστάτων. διοικεῖσθαι γὰρ κάλλιστα τοὺς πολέμους παρ' οἷς ἂν ἀγαθὸν τὸ συνειδὸς ἔχωσιν [πάντες] οἱ στρατευόμενοι, τοὺς δὲ οἴκοθεν φαύλους οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἐπιοῦσιν ἐχθροῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ θεῷ χρήσθαι πολεμίῳ.

He declared that even before mustering for battle he would test their obedience to command during the war, and whether they could refrain from their habitual wrongdoings such as thievery, banditry and robbery, deceiving one's compatriots, or do damage to one's closest associates to obtain personal profit. Because the most honourable wars are exercised when those waging war have a good conscience, but those who are base from within not only have to deal with imminent adversaries but also have to face God as their enemy.

⁴¹⁵ Josephus' narrative of his political and military preparations in the *BJ* is separated and presented in a different order (*Vita* 77–79, 186–89). They take place after John decides to rebel against Josephus (70–76). The *Vita* places the Dabarittha affair (126–48) after the episode of John at Tiberias (85–103). The mission from Jerusalem (190–335) takes place before Josephus' dispersal of John's allies (368–72). The narrative of the *Vita* presents Josephus as struggling to maintain control, with as absolute climax his intention to resign at the midpoint of the narrative (*Vita* 202–7). The impression created is radically different from what we encounter in the *BJ*. For a synopsis of the Galilee narratives in the *BJ* and the *Vita*, see Cohen (1979) 3–7; detailed chart in Mason (2001) Appendix C. For an extensive treatment of the contrasting evidence from the *BJ* and the *Vita* dealing with the civil war in the Galilee see Cohen (1979) 181–232. See also Rajak (2002) 144–73.

⁴¹⁶ Compare with e.g. *BJ* 1.204–5, 304–7, 309–14; 2.56, 118.

The passage signifies that Josephus recognizes the importance of moral purity and attempts to cleanse his men from their immoral practices — thievery, banditry, robbery, deceit, personal profit at the expense of others — to prevent the hostility of God himself. Elsewhere, we read that Josephus is unwilling “to defile his hand with the murder of his fellow-countrymen” (3.391: μιᾶναι τὴν δεξιάν ὁμοφύλῳ φόνῳ).⁴¹⁷ Hence, Josephus attempts to prevent the kind of practice that turns out to become one of the main causes of Judaeen defeat later in the narrative: the pollution of Jerusalem and its temple *because* the Judaeans murder each other.

It is thus no surprise that we find Josephus actively fighting the kind of problems that typically lead to a civil war.⁴¹⁸ Most of the problems encountered by Josephus are instigated by John of Gischala. John has ambitions to obtain military command or even bigger things (2.591) and tries to depose Josephus and become governor of the region himself (2.593).⁴¹⁹ He pushes his *bandits* (λησται) to intensify their raids “so that many will be stirred up for revolution through the country” (2.593: ὅπως πολλῶν νεωτεριζομένων κατὰ τὴν χώραν). This would either give him the opportunity to ambush Josephus, or blacken him if he would fail to take measures against the *bandits* (2.593: λησται). Considering the close correlation between banditry and civil war assumed by Josephus throughout the *BJ*, all the ingredients of a potential civil war are present.

Similar patterns are discernible elsewhere in the narrative, where Josephus employs various classical topoi related to the phenomenon of civil war. For instance, the uproar in Tarichaea is caused by a group of young men (2.595: νεανίσκοι). This is a group often associated with civic unrest

⁴¹⁷ Josephus uses the same verb as e.g. in the famous obituary of Ananus and Jesus (*BJ* 4.323), or when describing the defilement of the temple by the killing of the Zealots (5.10).

⁴¹⁸ The theme of brigandage and banditry in Josephus’ narrative has been taken as a central problem in first-century Galilee, and a fundamental factor in explaining the revolt in Galilee. See e.g. S. Schwartz (1994a) 297–300; Smith (1999); Freyne (2002); Horsley (2002).

⁴¹⁹ Compare with later episodes, e.g. after Ananus’ removal: John aims to become a tyrant (τυραννιάω; 4.389) and starts behaving like a king (4.390, 395). This causes factional strife in the war party and has Jerusalem exposed to war, *stasis* and tyranny (4.397). This is only possible because Ananus has been removed by the Idumaeans.

by historians such as Thucydides and Polybius.⁴²⁰ Josephus usually describes such young men as unthoughtful, emotional, and quickly angered.⁴²¹

Another classical topos used by Josephus is his explanation that a significant portion of the civic unrest in Galilee is caused by envy (2.614, 627: φθόνος). Among others, Plutarch emphasizes that envy is something that should at all costs be avoided by the statesman. It causes rivalry, which in turn might lead to civil war (*Precepts* 798C–799A, 811D). In continuation of this, Josephus comprehends that the envy of a few might develop in full-scale civil war (2.620: πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος).⁴²² He also realizes that civil war significantly decreases the chances of success against the Romans. We have already observed that Herod turns to fighting his foreign enemies only after dealing with those among his compatriots first (1.354). Likewise, Josephus highlights the importance of internal stability as a precondition for an effective campaign against the Romans. For example, he says that the Tiberian effort to wage civil war (στάσις ἐμφύλιος) directly plays into the hands of the Romans (2.638).

Josephus' policy turns out to be effective, as is shown by the summary statement at the end of the narrative (2.647): "Thus, the political uproar (κινήματα) in the Galilee had died down. And now the confusion among kinsmen (τῶν ἐμφυλίων ... θορύβων) had come to an end, they could turn to the preparations regarding the Romans." As Shaye Cohen observes, motifs of strife and tyranny resurface shortly after Josephus' capture (referring to *BJ* 3.448, 453–55, 492–93, 532, 4.83, 112–14).⁴²³ This can be elucidated in terms of the explanatory scheme that I have advocated to underpin Josephus'

⁴²⁰ Rajak (2002) 93ff. explains Josephus' practice in reference to Thucydides. On Polybius see Eckstein (1989); Eckstein (1990) 192–93.

⁴²¹ Examples are *BJ* 1.649, 651; 2.225, 286. On this group, see Mason (2008) 186 n.1409. The form νεανίσκοι is sparingly used in the *BJ*. See also θερμότεροι, νέοι, ἡλικία, etc... Josephus himself is a notable exception, possessing remarkable toughness in spite of his youth (3.396: ἡλικία).

⁴²² Considering this, John's claim in Jerusalem that Josephus has the potential of becoming a τύραννος might be perceived as having a double meaning. At this point, the audience knows that John himself aims to replace Josephus as commander and governor of Galilee. The narrator has also informed them about Josephus' institution of 70 magistrates and 7 judges because he comprehends the importance to "befriend the powerful by giving them a share in his authority" (*BJ* 2.570: τοὺς μὲν δυνατοὺς οἰκειώσεται μεταδιδοὺς τῆς ἐξουσίας αὐτοῖς). This is the exact opposite of what Josephus defines of tyrannical behaviour as John himself displays it in *BJ* 4 when aiming to become a tyrant (4.389: τυραννιάω). He starts ignoring (ἀπειθής) the decisions of others and issues decrees in imperial fashion (δεσποτικός), showing his intentions to obtain single ruler (4.390: μοναρχία; cf. 4.395). John thus warns the political leaders in Jerusalem about Josephus as a prospective tyrant, but he turns out to become one himself.

⁴²³ Cohen (1979) 99.

development of the theme of civil war in the *BJ*. There are similar cases of rising strife elsewhere: under Archelaus shortly after the death of Herod the Great; the increased revolutionary activity after the departure of Agrippa II; and the removal of Ananus as final check to Idumaeans and Zealot excess. Likewise, the absence of tyranny and pollution in Galilee in *BJ* 3 should be ascribed to Josephus' successful attempt to repress civic unrest in *BJ* 2.

To conclude, the autobiographical sections in *BJ* 2 are largely devoted to Josephus' attempts to contain civic unrest and hence prevent civil war. Galilee is a region troubled by civic unrest and banditry throughout the narrative. Josephus' successful internal policy in *BJ* 2 creates the preconditions necessary to effectively campaign against the Romans in *BJ* 3. The absence of anarchy, terror, pollution, and tyranny in this volume can be explained in reference to Josephus' defeat of the prospective tyrant John of Gischala.

3.3.4 The Tragic Tone of Josephus' Self-Characterization (*BJ* 3.135–442)

Having discussed Josephus' self-characterization in view of the major themes of civil war and the magnification of Judaeans' greatness, I now turn to Josephus' implementation of tragic themes in the *BJ*. By "tragic themes" I mean the composite of language employed by Josephus related to the sufferings of the Judaeans and the reversals of fortune, combined with occasional echoes of classical tragedy, tuned towards the catastrophic climax of the *BJ*: the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. I argue 1) that Josephus makes his personal sufferings (and not the siege of Jotapata) the climax of the tragedy in Galilee; 2) that he shapes them in such a fashion that they are a hinge point in the narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple; and 3) that he frames the tragic themes in such a manner that they underline Josephus' virtues. Yet before turning to my analysis of Josephus' self-characterization in this context, I provide an outline of the most important scholarly contributions on this specific subject.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁴ For tragic currents in the *BJ* more generally, see most notably Chapman (1998); Chapman (2005a) Chapman (2005b); Ullmann and Price (2002); Feldman (2006); Landau (2006) 10–12, 59–60, 76–78, 107–8, 194–98; Swoboda (2017). Mason (2016a) 114 n.179 refers to the *Poetics* (1449b, 1452b, 1453a–b, 1456b), in which Aristotle explains that tragedy accomplishes emotional cleansing (*κάθαρσις*) by appealing to the emotions of pity (*ἐλεος*) and fear (*φόβος*).

Scholars have incidentally identified tragic language in individual passages of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in the *BJ*. In his *Josephus: The Man and the Historian*, Henry St. J. Thackeray discusses Josephus' use of fifth-century Attic tragedy. Also his Loeb translation shows a deep interest in potential literary borrowings.⁴²⁵ Thackeray identifies phrases borrowed from Sophocles' *Electra* — recognized by him as “the writer's favourite play” — in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ* (3.153 and 212).⁴²⁶ As observed elsewhere in this investigation, Thackeray explains these literary borrowings not as the product of Josephus' own literary creativity, however, but ascribes it to hypothesized literary assistants.⁴²⁷ Nonetheless, Thackeray's more general observation that the *BJ* regularly reflects the themes and language of Attic tragedy remains significant.

Although he does not offer any clarification, Georg Misch writes that the siege narrative of Jotapata is dominated by “the rhetorical and dramatic manner of Hellenistic history writing.”⁴²⁸ He continues that this episode “has the atmosphere of a historical romance written round a hero”⁴²⁹ because it is coloured by theatrical elements. This leads Misch to conclude that the autobiographical sections in the *BJ* have the flavour of a dramatic composition that “stands out from the historical work as a self-contained section of a personal character.”⁴³⁰

Whereas Misch views Josephus' self-fashioning as a character as not sitting very well in a work of serious history, Per Bilde offers cursory observations on the place of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in its immediate literary context. Bilde emphasizes how Josephus makes himself part of the theme of the *BJ*, which in his view pertains to the tragedy that struck the Judaeans.⁴³¹ However, Bilde does not provide any detailed observations to substantiate this claim,

⁴²⁵ Thackeray (1929).

⁴²⁶ See notes in the LCL translation ad loc. and Thackeray (1929) 117.

⁴²⁷ Thackeray (1929) 100–24.

⁴²⁸ Misch (1950) 317.

⁴²⁹ Misch (1950) 317–18.

⁴³⁰ Misch (1973) 322.

⁴³¹ Bilde (1988) 71–73. On Josephus specifically, see p. 72: “Thus, the theme of *Bell.* also concerns Josephus himself. Naturally, Josephus plays a role in the *War* and in this respect, he is a part of the theme of the book. He is also part of the theme in a deeper sense, because as a Jew he shares the tragedy as it is unfolded here in this work.”

nor does he qualify his use of “tragedy” as a theme in any significant way. He rather uses it synonymously to words such as inconceivable catastrophe and indescribable disaster.⁴³²

More pertinent for this theme is Honora Chapman’s 1998 dissertation. She describes how the scene narrating Josephus’ entrance in the Roman camp immediately after his surrender (3.392–408) can serve as a representative example of the author’s use of language of spectacle and tragedy in the *BJ*.⁴³³ Chapman argues that the scene has a double meaning in which Josephus turns from a captive to a messenger of God. According to Chapman’s reading, this would have resonated among Greeks (resembling the messengers staged in Attic tragedy) and Judaeans (a Hebrew prophet, acting as a latter-day biblical Joseph or Daniel).⁴³⁴ For Chapman, the passage illustrates how the *BJ* should be read as a composition addressed to a mixed audience of Romans, Greeks, and Hellenized Judaeans. Chapman’s identification of language of spectacle and tragedy in the *BJ* is of fundamental significance for understanding how Josephus aimed to communicate his message to Greeks and Romans in an effective manner.

In his outline of the thematic currents of the *BJ* in *A History of the Jewish War*, Mason singles out how Josephus employs the motif of fortune in a way that resembles its use by authors such as Polybius and Plutarch. He links this to the more general tragic current that permeates Josephus’ books.⁴³⁵ As I have noted before, Mason’s analysis of Josephus’ language use shows the importance of understanding individual aspects of Josephus’ self-characterization in their immediate literary context. Mason uses Titus’ considerations about Josephus’ change from mighty enemy to helpless captive (*BJ* 3.396) to illustrate the rationale underpinning the *BJ* as a whole.⁴³⁶ This is yet another indication that Josephus’ self-characterization is thoroughly embedded in its compositional context.

More systematic work has been done on the *BJ* as a whole.⁴³⁷ Scholars increasingly recognize that Josephus introduces central tragic notions of pity, compassion, and lamentation in the prologue

⁴³² The lack of analysis is inherent in the introductory nature of Bilde’s monograph.

⁴³³ Chapman (1998) 15–16; Chapman (2005a) 293–96.

⁴³⁴ Chapman (1998) 17. Different aspects of messengers in Greek epic and tragic poetry are discussed in Barrett (2002).

⁴³⁵ Mason (2016a) 113.

⁴³⁶ Mason (2016a) 113. Cf. Mason (2016c) 29, where he refers to *BJ* 3.394–95 to illustrate a similar point.

⁴³⁷ Recently captured by Mason as “tragic situations in human and inter-*polis* relations,” see Mason (2016a) 114–16. See in more detail Mason (2013).

of the *BJ*, where he highlights the inconceivable disaster that struck the Judaeen nation with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.⁴³⁸ For example, at *BJ* 1.9–12 Josephus invokes a specifically tragic register, with the use of words such as συμφορά (2x), πάθος, οἶκτος, and ἐλέω. He frequently employs this and similar language throughout his narrative. This is further underlined by Josephus' use of rare words in *BJ* 1.9–12. He uses ἀτύχημα once elsewhere in the *BJ*, when lamenting the destruction of the temple (6.408). The word δυστύχημα ("misfortune") is even more atypical, and Josephus uses it only once throughout his entire corpus. The word ὀδυρμός ("lamentation") occurs with relative frequency in Greek tragedy. Even more strikingly, the word ἐπολοφύρομαι ("to lament over") never occurs in (preserved) Greek literature before Josephus, though Aeschylus' potential use singles it out as specifically tragic. The verb ὀλοφύρομαι ("to lament" or "mourn") regularly occurs in Greek literature, especially Homeric epic, but the substantivized form ὀλόφυρσις ("lamentation") as Josephus uses it is rather rare. Dionysius of Halicarnassus comments on this specific form as a stylistic oddity of Thucydides' *Histories* (2 *Amm.* 5). Thus, Josephus probably intends to overwhelm and impress his audience by permeating *BJ* 1.9–12 with unmistakably tragic but simultaneously odd and atypical language.

He develops these notions elsewhere in his work: the *BJ* is full of tragic reversals and scenes intended to arouse pity.⁴³⁹ Among the more obvious examples is Josephus' description of Mary's cannibalism (6.199–219), which is extensively discussed in Honora Chapman's dissertation on language of theatre and spectacle in the *BJ*.⁴⁴⁰ Introducing this episode, Josephus notes that he is aware that some might accuse him of talking marvels (τερατεύομαι) for including such an unbelievable narrative. He nonetheless claims that leaving out the story about this disaster

⁴³⁸ So e.g. Bilde (1988) 71–73.

⁴³⁹ For a discussion of tragic modes of writing history, see Sacks (1981) 144–70. For the problems related to the concept of "tragic history" as a genre, see Walbank (1960); Marincola (2003).

⁴⁴⁰ Chapman (1998) 58–121. See also Chapman (2005a) 32; Chapman (2007). Pictorial descriptions such as used by Josephus in this passage are reckoned among the most powerful tools to arouse emotions among the audience by ancient theorists. See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1378a 19–22, 1408a 23–25; Cicero, *De Orat.* 22.206; *Brut.* 188; *Fam.* 5.12.1, 5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Dem.* 18–22; Plutarch, On the Fame of the Athenians 347a–c; Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.67–70. These examples are discussed in Marincola (2003) 290–93. Webb (2009) 72–74 focuses on Quintilian's ideas about pictorial descriptions.

(συμφορά) — confirmed by numerous witnesses — will compromise his narrative (6.199–200).⁴⁴¹ Through the voice of Mary, he highlights the great symbolic value of the episode: “Go and become food for me, to the rebels an avenging ghost, and to the world as the one story that the world lacks about the misfortunes of the Judaeans” (6.207: ὁ μόνος ἐλλείπων ταῖς Ἰουδαίων συμφοραῖς).⁴⁴² The entire scene embodies the collective suffering of the Judaeans during the revolt against the Romans and illustrates Josephus’ use of tragic currents throughout the composition.⁴⁴³

This brief overview of scholarship, backed up by a several case studies, suggests that tragic themes feature prominently in the *BJ*. It also provides various indications that Josephus fashioned his personal narrative in similar terms. Using these insights as a point of departure, the following section 1) examines how Josephus frames his personal narrative as a tragic reversal, 2) shows how these compositional choices fit the broader thematic outlook and plot development of the *BJ*, and 3) attempts to explain the rationale underpinning this framing in view of an audience in and around Rome.

In the prologue of the *BJ* Josephus anticipates his autobiographical story in the following manner (1.22): “And I will go through the fate of those taken captive in each city with accuracy, exactly like I saw or suffered it. For I shall not conceal any of my own misfortunes, as I am about to speak to those who know about them already” (καὶ τὰ περὶ ἐκάστην πόλιν τῶν ἀλίσκομένων πάθη μετὰ ἀκριβείας, ὡς εἶδον ἢ ἔπαθον, δίδειμι. οὐδὲ γὰρ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ τι συμφορῶν ἀποκρύψομαι, μέλλων γε πρὸς εἰδότας ἔρεῖν). In this passage, Josephus does not draw attention to his impressive achievements as a general fighting the emperor but to the tragic character of his experiences. By emphasizing that he will not conceal anything, Josephus might have intended to create an image of openness and mutual trust between himself and his audience.

Josephus’ choice of words thematically anchors his autobiographical narrative in the compositional structures of the *BJ*. With the use of *συμφορά*, *πάθος*, and *πάσχω*, we observe that

⁴⁴¹ Josephus may have thought of Polybius discussion about the use of tragic elements in historical writings (*Hist.* 2.56). Polybius accuses Phylarchus of writing down marvels” (τερατεύομαι) like the tragic poets (οἱ τραγωδιογράφοι). Josephus might anticipate similar accusations by his careful introduction of the scene.

⁴⁴² The symbolic value of the episode is also emphasized by Mader (2000) 139–44.

⁴⁴³ See e.g. *BJ* 1.431, 665; 5.54–62; 6.81–91.

Josephus enhances the tragic theme of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (1.9–12; cf. 1.27–29) to the events that took place in Galilee, in which Josephus himself took an active part. Moreover, as Honora Chapman observes, Josephus' use of the verb ἀποκρύπτω ("to conceal") also connects his autobiographical narrative with his anticipation of the disaster of the destruction of the temple, where he uses the same verb (1.26).⁴⁴⁴ Thus, Josephus applies a thematic conjunction between the central theme of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and his personal story in the prologue of the *BJ*.

Josephus concentrates the tragic currents of his personal narrative to *BJ* 3, which describes the Roman conquest of Galilee and Josephus' resistance and surrender. In *BJ* 2, language of pity occurs only in relation to Josephus' strategic abasement (ταπείνωσις) to create discord among his enemies. Josephus' self-humiliation moves the Tarichaeans to pity (οἶκτος). It also misleads his critics to think that Josephus' main goal is to obtain their compassion (2.602–4: ἔλεος). Except for this instance, language of calamity (πάθος), suffering (πάσχω), disaster (συμφορά), or fortune (τύχη) is entirely absent from the autobiographical passages in *BJ* 2.⁴⁴⁵

The contrast with Josephus' self-characterization in *BJ* 3 is compelling. Tragic language features from the first altercations between Josephus and the Romans: "the whole of the Galilee was filled with fire and blood, and it was tried by all kinds of calamities and disasters" (3.63: πάθους ... ἢ συμφορᾶς). As Josephus proceeds, we find an increase of tragic vocabulary and drama in the narrative. This comes to full expression when he describes his plans to leave the city. This leads to a peak of despair (ἀπόγνωσις) among the inhabitants of Jotapata.⁴⁴⁶ In an attempt to persuade Josephus to stay, children, old men, and women with babies fall down wailing (ὀδύρομαι) before his feet and beseeching him in tears (κωκυτός) to share their fortune (3.201–2: τύχη). This prompts Josephus to pity (οἶκτος) them. He decides to stay and use their despair (ἀπόγνωσις) as a weapon to

⁴⁴⁴ See Chapman (2005a) 293–94.

⁴⁴⁵ Although elsewhere in the volume it features dominantly. E.g. Judaeans foreseeing their destruction at 2.454–56 and 650; the Judaeans killing his compatriots at Scythopolis at 2.469–76; the Alexandrian *stasis* at 2.487–99.

⁴⁴⁶ So also *BJ* 3.149, 153.

make a final stance against the Romans, even if there is no hope for victory or survival (3.204–5; cf. §3.3.2.1).

This tragic prospect looms large over the remainder of the siege narrative. Josephus repeatedly emphasizes the motif of despair (ἀπόγνωσις) and its effects on the Judaeans (see e.g. 3.208–9, 212, 384) and Josephus himself (3.271). The growing despair of the Judaeans is paired with an increasing use of συμφορά, κακός, πάθος, and τύχη vocabulary. Shortly before the conclusion of the siege, we encounter Josephus motivating his men by forcing them to visualize before their eyes the disasters (συμφοραί) that are about to happen: the enemy slaughtering old men, children, and women (3.261). In the confrontation that follows, the narrator emphasizes that the extreme misfortune (3.268: τὰς ἐσχάτας συμφορὰς) of the Judaeans motivates them to show themselves equal in bravery to the Romans. Note that Josephus also uses this phrase in the prologue of the *BJ*, to describe how the Judaeans “dropped to the most extreme of disasters” (1.11 πρὸς ἔσχατον συμφορῶν αὐθις καταπεσεῖν).

As is typical for his narrative style, Josephus heightens the tension by digressing from the main story shortly before the end of the siege. He elaborates on events taking place in Japha (3.289–306) and Mount Gerizim (3.307–15),⁴⁴⁷ again rendering the tragic vocabulary that permeates the main storyline of *BJ* 3. In the case of Japha, Josephus emphasizes the enormity of the Galilean calamities (3.293: τὰ Γαλιλαίων πάθη). He also notes that “this calamity befell the Galileans on the twenty-fifth of the month Daesius” (τοῦτο συνέβη τὸ πάθος Γαλιλαίοις πέμπτη καὶ εἰκάδι Δαισίου μηνός). Regarding the episode taking place at Mount Gerizim, Josephus notes the following (3.307): “Also the Samaritans did not remain without experiences of misfortunes” (Ἐμειναν δὲ οὐδὲ Σαμαρεῖς ἀπείρατοι συμφορῶν). The Samaritans “had not called themselves to sense by the trouble of their neighbours” (καὶ οὐδὲ τοῖς γειτνιώσι κακοῖς ἐσωφρονίζοντο) and eagerly consider the prospect of revolting (3.308). He closes the episode as follows (3.315): “And by such misfortunes the Samaritans were attacked” (καὶ τοιαύταις μὲν συμφοραῖς Σαμαρεῖται ἐχρήσαντο).

⁴⁴⁷ 3.289: Κατὰ δὲ τὰς αὐτὰς ἡμέρας (“During these days”). The author returns to Jotapata by using a genitive of time at 3.316: Τῶν δ’ ἀνὰ τὰ Ἰωτάπατα καρτερούντων (“Meanwhile the Jotapatans were still enduring ...”); 3.316.

By narrating the misfortunes that occurred in Japha and at Mount Gerizim, Josephus prepares the audience for the conclusion of the siege of Jotapata (3.316–39). In the midst of relentless slaughter, we encounter the by now familiar motifs: by chance (τύχη), the entire city was filled with a thick mist, obstructing those awake to see clearly. Under these circumstances, the Jotapatans “rose up to only get a perception of their troubles” (πρὸς μόνην τὴν τῶν κακῶν αἴσθησιν ἐξανέστησαν). Josephus now focuses on Roman anger: “To the mind of the Romans did not come any mercy or pity, remembering what they had suffered during the siege” (3.329: Ῥωμαίους δὲ κατὰ μνήμην ὧν ἐκ τῆς πολιορκίας ἔπαθον οὐτε φειδῶς εἰσῆει τινὸς οὐτ’ ἔλεος). At the end of the narrative, Josephus sums up that 40,000 were killed during the siege and 1,200 taken prisoner. Vespasian orders the city to be completely ravaged and its defences burned to the ground. This marks the end of the siege of Jotapata (3.336–39).

Nonetheless, Josephus does not make the end of the siege but his own surrender the tragic climax of the narrative. He separates the episode in three scenes. The first narrates the Roman search for Josephus, the latter’s disappearance to the cave, and his divine dream on account of which he decides to surrender (3.340–54). The narrator highlights the Roman eagerness to capture Josephus vis-à-vis Josephus’ unwillingness to surrender, with his autobiographical dream as a hinge point marking his decision to surrender.

The second and third scenes are more important in light of my present inquiry. The second scene describes Josephus’ dispute with his compatriots in the cave and how he manages to trick and escape from them (3.355–91). Despair (ἀπόγνωσις) keeps Josephus’ compatriots from listening to his speech (3.384). Josephus continues as follows: “Even at the moment of his extreme calamity they still showed respect to their general” (3.386: τῶν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τὰς ἐσχάτας συμφορὰς ἔτι τὸν στρατηγὸν αἰδουμένων). Note yet again the similarity of the vocabulary to the language Josephus employs in the prologue (1.11). In addition to this, Josephus’ hardships (3.387: ἀμηχανία; also 3.271) inspires his inventiveness and enables him to get away.

Nonetheless, it is only in the third scene that the full extent Josephus’ tragedy is brought into full view (3.392ff.). The spectacle (3.393: θέα) of Josephus entering the Roman camp changes Roman

sentiments from anger to pity.⁴⁴⁸ Those standing close to him remember his achievements in the past and are amazed by Josephus' sudden reversal (μεταβολή). Notwithstanding their past anger, the Roman commanders are touched by the sight (ὄψις) of Josephus. Titus in particular is seized by Josephus' display of character in his misfortunes (ἐν ταῖς συμφοραῖς). Josephus' youth causes even more pity (ἔλεος). His tragic reversal prompts Titus to consider the general power of fortune (τύχη) and he persuades many others to share his compassion (οἶκτος) for Josephus. In the context of this episode, Josephus also fashions himself as a representative of Judaeen toughness and a moral example of how to handle personal misfortunes by his emphasis on his innate strength of character under these difficult circumstances (cf. §3.3.2.1).

That not the siege of Jotapata but Josephus' personal misfortunes should be perceived as the tragic climax of the narrative becomes evident in the closing scene (3.432–42). Its opening stresses the collective tragedy of the city: news of Jotapata's suffering (πάθος) reaches Jerusalem and the greatness of the misfortune (τὸ μέγεθος τῆς συμφορᾶς) strikes the people with disbelief (3.432). Further, the message is classified as a series of gloomy tidings (σχυθρωπός) spreading quickly through the city (3.434). This is a word that is used with relative frequency in Greek tragedy, thus adding to the tragic colour of the narrative.⁴⁴⁹ As noted by Thackeray, Josephus' use of Rumour personified (φήμη) might echo Virgil's reference to Fama — who “flew with rumours mixed of false and true” — when describing the fall of Troy (*Aen.* 2.263–64).⁴⁵⁰

At this point, the narrator changes the focus of the narrative and foregrounds the report about Josephus' presumed death: “*This* filled Jerusalem with the greatest grief” (3.435: τοῦτο μεγίστου τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα πένθους ἐπλήρωσεν). The narrator vividly describes the lamentations taking place immediately afterwards. He emphasizes that, while families lament their individual losses, the mourning (πένθος) for Josephus is made public and the singing of dirges (θρηνέω) performed by all

⁴⁴⁸ As Honora Chapman has argued, Josephus does this by using highly visual language aimed at putting the spectacle right in front of his audience's eyes. On *BJ* 3.392–98, see Chapman (1998) 15–16; Chapman (2005a) 293–96.

⁴⁴⁹ With 31 occurrences throughout his corpus, Josephus is among the frequent users.

⁴⁵⁰ Translation is based on Rushton Fairclough, revised by Goold, LCL. Thackeray (1929) 118–19. Josephus uses a similar phrase at *BJ* 1.371.

(3.436–37). The narrator continues that the city’s lamentations (δόρυρσις)⁴⁵¹ continued for thirty days, corresponding to Judaeans lamentation practices.⁴⁵²

When the people of Jerusalem find out what had really happened at Jotapata and that the suffering (πάθος) of Josephus was a false rumour, they replace their affection (εὐνοία) with anger (ὀργή). The Judaeans accuse Josephus of cowardice and betrayal.⁴⁵³ The narrator explains their response as misguided (3.440–42):

παρωξύνοντο δὲ ταῖς πληγαῖς καὶ προσεξεκαίοντο ταῖς κακοπραγίαις· τό γε μὴν πταίνειν, ὃ γίνεται τοῖς εὖ φρονούσιν ἀσφαλείας καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων φυλακῆς αἴτιον, ἐκείνοις κέντρον ἑτέρων ἐγίνετο συμφορῶν, καὶ τὸ τέλος αἰεὶ τῶν κακῶν αὐθις ἀρχή· μᾶλλον γοῦν ὥρμων ἐπὶ τοῦς Ῥωμαίους ὡς καὶ Ἰώσηπον ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀμυνόμενοι. τοὺς μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων τοιοῦτοι θόρυβοι κατεῖχον.

They were provoked by strokes of calamity and fired up by lack of success. Indeed, a mishap of the kind that causes those with a good understanding to be cautious and take measures against similar situations, only became an incentive for them to further disasters. The end of trouble was always the beginning of the next, and accordingly they rushed headlong at the Romans, thinking that by taking revenge on the Romans they would also take revenge on Josephus. These were the sorts of disturbances that gained possession of Jerusalem.

The foregoing indicates that Josephus makes his personal misfortunes the hallmark of the sufferings that unfolded in Galilee. The choice of such a frame is thoroughly embedded in the thematic outlook of the *BJ*, with its focus on the unparalleled tragedy that struck the Judaeans. What is more, he makes

⁴⁵¹ A rather rare term. As we have already observed, Josephus uses it to describe his personal lamentations in the prologue of the *BJ* (1.12).

⁴⁵² Cf. the thirty-day mourning for Moses (Deut. 34:8) and Aaron (Num. 20:29) in the Hebrew Bible. Seven days may have been the average (Eccl. 12:12). See the note at the LCL translation. Further references to the importance of this tradition among Judaeans can be found in the Rabbinic corpus.

⁴⁵³ On these and similar motifs, cf. §5.4.

his personal sufferings the beginning of the disasters in Jerusalem, a current which he develops further in *BJ* 4 and subsequent volumes. By doing so, he makes the Jotapata narrative and especially his own capture a hinge point in the development of *BJ*'s plot.

In addition to plot development, another significant reason for framing sections of his self-characterization in tragic terms might be the general appeal of this theme to his audience and communicate his messages in an effective manner. In the *Poetics* Aristotle extensively discusses how a reversal (περιπέτεια) from good to bad fortune is a basic but powerful plot move in ancient Greek tragedy, specifically designed to excite emotions of pity and fear (*Poet.* 11). Likewise, in his letter to Lucceius Cicero attempts to convince the historian to write down his history because “nothing takes more care to the reader’s pleasure than changes of circumstance and reversals of fortune” (*Fam.* 5.12.4: *nihil est enim aptius ad delectationem lectoris quam temporum varietates fortunaeeque vicissitudines*).⁴⁵⁴ He notes that such enjoyment — of the kind intended by Aristotle, namely of the kind that arouses strong emotions such as pity (*miser cordia*), compassion (*miseratio*), sympathy (*studium*), surprise (*admiratio*), suspense (*expectatio*), joy (*laetitia*), distress (*molestia*), hope (*spes*), and fear (*timor*) — is experienced by those going through the misfortunes of another without having to experience them personally (5.12.5). Correspondingly, it may very well be that Josephus frames his self-characterization as a reversal of fortune to adjust his account to the tastes of his audience.

3.3.5 The Functions of Josephus’ Speech before the Walls of Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.361–419)

Throughout this study, I have observed that Josephus ascribes a consistent set of character traits to himself and creates an impressive and rather consistent narrative persona that suits the historiographical outlook of the *BJ*. Until this point, I have focused on the themes and functions of the autobiographical passages in *BJ* 2–3. In keeping with the principle of a systematic analysis of Josephus’ self-characterization in the *BJ*, however, it is necessary to examine the autobiographical passages situated outside of the Galilee narrative, especially the speech before the walls of Jerusalem (5.361–419). Scholars have frequently commented on how Josephus’ fashions himself as a latter-day Jeremiah in this speech. This is sometimes explained as an attempt to justify his decision to

⁴⁵⁴ Translations are from Shackleton Bailey LCL, with adaptations.

surrender to fellow-Judaeans.⁴⁵⁵ Because this is one of the few places where Josephus explicitly draws on biblical traditions, other scholars have examined his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible when he wrote the *BJ*.⁴⁵⁶ However, less attention has been devoted to 1) the logic of the speech in its immediate narrative context 2) and how it relates to Josephus' self-characterization as a Judaeen statesman and general in the extended autobiographical narrative of *BJ* 2–3. The following will examine these issues.

I argue that Josephus' use of biblical history to convince his fellow-Judaeans suits both his specific role as a mediator on behalf of Titus and his general self-characterization. In regard to the former, Titus' entire point of dispatching Josephus on his behalf is that a Judaeen might be able to persuade the Jerusalemites where a Roman might fail (5.361):

οἷς δ' ἔργοις ἀνέμισγε συμβουλίαν, καὶ πολλάκις γινώσκων ἀνυπικότερον ὅπλων τὸν λόγον,
αὐτός τε σώζεσθαι παρεκάλει παραδόντας τὴν πόλιν ἤδη παρειλημμένην καὶ τὸν Ἰώσηπον
καθίει τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσει διαλέγεσθαι, τάχ' ἂν ἐνδοῦναι πρὸς ὁμόφυλον δοκῶν αὐτοῦς.

He mixed diplomacy with actions and, perceiving that speech is often more effective than arms, he himself urged them to save themselves by handing over the city, already taken, and he posted Josephus to convince them in their native language, thinking that they might make concessions to one of their own people.

In the first part of the speech Josephus touches upon common *topoi* related to the power of the Romans and how they are favoured by God and fortune (5.362–74). This part closely resembles Agrippa II's reasoning in *BJ* 2 (2.345–401) and illustrates Josephus' knowledge of contemporary politics. However, Josephus classifies it as plain advice (5.375: ταῖς φανεραῖς ... συμβουλίαις), perhaps

⁴⁵⁵ For the argument that Josephus presents himself as a latter-day Jeremiah, see esp. Lindner (1972) 26, 32–33, 73, 132–41. Also Wolff (1976) 10–15; Daube (1980); Cohen (1979) 98, 232; Cohen (1982); Bilde (1988) 55–56; Gray (1993) 72–74; Gnuse (1996) 27–29; Gussmann (2008) 295–96; Den Hollander (2014) 144. We shall not concern ourselves with the issue of prophecy here, which will be addressed in more depth in §5.4.4.

⁴⁵⁶ S. Schwartz (1990) 23–57; Tuval (2011); Tuval (2013) 90–128.

indicating that it does not contain any specialist knowledge and hence could have been delivered by others, Roman or Judaeen, steeped in politics and rhetoric.

However, the second part of the speech consists entirely of specialized Judaeen knowledge and thus could not have been spoken by a Roman or a Greek. Josephus touches upon specific episodes from the Hebrew Bible: Necho and Abraham (*BJ* 5.379–81; cf. Gen. 12:10–20), the ten plagues in Egypt (*BJ* 5.382–83; cf. Exod. 1–14), the stealing of the arch by the Philistines (*BJ* 5.384–85; cf. 1 Sam. 5–6), Sennacherib and the Assyrians (*BJ* 5.387–88; cf. 2 Kgs. 18:17–19:36), the release from Babylon by Cyrus (*BJ* 5.389; cf. 2 Chr. 36:20–23; Ezra 1), and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (*BJ* 5.391–93; cf. 2 Kgs. 24:18–25:12). Josephus then continues with post-biblical Judaeen history narrated in *BJ* 1: the sacrilege of Antiochus IV (*BJ* 5.394) and the various Roman invasions of Judaea (5.395–98). This kind of arguing requires a Judaeen learned in the customs of the country, indeed someone like Josephus (cf. *BJ* 1.3; 3.352). As many of the people in Jerusalem desert the Judaeen cause and escape to the Roman camp (5.420–23), Josephus' speech fulfils Titus' expectation in part, though the Judaeen leaders will not hand the city over.

In previous sections we have seen that Josephus portrays himself as a sagacious and inventive individual. This also means that the character Josephus does not always tell the truth, but is able to manipulate others in the narrative.⁴⁵⁷ This has implications for how we can interpret Josephus' speech. Some scholars have rightly observed that Josephus' rewriting of the Hebrew Bible vastly digresses from the original text and does not exemplify “exegetical precision.” An important

⁴⁵⁷ The hypothesis that the speeches in Josephus' narrative reflect his views as author is problematized especially in Mason (2011b); Mason (2012). For the view that Josephus' speech reflects his views as author, see more elaborately Lindner (1972) 25–33. See also e.g. Bilde (1988) 55. In a different argumentative context, Mason compares the behaviour of statesmen in the *BJ* and — among other works — Plutarch's advice in the *Precepts of Statecraft*. See Mason (2016a) 106ff: he draws attention to Plutarch emphasis on the necessity for a statesman to learn about the character of his people. A virtuous leader knows how to win the trust of the people and manages to steer them towards a course of action that benefits common interests (*Precepts* 799b–800a). An efficient way to accomplish this is the use of rhetorical skills to “soften by persuasion and overcome by charms the fierce and violent spirit of the people” (801e). Because the common people lack a deeper understanding of their own interests, the statesman must sometimes use manipulation to act in *their* interest (813a–c, 818e–819b). In reference to Plutarch's views, Mason argues that statesmen in the *BJ* display exactly this strategic attitude (examples are *BJ* 2.648–51; 4.248–50, 319–21). Their aim is to achieve the welfare of the people. The means are not important: “The essence of strategy is the pursuit of a goal, not from ideology, emotion, or reflex, but by the rational means most likely to secure it” (Mason [2016a] 112).

question is whether he aimed at “exegetical precision” — which in this context means to stay as close to the source text as possible— on this occasion.⁴⁵⁸ Did Josephus lack a solid knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and did he rely on oral priestly sources with different plots than we know them today? Or did Josephus design the speech to fit the literary context of the *BJ*, his self-characterization, and his intellectual purposes as an author writing for an audience in and around Rome? If he was mainly writing for Greeks and Romans, exegetical precision would presumably not be required since they did not have much knowledge of biblical traditions.

It might be impossible to know whether Josephus at this point of his career knew that his summary of, for instance, the encounter between Abraham and the Pharaoh was largely inconsistent with the account as one finds it in Genesis 12:10–20. What we can uncover is that each of the biblical examples as Josephus presents them suits the immediate narrative context and correlates to the broader compositional outlook of the *BJ*. Thus, his emphasis on the fact that Abraham “stretched out his clean hands towards the very place that you have now defiled” (5.380: καθαράς δ’ ἀνατείνας τὰς χεῖρας εἰς ὃν νῦν ἐμιάνατε χώρον ὑμεῖς τὸν ἀνίκητον αὐτῷ βοηθὸν ἐστρατολόγησεν) is absent from the Hebrew Bible. Yet the stress on the presumed place of the temple fits Josephus’ rhetorical purpose, which is to persuade the Judaeans that armed resistance has never been part of the Judaeian tradition. This is also the case with Josephus’ comment that the Pharaoh “made obeisance to the place which you have stained with blood of your murdered compatriots” (5.381: προσκυνῶν δὲ τὸν ὕφ’ ὑμῶν αἱμαχθέντα χώρον ὁμοφύλῳ φόνῳ), or the specification that Abraham had 318 officers under him,

⁴⁵⁸ See esp. S. Schwartz (1990) 23–57; According to Seth Schwarz, Josephus uses this speech to illustrate his general point that Josephus did not know the Hebrew Bible very well when he wrote the *BJ*. His speech before the walls of Jerusalem is referred to as evidence to support this claim. Seth Schwartz observes about the biblical examples cited by Josephus in the speech that he “has imposed a ‘quietistic’ and cultic interpretation on every story which did not have one, and, sometimes quite apart from the needs of his argument, has told the stories in forms so altered that some are nearly unrecognizable.” S. Schwartz (1990) 28. He continues that Josephus used the biblical stories in the *BJ* to respond to Judaeian charges even though he was unconcerned with Judaeian tradition. To effectively counter such charges exegetical precision would have been required, which is precisely what this speech lacks. Schwartz proposes that Josephus uses priestly legends rather than the Bible itself. At any rate, there is no evidence that he had studied the Bible when he was composing the *BJ*. S. Schwartz (1990) 28–35. See for a related argument Tuval (2011); Tuval (2013) 90–128. For Josephus’ speech before the walls of Jerusalem, see Tuval (2013) 121–24. Tuval investigates “Josephus’ changing perceptions of the Jewish religion” (p. 1). That hypothesis is challenged on other grounds in Mason (2017b).

each commanding a large body of men, but that he did not call them to arms (5.380).⁴⁵⁹ This emphasis on the holy place of the temple in light of its impending destruction permeates the entire speech and supports Josephus' purpose with this speech as a mediator on behalf of Titus.⁴⁶⁰

To sum up, the preceding analysis indicates that the autobiographical passages apart from the extended narrative of *BJ* 2–3 are consistent with and significantly contribute to how Josephus shapes his narrative persona. It illustrated this point by an examination of Josephus' speech before the walls of Jerusalem in *BJ* 5. In addition to this, it was noted that the speech fits the immediate narrative context in which Josephus acts as a mediator on behalf of Titus, as it in part fulfils the latter's expectations when sending a Judaeen to persuade the inhabitants of Jerusalem to surrender.

3.4 Conclusion: The Purpose of Josephus' Self-Characterisation in the *BJ*

By way of conclusion, I offer a synthesis of the foregoing examination of the compositional place and potential purposes of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*. This survey of the language and literary motifs of the autobiographical sections indicates that Josephus took pains to anchor the autobiographical passages in their immediate narrative context in accordance with the moral-didactic themes of the *BJ*. To accomplish this, it has explained Josephus' self-characterization in reference to the themes of 1) Judaeen toughness and courage, Josephus' elite values; 2) Josephus' handling and suppression of civic trouble; 3) Josephus' personal story as tragic reversal and exemplar of how to deal with misfortunes; 4) Josephus' self-presentation as capable orator and specialist of Judaeen matters before the walls of Jerusalem vis-à-vis his role as mediator on behalf of Titus. In general, Josephus foregrounds the excellence of his narrative persona and underscores this by

⁴⁵⁹ Pace S. Schwartz (1990) 30, who claims that neither Josephus' addition about the 318 officers nor the specific emphasis on the place in Palestine matter for Josephus' purposes with the speech and concludes that Josephus follows a priestly legend here.

⁴⁶⁰ As has been observed by Mason, in his speech Josephus highlights the disastrous consequences of Judaeen armed resistance in response to the sacrilege of Antiochus IV (5.394). This resistance is hardly an issue in *BJ* 1, where Antiochus is said to take the city by storm after he was invited by the Tobiad priests (1.32). Rather, it is the armed resistance of the Hasmonaeans that eventually led to Judaeen liberation from 170 years of Macedonian domination (1.36–53). The *author* Josephus obviously knew all this: he wrote all of it himself. But it would hardly have served the purpose of the *character* Josephus to remind the Jerusalem insurgents of past military successes. See Mason (2012) 151; Mason (2016a) 424–25.

showing how he responds to a variety of situations that put his character to the test. In addition to this, it has suggested some ways in which Josephus' autobiographical narrative relates to the plot development of the *BJ* as a whole. While scholars have identified aspects of these themes before, this chapter has offered the first systematic examination of the themes and narrative currents of Josephus' self-characterization in the literary context of the *BJ* as a whole composition and in the backdrop of the moral-didactic nature of Graeco-Roman historiography. Josephus shapes his own character in accordance with the themes, moralizing outlook, and literary techniques employed elsewhere in the work.

Josephus evidently highlights his own uniqueness throughout his narrative in an attempt to sell himself and his personal story in Rome. Simultaneously, his emphasis on his impressiveness as general can at least partially be explained as arising from the moral-didactic historiographical outlook of the *BJ*. The work focuses on allegedly the greatest military conflict ever and promises to highlight Judaeon achievements in the process. In addition to a desire of selling himself and his personal story in Rome, Josephus might have taken much care to fashion an authoritative narrative persona because historians could and would be judged on the basis of their histories. In consideration of this point, the foregoing analysis has suggested some ways in which Josephus' presentation of his narrative character underscores his ability as a historian to write about military and political events. It is obvious that Josephus' self-representation in *BJ* 2–3 is intended to enhance his credibility as military and political historian.⁴⁶¹

To this one should add that Josephus might have had special reason to elaborate his personal experiences in Galilee in view of an audience in and around Flavian Rome. Who amongst his contemporaries had the experience of defying the emperor himself during the war which had effectively established his political supremacy? Others have argued that no member of the Roman elite would have had any significant interest in a Judaeon priest and war captive. I have argued that

⁴⁶¹ Although the truth of Josephus' narrative remains a questionable issue, such as why Josephus presents himself as appointed as the *one and only general* responsible for the defence of Galilee in *BJ*, whereas in the *Vita* he comments how he was sent as part of a *diplomatic mission* to persuade the people in the region not to fight against the Romans *as one of three* (*Vita* 28–29). Such inconsistencies between the *BJ* and the *Vita* have been the focus of e.g. Laqueur (1920); Cohen (1979); Rajak (1983).

Josephus had good reason to assume a considerable interest on the part of his audience in his campaigning against the Romans and Vespasian. In light of this, it is only natural that he fully exploited his personal story to create a self-portrayal suiting the tastes and conventions of the elites in Rome. Even if Josephus lacked any prominence in Rome's most powerful social and political circles, he would have been famous enough in the city to be an object of curiosity.

Until this point, no discussion has been offered of the aspects of personal apology that feature so prominently in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*. Considering this, the foregoing presentation of Josephus' main purposes when writing so extensively about his own achievements might raise important questions. For one thing, how does Josephus attempt to moderate the precarious balance between highlighting his own virtues and maintaining an appearance of objectivity as a historian? A too overt emphasis on his own political and military excellence would obviously undercut his claim to write from an impartial and objective perspective. How should one explain the apologetic features of Josephus' self-characterization, or his "prophecy" about the fate of the Judaeans and the Roman emperors? The preceding analysis has not yet explained these currents. Hence, the remainder of this study investigates these and related questions.

Chapter 4: Graeco-Roman Autobiographical Discourse and the Rhetoric of Self-Praise

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have examined Josephus' self-characterization in the compositional context of the *BJ*, approaching it as a composition steeped in contemporary Graeco-Roman historiographical and rhetorical conventions. The remainder of this study continues to explore the rhetorical aspects of the work, but it focuses on those rhetorical aspects relevant specifically for understanding Graeco-Roman dispositions towards autobiographical practice. More specifically, Chapters 4 and 5 will investigate how Josephus rhetorically moderates the strong emphasis on his military and political virtues examined in Chapter 3.⁴⁶²

What drives this approach is Josephus' unusual position as both a character in and the author of the *BJ*.⁴⁶³ If we look back on our reflections in regard to the publication of Josephus' *BJ* and his social position in Flavian Rome, the issue of negotiating his roles as author and character comes to the fore. How does Josephus create a rhetorically convincing perspective for the autobiographical sections of his narrative before an audience that, at least partially, knew him personally or even listened to recitations of his work (cf. §2.2)? The broader argument underpinning this approach is that setting up a dialogue between Josephus' self-characterization and Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse offers a vantage point that allows us to satisfactorily explain the textual features that have caused much interpretative difficulties for scholars, such as Josephus' strong criticism of the instigators of the Judaeo-Roman conflict while simultaneously justifying his own involvement.⁴⁶⁴ As we will discuss in the following chapter, scholars have mainly approached this problem in the face of the historical events underlying it. By contrast, we will examine the literary

⁴⁶² My choice to separately study Josephus' self-characterization as "historiography" and "autobiography" is evidently artificial and merely a redactional choice to present the results of this investigation. Niehoff and Levinson (2019), a collection of articles that includes some studies on autobiographical self-fashioning, contains relevant material in relation to the present chapter but came too late to my attention to be considered for this study.

⁴⁶³ On the self-fashioning of Graeco-Roman historians see Marincola (1997) 128–74. On the self-portrayal of historians as character in their own narratives see pp. 175–216.

⁴⁶⁴ On this problem, see e.g. Cohen (1979) 100.

features of Josephus' autobiographical narrative as an integral part of a rhetorical history, designed to communicate with a local audience in and around Rome.

Accordingly, the remainder of this investigation is devoted to the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by Josephus to describe his own character in the *BJ*. My approach is largely inspired by John Marincola's *Authority and Tradition*. Marincola investigates aspects of self-presentation of Greek and Roman historians, particularly how they constructed their claims to authority. He defines authority as "the literary means by which the ancient historian claims the competence to narrate and explain the past, and simultaneously constructs a persona that the audience will find persuasive and believable."⁴⁶⁵ In his monograph, Marincola devotes one chapter to surveying how Graeco-Roman historians "reconciled the dual role of *actor* and *auctor rerum*." He explores issues of person and perspective and other strategies that might be of relevance to understand aspects of self-presentation by classical historians.⁴⁶⁶ This study is exceptionally wide-ranging and suggests the value of Graeco-Roman rhetorical discourse for an in-depth study of Josephus' rhetorical techniques and strategies of self-characterization in the *BJ*.⁴⁶⁷

The present chapter sets up a comparative framework that will aid us to understand Josephus' autobiographical self-fashioning in the *BJ*. This will help to define the specific rhetorical problems Josephus had to tackle when extensively describing his own role in the Judaeen-Roman conflict about himself in view of an audience in and around Rome and pave the way for an examination of the rhetorical features of his autobiographical narrative in Chapter 5.

To accomplish this, we begin by providing an outline of the history of autobiographical practice from fifth-century Greece until first-century Rome and by looking at how Josephus' practice generally fits this comparative context.⁴⁶⁸ Second, we explore a selection of Greek and Latin texts that reveal different aspects of the rhetorical problems related to Graeco-Roman autobiographical practice (and speaking about oneself more generally). It turns out that the issue of self-praise is

⁴⁶⁵ Marincola (1997) 1.

⁴⁶⁶ Marincola (1997) 175. On self-praise, see pp. 175–82; On issues of person and perspective, see pp. 182–205; on strategies of self-presentation see pp. 205–16.

⁴⁶⁷ Marincola regularly refers to Josephus' practice. See Marincola (1997) *passim*.

⁴⁶⁸ Grojnowski (2015) offers an in-depth investigation of autobiographical texts vis-à-vis Josephus' corpus, arguing for a genre (cf. §1.3).

central to almost any discussion about writing or speaking about oneself. Simultaneously, ancient critics observe a variety of techniques and strategies that might be of use to moderate self-praise and render it less offensive. The chapter argues that this discourse offers a vantage point that allows us to obtain a better understanding of the rhetorical techniques that shaped Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*.

4.2 Josephus and Autobiographical Practice in Flavian Rome

4.2.1 Autobiography in Antiquity

What exactly do we study when studying autobiography in antiquity? Tim Whitmarsh writes the following:

Unlike with *bios* ('life', hence 'biography'), no ancient word exists for autobiography; and, relatedly, there is no sharply defined concept of the genre. There are, of course, all kinds of texts that have substantial amounts of personal narrative in them, from Plato's seventh *Letter* and Xenophon's *Anabasis*, through the now-lost personal records of Hellenistic courtiers, through the Achievements (*Res Gestae*) of Augustus and other emperors, to Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. It is practically meaningless, however, to ask whether or not such texts count as autobiography, a genre that is an entirely modern construct.⁴⁶⁹

Hence, the task we have set before ourselves in the first part of this chapter pertains not so much to asking whether certain texts count as autobiographies in the modern sense of the word.⁴⁷⁰ In accordance with Whitmarsh' proposal, we shall investigate texts from Graeco-Roman antiquity that either directly or indirectly reflect on the forms and functions of personal narrative (which we continue to call "autobiography," and "autobiographical practice," since we lack better words to

⁴⁶⁹ Whitmarsh (2005) 79–83 (quote p. 79).

⁴⁷⁰ See Misch (1973) 1.1–19 on the origins of the "genre" of autobiography.

describe it). Cases of such practice are found across different times and genres. One regularly encounters ancients describing their own life, education, expertise, and virtues.⁴⁷¹

4.2.2 Classical Greece

To understand the peculiarities of autobiographical discourse in Josephus' immediate cultural context — Flavian Rome — it is helpful to first look at such practice in Classical Greece and obtain a grasp of some fundamental developments.⁴⁷²

Greeks did not tend to write about themselves elaborately, at least not in literary texts. When they did, they employed a distinctively apologetic tone. Plato's *Seventh Epistle* gives an autobiographical account of Plato's activities at Sicily. It was presumably written after the murder of Plato's disciple Dion in 354 BC. Plato recounts several of his visits to Sicily and his counsel to Dion, his friends, and the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius II in the treatise. The work concludes with Plato affirming that "he is forced" (ἀναγκάσθων εἶναι) to explain his choices and motives to go to Sicily for a second time in defence against "absurd and irrational stories" (352A). Plato apparently writes to justify his past actions, or at least he creates the appearance that he is doing so.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ Georg's Misch study remains the standard treatment of autobiographical writing in antiquity. See Misch (1973) 159–339 (autobiographical practice in the Greek and Roman periods). See for more general overviews e.g. Momigliano (1993), with a focus on the Greek period; Mellor (1999) 165–84 (specifically focusing on Roman autobiography, but with a brief treatment of Greek autobiography as well); Riggsby (2007). See also the case studies in Baslez, Hoffmann, and Pernot (1993); Reichel (2005); Marasco (2011), a volume in which the structural distinction between political autobiography and other shapes of autobiography as proposed by Misch is problematized. Mason's 2001 commentary on the *Vita* places Josephus' autobiographical practice in the context of Graeco-Roman autobiographical practice, see pp. xli–xliii. Grojnowski (2015) includes a survey of comparative evidence in support of her argument that Josephus fashioned himself to the likeness of Nehemiah in the *Vita*. Grojnowski's approach should be explained in light of the approach of her doctoral work *Josephus: An Autobiography: A Comparative Analysis of Ancient Literature in the Search for Genre*. She seeks to explain Josephus' *Vita* at the background of the development of autobiography as a literary genre. Although the study came to my attention late in my research, Grojnowski has done much comparative work relevant for the purposes of my study.

⁴⁷² An early instance of autobiographical practice in Greek culture is in Hesiod's work. Misch (1973) 167–95. On self-reference in Greek epic poetry see e.g. Schneider (1993).

⁴⁷³ The authenticity of the document is disputed. See Kotzé (2015). Kotzé also discusses Isocrates' *Antidosis*, on which see further below. See also Misch (1973) 110–54; Brisson (1993) 37–46.

Although more elaborate discussion is offered elsewhere in this chapter, one should also take note of Isocrates' *Antidosis* (cf. §4.3.1). In this work Isocrates presents autobiographical discourse in terms of a fictional court case in which he himself stands accused. A striking aspect of this work is that Isocrates informs his audience *in advance* about his procedures, explaining that this framing offers him the opportunity to speak with more freedom about his own actions (*Ant.* 4–8).⁴⁷⁴

Demosthenes' *On the Crown* is the written form of a speech delivered around 330 BC in defence against accusation from Aeschines. Throughout the speech Demosthenes refers to and justifies his own actions and emphasizes the excellence of his own character. He apologizes to his audience in advance for speaking about himself so elaborately. Yet this is something for which he can hardly be blamed — he claims — because Aeschines *forced* him to do so. Demosthenes thus shifts the blame to his adversary (*Cor.* 3–4).⁴⁷⁵ Each of these authors presents autobiographical discourse in terms of apology or self-justification. At least in the case of Isocrates, this claim is partially fictitious.

The Greek historian Ctesias, writing at the Persian court, is known to have written about his career extensively in his *Persica*,⁴⁷⁶ but this work is mainly lost. Only in Xenophon's *Anabasis* can such practice be studied in a significant manner.⁴⁷⁷ In this work the reader encounters long stretches

⁴⁷⁴ Plato's *Apology of Socrates* follows similar rhetorical patterns as the *Antidosis*, the difference being that Plato writes about Socrates. Yet the entire *Apology* presents itself as autobiographical. See Kotzé (2015) 43–44.

⁴⁷⁵ On the appreciation of Demosthenes' *On the Crown* in the ancient world see Adams (1927) 201–56; Rutherford (1998) 61–63; Yunis (2000) 99–100. In modern scholarship Wankel (1976), a 1376 pp. commentary, is exemplary for the attention that Demosthenes' *On the Crown* has received. See also e.g. Yunis (2005) 9–20; MacDowell (2009) 382–97.

⁴⁷⁶ In this work — only preserved through quotations in various other authors — Ctesias seems to have written significant portions about himself as a character in his histories, in addition to the usual claims of reliability as a historian. Marincola (1997) 134. On Ctesias' autobiographical material, see also Gray (2011a) 26–30.

⁴⁷⁷ Before Xenophon's work we find historians briefly referring to their own credentials and background in the prologues of their investigations. Herodotus claims his authority on the basis of inquiry (ἵστορία; *Hist.* 1.1.1). Thucydides is more elaborate when establishing his authority based on his experience as eyewitness. Thuc. 1.1 (introduction “Thucydides the Athenian”); 1.20–22 (methodological exposition). The importance of experience is expressed most emphatically in the second preface of the work: Thuc. 5.26.5. He relates the impact of the Peloponnesian War on his personal career in the second prologue and stages himself as a minor character in his own work. Thuc. 4.105.4–105.1; 5.26. Cf. Marincola (1997) 182–84.

of personal narrative about Xenophon's role in saving the Ten Thousand Greek mercenaries that joined Cyrus the Younger in his mission to usurp his brother's throne. Books 5 to 7 contain many sections framed to defend the actions of the character Xenophon. Xenophon is regularly challenged based on ill-informed and sometimes even wicked claims. In each case Xenophon delivers long speeches in justification of his own actions and the motives underpinning them.⁴⁷⁸

In brief, each of the aforementioned authors emphasizes motives of necessity when elaborating about their own actions or character. Either the surviving Greek authors of the fifth and fourth centuries BC write about themselves only in self-defence,⁴⁷⁹ or they wanted to create an appearance that they did so. At any rate, personal narrative is encountered much less frequently than in subsequent periods.

4.2.3 Autobiography in the Hellenistic and Roman Republic Period

Most evidence from the Hellenistic period is likewise lost. However, there are various indications that autobiographical texts became more common in this period.⁴⁸⁰ One could point to the emergence of royal political memoirs (ὑπομνήματα) of Hellenistic kings (see e.g. Diodorus on Alexander's memoirs in *Lib.* 18.4).⁴⁸¹ We also tend to find more explicit personal narrative in literary texts, such as in the poems of Callimachus.⁴⁸²

While one should not downplay this Hellenistic evidence, scholars largely agree that autobiographical writing received a significant impetus under Roman influence.⁴⁸³ This increase in autobiographical practice appears to have been instigated by the social circumstances in Republican Rome. Hellenistic texts already witness a strong emphasis on great individuals. Yet the Romans

⁴⁷⁸ For an extensive treatment of the *Anabasis*, see Flower (2012). A survey of the themes of the *Anabasis* — including apology — is found at pp. 141–67.

⁴⁷⁹ A point made most emphatically in relation to classical Greek autobiographical practice in Most (1989).

⁴⁸⁰ Misch (1973) 1.177–98.

⁴⁸¹ Misch (1973) 1.200–7; Bearzot (2011).

⁴⁸² Misch (1973) 1.296–98.

⁴⁸³ For more elaborate discussions see Misch (1973) 1.208–55; Mellor (1999) 165–84; Tatum (2011). See also Mason (2001) xli–xlii.

adopted this emphasis in a particularly competitive system that stressed the importance of obtaining personal *gloria*.⁴⁸⁴

This development is confirmed by a survey of the evidence from that period. Polybius, whose life and writings were to a large extent determined by a career in the wake of increasing Roman political dominance (cf. §2.3.2), wrote substantial portions about his own life and career. Polybius is explicit about the rhetorical aspects of writing about himself and explains his choice to alternate between the first and third person as a stylistic one.⁴⁸⁵

Notable examples from the Latin tradition in this period are the lost memoirs of Publius Rutilius Rufus (ca. 158–77 BC) and Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (ca. 162–89 BC). In the preface of the *Agricola* Tacitus relates how the works of Rutilius and Scaurus put down exempla of *virtus* without provoking offence.⁴⁸⁶ Cicero characterizes Scaurus as a great and virtuous individual. He mentions Scaurus' memoirs alongside Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as a must-read for politicians, even though in fact no one reads it (*Brut.* 29.110–30.116; 35.132). We also know of a twenty-two-volume memoir produced by Lucius Cornelius Sulla (ca. 138–78 BC), referred to by Plutarch as Sulla's *hypomnēmata*.⁴⁸⁷ Cicero also produced memoirs. According to his own testimony he wrote them as a source for a true literary history.⁴⁸⁸ Caesar's memoirs are among the most widely read autobiographical literature from antiquity. They consist of notes about his military campaigns during the Gallic and the Great Civil War and were spoken of by contemporaries as records (*commentarii*) of Caesar's achievements. Both Hirtius and Cicero praise the superior style of Caesar's writings,⁴⁸⁹ which were (unlike other *commentarii* in Latin) written from a third-person

⁴⁸⁴ The process is described in detail by Misch (1973) 1.177–286. See also Mellor (1999) 167. The argument that autobiography was a natural offshoot of the competitive environment of the Roman Republic is also made in Cornell (2008).

⁴⁸⁵ See §4.3.2.1 for further discussion of this aspect of Polybius' writings.

⁴⁸⁶ Both Cicero and Tacitus refer to these memoirs. On these two *commentarii* see Misch (1973) 1.210–11; Candau (2011).

⁴⁸⁷ For an overview of ancient sources see Tatum (2011) 166 n.18.

⁴⁸⁸ Cicero, *Att.* 2.1.1–2. He writes that he sent these notes to the historians Posidonius to get a history written down about his consular year, but Posidonius declined. On Cicero's memoirs see *Att.* 1.19.10, 1.20.6, 2.1.1–2; *Fam.* 5.12. On Cicero's autobiographical material see e.g. Tatum, (2011) 176–84; Baier (2005) 128–34.

⁴⁸⁹ Hirtius adds that even though Caesar's *commentarii* were published with the aim to provide professional writers with source material for composing a literary history, their literary quality rather discouraged

perspective.⁴⁹⁰ The tone and emphasis of each of these writings are markedly different from what we encounter in the earliest Greek examples. Romans tend to be more explicit and flagrant in their literary self-representations than the Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.⁴⁹¹

This can perhaps be understood as part of the same development we traced in regard to the emotional, engaged, and outspoken style of Roman historians (Chapter 2). As Glenn Most argues, Romans apparently felt less restraint than their Greek predecessors in speaking and writing about themselves.⁴⁹² For example, Cicero ends his *Brutus* with an overview of his early life and training (88.301–97.333). Sallust elaborately explains his lack of current political engagement in the prologue of the *Catiline*, turning this into a virtue rather than a vice (*Cat.* 3–4). Such active self-promotion is also evident in non-literary evidence. As Peter Wiseman notes, we can observe a significant increase of self-reference in especially memorial inscriptions and the election campaigning of Roman magistrates.⁴⁹³ Much more than their classical Greek counterparts, Romans emphasized their public experience and actively promoted this.⁴⁹⁴

historians to write about Caesar's campaigns. On Caesar's work as *commentarii* see Hirtius, *BG* 8 preface 2: "our friend Caesar's *commentarii* on his achievements in Gaul"; see also preface 4: "of those *commentarii*"; Cicero, *Brut.* 252, 262: "*commentarii* on his achievements." See the same passages for the literary merit of Caesar's work. Cf. Misch (1973) 1.238–39. For this argument see especially Wiseman (1985). See also e.g. Lendon (1997). Also in Greek society competition and rivalry were commonplace. See Thomas (2000) 249–69. The issue of speaking or writing about oneself is inherently connected with the centrality of the proposition that the Roman Empire saw a new and special emphasis upon the individual over against the stress on collective identity in Greek culture. See further Edwards, (1997); Toohey (2004).

⁴⁹⁰ See further e.g. Misch, (1973) 1.240; Mellor (1999) 173; Riggsby (2007) 273; Mayer (2011) 209; Flower (2012) 55. For a more elaborate and sophisticated treatment of the subject see Riggsby (2006) 150–55. On the *BC* see Batstone and Damon (2006). See Chapter 5 for a more detailed treatment of and secondary literature on Caesar's autobiographical writings.

⁴⁹¹ As is argued in Most (1989) 124ff.

⁴⁹² Most (1989) 124ff.

⁴⁹³ For inscriptions and autobiographical practice see Wiseman (1985). For the Roman election process see Yakobsen (1999).

⁴⁹⁴ On this point in relation to self-expressions of historians in their writing, see Marincola (1997) 138–40.

4.2.4 The Roman Empire

Social conditions under the early Principate changed significantly.⁴⁹⁵ The privilege of writing about oneself in a political context appears to have been almost exclusively reserved for the emperor and his family. Obtaining personal *gloria* became notoriously difficult, as all of it was directed towards the notional *primus inter pares*.⁴⁹⁶ In the prologue of the *Agricola*, Tacitus laments that Domitian made it impossible for him even to praise the achievements of his father in law Gnaeus Agricola (*Agr.* 1.1–4):

Clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus quamquam incuriosa suorum aetas omisit, quotiens magna aliqua ac nobilis virtus vicit ac supergressa est vitium parvis magnisque civitatibus commune, ignorantiam recti et invidiam. sed apud priores ut agere digna memoratu pronum magisque in aperto erat, ita celeberrimus quisque ingenio ad prodendam virtutis memoriam sine gratia aut ambitione bonae tantum conscientiae pretio ducebatur. ac plerique suam ipsi vitam narrare fiduciam potius morum quam adrogantiam arbitrati sunt, nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem aut obtreptioni fuit: adeo virtutes isdem temporibus optime aestimantur, quibus facillime gignuntur. at nunc narraturo mihi vitam defuncti hominis venia opus fuit, quam non petissem incusaturus: tam saeva et infesta virtutibus tempora.

But in our fathers' times, just as it was easy, and there was more scope, to do deeds worth recording, so also there was inducement then to the most distinguished men of ability to publish such records of virtue. Partisanship or self-seeking was not the motive: a good conscience was its own reward; indeed, many men even counted it not presumption, but self-respect, to narrate their own lives. A Rutilius, a Scaurus, could do so without

⁴⁹⁵ As a parallel development to this, scholars have recognized that notions of will vis-à-vis selfhood in the Stoic theories advanced in the context of the Roman Empire, such as the ideas expressed in the works Seneca (*voluntas*) and Epictetus (προαίρεσις). The bibliography on the subject is vast. See to various extents and with differences in emphasis e.g. Foucault (1986) 37–68; Kahn (1988) 251–55; Inwood (2000); Long (2002) 207–30; Frede (2011) 46; Asmis (2015) 236–37.

⁴⁹⁶ See Misch (1973) 1.255–71.

being disbelieved or provoking a sneer; so true is it that virtues are best appreciated in those ages which most readily give them birth; but in these times, even though I was about to write the life of a man who was already dead, I had to seek permission which I should not have needed, had invective been my purpose so harsh was the spirit of the age, so cynical towards virtue (Trans. Hutton and Peterson, rev. Ogilvie, Warmington, and Winterbottom, LCL).

Tacitus makes a point about the specific circumstances under Domitian, presenting a highly idealized version of late Republican history and a gloomy outlook of that recent past.⁴⁹⁷ But the general point is clear: praising others than the emperor on account of their public achievements had been dangerous. Correspondingly, we rarely encounter political autobiography in the Imperial period, outside of works produced by an emperor himself. Political memoirs such as those produced by Herod the Great (*AJ* 15.174)⁴⁹⁸ or Domitius Corbulo seem to have become exceptional.⁴⁹⁹ Herod maintained excellent ties with the imperial court. Corbulo was eventually put to death by Nero in AD 67, allegedly because he betrayed the emperor, but more likely because of his popularity and influence on account of his great successes in Armenia. He had become too much of a threat.⁵⁰⁰

Nonetheless, autobiographical practice continued in various other forms in the pre-Nervan period.⁵⁰¹ Ovid makes his own experiences an integral part of his poems. Most notable are his lengthy autobiographical poems at the end of the fourth book of his *Tristia* (4.10).⁵⁰² The *Life* of Nicolaus of Damascus — written shortly after the death of Herod the Great — deals with his own life, upbringing, and expertise.⁵⁰³ Historians such as Pompeius Trogus, Velleius Paterculus, and Tacitus assert their *dignitas* and *auctoritas* by recalling the advancements in social status of their ancestors

⁴⁹⁷ For a more detailed rhetorical analysis, see Sailor (2008) 53–72. See also Marincola (1997) 178–79.

⁴⁹⁸ For a discussion about Herod's Memoirs and some speculation about its intellectual backgrounds, see Geiger (2011) 260–64.

⁴⁹⁹ Peter (1967) 2.99–101.

⁵⁰⁰ For a survey of the evidence and the argument that Corbulo had become a threat to Nero's position on account of his successes in Armenia, see Vervaet (2002).

⁵⁰¹ On which see Misch (1973) 1.287–338.

⁵⁰² Cf. Misch (1973) 1.295–307; Fairweather (1987).

⁵⁰³ On the autobiography of Nicolaus of Damascus see Misch (1973) 1.307–15.

and themselves in various places of their histories.⁵⁰⁴ It is perhaps not accurate to label these autobiographical passages “non-political”: most of these authors had been or still were politically involved. Nonetheless, autobiographical practice took on different forms and a much less overt emphasis on personal achievements. One hardly finds the active promotion of political achievements by means of explicitly political or military memoirs under the empire outside of those produced by the emperor.

4.2.5 Josephus’ Autobiographical Practice in a Roman Imperial Context

As Steve Mason phrases aptly in the introductory essay of his commentary of the *Vita*, it appears that Josephus’ self-promotion as a historian and public figure throughout his corpus can be explained in reference to the competitive social climate of late Republican and early Imperial Rome.

Honor (*gloria*) was a zero-sum game: Since one could only have it at the expense of others, it was crucial to show that one was the best in all areas of life; hence the abundant superlatives in documents and inscriptions from this period. Even if an aristocrat had few accomplishments of note, his inscriptions made the most of his deeds, in the interests of both personal advancement and the family’s reputation.⁵⁰⁵

Perhaps it is somewhat odd to find Josephus confidently and elaborately describing his political and military achievements in the *BJ* and the *Vita*. As observed in Chapter 3, he devotes lengthy sections of the *BJ* to his actions as a governor and general in Galilee. In the *Vita* he celebrates his successes as a Judaeen public figure, fitting a prominent member from a provincial elite family with a distinguished aristocratic and priestly background.⁵⁰⁶ Josephus’ bold self-expression as a public figure closely resembles the confidence expressed in Republican political and military memoirs.

⁵⁰⁴ See Marincola (1997) 136–44.

⁵⁰⁵ Mason (2001) xli. Mason constructs this hypothesis in response to the predominant view that the purpose of the *Vita* is to furnish an apology against the accusations from Justus of Tiberias. For a more elaborate discussion of this view and its different expressions in scholarship, see the Appendix.

⁵⁰⁶ On which see Mason (1998); (2001); Mason (2016c).

Yet Josephus did not write under the Republic but under the Empire. We observed in Chapter 2 that Josephus was no prominent member of political circles in Rome. He was not as closely associated with the imperial court as scholars who see him as court spokesman have sometimes imagined. Josephus would presumably not have been perceived as a political threat on account of his self-promotion. He was a provincial, an aristocratic Judaeian priest born in Jerusalem (*BJ* 1.3; *Vita* 1–6). His public career and strong networks were located far from the centre of Roman political power.⁵⁰⁷ He repeatedly emphasizes how much he is indebted to the Flavian imperial family in regard to his privileged social position in Rome (*Vita* 422–23, 426, 428–29). Moreover, in the *CA* he refers to his “leisure” in Rome (1.50: σχολή), perhaps in contrast to experiences in the preceding years as a general in Galilee and a Roman prisoner. In Rome, his rivals are fellow-historians (esp. *BJ* 1.13–16; *Vita* 336–67; *CA* 1.6–57), not senators or political factions. Josephus presents his life and career in Rome as that of a historian focusing on his literary pursuits. He was no Domitius Corbulo and he places himself outside of the Roman political arena by emphasizing his Judaeian background and political experience in Judaea and Galilee.⁵⁰⁸

4.3 Greeks and Romans on the Problem of Self-Praise

This brief review of autobiographical writing helps us to situate Josephus’ practice in the context of some important general developments. To obtain a deeper understanding of Josephus’ compositional choices in the *BJ*, we now need to consider Greek and Roman perceptions of personal narrative in more detail. As we shall see, perceptions about autobiographical practice remained relatively stable. Evidence appears in many different literary genres. One can think of rhetorical theory (Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Pseudo-Hermogenes) and practice (Isocrates, Demosthenes, Cicero, Aelius Aristides), moral essays (Plutarch), literary history (Cicero’s *Brutus*), historiography (Dionysius, Sallust, Tacitus, Cassius Dio), or epistolography (Cicero, Paul).

The picture that arises from my survey is that most writers regard personal narrative (spoken or written) as problematic under most circumstances. It should be avoided where possible. The

⁵⁰⁷ On this issue see more elaborately Den Hollander (2014), discussed in some detail in Chapter 2.

⁵⁰⁸ Mason (2001) xliii.

problem is that such practice usually takes on the appearance of self-praise. Nevertheless, these writers also identify various occasions in which self-reference might be necessary. They also mention a variety of rhetorical techniques and strategies to take away the sharp edges of self-praise.

4.3.1 Classical Greece

4.3.1.1 Aristotle

Aristotle is among the first to provide explicit reflections on talking about oneself (*Rhet.* III 1418b 23–27: *περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγειν*).⁵⁰⁹ In the *Rhetorica* he concisely discusses the problems inherent in self-praise. Besides the dangers of long-windedness (*μακρολογία*), Aristotle identifies potentially negative responses from the audience as the main problem.⁵¹⁰ He uses the word *ἐπιφθονος*, being “liable to envy,” to describe such negative responses.

The motif of envy turns out to be central in discussions of speaking about oneself. Elsewhere in the *Rhetorica* Aristotle explains that envy (*φθόνος*) is caused by the success of someone else, whether they deserve their success or not. Envy causes rivalry between two individuals of equal social standing and results in competition and strife.⁵¹¹ It is a negative emotion, belonging to “lovers of opinion” and “small-minded people” only (*Rhet.* 1387b 33–34).

Evaluating possible ways of avoiding such problems, he refers to an example from Isocrates’ *Antidosis* and suggests making another character speak in one’s stead, as Isocrates did when staging an apprentice to praise him.⁵¹² The broader implication is that it is best to avoid any appearance of self-praise, even if one actually practises it.

⁵⁰⁹ For a thought-provoking article dealing with Greek restraint in regard to speaking or writing about oneself, see Most (1989). Similar ideas already occur in the works of Pindar and Thucydides, on which see Roig Lanzillotta (1997), 208–35 (Pindar), 389–400 (Thucydides). See also idem (1999).

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Pernot (1998) 105, 114.

⁵¹¹ See Aristotle, *Rhet.* II 1386b 18–20. Cf. Grimaldi (1988) 154; Cairns (2003); Konstan (2006), 111–28; Spatharas (2011) 201.

⁵¹² Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1418b 26–27. See for further discussion e.g. Misch (1973) 1.172–73; Most (1989) 124–25; Marincola (1997) 214.

4.3.1.2 Isocrates and Demosthenes

In the *Antidosis*, Isocrates wishes to establish the truth about his character, life, and education in correction of misinformed opinions and envy (*Ant.* 4–7). Yet he realizes that any attempt at self-praise (ἐπαινεῖν ἑμαυτὸν ἐπιχειροῖν) is impossible without provoking envy (ἀνεπιφθόνως) among listeners. To avoid such problems, Isocrates artificially creates a discourse of self-defence by shaping his speech in the cast of a court case. This enables him to elaborate on all the relevant issues without any restraint (*Ant.* 8).⁵¹³

A similar rationale underpins Demosthenes' *On the Crown*, a political speech delivered to the Athenians in defence of himself and his friend Ctesiphon against the accusations from their rival Aeschines. Demosthenes claims to have two significant disadvantages in comparison to Aeschines. The first is that he has much more to lose than his prosecutor. The second reason, more important for present purposes, is that he must practise self-praise to absolve himself and Ctesiphon from Aeschines' charges (*Cor.* 3–4):

ὁ φύσει πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὑπάρχει, τῶν μὲν λοιδοριῶν καὶ τῶν κατηγοριῶν ἀκούειν ἡδέως, τοῖς ἐπαινοῦσι δ' αὐτοὺς ἄχθεσθαι· τούτων τοίνυν ὁ μὲν ἐστὶ πρὸς ἡδονήν, τούτῳ δέδοται, ὁ δὲ πᾶσιν ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἐνοχλεῖ, λοιπὸν ἐμοί. καὶ μὲν εὐλαβούμενος τοῦτο μὴ λέγω τὰ πεπραγμέν' ἑμαυτῷ, οὐκ ἔχειν ἀπολύσασθαι τὰ κατηγορημένα δόξω, οὐδ' ἐφ' οἷς ἀξιῶ τιμᾶσθαι δεικνύναι· ἐὰν δ' ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ πεποίηκα καὶ πεπολίτευμαι βαδίζω, πολλάκις λέγειν ἀναγκασθήσομαι περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ. πειράσομαι μὲν οὖν ὥς μετριώτατα τοῦτο ποιεῖν· ὅ τι δ' ἂν τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτ' ἀναγκάζῃ, τούτου τὴν αἰτίαν οὐτός ἐστι δίκαιος ἔχειν ὁ τοιοῦτον ἄγων· ἐνστησάμενος.

[T]here is the natural disposition of mankind to listen readily to slander and invective, and to resent self-praise. To him the agreeable duty has been assigned; the part that is almost always offensive remains for me. If, as a safeguard against such offence, I avoid the relation of my own achievements, I shall seem to be unable to refute the charges

⁵¹³ On autobiographical aspects of the *Antidosis* see esp. Misch (1973) 1154–75; Too (1995) 113–50; Too (2008); Gray (2011) 16–18.

alleged against me, or to establish my claim to any public distinction. Yet, if I address myself to what I have done, and to the part I have taken in politics, I shall often be obliged to speak about myself. Well, I will endeavour to do so with all possible modesty; and let the man who has initiated this controversy bear the blame of the egoism which the conditions force upon me (trans. Vince and Vince LCL, with adaptations).

Thus, the rhetorical problem is that Aeschines has an advantage over him because as a prosecutor he can slander Demosthenes. This is the kind of talk to which people tend to listen eagerly by nature (φύσις). This leaves the problematic part of self-defence for Demosthenes, since those same people tend to loath “those who praise themselves” (τοῖς ἐπαινοῦσι δ’ αὐτοῦς). To absolve himself from blame and convince his audience that he is worthy of the honours bestowed upon him in the past, he will be forced (ἀναγκασθήσομαι) to speak about his own political achievements and hence do exactly what people consider loathsome.

Simultaneously, Demosthenes assumes a mutual trust between himself and his audience, in pointing all of this out. He knows his practice to be problematic, but Aeschines forces him into this and so *he* should be blamed for any unseemly practice on Demosthenes’ part. The urgency of the situation justifies him in speaking about his political achievements, in spite of the moral objections against self-praise (even if it is moderate).⁵¹⁴

On the basis of this admittedly limited evidence, we can see that ancient Greeks were reluctant to speak about themselves in public. The main problem is the potential vexation felt by the audience. Yet the same authors provide various clues as to how Greeks thought they could get away with praising themselves. Aristotle discusses various possibilities and exemplifies them by referring to Isocrates’ rhetorical trick of staging others to praise him. Isocrates points to the cover of self-defence when practising self-praise.⁵¹⁵ Demosthenes adopts a claim of necessity to speak about his political achievements in defence against the accusations brought against him by Aeschines.

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Yunis (2001) 108.

⁵¹⁵ See also, more generally, Gray (2011a) 16.

4.3.2 Greek and non-Greek Provincials under Rome

There is no substantial evidence from the Hellenistic period before Polybius. From Polybius onwards, much of the evidence needs to be explained in dialogue with the rise of Rome. In §4.2 we have discussed the potential increase of autobiographical activity in the late Republican/Hellenistic period, motivated by the competitive political climate of Republican Rome. Perhaps by analogy, we find an increase in rhetorical discussions and moral reflections about the subject of personal narrative.

4.3.2.1 *Polybius*

Polybius is one of the few (largely) extant historians from antiquity who provides some explanation of the rhetorical aspects of writing about his own conduct.⁵¹⁶ As John Marincola notes, throughout the *Histories* Polybius seems to consistently apply third-person narration when writing about himself as a character.⁵¹⁷ This procedure suddenly changes in *Hist.* 36.11, when Polybius narrates his conversation with the Roman consul Manilius. While Polybius starts the section by addressing himself as Polybius of Megalopolis, he switches to the first-person plural (ἡμεῖς) shortly afterwards.

In the chapter that follows, Polybius explains this change of procedure. He considers it necessary (ἀναγκαῖος) to alternate between different forms when referring to himself because he has a considerable role in the events being narrated (36.12.2). Constantly using his own name could potentially offend (προσκόπτω) his audience, and too frequently employing the first person could result in a “wearisome” (φορτικός) style. By switching between first- and third-person perspectives, Polybius aims to escape being “burdensome” (ἐπαχθής). This is something inevitably caused when constantly “speaking about ourselves” (τῆς περὶ αὐτῶν λαλιᾶς).⁵¹⁸ Adding variation to a narrative was of course a common rhetorical principle, but Polybius is the only extant author who applies this point to describing his own conduct.

⁵¹⁶ Polybius also narrates about inappropriate self-laudation of Hermeias, a chief advisor of Seleucus III, in *Hist.* 5.49.4ff. This self-laudation (αὐτὸν ἐγκωμιάζων) caused offence (προσκόπτω) among his audience and displeased (λυπέω) Antiochus III, Seleucus’ successor.

⁵¹⁷ Marincola (1997) 189 (see n.71 for references).

⁵¹⁸ For a more elaborate discussion of this passage, see Marincola (1997) 188–92.

4.3.2.2 *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*

Dionysius of Halicarnassus also offers relevant reflections. In his discussion of Thucydides' *Histories*, he touches upon the subject of speaking about oneself in reference to the rhetoric employed by Pericles when addressing an angry Athenian audience.⁵¹⁹ He discusses the passage in which Pericles says that he is “a man inferior to no one, I think, in perceiving what is right and explaining it” and “a lover of the city and superior to bribery” (καίτοι ἐμοὶ τοιούτῳ ἀνδρὶ ὀργίζεσθε, ὃς οὐδενὸς οἶομαι ἥσσω εἶναι γινῶναί τε τὰ δέοντα καὶ ἐρμηνεύσαι ταῦτα, φιλόπολις τε καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσω).⁵²⁰ Pericles claims that the combination of these qualities makes him the perfect leader of the Athenians in times of crisis.⁵²¹

Dionysius says the following about the passage (*Thuc.* 45): “It is striking that Pericles, the greatest of the orators then, would not have known what no one with an average intellect would have been ignorant of” (θαυμαστόν γάρ, εἰ Περικλῆς ὁ μέγιστος τῶν τότε ῥητόρων ἡγνόει τοῦτο, ὃ μηδεὶς ἄν τῶν ἐχόντων μέτριον νοῦν ἡγνόησεν). This basic rhetorical mistake pertains to praising one's virtues without restraint (οἱ μὴ τεταμειυμένως ἐπαινοῦντες τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀρετὰς). This makes the orator vulnerable to offending the audience, especially when one is in court and thus in danger of immediate punishment. Dionysius claims that Pericles will not only have upset the audience in this case, but will have brought misfortune upon himself by arousing their envy (φθόνος). According to Dionysius, the strategy chosen by Pericles is completely off the mark. What he should have done was to create “countless tears and lamentations” (μυρίων ... δακρύων τε καὶ οἴκτων) to secure the goodwill of his audience.⁵²²

Dionysius clarifies his observations by adding that the speech given by Pericles may not consist of Pericles' own words but those of Thucydides, in which case the example tells more about Thucydides' abilities as an author than Pericles' qualities as an orator. The speculation is nonetheless revealing. The issue is not so much whether Pericles possessed the qualities he ascribes to himself.

⁵¹⁹ *Thuc.* 2.60.5–6.

⁵²⁰ Translations of the *Thucydides* are from Usher LCL, with minor adaptations.

⁵²¹ On Dionysius' views about Thucydides more generally, see De Jonge (2017); De Jonge (2018).

⁵²² See also in reference to Josephus' use of emotions in *BJ* 1.9–12.

That is beyond dispute. But as someone standing accused by the Athenians, he should have used humbler words. This would have been more appropriate for the present occasion: even “the invention of the best arguments and ideas” (ἡ τῶν κρατίστων ἐνθυμημάτων τε καὶ νοημάτων εὕρεσις) is useless when not tailored towards the character, the occasion, and other potentially relevant factors.

Dionysius puts this claim of humbleness into practice in the prologue of the *Roman Antiquities* (1.1.1):

Τοὺς εἰωθότας ἀποδίδοσθαι ἐνὶ τοῖς προοιμίοις τῶν ἱστοριῶν λόγους ἥκιστα βουλόμενος ἀναγκάζομαι περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ προειπεῖν, οὗτ’ ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις μέλλων πλεονάζειν ἐπαίνοις, οὓς ἐπαχθεῖς οἶδα φαινομένους τοῖς ἀκούουσιν ... ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἑμαυτοῦ λογισμοὺς ἀποδεικνύμενος, οἷς ἐχρησάμην ὅτε ἐπὶ ταύτην ὥρμησα τὴν πραγματείαν, καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀφορμῶν ἀποδιδούς λόγον, ἐξ ὧν τὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἔλαβον τῶν γραφησομένων.

Although it is much against my will to indulge in the explanatory statements usually given in the prefaces to histories, I am nonetheless forced to prefix to this work some remarks concerning myself. In doing this it is not my intention to dwell too long on my own praise, which I know would be offensive to the reader... However, I shall only show the reasons that induced me to undertake this work and give a presentation of the sources from which I obtained the knowledge of the things I am going to investigate (trans. based on Cary and Spelman LCL).

The language employed by Dionysius is familiar from what we have observed thus far. He is forced (ἀναγκάζω) to say some things about himself but promises not to practise excessive self-praise, which would be perceived as offensive (ἐπαχθής) to the reader. In what follows Dionysius explains why it is necessary to include information about his investigation and his sources. As I have discussed in Chapter 2, Dionysius perceives a historian’s work to be an immediate manifestation of

his character (1.1.3).⁵²³ The process of investigation and the choices made by the historian are thus intrinsically part of the history itself and of crucial importance for understanding it. This is the reason why Dionysius elaborates about these issues. The prologue of his work is the obvious and only place to do this (1.1.4).

To anticipate the analysis of the following chapter: this might explain the differences in procedure when Josephus writes about his own virtues as a historian in the prologue of the *BJ* (and in the *AJ*; see the conclusion of this chapter and Appendix) — which he does with great confidence and openness — and when he writes about his achievements in Galilee — which he describes with similar confidence but in an indirect manner.

4.3.2.3 *Paul*

The apostle Paul is infamous for his frequent self-promotion in his letters. Clearly, personal letters such as those written by Paul have a different character than the rhetorical-historiographical discourse we have surveyed until this point: they are much more specific, occasional, and personal. Nonetheless, Paul's outburst in 2 Cor. 10–13 is relevant for the present discussion. In what follows I do not aim to provide a systematic analysis of Paul's ideas in 2 Corinthians. The discussion focuses on relevant aspects of Paul's argument in relation to autobiographical discourse and assumes Paul's familiarity with existing social norms and rhetorical conventions.

Paul responds in this letter to claims in Corinth that he is not very impressive as a public speaker, although his skills as a writer are acknowledged (2 Cor. 10:10). According to Paul, however, his public self-presentation is the same as his self-presentation in his letters. He will back this up with actions when he visits Corinth in the future (10:11). He feigns that he does not dare to compare himself to “those who commend themselves” (συνίστημι). He will therefore not boast (καυχάομαι) about himself (10:13) and adds that in fact no one should boast about his own character (10:17–18): “He who is boasting should boast in the Lord. Because it is not him who commends himself that is

⁵²³ “For it is a reasonable and commonly accepted belief that a man's words are the images of his mind” (ἐπεικῶς γὰρ ἅπαντες νομίζουσιν εἰκόνας εἶναι τῆς ἐκάστου ψυχῆς τοὺς λόγους). On this passage see e.g. Wiater (2011) 75–76; idem (2017) 248–49. Josephus says something remarkably similar in the conclusion of the *AJ*, on which see §4.4.1.

approved, but him who the Lord commends.” Although the argument is uniquely Christian in content, it echoes the same principle of avoiding self-praise we find elsewhere.

Strikingly, immediately afterwards Paul embarks on a discussion that revolves around his own character and excellence as an apostle. He claims that he will adopt the rhetorical standards of his opponents for the sake of argument, repeatedly emphasizing that this is not *his* but *their* foolishness (ἄφροσύνη) of self-promotion (11:1, 16–18). Paul boasts about the fact that he possesses qualities superior to those of his competitors: even *if* (εἰ) they are right about the fact that Paul is unskilled with words (ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ), he is nonetheless superior in knowledge (γνώσις). This evidently carries much more value (11:5–6). He continues to boast about his experience as a servant (διάκονος) of Christ and the sufferings he had undergone to become one. If his competitors claim to be servants of Christ, Paul clearly comes off better by any standard.

In what follows, Paul adopts a strategy resembling that of Demosthenes: “I have been a fool to praise myself, yet you forced me into it” (12:11: Γέγονα ἄφρων καυχώμενος· ὑμεῖς με ἠναγκάσατε)! Not Paul himself, but the Corinthians are to blame for his self-praise.

Paul creates a veil of apology throughout these chapters, but his true purpose is different and ostensibly more noble: “Again, you are under the impression that we defend ourselves? We speak in the presence of God in Christ: all these things, beloved ones, are on behalf of your edification” (12:19: Πάλιν δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα; Κατενώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα, ἀγαπητοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς). Paul’s deeper reasons to embark on self-praise are not selfish, he claims. They serve the Christian community in Corinth.

2 Cor. 10–13 has been a central text in the scholarly discussion about Paul’s knowledge of Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions related to self-praise. The deeper question driving such scholarship pertains to the issue of Paul’s rhetorical education. In his 1924 commentary, Hans Windisch points to the similarity of Paul’s arguments with Plutarch’s advice in *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*, claiming that both texts share the same general outlook.⁵²⁴ This parallel has been taken up and expanded in detail by Hans Dieter Betz, who advocates that Paul strictly conformed his

⁵²⁴ See Windisch (1924) 345.

argument in 2 Corinthians to rhetorical prescriptions.⁵²⁵ Various significant parallels have been identified between Paul's letter and Graeco-Roman moral-rhetorical discourse: 1) Paul's claim about the undesirability of self-commendation; 2) his claim that he is forced to practise it nonetheless; 3) his claim to ultimately have a higher purpose with his self-praise. According to Betz, Paul clearly employs his argument with a specifically Christian flavour, but its rhetoric also echoes Graeco-Roman conventions.⁵²⁶ In his view, Consequently, 2 Cor. 10–13 is evidence of Paul's rhetorical education.⁵²⁷

Ryan Schellenberg has recently questioned Betz's hypothesis,⁵²⁸ claiming that "there is nothing in Paul's boasting to warrant the conclusion that he was familiar with rhetorical principles governing self-praise."⁵²⁹ Schellenberg insists on understanding Plutarch's essay on its own merits, namely as a moralizing work addressed to ὁ πολιτικός ἀνὴρ, not primarily as a rhetorical treatise.⁵³⁰ Taking this as a point of departure, Schellenberg argues that the resemblance between Plutarch and Paul is perhaps better explained "as resulting from overlapping social mores" and does not need to be explained in view of Paul's rhetorical education.⁵³¹

I agree with Schellenberg's main point, but one issue that needs clarification is his apparent insistence on the dichotomy between moral and rhetorical discourse:

Plutarch is a moralist ... in this case playing the role of a political advisor. Accordingly, *De laude ipsius* provides moral and strategic reflections on a particular exigency of

⁵²⁵ Betz (1972); Betz (1978) 367–93. The parallel has been discussed extensively in Forbes (1986); Watson (2002); Watson (2003); Wojciechowski (2006); Trapp (2006) 340–42; Donahoe (2008); Kowalski (2013); Schellenberg (2013); Smith (2014); Pawlak (2018).

⁵²⁶ See for other passages discussed in this regard the discussion in Betz (1978), also concerning non-Pauline early Christian literature.

⁵²⁷ See e.g. Betz (1972); Betz (1978) 367–93. The parallels have been discussed extensively in Forbes (1986); Watson (2002); Watson (2003); Wojciechowski (2006); Trapp (2006) 340–42; Donahoe (2008); Kowalski (2013); Schellenberg (2013); Smith (2014); Pawlak (2018).

⁵²⁸ Schellenberg (2013) 97–122. Schellenberg claims that "the superficial similarity [between Paul and Plutarch] erodes under further examination" (p. 114).

⁵²⁹ Schellenberg (2013) 120.

⁵³⁰ Schellenberg (2013) 99.

⁵³¹ Schellenberg (2013) 115.

statesmanship. This is not a collection of rhetorical techniques. Treating it as such promotes a cursory reading of the treatise that divorces Plutarch's recommendations for inoffensive self-reference from the moral values that inform them—which is precisely the sort of thing that has been endemic among Pauline scholars.⁵³²

Schellenberg is correct to observe that Plutarch's *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* is primarily a moral-political treatise. However, in my view Plutarch's rhetorical observations are more substantial than Schellenberg allows. We shall see in the following section that Plutarch does not make a clear distinction between “moral advice” and “rhetorical practice” and (from our modern perception) he frequently slips from one to the other. Moreover, as I observed in §2.3.1, Graeco-Roman rhetoric was a deeply moral enterprise and had an important preparatory function for public life. A strict separation between moral and rhetorical discourse might prevent us from understanding the moral stakes of Graeco-Roman rhetoric and the importance of rhetoric in Graeco-Roman public life.

4.3.2.4 *Plutarch*⁵³³

The biographer and essayist Plutarch discusses the issue of self-praise at different places in his corpus. He regularly comments, for instance, about Cicero's unpopularity among his countrymen on account of his bad habit of boasting about his virtues and public achievements.⁵³⁴ Most conspicuously, as we have noted in the previous section, Plutarch devotes an entire treatise to the

⁵³² Schellenberg (2013) 103; cf. e.g. p. 120–21: “[T]he notion that Plutarch [based his writing] on established rhetorical dictates for *periautologia* cannot be sustained. [It occasionally reflects] existing rhetorical practice, but Plutarch's is a work of moral philosophy with only incidental rhetorical observations ... Why, then, has Betz's invocation of *De laude ipsius* been so well received? Why does nearly every recent commentary on 2 Corinthians refer to Plutarch's precepts for *periautologia*—and do so without bothering to mention what actually interested Plutarch?” One might ask to what extent Betz will have recognized himself in Schellenberg's criticism. For Betz acknowledges that Plutarch was primarily interested in the ethical implications of self-praise and that the treatise has *moral* instruction as its main purpose; see e.g. Betz (1978) 367 and the elaborate discussion of the ethical nature of the problem at pp. 373ff.

⁵³³ Translation from *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* are based on De Lacy and Einarson, LCL.

⁵³⁴ Plutarch, *Cic.* 24.1–2. See also *On the Fame of the Athenians* 345E; *Table Talk* 630C–D; *Precepts* 816D–E; *Arist.–Cat.Ma.* 5.3; *Dem.–Cic.* 2; *Art.* 13.7; *Agis.–Cleom.* 2.1.

subject of self-praise: *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* (Περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπιφθόνως). This is by far the most elaborate ancient treatment of the subject.⁵³⁵

The treatise is a piece of Plutarch's practical ethics and was (like many of his works) written for educational purposes. In this case, Plutarch discusses a number of moral and rhetorical issues involved when speaking about oneself in public life.⁵³⁶ He offers advice on the following issues: the general inappropriateness of self-praise (539A–E; 544D–546A); circumstances under which self-praise can be practised (539E–541F); the rhetorical strategies one should employ to make self-praise tolerable (or perhaps *less intolerable*: 541F–544C); the greater utility self-praise should have when practised (546B–547C).⁵³⁷ It becomes immediately clear from this overview that Plutarch is mainly concerned with moral issues. Yet in the process he also offers some detailed rhetorical advice.

The Problem of Self-Praise

I shall now provide a summary of Plutarch's *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*, before contextualizing his observations in relation to his other moral essays.

Plutarch begins his essay by pointing out the disparity between theory about and practice of speaking about oneself (539A–B):

Τὸ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λέγειν ὥς τι ὄντος ἢ δυναμένου πρὸς ἑτέρους, ὧς Ἡρῴδης, λόγῳ μὲν ἐπαχθὲς ἀποφαίνουσιν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐ πολλοὶ τὴν ἀληθείαν αὐτοῦ διαπεφεύγασιν οὐδὲ τῶν ψεγόντων.

With regard to speaking about oneself to others, that is about one's status or power, dear Herculaneus, although in speech everyone declares it offensive, in practice not many escape the shame or indeed the censures.

⁵³⁵ For Plutarch's practice of self-praise, focusing on the prologue of the *Demosthenes*, see Chrysanthou (2018a).

⁵³⁶ See e.g. Van Hoof (2014); idem (2018) 44–46. See also the useful introduction of the text in the LCL edition: De Lacy and Einarson (1959) 110–13. Cf. Marincola (1997) 176.

⁵³⁷ For an analysis of the structure and content of the essay, see Radermacher (1897); Ingenkamp (1971) 62–69; Betz (1978) 367–72.

Plutarch lists various examples of such hypocritical practice. Euripides, while noting the problematic nature of praising oneself, “boasts most intolerably.” Pindar “never tires of commending his own abilities” and “when Timotheus writes about his triumph over Phrynis ... we rightfully feel disgusted at this ungraceful and unlawful proclamation of his own victory.” Plutarch’s general point is that self-praise is most distressing (λυπηρότατος).

He identifies various reasons for this. First, someone praising himself is generally regarded as shameless (ἀναίσχυντος). Second, in Plutarch’s view it is unjustified (ἀδίκως) to bestow upon oneself what should be done by others. Third, an audience listening to the praise is liable to “appear vexed and envious” (ἄχθεσθαι καὶ φθονεῖν δοκοῦμεν) or may seem to be submitting to slavish flattery. That is to say, self-praise makes not only the speaker but also the audience look bad (539B–E; cf. 547D–E). Plutarch stresses similar points in the conclusion of his essay: “no other manner of expression is so offensive nor so burdensome” (λόγος ἄλλος οὐδεις οὕτως ἐπαχθῆς οὐδὲ βαρὺς). It is difficult not to slip from simply speaking about oneself into outright boasting, which *always* discomforts the audience, “as if by nature” (547D: ὥσπερ φύσει; cf. 547B).

All of these concerns are important for their own sake. However, Plutarch identifies the more general problem inherent in self-praise as its potential to lead to social tensions, something we discussed briefly in relation to Aristotle. Self-praise is oftentimes caused by ambition (546C–D: φιλοτιμία).⁵³⁸ When one sees someone else being praised, especially when this person has a similar or even an inferior social status, one’s “desire for glory” (ὁρμὴ πρὸς δόξαν) is immediately stimulated. It is difficult to bear such praise when the one praised is not more deserving than people listening to that praise. Correspondingly, if the aim of self-praise is “to support ambitions and hunger for glory” (φιλοτιμίας ἔνεκα γίγνεσθαι καὶ δόξης ἀκαίρου φαινόμενος) it is unacceptable (540A–C). Commending and increasing one’s own social position and ambitions often go together with *diminishing* the glory

⁵³⁸ See also *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 540A, where Plutarch classifies praise as frivolous when it solely directed towards promoting ambition and an unhealthy craving for glory (καὶ καταφρονεῖται μάλιστα, φιλοτιμίας ἔνεκα γίγνεσθαι καὶ δόξης ἀκαίρου φαινόμενος). For a discussion of this passage see below. See the discussion of the words φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία in Stadter (2015) 275–76. The first to write about these issues was Plato, see further Roig Lanzillotta (1997) 413–35.

of others. Hence, self-praise increases rivalry because it creates envy (φθόνος) and jealousy (ζηλοτυπία). It is therefore malicious (κακοήθης) in most cases.

The topic of social strife also features in Plutarch's other moral writings, such as the *Precepts of Statecraft*.⁵³⁹ In this treatise Plutarch describes the main task of the politician to be the guardian of the common interest of his community. In Plutarch's view the statesman must aim to increase the harmony (ἁρμονία) and unity (ὁμόνοια) of the community. He must look for the ideal mixture (κρᾶσις) of the state's different elements.⁵⁴⁰ The problem is that most statesmen aim for personal glory and pursue their own interests. In doing so, they have to compete with their peers. This potentially jeopardizes harmony and unity instead of increasing it (*Precepts* 798C–799A).⁵⁴¹ Likewise, feelings of ambition (φιλοτιμία) of individuals and rivalry (φιλονικία) among members of a society to hold important offices within the community cause envy (*Precepts* 811D: φθόνος).⁵⁴² If a statesman is unable to restrain such feelings in himself and the members of his community, social harmony will decrease and civil strife (στάσις), the worst of all social problems, will flare up.⁵⁴³

Considering this, it is easy to understand why self-praise is such a bad thing in Plutarch's opinion. It causes competition. Competition causes envy. Feelings of envy may cause civil strife. This in turn is a problem that should be avoided at any cost. In other words, practising self-praise diametrically opposes the responsibility of a statesman to increase social harmony.

⁵³⁹ The literature on Plutarch's *Precepts of Statecraft* is extensive. For a recent study and references to secondary literature, see Pelling (2014); Liebert (2016) 23–28.

⁵⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Precepts* 805D, 809E, 824A, 824D–E. See Pelling (2014) 156. On Plutarch's use of *exempla* in relation to his main point that social harmony is attained by a statesman practicing self-control, see Cook (2004).

⁵⁴¹ See also *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 539E–F. See for the suggestion of using the *Precepts* for understanding *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*, Fields (2008) 158–60.

⁵⁴² On φιλονικία in Plutarch's *Moralia*, including a brief discussion of the *Precepts of Statecraft*, see Stadter (2015) 276–78.

⁵⁴³ See the discussion on στάσις in *Precepts* 823F–825F. For the importance of Plutarch's *Precepts* and the responsibility of the statesman for understanding some of the dynamics of the Josephus' *BJ*, see also Mason (2016a) 106–7.

Justified Self-Praise

There are three occasions, however, in which Plutarch considers speaking about oneself justified: when someone is defending himself, when someone finds himself in a situation of misfortune, or when someone is being wronged.⁵⁴⁴

First, self-praise is acceptable when someone aims to defend himself (ἀπολογούμενος) and when dealing with false accusations or slander (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 540C). This is only on the condition that what is said by way of defence is well-founded and true (540D). Plutarch provides a few examples to illustrate the principle. Pericles' self-defence before the Athenian assembly was justified.⁵⁴⁵ Scipio referred to his great achievements and their benefits for the Roman people only when he was judged by the people he was serving. Scipio's words made the Romans realize their foolishness and caused their envy to disappear (τοῦ δὲ ἀφῆρει τὸν φθόνον ὁ κίνδυνος). Cicero serves as a counterexample: his boasting about his role in the Catilinarian conspiracy was annoying to the Romans because Cicero "was not forced but only praised himself to obtain glory" (540–541A: οὐκ ἀναγκαίως ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ δόξης ἐχρήτο τοῖς ἐπαίνοις). For Plutarch, then, necessity and self-defence are important parameters for judging whether self-praise is justified. As will be examined in the following chapter, similar motifs permeate Josephus' autobiographical narrative, especially in the sections associated to his alleged betrayal to the Romans in the Jotapata narrative. This framing may have been applied partially because of its moderating force in relation to self-praise.

Second, Plutarch explains that self-praise is allowed for those who are unfortunate (δυστυχοῦντες), over against those who are fortunate (εὐτυχοῦντες).⁵⁴⁶ A man praising himself from a position of strength can glorify himself and gain pleasure from his self-praise. But an unfortunate man is not in a position to realize any personal ambitions (541A). Because his self-praise will not bring him significant gain, it is less offensive. Plutarch adds that for "a man overthrown by fortune" (ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ τύχης σφαλλόμενος) practising self-praise is not only harmless but even commendable:

⁵⁴⁴ For a brief discussion of Plutarch's views on acceptable self-praise, see Marincola (1997) 176–77.

⁵⁴⁵ Note Dionysius' different judgment of Pericles' self-praise (Thuc. 45), though Dionysius primarily focuses on the flawed rhetoric of Pericles' (or Thucydides') words and Plutarch (at this point) focuses on the moral justification of the practice.

⁵⁴⁶ Compare with Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12.4: "Nothing takes more care to the reader's pleasure than changes of circumstance and reversals of fortune."

“they are bearing up against fortune, carrying their pride, running from all appeal to compassion, self-pity, and abasement in adversity” (541A). This is the case because, by rising up from a state of humiliation into pride, a person is not considered “offensive or arrogant but he seems to be great and unconquerable” (541B: οὐκ ἐπαχθῆς οὐδὲ θρασὺς ἀλλὰ μέγας εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ ἀήττητος). As has been observed in the previous chapter, Josephus presents his capture by the Romans as a tragic reversal. His choice to present the tragic destruction of the temple as the work’s major theme may have been an important factor motivating his considerations, but we can also explain it in relation to Plutarch’s remark about self-praise (cf. Chapter 5).

A third case in which it is permissible for the statesman to speak about himself is when wronged (ἀδικούμενος), especially when rebuked for actions that in fact deserve praise. According to Plutarch, such a plea for justice (δικαιολογία) creates a freedom of speech (παρρησία) for the speaker that renders boasting (μεγαλαυχία) and self-elevation (μεγαληγορία) acceptable (541D). He explains that Demosthenes’ self-praise in *On the Crown* “is perceived not as reproach but self-defence” (δοκεῖ ... οὐκ ὀνειδίζειν ἀλλ’ ἀπολογεῖσθαι). This allows him to speak about himself with “a distinct freedom of speech” and “glorify in the accusations brought against him” (541E–F). The following chapter will argue that Josephus presents his dispute with John in *BJ* 2 along these lines.⁵⁴⁷

Merely getting away with self-praise is not enough for Plutarch. He explains that the statesman should only speak about himself only “when there is an immediate occasion that requires the truth about what he himself did or said, as when speaking about another” (539E). Self-praise is appropriate when it promotes the interests of the community (544D):

⁵⁴⁷ The concept of παρρησία plays an important role in Plutarch’s argumentation. It is similarly important in other essays of practical philosophy. For instance, in *How the Young Should Study Poetry*, *On Exile*, and *On Talkativeness*, he frequently discusses the dilemma of παρρησία in relation to caution and modesty when speaking in public. Good and virtuous men have the ability to employ freedom of speech on the right occasion. On παρρησία in Plutarch’s practical ethics, see Van Hoof (2010) esp. 140–43. Also relevant are Lucian’s and Philodemus’ essays on παρρησία. See for a treatment of these texts e.g. Holland (2004). On the concept of παρρησία in general see the essays in Fitzgerald (1996). On παρρησία in Plutarch’s work in the context of friendship in the Hellenistic world, see Konstan (1997) esp. 103–5.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐ μόνον ἀλύπως καὶ ἀνεπιφθόνως, ἀλλὰ καὶ χρησίμως καὶ ὠφελίμως προσοιστέον
 ἐστὶ τοὺς ἐπαίνους, ἵνα μὴ τοῦτο πράττειν ἄλλ' ἑτερόν τι διὰ τούτου δοκῶμεν, ὅρα πρῶτον εἰ
 προτροπῆς ἔνεκα καὶ ζήλου καὶ φιλοτιμίας τῶν ἀκουόντων αὐτὸν ἂν τις ἐπαινέσειεν

But because it is necessary that the praises are not only painless and free from arousing
 envy, but also useful and beneficial — so that we should seem to be doing this not only
 for itself but with something else by means of it — consider first whether someone
 might praise himself by way of inspiring his hearers to emulation and ambition.

We may again turn to the *Precepts* to contextualize Plutarch's remarks. Here, he points out that a
 statesman has the duty to educate his fellow-citizens against the dangers of rivalry and ambition.
 Such education can be accomplished by offering moral examples⁵⁴⁸ or by using rhetoric to steer the
 people towards a more beneficial course of action. The function of these educational tools is again
 to increase the social harmony of the community (*Precepts* 800C–801C).⁵⁴⁹

This also applies to self-praise. Plutarch repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of higher
 didactic goals when speaking about oneself. This kind of self-praise is commendable because “it
 teaches admiration and love of the useful and profitable rather than of the vain and superfluous”
 (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 545D–546B). In some cases, offering one's own behaviour as a
 virtuous example can inspire others with “pride and ambition” (544D–E). Boasting can also be useful
 to strike the audience with “amazement and abasement,” to “disparage and overtake the stubborn
 and reckless,” or to overcome public and private enemies. When speaking to friends and
 countrymen, one can also offer “a pledge of virtue and understanding to inspire the disheartened
 with confidence” (τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐνέχυρον τοῦ θαρρεῖν ... διδόντος) to safeguard security
 in times of despair (544F–545D). Finally, Plutarch explains that self-praise is helpful to

⁵⁴⁸ Compare this claim with Plato, *Laws* 730E–731A. Cf. Roig Lanzillotta (1997) 420–24.

⁵⁴⁹ See for further discussion e.g. Pelling (2004); idem (2014) 155–56; Duff (2008); Stadter (2015) 277. On the
 function of the statesman in Plutarch's *Precepts* in relation to Josephus' *BJ* see the discussion in Mason (2016a)
 106–7.

counterbalance mistaken praise of vicious things, because it is with “the praise of vicious acts that a statesman must wage war” (545D–546B).

The Rhetoric of Self-Praise

Thus far the discussion has focused on Plutarch’s views about the issue of when one should or should not praise oneself: problems likely to appear, cases when practising self-praise is justified, and the necessity of having a higher aim of utility for the community. Plutarch also gives advice on how to make the praise digestible *if* one decides to do it.⁵⁵⁰ Without the proper rhetorical adjustments, self-praise is doomed to be received badly, regardless of whether it is justified or serves a higher purpose. Plutarch lists the following tools as useful:

- 541F–542A: the use of contrast (ἀντιθέσεις). For Plutarch, Demosthenes’ *On the Crown* is an excellent example of a text where this technique is applied successfully. It consists of showing that the opposite of what a person is accused of is worse than the accusation itself.
- 542A–C: Plutarch recommends harmoniously mixing praise of the audience (e.g. Athenians or the Thebans) with self-praise. This creates a context in which one is not liable to envy (ἀνεπίφθονος) or appearing to display self-love (ἀφιλαυτος). The audience welcomes the praise by the speaker, which allows him to praise himself as well.
- 542C–E: praising the aims, achievements, and character of virtuous men comparable to oneself. Plutarch explains that people are extremely hostile and vexed (πολεμοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ σφόδρα καὶ ἄχθονται) towards self-praise, but they listen with pleasure and agreement when the same speaker praises others. If one praises another whose aims and actions are the same as one’s own, the audience will recognize the similarity and draw the conclusion that the speaker also deserves praise.

⁵⁵⁰ The transition from suitable occasions of self-praise to softening techniques is somewhat arbitrary. Plutarch himself does not clearly distinguish between the two, see *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 541F. I follow the analysis of Ingenkamp (1971) 65.

- 542E–543A: when speaking about himself, a statesman must never claim all the glory, but should “disburden himself” (ἀποτιθεσθαι) by giving credit to fortune (τύχη) and god (θεός). Sulla, for instance, avoided envy by calling himself the Fortunate. Plutarch explains that this is effective because men would rather attribute their lack of success to fortune than to the virtue of others (μᾶλλον γὰρ εὐτυχίας ἢ ἀρετῆς ἡττᾶσθαι βούλονται). By giving credit to fortune and the gods, the speaker creates the impression that he had an unfair advantage and so avoids the impression of competition.⁵⁵¹
- 543A–F: Plutarch advises statesmen not to introduce (εἰσφέρειν) self-praise but to transfer (μετατίθημι) it. If someone is praised, he has to make clear that it is for the wrong things. If he were to be justly praised, it should be for something else. The effect is that the speaker appears displeased at being praised wrongly, instead of desiring to be praised. Plutarch points out that this technique creates the space to speak freely (παρρησιάζομαι) about the virtues *not* addressed by the person who has introduced the praise. He adds that when rejecting the flattery of others, one will not cause envy by laying claim to more moderate virtues.
- 543F–544C: Plutarch explains that when praising oneself it is useful to mention minor failures, because “they abstract any displeasure or matter of causing wrath” (ἀφαιροῦσι τὸ ἐπαχθὲς αὐτῶν καὶ νεμεσητόν). If the shortcomings are not altogether dishonouring (αἰσχρός) or sordid (ἀγεννής), and they are intermingled with the praise, they can effectively prevent envy.
- 544C–D: Plutarch closes the discussion by moving from softening techniques that can be added to self-praise to factors inherent in the actual content of the praise. He refers to perils undergone when acquiring the characteristics or achievements that

⁵⁵¹ This advice is similar to Quintilian’s suggestions based on Cicero’s practice of speaking about himself. See below the discussion of Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.23–24. Elsewhere Plutarch states that Sulla emphasized aspects of fortune and divine intervention to such an extent that it went at the expense of the reputation of his own virtues (*Sull.* 6.5). In other words, he moderated his self-praise perhaps *too* effectively.

are praised.⁵⁵² Plutarch's conclusion is that the masses envy something when it is obtained without cost or hardship. When it is acquired through hard work and danger, however, they do not envy the speaker.⁵⁵³

As noted in the beginning of this section, Plutarch offers the most systematic discussion of the issues revolving around self-praise. His essay provides an opportunity to anticipate the following chapter and indicate the importance of this discourse vis-à-vis Josephus' practice. We shall see that Josephus makes use of just such techniques. He emphasizes the intervention of fortune, God, and the divine in his survival story; he praises the virtues of men similar to his own character; in the autobiographical narrative Josephus tends to be more explicit in his praise of others; he mentions minor mistakes to avoid the impression of overweening pride; and he emphasizes how hard he worked to produce his treatises. All of this might be understood as Josephus' attempt to deal with the decorum of self-praise as elucidated by Plutarch.

Conclusion

Plutarch's elaborate discussion provides us with a unique vantage point through which we can further investigate ancient perceptions about autobiographical discourse. It paves the way for examining the rhetoric of the autobiographical sections in the *BJ* in the next chapter. Plutarch discusses many moral and rhetorical issues relevant for understanding this subject. His vast corpus provides further explanation and contextualization in reference to his arguments. For him, self-praise is inadvisable on moral grounds. In most cases, self-praise creates problems such as envy, excessive ambition, and competition, leading to problems of social strife and discord. Because the main responsibility of the statesman is to improve social harmony, self-praise should be avoided in most cases. It is much better to praise others or to be praised by others. Self-praise is acceptable in cases where the statesman practises it with a higher goal in mind. The speaker is excused when he is defending himself, when unfortunate, or when being wronged. Yet in all such cases a speaker is strongly urged to use rhetorical techniques to soften the self-praise.

⁵⁵² See also the observations on Josephus *AJ* 20.262–67 below.

⁵⁵³ On these techniques see also Ingenkamp (1971) 65–66.

Evidently, Plutarch's advice is idealized. As in the case of Isocrates' *Antidosis*, writers and speakers could exaggerate or invent moral justification for rhetorical purposes. This implies that some claims of self-defence or apology might be exaggerated or even wholly invented (as with Isocrates' court case).

4.3.2.5 Cassius Dio

After Plutarch, one finds only scattered references to the subject of personal narrative in ancient Greek literature. The later authors display no significant change of position from the older ideas. One example is Julius Caesar's speech as presented in Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. When Caesar enters Rome after becoming a dictator, he finds the people terrified. As a result, he attempts to encourage them through a speech in which he elaborates on the stability of his nature. This stability ensures that Caesar will not change after assuming the offices bestowed upon him and that he will protect the Romans. Before getting into details he poses the following question: "Why is it necessary for me to go into details and become offensive by praising myself" (*Rom. Hist.* 43.15.6: τί γὰρ δεῖ με καθ' ἑκάστων ἐπεξιόντα ἐπαχθῆ, ὥς καὶ ἑμαυτὸν ἐπαινοῦντα, γενέσθαι)?⁵⁵⁴ This sentence contains two central ideas we have encountered frequently: a statement about the general offensiveness of self-praise and the accompanying claim of necessity to practise it nonetheless.

4.3.2.6 Aelius Aristides⁵⁵⁵

Aelius Aristides' *On a Remark in Passing* illustrates the kind of self-praise he employs throughout his corpus (e.g. his autobiographical experiences in the *Sacred Tales*). It provides a peculiar viewpoint on the issue, however, for it is arguably one of the most boastful works from antiquity, making even Josephus' boasting in the *Vita* look pale in contrast.⁵⁵⁶ The occasion of Aristides' *On a Remark in Passing* is an accusation that he has addressed his own affairs during a speech in an unfitting

⁵⁵⁴ This translation is based on Cary and Foster, LCL.

⁵⁵⁵ Translations of Aelius Aristides are taken from Behr (1981).

⁵⁵⁶ Fields (2008) systematically explains the differences between Aelius Aristides' and Plutarch's attitude towards self-praise by means of their different social context, i.e. Aelius Aristides being an orator and Plutarch being involved in political discourse. For an outline of the structure and content of Aristides' *Remark in Passing*, see Rutherford (1995) 195–99.

manner, “in particular in the presence of those perfectly familiar with them” (28.1–2).⁵⁵⁷ Apparently, he has been blamed for failing to adapt his speeches to the tastes of his audience.

In response, Aristides claims that the orator should be concerned only with the quality of the speech. If the audience is not able to appreciate that quality, it is *their* problem, not the speaker’s. Adapting the speech would require compromising its quality.⁵⁵⁸ Aristides points out that there is nothing wrong with referring to himself when the need arises because he speaks the truth: “all men dear to the gods and excelling their fellows are not ashamed to speak the truth” (28.49). On this basis he claims that “it is the part of an intelligent and moderate man to recognize his true worth, and the part of a just man to pay himself and others their proper due, and the part of a brave man not to be afraid to speak the truth” (28.145).⁵⁵⁹ Aristides also asserts that a virtuous man should not be afraid to show himself and “speak with frankness” (παρρησία).⁵⁶⁰ Nothing is wrong with praising oneself, Aristides holds, “as long as he does not tell lies” (28.50). It is implied that all the above applies to Aristides himself.

Aristides’ practice seems to be diametrically opposed to ancient advice about self-praise. Throughout the orator’s treatise one can observe a confident self-promotion typical of many authors writing under the so-called Second Sophistic.⁵⁶¹ However, a closer look at the rhetorical strategies employed throughout the speech shows that Aristides employs many of the rhetorical commonplaces encountered thus far in relation to personal narrative. Most obviously, the entire speech is framed in terms of self-defence (28.3, 98). The opposition between himself and those criticizing him might very well be rhetorically inflated to enhance his just and truthful character. As

⁵⁵⁷ I follow the edition of Behr (1981) 2.107–39.

⁵⁵⁸ As we can learn from his other works, it is precisely at this point where Aristides is different from other orators. For example, in Aristides’ *Against Those Who Betray the Mysteries* (Κατὰ τῶν ἐξορχουμένων) we see that Aristides considered it a ridiculous idea that an orator should lower his standards to meet those of his audience. Rhetorical skill has an intrinsic and absolute value that only becomes polluted when adapted to the needs of those who do not fully comprehend it. On the rhetorical ideal in relation to *idea*-theory as advocated by Aelius Aristides, see Rutherford (1998) 96–105.

⁵⁵⁹ This aspect of Aristides’ claims is highlighted by Fields (2008) 160–62.

⁵⁶⁰ Aristides, *Remark in Passing* 28.53, 85, 88.

⁵⁶¹ On Aelius Aristides as rhetorician of the Second Sophistic, see e.g. Kennedy (2011) 239–41. For an analysis of Aristides’ views on the Roman Empire and the problems of perceiving these as representative for all Greeks under Roman rule, see Swain (1996) 254–97.

has been observed in §4.2, many autobiographical writings from antiquity contain at least some apology. One can reasonably assume that including apologetic aspects will at least partially have been motivated to accord with rhetorical conventions.

In addition to this, while insisting that he has the right to praise himself, Aristides notes that his remarks are in fact not so bad. He made them in passing (28.88), whereas many other authors — he notes various examples from classical antiquity — were much more elaborate and explicit when speaking about themselves (28.11–97).⁵⁶² Aristides points out that his self-praise is necessary (28.119, 126, 128). He also explains that his rhetorical skills are of divine origin and that he only speaks because “god moves him” (28.102). He cannot but speak because “whenever the light of god has surrounded the speaker ... it immediately fills him with strength and warmth and lifts up his eyes and causes his hair to stand up. A man in such a condition ... looks to nothing but the words themselves” (28.114). Aristides thus claims the divine origin of his speech. He adds that because of this the self-praise was in fact no *self*-praise at all: it was “the nature of the speech” (ἡ τοῦ λόγου φύσις) that carried him on. Even though it consisted of “his own words, it was as if one were listening to those of another” (28.127: καὶ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ λόγων ἡ κροῶμην ὡς ἀλλοτρίων). The suggestion is that Aristides did not practise self-praise at all, since the words were spoken as if about someone else. The defensive stance taken in combination with the variety of other strategies employed by Aristides strongly situate this speech in its wider rhetorical context.

4.3.2.7 *Pseudo-Hermogenes*⁵⁶³

Pseudo-Hermogenes offers some plain rhetorical advice on the subject of self-praise in *On the Method of Forceful Speaking*. The work most likely dates to the third or fourth century AD and contains a section titled *On Praising oneself without Offence* (*Meth.* 25).⁵⁶⁴ The author starts by pointing out that praising oneself is “offensive and easily detested” (ἐπαχθοῦς ... καὶ εὐμισήτου). Yet

⁵⁶² Cf. Rutherford (1995) 196. For examples see especially 52 (Alcman comparing himself to a Muse or a Siren), 58 (Pindar’s self-praise), 75 (Demosthenes’ *On the Crown*), 96 (Isocrates’ *Panegyricus*).

⁵⁶³ For the Greek text and an English translation of the Hermogenic corpus, see the edition by G. A. Kennedy and Rabe (2005) 244–47.

⁵⁶⁴ For a more detailed analysis of this work, see Bürgi (1930). See also Wallach (1981); Rutherford (1998) 6–7, 92.

he immediately turns to the question of how to praise oneself effectively, isolating three techniques to help accomplish this. Hermogenes' advice is consistent with most of the evidence discussed in this chapter and so helps to provide an interpretative basis for analysing the features of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in the next chapter.

First, he shows how Isocrates uses general examples of virtuous and vicious men. Instead of directly applying the categories to himself, Isocrates leaves it to the audience to make the connection (cf. Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 542C–E). Second, a speaker could excuse self-praise by introducing a claim of necessity. Pseudo-Hermogenes illustrates this principle by looking at Demosthenes' *On the Crown*, but also notes that this strategy is insufficient and suspicious when used in isolation.⁵⁶⁵ He offers a solution to the problem by recommending another technique: just as Demosthenes switches between addressing the Athenian assembly and his opponent Aeschines, a speaker should alternate between different audiences. When saying something acceptable and modest, a speaker should address the general audience. But whenever the speaker is about to claim something that could be regarded as “arrogant and offensive” (ὕπερήφανον καὶ ἐπαχθές), he should change to a more particular addressee and use a singular or the name of an opponent. This to avoid offending the audience in general.⁵⁶⁶

4.3.3 Romans and Self-Praise

Until this point the discussion has focused on Greek sources. The picture arising from this analysis is that Greeks were generally reserved about self-praise. Dionysius' remarks that everyone with an average intellect understands this (*Thuc.* 45). These texts offer, however, a variety of techniques and strategies to bypass problems inherent in the practice.

The following sections concentrate on available Latin evidence. As has been observed in §4.2, the late Republican period witnessed a significant rise in autobiographical practice. This is usually explained by the competitive social and political climate.⁵⁶⁷ Praise and blame were important

⁵⁶⁵ See also Marincola (1997) 211.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. Pernot (1998) 115.

⁵⁶⁷ Mellor (1999) 167.

tools to increase or diminish the status of one's friends and rivals.⁵⁶⁸ Scholars frequently argue that confident self-expression became more common in this period.⁵⁶⁹ This does not mean that it was more accepted, however: advice about self-praise remains very similar to that encountered in Greek literature.

4.3.3.1 *Sallust*

That not everyone saw the extremely competitive nature of Roman society as commendable is evident from the reflections of Sallust. In the *Jugurtha*, unrestrained *ambitio* and striving for offices are threats to *virtus*.⁵⁷⁰ Exemplary are the cases of Jugurtha and Marius. While admirable and modest nobles at first, self-promotion and boasting become integral to their behaviour after they are corrupted by other Roman nobles. This comes at the expense of their rivals but also their own *virtus*.⁵⁷¹ Sallust considers self-promotion and boasting perverse, especially the kind that is caused by an excessive search for fame and the realization of one's personal *ambitio*. Modesty is commendable because true virtue is self-explanatory and does not need elaboration.⁵⁷²

4.3.3.2 *Cicero*

Cicero's work provides an excellent window for investigating Roman perceptions of self-praise in more detail. He offers various reflections on the subject. In *De Officiis* he notes that doing so testifies to bad taste, especially when one is lying (1.137). We read in *De Inventione* that praising one's own achievements can be successful if it is done to secure the goodwill of an audience. Yet it should

⁵⁶⁸ On which see Lendon (1999) 56–58. On praise and blame in Roman rhetoric, see the contributions in Smith and R. Covino (2011).

⁵⁶⁹ Esp. Wiseman (1985). For an analysis of Roman-aristocratic assumptions and practices that prepared the ground for the Roman co-optation of rhetoric in the service of literary autobiography Misch (1973) 1.211–30.

⁵⁷⁰ Some of this might be explained because Sallust himself had been a very ambitious politician, forced out of public life by accusations of gross malfeasance and extortion. On this, see Allen (1954).

⁵⁷¹ On Jugurtha's modesty see Sallust, *Jug.* 6.1, 7.3. On Jugurtha's corruption see *Jug.* 8.2, 12.3–6, 20.1; and boasting about his past achievements 22.2. On Marius' excellence and corruption see esp. *Jug.* 63. On Marius' wicked strategies of self-promotion, at the expense of his own *virtus* and that of his soldiers, 64.5–6, 73.5, 84–85. For further discussion on the *virtus* of Jugurtha and Marius see Earl (1961) 60–81.

⁵⁷² Pace Mellor (1999) 168: "Romans gave little weight to the virtue of modesty." In some cases, the Romans clearly did.

always be performed humbly, when dealing with charges, or when relating one's misfortunes (*Inv.* 1.16.22).⁵⁷³

In the *Brutus*, Cicero includes an extensive autobiographical account, allegedly to comply with Brutus' wishes. He notes that an account of his career may seem alien to his proposed subject, but its development "followed the very footprints of Hortensius" (307: *et videre quem ad modum simus in spatio Q. Hortensium ipsius vestigiis persecuti*).⁵⁷⁴ The beginning of Cicero's career marks the end of Hortensius' and thus has the potential to shed light on the career of the latter. Elsewhere he repeats that his purpose in talking so elaborately about himself is not boasting (318).⁵⁷⁵

Nimis multa videor de me, ipse praesertim; sed omni huic sermoni propositum est non ut ingenium et eloquentiam meam perspicias, unde longe absum, sed ut laborem et industriam.

I fear that too much is being said of me, *especially since I am saying it*; but the purpose of all this part of my talk is not to parade my talent or my eloquence, which is far from my intention, but only to let you see how hard I worked and how industrious I was.

Cicero writes extensively about himself, yet simultaneously shows awareness that such practice is not without problems. Consequently, he employs a variety of strategies and techniques to make it look *as if* he is hesitant to write and speak about himself: he stresses that his emphasis is not on his talent (*ingenium*) or eloquence (*industria*), but on his hard work and industry (*labor et industria*;

⁵⁷³ For Cicero's strategies of avoiding the offensiveness of self-praise in *Divinatio in Caecilium* see recently Tempest (2011). On Cicero's self-fashioning see especially Dugan (2005). See also e.g. Baier (2005) 128–34; Riggsby (2007) 271–73; Tatum (2011) 176–81.

⁵⁷⁴ Translations of the *Brutus* follow Hendrickson and Hubbell LCL.

⁵⁷⁵ In what follows, Cicero's autobiographical account turns out to contain significant moral lessons, especially in comparison to the end of Hortensius' career. When Hortensius arrived at the peak of his career, he decided to allow himself to relish the enjoyments of life and ceased to work as hard as he had before (*Brut.* 320). This in notable contrast to Cicero (321): "I, on the other hand, did not cease from efforts to increase such gifts as I had by every type of exercise, and particularly by writing." At the expense of Hortensius, Cicero implies that the example to be followed here is his own.

compare with Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 544C–D).⁵⁷⁶ This epitomizes the frequent disagreement between theory and practice of personal narrative. On the one hand, Cicero is aware of the problems inherent in self-praise and advises others to keep such practice to an absolute minimum. On the other hand, he frequently spoke and wrote about his own achievements and became the butt of criticism because of this.

It is not difficult to see why authors such as Plutarch picked out Cicero to illustrate their point that self-praise could best be avoided. When reading Cicero, we encounter many instances of self-praise. For example, in his correspondence with his friend Atticus, Cicero mentions that he has written *commentarii* about his consular year as still raw materials for actual history. Because of their unusually high level of polish, the eminent Greek historian Posidonius declined his offer to rewrite these Greek “notes” into a more elaborate treatment of the topic. Even Greek masters recognize the stylistic superiority of Cicero’s Greek (*Att.* 1.19.10, 1.20.6, 2.1.1–2).

Cicero takes a different stance in his letter to Lucius Lucceius. This letter dates to 55 BC, shortly after his return from his first exile.⁵⁷⁷ Cicero requests Lucceius to write a separate history about his achievements during his consular year, rather than making it a part of a larger history (*Fam.* 5.12.2).⁵⁷⁸ One of Cicero’s main points is to convince Lucceius to write *eulogistically*, if necessary with exaggerations. Cicero asks Lucceius to “ignore the laws of history” (*leges historiae neglegas*) in this respect,⁵⁷⁹ not to lay aside friendship, and to “permit just a little more personal affection than truth would allow” (*Fam.* 5.12.2–3: *ne aspernere amorique nostro plusculum etiam quam concedet veritas largiare*).⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁶ On this passage, see also Van der Blom (2010) 306–7.

⁵⁷⁷ On Cicero’s letter to Lucceius in the context of Roman social negotiations see Hall (1998). See pp. 313–15 for this interpretation and examples of humorous language. See also Woodman (1988).

⁵⁷⁸ On the identity of Lucceius, see Drummond (2013) 335.

⁵⁷⁹ Matthew Fox interprets the letter as follows: “The main reason for including a discussion of the letter here is that in it Cicero displays a particularly cynical attitude towards historical fact. Almost the sole purpose of history seems to be the celebration of the individual, the immortalisation of heroic deeds. It is a vision of the role of history which deliberately flouts the boundaries between genres.” Fox (2007) 258–59. Yet this interpretation is problematic when taking into account that Cicero seems very much aware of the foundational principles of history. For Cicero history normally had a profound concern with *veritas*, but for his purposes he needs a tone that is just a tad more eulogistic than *veritas* would normally allow.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12.6.

In this case, Cicero mentions the “laws of history” only because he is about to violate them (cf. *De or.* 2.62; *Leg.* 1.5).⁵⁸¹ He begs the eminent historian Lucceius — whose *auctoritas testimoni* has been praised presumably on the basis of his usual adherence to the *leges historiae* — to ignore those same “laws” and allow partiality in a writing about Cicero’s achievements. He points out that if, for one reason or another, Lucceius is not able to write about Cicero’s achievements (*Fam.* 5.12.8–9):

cogar fortasse facere quod non nulli saepe reprehendunt: scribam ipse de me, multorum tamen exemplo et clarorum virorum. sed, quod te non fugit, haec sunt in hoc genere vitia: et verecundius ipsi de sese scribant necesse est si quid est laudandum et praetereant si quid reprehendendum est. accedit etiam ut minor sit fides, minor auctoritas, multi denique reprehendant et dicant verecundiores esse praecones ludorum gymnicorum, qui, cum ceteris coronas imposuerint victoribus eorumque nomina magna voce pronuntiarint, cum ipsi ante ludorum missionem corona donentur, alium praeconem adhibeant, ne sua voce se ipsi victores esse praedicent. haec nos vitare cupimus et, si recipis causam nostram, vitabimus idque ut facias rogamus.

I shall perhaps be driven to a course often censured by some, namely to write about myself—and yet I shall have many illustrious precedents. But I need not point out to you that this genre has certain disadvantages. Someone writing about himself must use a modest tone where praise is due and pass over anything that calls for censure. Moreover, his credit and authority are less, and many will blame him and say that heralds at athletic contests show more delicacy, in that after placing garlands on the heads of the winners and loudly proclaiming their names, they call in another herald when it is their turn to be crowned at the end of the games, in order to avoid announcing

⁵⁸¹ Cicero presents these laws as common knowledge: everyone knew them. He continues that the completion of a historical writing consists of perfection of content and style (*exaedificatio*; i.e. writing down the actual arrangement and choice of language), the special task of the orator. On Cicero’s views of history writing see Woodman (1988) 70–116; Woodman (2008); Feldherr (2003); Fox (2007) 111–48; Northwood (2008).

their own victory with their own lips. I am anxious to escape these drawbacks, as I shall, if you take my case. I beg you so to do (trans. Shackleton Bailey LCL).

Although Cicero does not present autobiographical history as a bad thing per se (“I shall have many illustrious precedents”), the repeated use of *reprehendere* in this passage shows his awareness of the problems inherent in writing about oneself. It raises suspicion and aversion.⁵⁸² This is especially so because Cicero planned the history to be a praise of his achievements. Writing about himself would force him to write with more modesty (*verecundia*) than would be required in a regular history, in order to avoid accusations of partiality.⁵⁸³ An autobiographical account of Cicero’s achievements would reduce the authority (*auctoritas*) and credibility (*fides*) of the praise.

We have observed how Cicero writes about his own *commentarii* very confidently in his correspondence with Atticus, especially when it comes to their superior Greek style. Now, if he was so happy with his own memoirs about his consular year, why ask someone else to write about it now? Cicero wrote this letter immediately after his exile. He wished to see his legacy preserved while he still lived (*Fam.* 5.12.9), having good reasons to doubt that he would live for many more years. Moreover, it may be that at the time of writing he needed the *auctoritas testimoni* of the historian Lucceius, renowned especially for his literary skill and hence perfect for the panegyric-like history envisaged by Cicero,⁵⁸⁴ in order to improve his social position immediately after his exile (5.12.1, 7). An external testimony by an eminent historian would be far more effective for Cicero than to write about his own achievements.⁵⁸⁵

In short, the evidence from Cicero’s work shows the complexity of moderating self-praise and self-promotion in the competitive social and political climate of the Late Republic. Cicero shows awareness of the problems inherent in self-praise at different points in his vast corpus. At the

⁵⁸² Marincola (1997) 178.

⁵⁸³ On *verecundia* in general see esp. Kaster (2005) 13–27, 61–65. On the issue of self-praise and autobiography see Riggsby (2007) 267–68.

⁵⁸⁴ Drummond (2013) 336–37.

⁵⁸⁵ Jeffrey Tatum (appreciatively citing Ronald Syme) proposes that “one should perhaps not take these worries too literally from any member of a class of person who, as Syme once put it, were ‘not disposed to self-dispraisement.’” Tatum (2011) 162, referring to Syme (1964) 155.

pinnacle of his career Cicero had no issues with producing *commentarii* in Greek, about which he boasts in his correspondence with Atticus.⁵⁸⁶ When writing to Lucceius, however, he approaches the issue from a different angle. Whatever the superior style of his *commentarii*, they lack the *auctoritas testimonii* of a distinguished historian. His request to Lucceius cannot be separated from his attempt to rehabilitate his social and political position shortly after his return from exile. Cicero could hardly write about himself as if writing about someone else, as this would make him vulnerable to accusations of partiality. This problem could be avoided by persuading an eminent historian like Lucceius to accomplish the task.

4.3.3.3 Quintilian

Quintilian extensively discusses self-praise in the *Institutio oratoria*, specifically focusing on its applications in court rhetoric.⁵⁸⁷ The discussion appears in a chapter devoted to appropriateness (*decorum*). Quintilian considers this principle to be the most essential of all stylistic components (*elocutio*) of a speech (*Inst.* 11.1.1). *Decorum* is so important because it is not merely a matter of *elocutio* — the tone and style — but of *inventio* as well — what to say and where to say it. Every speaker at some point needs to decide between what is profitable (*expedio*) and what is approved (11.1.7: *decet*). In Quintilian's view the latter should always be prioritized over the former, because an orator should always speak and act in an honourable way (11.1.14).

According to Quintilian, self-praise is the type of speech in which the choice between the profitable and the approved is particularly pressing. Like most authors discussed thus far, Quintilian shows discomfort with self-praise and considers it inappropriate in most cases. This is even more so when an orator boasts about his rhetorical skills (11.1.15: *eloquentia*). Boasting about one's rhetorical skills is not only boring to an audience (*non fastidium modo*) but it also offends them (*sed plerumque etiam odium*). Self-praise reveals differences in social status: it causes envy (*invident*) when listeners have a social status inferior to the speaker,⁵⁸⁸ mockery (*rident*) when they have a superior status, and

⁵⁸⁶ He also promises to provide Lucceius with further *commentarii*. Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12.10.

⁵⁸⁷ Translations of the *Institutio* follow Russell LCL.

⁵⁸⁸ Note the contrast with the analyses offered by Aristotle and Plutarch. Aristotle notes that envy only exists between people of equal social status. Plutarch points both to equality and inferiority in terms of social status.

disapproval (*improbat*) when the audience consists of virtuous men. Quintilian adds that self-praise frequently has the flavour of “misplaced arrogance” (*adrogantium falsam*). Even when the qualities praised by the speaker are real, it suffices to know that someone has them (11.16–17: *sufficit conscientia*). At the end of the discussion Quintilian notes his uncomfortableness with Cicero’s self-praise in his poems and notes that they are an easy and justified target for criticism (11.1.24), emphasizing that one should leave praise to others whenever possible (11.1.22). In other words, real virtue goes without saying and does not require elaboration. Both in his general advice as well as in the language he adopts Quintilian is very similar to other Greek and Roman authors discussing the issue of self-praise.

While in Quintilian’s view boasting about one’s skills is out of the question, he adds that it is sometimes permissible “to show confidence in it [one’s eloquence]” (11.1.25–26: *concenda fiducia est*). Accordingly, he offers some reflections on how to avoid problems of offensiveness when embarking on self-praise. He gives special attention to claims of self-defence and necessity. Cicero’s boasting receives elaborate attention. Quintilian notes that Cicero has been accused of boasting about his rhetorical skills, although his self-praise was focused on his political achievements (11.1.17). Even though Quintilian considers Cicero’s self-praise slightly off topic, he wishes to discuss why the former consul *was* justified in praising himself. Cicero was forced to defend his friends and respond to envy (*aut respondebat invidiae*) at his social status. Although one might ask whether this is a purely analytical assessment and not a specific case in defence of Cicero’s greatness, in Quintilian’s opinion Cicero’s self-praise should be perceived not as self-glorification but as self-defence (11.1.17–18: *videri non gloriae magis quam defensionis data*).⁵⁸⁹

In constructing this defence, Quintilian cites evidence that Cicero presents himself rather humbly in many of his speeches (11.1.19). Moreover, when Cicero writes about his rhetorical skills, he does so in personal letters to friends and only when using the voice of others to refer to his own skills (11.1.21).⁵⁹⁰ Elsewhere Quintilian writes that Cicero uses another technique to make his self-praise acceptable: he attributes part of the success to the “courage of the senate” (*virtuti senatus*) and the

⁵⁸⁹ See also Marincola (1997) 177.

⁵⁹⁰ For Cicero’s practice of this technique, see §5.3.1.

“providence of the immortal gods” (11.1.23–24: *providentiae deorum immortalium*; compare with Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 542E–543A).⁵⁹¹ The more general point addressed by Quintilian that one should always avoid the *appearance* of self-praise.

Quintilian also claims that although an orator is not allowed to speak about his *eloquentia*, he is allowed to speak in reference to his own achievements (11.1.22: *gestis oratori*). He provides two examples. First, Demosthenes successfully inserts a claim of necessity (*ut necessitatem*), which allowed him to speak about himself: he was forced (*coegisset*) to do so because of the envy (*invidia*) of Aeschines toward his friend Ctesiphon (*Inst.* 11.1.22). The second example is Cicero’s frequent reference to his own achievements during the Catilinarian conspiracy.⁵⁹² Quintilian notes that Cicero “makes greater claims for himself when confronting his enemies and detractors because he was forced to defend his policies when they were used against him” (11.1.23). This observation recalls Pseudo-Hermogenes’ advice to alternate between different audiences (*Meth.* 25). It is possible to make bolder claims when addressing an enemy. The implication is that the audience matters when deciding which claims are acceptable.

In accordance with discussions encountered in other texts, Quintilian’s discussion radiates a tone of reservation regarding the subject of self-praise. We have observed that Quintilian considers all kinds of boasting to be ill-advised. He also clarifies that it is sometimes necessary to show confidence in one’s abilities and provides some advice on how to render it more acceptable when practising it. A central point in his discussion is that any appearance of self-praise should be avoided.

4.3.3.4 Pliny

Until this point, the evidence examined indicates a relatively stable theoretical disposition towards self-praise among Greeks and Romans. Pliny is known to boast about his own achievements, especially in his *Letters*, with a frequency and an intensity that is difficult to reconcile with the moral

⁵⁹¹ Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 542E–543A.

⁵⁹² Note the different judgment of Plutarch in *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 540–541A.

discourse surveyed in this chapter.⁵⁹³ Cicero's letter to Lucceius anticipates a similar request by Pliny to the historian Tacitus (*Ep.* 7.33).

In this letter, Pliny frankly admits (*ingenue fatebor*) his anxiety about asking to appear in Tacitus' histories (7.33.1), which he predicts will win him immortality in the future. He attempts to persuade Tacitus to include an incident in his histories related to Pliny, concerning his involvement with Herennius Senecio in the successful prosecution of Domitian's protégé Baebius Massa for extortion, during his tenure as a proconsul of Baetica in AD 92–93. Pliny highlights the brave reply he gave when Baebius Massa accused Herennius Senecio of showing personal enmity against him. Massa did not include Pliny in this indictment, which according to Pliny suggests collusion with the defendant. The incident appeared in the official records (7.33.3) and his reply allegedly earned Pliny the respect of his fellow-senators including the future emperor Nerva (7.33.8–9).⁵⁹⁴

Some scholars have suggested that Pliny modelled this letter on Cicero's *Fam.* 5.12.⁵⁹⁵ Both Cicero and Pliny address a contemporary historian in a letter that contains a request to include their extraordinary deeds of virtue in his history. Moreover, both authors compare the craft of the historian with the production of visual art (*Fam.* 5.12.7; *Ep.* 7.33.2).

In spite of these clear parallels, Pliny uses a different tone to materialize his request. Cicero highlights the contrast between self-praise in autobiographical writing and being praised by an eminent historian. He gets to his point only after some verbiage about his shyness to approach Lucceius in the first place (*Fam.* 5.12.1). Pliny is more open about the merits of his achievement. He implies that because of the respect it gained him among the senators and the emperor himself it *should* have a place in Tacitus' history. This will ensure its fame and importance — something Pliny assumes to be a given. Additionally, whereas Cicero shamelessly asks Lucceius to violate the laws of history and allow friendship a little more than truth would allow (*Fam.* 5.12.2–3),⁵⁹⁶ Pliny suggests

⁵⁹³ See e.g. Pliny, *Let.* 2.4; 2.18; 3.11; 9.23.1–2. On Pliny's self-praise see esp. Gibson (2003). See more briefly Trapp (2006) 343.

⁵⁹⁴ On this episode, see also Tacitus, *Agr.* 45.1. The letter is discussed in relation to the subject of self-praise by Gibson (2003) 242.

⁵⁹⁵ See especially the discussion in Marchesi (2008) 221–23.

⁵⁹⁶ Pace Marchesi (2008) 221: "Friendship should allow the laws of historiography to be relaxed, but not beyond the boundaries of truth."

that his historical example is fully established and does not need overly favourable treatment (*Ep.* 7.33.10).

If self-praise was rejected in Pliny's cultural context (and human conventions more generally), how should we judge Pliny's unrestrained attempt? As Roy Gibson argues, much of what Pliny says can be explained in relation to the generic context of letter writing.⁵⁹⁷ In my discussion of Paul's boasting in 2 Cor. 10–13 I briefly discussed the issue that personal letters have a different character from, say, historiography or public speeches. This is why Quintilian can excuse some of Cicero's self-praise: "Sometimes in the familiar tones of his letters to friends ... he does speak the truth about his own eloquence" (*Inst.* 11.1.21: *In epistulis aliquando familiariter apud amicos ... verum de eloquentia sua dicit*).⁵⁹⁸ Cicero makes a similar point in one of his letters: "I don't feel that I am bragging offensively when I talk about myself in your hearing, especially in a letter which I don't wish to be read to other people" (*Att.* 1.16.8: *non enim mihi videor insolenter gloriari cum de me apud te loquor, in ea praesertim epistula quam nolo aliis legi*).⁵⁹⁹ Correspondingly, one should distinguish between public discourse — about which Plutarch and Quintilian write and in which Josephus participates — and private discourse, such as the letters written by Paul, Cicero, and Pliny.

This point is confirmed when looking at one of Pliny's other letters, addressed to Pompeius Saturninus (*Ep.* 1.8). The letter discusses the problems presented to Pliny by the *publication of a speech* on his benefactions to the city of Comum, one of the few cases in which he shows awareness of the problems inherent in self-laudation (1.8.4–7):

Quin immo fortasse hanc ipsam cunctationem nostram in alterutram sententiam emendationis ratio deducet, quae aut indignum editione dum saepius retractat inveniet, aut dignum dum id ipsum experitur efficiet. Quamquam huius cunctationis meae causae non tam in scriptis quam in ipso materiae genere consistunt: est enim paulo quasi gloriosius et elatius. Onerabit hoc modestiam nostram, etiamsi stilus ipse pressus demissusque fuerit, propterea quod cogimur cum de munificentia parentum nostrorum

⁵⁹⁷ Gibson (2003) 242–45.

⁵⁹⁸ Trans. Russell LCL.

⁵⁹⁹ Gibson (2003) 244. Trans. Shackleton Bailey LCL.

tum de nostra disputare. Anceps hic et lubricus locus est, etiam cum illi necessitas lenocinatur. Etenim si alienae quoque laudes parum aequis auribus accipi solent, quam difficile est obtinere, ne molesta videatur oratio de se aut de suis disserentis! Nam cum ipsi honestati tum aliquanto magis gloriae eius praedicationique invidemus, atque ea demum recte facta minus detorquemus et carpinus, quae in obscuritate et silentio reponuntur. Qua ex causa saepe ipse mecum, nobisne tantum, quidquid est istud, composuisse an et aliis debeamus. Ut nobis, admonet illud, quod pleraque quae sunt agenda rei necessaria, eadem peracta nec utilitatem parem nec gratiam retinent.

And yet it is the actual subject-matter rather than my treatment of it which is holding me back in this way. It makes me seem rather carried away by my own praises, and this will increase my diffidence even if I keep to a terse and unassuming style, especially as I am obliged to dwell on my own generosity as well as that of my relatives. This puts me in a very difficult and delicate position, though somewhat justified by being inevitable. Even disinterested praise is very rarely well received, and it is all the harder to avoid a bad reception when a speaker refers to himself and his family. We feel resentment against merit unadorned, and still more when pride publishes it abroad; in fact it is only when good deeds are consigned to obscurity and silence that they escape criticism and misconstruction. For this reason I have often asked myself whether I ought to have written this speech, such as it is, for an audience at all; or done so only for my own benefit, seeing that there are many features which are essential when a matter is still in the process of preparation but lose their value and power to please once it is completed (trans. Radice LCL).

These words indicate that also Pliny was hesitant to praise himself *on public occasions*. Even if the praise of his own achievements is justified because it is inevitable — or so Pliny claims —, it puts

him in a “very difficult and delicate position” that makes him vulnerable to criticism from his audience.⁶⁰⁰

4.3.3.5 *Tacitus*

A similar perspective can be extracted from the preface of Tacitus’ *Agricola*.⁶⁰¹ As observed in §4.2.4, Tacitus uses ironic and contrasting extremes to establish his argument (*Agr.* 1.2–4; cited in §4.2.4).⁶⁰² His approach is determined by his view of political and cultural decline under Domitian.⁶⁰³ Writing after Domitian’s time, he is concerned with the apparent hostility to virtue in Domitian’s age and the fact that people found suspicion even in biographical writing — unless one criticized them. The contrast is striking: in the old days even self-praise was commended, whereas under Domitian praising someone else — even a dead person — invites danger, though that situation is changing under Nerva.⁶⁰⁴

That Tacitus’ remarks should not be understood as a license for unrestrained self-praise in Nerva’s or Trajan’s time becomes evident from his addition that in the old days no motives of personal favour and ambition were involved when writing about one’s own virtue.⁶⁰⁵ Elsewhere in the treatise, he praises Agricola for his modesty and prudence (e.g. 7.3; 8.1–3; 18.5–6; 40.4; 42.3–4).⁶⁰⁶ Tacitus points out that Agricola showed no interest in obtaining *gloria* and *fama*, although he got

⁶⁰⁰ Gibson (2003) 237–38, 243.

⁶⁰¹ This passage is frequently cited as evidence for the hypothesis that self-praise was commonly accepted in the late Republican period. See e.g. Most (1989) 125; Mellor (1999) 168; Tatum (2011) 162.

⁶⁰² See Leeman (1973); Marincola (1997) 250–52. For a detailed analysis of the prologue of the *Agricola*, see Sailor (2008) 53–72. For Tacitus’ ironic language and style of writing in the *Annals*, see O’Gorman (2000).

⁶⁰³ Whitmarsh (2006) 308.

⁶⁰⁴ A point made strongly in Marincola (1997) 179. See also Buchner (1962–1979) 4.29–30; Sailor (2008) 58–59.

⁶⁰⁵ Glenn Most (1989) takes the preface of the *Agricola* as an example illustrating that “explicit and detailed autobiography *without defensiveness or complaint* was thoroughly at home at home in Latin literature” (p. 125). For a correction of this position see e.g. Gibson (2003) 239–40. See with a different emphasis Rutherford (1995) 199–200. Compare Tacitus’ remarks with Sallust’s contrasting analysis about Jugurtha and Marius (contemporaries of Rutilius and Scaurus) and the decline of Roman *virtus* in these days. Briefly touched upon in §4.3.3.1.

⁶⁰⁶ Mellor claims that Romans “turned enthusiastically to autobiographical writing” ([1999] 167) and “gave little weight to the virtue of modesty” (p. 168).

into serious trouble because he obtained it nonetheless. We again encounter the viewpoint that true *virtus* speaks for itself and does not need active promotion.⁶⁰⁷

4.4 Josephus and the Decorum of Self-Praise

This chapter has surveyed different aspects related to the production of personal narrative in antiquity to set up a comparative framework that will help to understand the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by Josephus in the autobiographical passages of the *BJ*. The following summarizes the most important conclusions and outlines some implications for our comprehension of Josephus' self-fashioning throughout his corpus.

First, the social and political circumstances of the Roman Republic resulted in a boost of self-promotion and an apparent increase in autobiographical writing. Writing political autobiography became a privilege of the emperor from the time of Augustus, but literary autobiography continued to flourish. Josephus' confident self-presentation throughout his corpus closely resembles the competitive social environment of the late Republican and Imperial periods. Josephus customarily establishes his own authority at the expense of others, such as rival historians or public figures. While his self-characterizations in the *BJ* and the *Vita* have a decidedly political tone, he places himself outside the Roman political arena and explains his current literary activities as well-deserved leisure. This emphasis can perhaps be understood in view of the particular dynamics of the Imperial period, in which all *gloria* was reserved for the emperor. In any case, no matter what Josephus said or did not say, he was no senator like Domitius Corbulo with the kind of support that could potentially be threatening to the emperor.

Second, while autobiographical practice reached a pinnacle during the late Republican and early Imperial periods, the foregoing analysis indicates that rhetorical conventions did not change accordingly. Having examined the available evidence across different periods and genres (rhetorical handbooks, oratory, moral essays, historiography, biography, epistolography), the analysis of this chapter shows that the ancients had a relatively stable attitude towards the subject of personal

⁶⁰⁷ See for further discussion e.g. Kapust, (2011) 134–37; Sailor (2008) 76–77. On echoes of Sallust's *Catiline* in Tacitus' characterization of Agricola, including a discussion on Agricola's *modestia*, see Lausberg (1980). For a brief but helpful overview see Birley (2010) esp. 49–51.

narrative and self-fashioning in spoken and written discourses. There are no marked differences between sources written in Greek and Latin. Along general lines, ancient authors explicitly reflecting on the subject show a high degree of sensitivity to the problems inherent in self-praise, particularly its potential to cause offence or envy in the audience.

The same authors refer to a coherent set of occasions when speaking about oneself is justified. Claims of apology, self-justification, and necessity are central to most discussions of the subject. Some authors mention the freedom that is created when being in an unfortunate position (esp. Cicero and Plutarch). Plutarch insists on the significance of having a higher moral goal when praising oneself. While theorists never encourage the invention of justified occasions, one can imagine that the aforementioned exemptions were frequently exploited for rhetorical purposes. This is implied by Pseudo-Hermogenes' remark that claims of apology were suspect and corroborated by Isocrates' explanation of his procedures in the *Antidosis*.

Additionally, Greeks and Romans propose a variety of rhetorical techniques to render speaking about and praising oneself more acceptable (or less offensive). One can think of staging others to make the praise, letting others (audience, state, gods) share in one's success, praising others similar to oneself, an emphasis on hardships and effort when achieving success, introducing minor shortcomings, or changing the addressee. The general idea of using such techniques is that anyone practising self-praise should avoid the appearance of it.

That this comparative material has explanatory potential in relation to Josephus' autobiographical practice can only be hinted at in the context of this chapter. Perhaps it is nonetheless useful to look briefly at some of the claims Josephus employs to fashion himself as a historian, although the questions driving this study prevent me from a systematic examination of this subject (see the Appendix for a somewhat more detailed analysis and relevant scholarship).⁶⁰⁸ For example, we observed the claims of hardship and effort by Cicero (*Brutus* 318), which are discussed by Plutarch in reference to self-praise (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 544C–D) and put

⁶⁰⁸ Different aspects of Josephus' self-fashioning as a historian have recently been discussed in Niehoff (2016); Niehoff (2018b); Van Henten (2018). For a brief outline of their contributions, see the introduction of this study.

into practice by Cicero (*Brutus* 318).⁶⁰⁹ One might understand Josephus' insistence on the fact that he composed his contemporary history *at great personal expense and effort* (*BJ* 1.16: ἀναλώμασι καὶ πόνοις μεγίστοις) along these lines. Likewise, in the *AJ* he claims that he was “encouraged to greater activity” (προθυμότερον ἐπερρώσθην) by the nobility of his task (*AJ* 1.9). In the concluding sections of the same work he emphasizes his superior learning in Judaeian traditions, but also the following: “after I had acquainted myself with the grammar, I took great pains to participate in the discourse of Greek prose and poetry” (20.263). In the *CA* one encounters a similar emphasis, although in this particular case Josephus emphasises how the Judaeans (“we”) suffer torture and even die on behalf of their laws and their (historical) writings, in explicit contrast to the Greeks who would never do such a thing (*CA* 1.43–44). Thus, it appears that Josephus systematically uses claims of effort alongside his self-laudation as a historian.

Furthermore, when introducing the *Vita*, Josephus notes that he is aware that going through his own ancestry and actions — i.e. to write an autobiography — might cause him to be *liable to envy* (ἐπίφθονος) and strike the common people as gauche (*AJ* 20.266: σκαίος). Where Josephus talks about the virtues of his work and his excellence as a historian outside of the prologues and concluding sections of his works (i.e. sections detached from his main narrative; *BJ* 1.1–30, 7.454–55; *AJ* 1.1–26; 20.262–67), he frames his remarks as *apologetic digressions* forced on him by his detractors. Thus, in the opening of his famous (and frequently discussed) response to Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 336–67), Josephus claims that he is *under compulsion* (ἀνάγκη) *to defend himself* (ἀπολογέομαι) because others have failed to speak the truth about him (338). One finds a similar emphasis in the closing of the digression: “but let these issues that had to be taken up against Justus through this digression be said by us until these” (367: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν πρὸς Ἰούστον ἀναγκαίαν λαβόντα τὴν παρέκβασιν μέχρι τούτων ἡμῖν λελέχθω). Likewise, in the *CA* Josephus concludes a section on comparative historiography (1.6–56) — in which he yet again singles out his own virtues as a historian (1.47–56): “*I have composed this digression out of necessity*, wishing to point out the frivolity of those who promise to write histories” (1.57: Περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων ἀναγκαίαν ἐποίησάμην τὴν παρέκβασιν

⁶⁰⁹ And many other historians. On claims of effort in relation to the historian's craft, see Marincola (1997) 148–58.

ἐπισημῆνασθαι βουλόμενος τῶν ἐπαγγελλομένων τὰς ἱστορίας συγγράφειν τὴν εὐχέρειαν). As my analysis in this chapter indicates, claims of apology and necessity are among the most frequently discussed *topoi* in relation to Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse. Correspondingly, it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that Josephus uses such claims when talking about his own virtues.

If Josephus used such rhetorical techniques in his self-fashioning as a historian, it is likely that he followed similar procedures when fashioning himself as a character in the *BJ*. Chapter 3 examined how Josephus confidently and systematically commends his own virtues as a statesman and a general in the autobiographical sections of this treatise. In view of this, the next chapter scrutinizes how Josephus pairs his self-commendation with an arguably as systematic concern with the decorum of such practice in the context of a purportedly impartial work of history.

Chapter 5: The Rhetorical Features of Josephus' Self-Characterization in the *BJ*

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the rhetorical tropes of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*. To this end, it uses the Graeco-Roman autobiographical conventions examined in the previous chapter as a hermeneutical tool. It argues that Josephus employs a variety of rhetorical softening techniques and strategies to moderate his self-praise in accordance with Graeco-Roman autobiographical conventions.

One of the few features of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* that scholars have explored is his use of the third person to describe his own actions. Scholars agree that he uses this device to characterize himself as an objective historian, emulating some of his Greek predecessors. This was already observed by Eduard Norden, who contends that Josephus — like Xenophon, Polybius, and Julius Caesar — used Thucydides as a model.⁶¹⁰

Norden's observations remain a point of reference on the use of the third and first person in Greek and Roman historiography and autobiography, although Josephus scholars also recognize potential influence by Polybius. For example, Tessa Rajak suggests that Josephus had to subscribe to the generic conventions of Greek war histories in the *BJ* and that this explains most of the rhetorical choices made in regard to his self-characterization.⁶¹¹ This includes a consistent use of a third-person perspective.⁶¹² The subject has been discussed most elaborately by Martina Hirschberger. She takes Josephus' use of Thucydides and Polybius as a point of departure. Hirschberger observes that Josephus maintains a strict separation between the "erzählende" Josephus (narrator) and "erzählte" Josephus (character) until the closing paragraphs of the *BJ*.⁶¹³ She proposes that Josephus effectively

⁶¹⁰ Norden (1913) 317.

⁶¹¹ Rajak (2002) 154ff.

⁶¹² Rajak (2002) 170.

⁶¹³ Hirschberger (2005) 143–44.

employs this perspective to maintain an appearance of objective storytelling when relating his own deeds and personal fate in his own history.⁶¹⁴

While most scholars agree that Thucydides and Polybius are Josephus' most important historiographical models in reference to the *BJ*,⁶¹⁵ some have suggested other sources of inspiration, such as Caesar's *commentarii*.⁶¹⁶ It is therefore necessary to clarify this relationship in reference to autobiographical discourse specifically. Even if Thucydides was the first historian to use the third person to describe his own deeds, there is a significant difference in terms of scale between Thucydides' *Histories* and the *BJ*. Thucydides restricts his active role to a single passage. There he is a minor character opposing the great Spartan general Brasidas (Thuc. 4.104.4–105.1).⁶¹⁷ Josephus makes himself one of the major characters of the *BJ*. In addition to the sheer difference in scale, Thucydides immediately mentions that author and character are the same person.⁶¹⁸ Instead, Josephus maintains a rhetorical distinction between author and character throughout the work until the closing paragraphs (*BJ* 7.448).

Polybius relates his actions more extensively than Thucydides. Furthermore, there are significant biographical parallels between Polybius and Josephus that warrant a stylistic comparison.⁶¹⁹ Yet Polybius' procedures are not as consistent as those of Josephus. As I observed in the previous chapter (§4.3.2.1), he alternates between a third- and first-person perspective,

⁶¹⁴ Hirschberger (2005) 170. See also e.g. Cohen (1979) 105; Campbell (2007) 38; Elledge (2017) 21. Mason (2016a) 85 and (2016d) 100 points to Julius Caesar as a more immediate parallel. Hirschberger explains the differences between the *BJ* and the *Vita* as the result of a radical reinterpretation of Josephus' personal fate and the Judaeo-Roman conflict that she consistently traces in Josephus' later compositions (p. 175). In doing so she appears to be following the approach employed by Cohen and Seth Schwartz, on which see Chapter 1.

⁶¹⁵ On Josephus and Thucydides, see e.g. Rajak (2002) 91–94. Mader (2000) 55–103; Price (2010); Price (2011a); Price (2011b). For a more general investigation, including Thucydidean elements, of *War's* preface see Mason (1991) 57–81. On Josephus and Polybius see e.g. Shutt (1961); Cohen (1982); Eckstein (1990); Sterling (1999); Walbank (2002); Gruen (2011).

⁶¹⁶ Kraus (2005) 188; Mason (2016a) 85; Mason (2016d) 100.

⁶¹⁷ This is a point made more generally in Marincola (1997) 199.

⁶¹⁸ On these and related aspects of Thucydides' self-characterization, see Most (1989) 123; Marincola (1997) 182–84.

⁶¹⁹ For modern biographies of Polybius see e.g. Walbank (1972) 1–31; Eckstein (1995) 1–16; McGing (2010) 130–47. On the biographical parallels between Josephus and Polybius, see Cohen (1982) 367; Eckstein (1990) 175; Walbank (2002); Gruen (2011).

explaining his surprising (ἀπρόσδεκτος) choice on formal grounds (*Hist.* 36.12).⁶²⁰ By contrast, in one passage *Josephus as a narrator* offers first-person reflections (ἔμοιγε δοκεῖν), about the motivation of the inhabitants of Jotapata when petitioning *Josephus the character* to stay in the city, while still referring to his character in the third person (*BJ* 3.202: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡξίουں πείσεσθαι δεινὸν Ἰωσήπου μένοντος). Josephus consistently maintains this distinction between narrator and character (cf. below). Additionally, Polybius usually acts as an advisor removed from the epicentre of the narrative action (see e.g. *Hist.* 31.23–30).⁶²¹ The state of preservation of Polybius' autobiographical narrative makes any firm conclusions impossible, but it appears that Josephus stages his own character much more centrally in *BJ* 2–3. Thus, a quick reference to Thucydides or Polybius hardly explains the narrative perspective of the autobiographical passages in the *BJ*.

Moreover, the use of the third person is only one of many stylistic features employed by Graeco-Roman authors to create an appearance of objectivity. As we have noted in the previous chapter, the ancients had a variety of rhetorical techniques and strategies at their disposal to moderate self-praise. John Marincola's *Authority and Tradition* contains a chapter that surveys the practice of historians describing their own deeds in their histories.⁶²² One of the merits of Marincola's analysis is that he attempts to move beyond the simple use of first or third person to understand the narrative perspective.⁶²³ Applied to the present study, this suggests that Josephus would have needed to use a complex range of rhetorical techniques and strategies to create a convincing narrative perspective, and communicate the potential messages of his self-characterization effectively.

Admittedly, separating Josephus' messages and meaning from his rhetoric is artificial. As Christina Kraus observes, "one cannot separate narrative from hard core and *retain meaning*."⁶²⁴ Rhetoric is by definition intrinsically part of the meaning of Josephus' text. Correspondingly, I view

⁶²⁰ Cf. Marincola (1997) 188–92.

⁶²¹ Polybius' self-characterization as political advisor probably functions to underscore Polybius' authority as historian and teacher of politics to upper class Greeks and Romans (cf. e.g. *Hist.* 1.1–2; 9.1–2; 12.25e), a point made in McGing (2010) 140: "He describes in considerable detail how it came about (31.23–25), no doubt parading the relationship to boost his authority as an analyst of Roman politics."

⁶²² Marincola (1997) 175–216. In the context of this chapter, Marincola provides some useful observations on Josephus' use of such techniques and strategies in the *BJ*. See esp. pp. 212–16.

⁶²³ Marincola (1997) 184.

⁶²⁴ Kraus (2010) 416.

rhetoric as inseparable from Josephus' text. Taking this as a point of departure, the following examines the literary motifs of Josephus' personal narrative and compares these with the *topoi* and techniques encountered in Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse. Studying the *BJ* in light of this comparative background might enable us to identify some of Josephus' most important rhetorical moves (at least partially) intended to enhance the credibility of his narrative in a fashion that conforms to the expectations of his local audience.

The aims in this chapter are 1) to offer a systematic survey of the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by Josephus to moderate his self-praise in the *BJ*, and 2) to situate his practice in relevant compositional, comparative, and historical contexts. This will be materialized by 1) comparing Josephus' use of the third person to the practice of other Greek and Roman historians describing their own deeds; 2) scrutinizing the characterization techniques that collectively shape Josephus' narrative persona against the backdrop of the rhetorical conventions explored in the preceding chapter; and 3) explaining Josephus' use of themes related to self-justification, apology, the divine, and tragedy as strategies that can be understood in relation to the decorum of self-praise. I argue that Josephus attempts to create a convincing narrative perspective based on the composite of rhetorical techniques and strategies applied throughout the autobiographical passages of the *BJ*. Additionally, Josephus' rhetorical and thematic choices together explain and justify the elaborate description of his conduct and achievements in Galilee during the Judaeen revolt against Rome.

5.2 Person and Perspective in the *BJ*: Comparative Observations

Josephus' use of person and perspective can function as a point of departure to tackle the question of how he attempts to create a convincing portrait of his own deeds in a history that purports to be impartial. Although the evidence is far from complete, there are reasons to think that the third person was predominantly used by Greek authors describing themselves.⁶²⁵ The previous section already offered a brief discussion of Thucydides and Polybius as representatives of the Greek historiographical tradition. In addition to this, Xenophon — discussed in more detail below — consistently uses the third person singular to describe his own actions. The historian Ctesias appears

⁶²⁵ For a sophisticated discussion, see Marincola (1997) 182–205 (on Josephus, see p. 199).

to have written extensively about his own deeds in the *Persica* (see Plutarch, *Artax.* 13), but we do not know whether he referred to himself in the first or the third person.⁶²⁶ Also the third-century AD Athenian historian Dexippus uses the third person to describe his own actions.⁶²⁷

On the other hand, Roman authors — with Julius Caesar as notable exception — appear to have predominantly used the first person to refer to themselves as characters in their work. This can perhaps be explained in reference to the Roman *commentarii* tradition. Examples are the histories written by Cato the Elder⁶²⁸ and much later Ammianus Marcellinus.⁶²⁹ The compendium history of Velleius Paterculus is also illustrative. Velleius writes a generation before Josephus and addresses his work to Marcus Vinicius.⁶³⁰ He always uses the first person to refer to himself as a character in his history, although he is more often a passive observer than an active participant. In the context of this framework, he emphasizes that he has served under M. Vinicius' father and grandfather (*Rom. Hist.* 2.96.2, 101.3, 103.1, 104.2), and prides himself especially on being a spectator of the emperor Tiberius' extraordinary achievements (e.g. *Hist. Rom.* 2.101.3, 104.3–4, 113.3, 114.2). This creates a sense of intimacy between author and audience that is typical of Roman historiography and — more occasionally — Greek historiography written under the late Republic and Principate.⁶³¹

⁶²⁶ Cf. Marincola (1997) 185–86. All the evidence of the Hellenist royal memoirs is lost. It has been proposed that Nicolaus may have written about himself in the third person, see Bellemore (1984) xvi. However, most scholars ascribe these fragments to a separate autobiographical work. For a new edition, discussion, and commentary of these fragments, see Toher (2016).

⁶²⁷ Cassius Dio always uses the first person singular or plural to refer to his own actions. He also associates himself with the senatorial elite by using the first-person plural, although it seems that Dio's practice is influenced by the more intimate tone of Roman historiography and memoir-tradition. Cf. Marincola (1997) 199–200. Note also Appian's famous escape narrative related to the Judaeian diaspora revolt from AD 115–17 (frag. 19 [excerpt from Book 24]), where he uses the first person to describe his escape. However, the literary context and purpose of the fragment is uncertain. See Stern (1974–84) 2.185–86; reproduced in Pucci-Zeev (2005) 78–79. Marincola (1997) 201 n.197 suggests that the passage may have been part of a digression.

⁶²⁸ Cato *HRR* frag. 99 = Gellius 15.9.5. The immediate compositional context is lost.

⁶²⁹ See e.g. Ammianus' escape story in Book 18 (6.11–12), or his narrative about the siege of Amida in Book 19. Unlike Velleius, Ammianus' *Res gestae* is a large-scale work in which his own actions are described elaborately. For the formal features of Ammianus' personal narrative, see Marincola (1997) 200–204.

⁶³⁰ Someone with whom Velleius must “have been on dining terms.” See Levick (2010) 7.

⁶³¹ For a discussion of the form and genre of Velleius' *Roman History* in light of Velleius' intended first audience, see Rich (2010). It needs to be stressed that Velleius does not intend to write history proper but merely offers an overview. Velleius repeatedly mentions that the description of many details is reserved for a work of history to be written in the future (2.48.5, 96.3, 99.3, 103.4, 114.4, 119.1). Velleius promises brevity in the

Examples such as these prompt scholars to explain Josephus' autobiographical practice as inspired by Greek historiographical tradition.⁶³² Yet we have observed that — beyond the use of the third person — there is not much that connects Josephus' practice with that of Thucydides or Polybius. Taking into consideration the central role Josephus ascribes to himself in his narrative, perhaps Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Caesar's *Commentarii* might have been sources of inspiration. Strikingly, both writers are rather atypical when compared to other texts from the historiographical and autobiographical discourses in which they are usually situated.⁶³³

Xenophon's *Anabasis* is usually considered to be a piece of Greek historiography. Yet it has a different focus and perspective from most works of that genre.⁶³⁴ The work lacks a prologue in which the author states his credentials or explains the purpose of the work.⁶³⁵ It gives a memoir-like impression. Its form and plot development are arguably closer to Homer's *Odyssey* than to Thucydides' *Histories*.⁶³⁶ It describes the narrative of the Ten Thousand Greeks joining Cyrus' the Younger's attempt to take the throne from his brother Artaxerxes in 401 BC, which Xenophon joined on the invitation of his Boeotian friend Proxenus (*Anab.* 3.1.4). After the death of Cyrus, it focuses on the adventures and difficulties of the Ten Thousand in their attempt to return to Greece against all odds and under pressure of powerful enemies. The character Xenophon makes various brief appearances in the first two volumes (1.8.15–17; 2.4.15, 2.5.37–41), but from Book 3 onwards — after

present work (2.55.1, 86.1, 89.6, 99.4). Unfortunately, the prologue of the work (referred to in 1.16.1; 2.38.1, 48.6) is lost and we do not know Velleius' stated purposes.

⁶³² See e.g. Cohen (1979) 105; Hirschberger (2005) 143–44.

⁶³³ Grojnowski (2014) discusses the relevance of Caesar's memoirs (pp. 144–47) and Xenophon's *Anabasis* (pp. 155–58) as comparative sources relevant for understanding the autobiographical “genre” of the *Vita*.

⁶³⁴ On issues of genre, form, and convention in ancient historiography, see Marincola (1999).

⁶³⁵ Nor does Xenophon in the *Hellenica*, his other major historical work, though the *Hellenica* was written as a direct continuation of Thucydides' *Histories*. For the relation between Thucydides' work and Xenophon's *Hellenica*, see Marincola (1999) 310.

⁶³⁶ Marincola (1999) 303–4, 316–17. Marincola classifies the *Anabasis* as “a narrative history of recent events, focalized around an individual group, which tells of the dangers, survival, and return against enormous odds and powerful foes” (p. 316). On the *Odyssey* as potential source of inspiration for the *Anabasis*, see Lossau (1990). For a more elaborate discussion on the form, function, and genre of the *Anabasis*, see Huitink and Rood (2019) 12–23.

an elaborate introduction (3.1.4–10)⁶³⁷ —he becomes the protagonist of the narrative, almost single-handedly responsible for the rescue of the Ten Thousand.⁶³⁸

Within the confines of this narrative framework, Xenophon maintains a strict separation between his voice as first-person narrator and his role as character in the narrative, described by the narrator in the third person.⁶³⁹ In the first two volumes Xenophon regularly embarks on explicit praise and blame of various characters, especially in obituaries (esp. Cyrus the Younger at 1.9; or the five Greek generals at 2.6). Yet when Xenophon becomes the protagonist in the *Anabasis*, we rarely encounter such overt narrative interventions.⁶⁴⁰ This can perhaps be interpreted as an attempt to turn a memoir-like work into unmediated and arm's length history.⁶⁴¹

In addition to this, Xenophon may have published the *Anabasis* pseudonymously. In the *Hellenica* he refers to a certain Themistogenes (3.1.2) as the one who extensively wrote about the Ten Thousand (3.1.2). This is probably a veiled reference to his own *Anabasis*.⁶⁴² Plutarch's later explanation provides evidence for this theory (*On the Glory of the Athenians* 345E):

Ξενοφῶν μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ γέγονεν ἱστορία, γράψας ἃ ἐστρατήγησε καὶ κατώρθωσε καὶ
Θεμιστογένῃ περὶ τούτων συντετάχθαι τὸν Συρακόσιον, ἵνα πιστότερος ᾖ διηγούμενος ἑαυτὸν
ὥς ἄλλον, ἐτέρῳ τὴν τῶν λόγων δόξαν χαριζόμενος.

⁶³⁷ This introduction is strategically placed at a point where the Ten Thousand face a moment of severe crisis (3.1.11: ἀπορία), immediately after the Persian Tissaphernes has murdered most the Greek generals. This is an important motif in the *Anabasis*, and this will not be the last time that Xenophon comes to the rescue in times of ἀπορία. See Flower (2012) 126ff.

⁶³⁸ For aspects of focalization and perspective of Xenophon's self-characterization in the *Anabasis* see e.g. Flower (2012) 117–19. See more elaborately Pelling (2013).

⁶³⁹ See for further discussion on the relation between narrator and characters in Xenophon's historical writings, including the *Anabasis*, Gray (2004); Grethlein (2012). The latter focuses on the subtle merging of perspectives between Xenophon's narrator and character under the surface of the obvious distinction observed by most scholars. On the changing role of the narrator after Xenophon's introduction in Book 3, see especially Bradley (2010) 535. For a discussion on the use of the first and the third person, see Reichel (2005a) 56–63.

⁶⁴⁰ Rood (2018) 180–81.

⁶⁴¹ Flower (2012) 56–57.

⁶⁴² See e.g. Most (1989) 123; Tuplin (2003) 154.

Because Xenophon became his own history, writing up the things that happened under his command and what he accomplished but claiming that it was Themistogenes the Syracusan who arranged them, so that it would appear more trustworthy if he narrated about himself as if being another, gratifying another with the glory of his writing (trans. based on Babbitt LCL).

If we accept Plutarch's interpretation, this is a significant indication that Xenophon understood the importance of creating an impersonal narrative perspective to enhance the credibility of his history.⁶⁴³

Although there are many uncertainties in relation to this issue, one of the reasons that may have motivated Xenophon to follow these procedures may have been the historical circumstances related to the publication of the *Anabasis*. Cyrus was an important ally of the Spartans during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) and therefore an old enemy of Athens, Xenophon's mother polis. The *Anabasis* (5.3.6–7; 7.7.57) already foreshadows Xenophon's exile before he could return to Athens somewhere after 399 BC. The reasons for Xenophon's exile are not entirely clear, but one source suggests that the Athenians blamed Xenophon for joining the expedition of Cyrus the Younger (Pausanias, *Description* 5.11.5–6).⁶⁴⁴

With Julius Caesar's memoirs we find ourselves in an entirely different cultural and political context. The *Bellum gallicum* (BG) and the *Bellum civile* (BC) clearly reflect the political

⁶⁴³ So e.g. Momigliano (1993) 57; Marincola (1997) 186. Discussed in some more detail in Rood (2018) 186–90. For some reservations about the traditional Themistogenes hypothesis, see Flower (2012) 54–55. On different aspects of the complex relationship between Xenophon as narrator and character in the *Anabasis*, see Rood (2014); Rood (2015). For a more general exploration of Xenophon's use of his authorial voice in his various works, including the *Anabasis*, see Pelling (2017).

⁶⁴⁴ His friendship with Agesilaus II and Spartan service (by reason of which Xenophon forced to fight against Athens during the battle of Coronea (394 BC) might have been another reason. On the historical context of the *Anabasis* see Flower (2012) 13–40 (on Xenophon's exile see pp. 13, 23–26, 36). For further discussion on Xenophon's exile see notably Rahn (1981); Tuplin (1987; 2017); Green (1994). For Momigliano (1993) 57, this context explains the "strongly subjective approach" and "clearly apologetic tone" of the *Anabasis*. For a brief overview of Xenophon's life see Huitink and Rood (2019) 8–12.

propagandistic context of the Late Republic.⁶⁴⁵ Caesar may have been absent from Rome most of the time, but he made himself a significant political presence in the city with his memoirs.⁶⁴⁶ They were presumably read aloud as reports to the senate, and — as Wiseman suggests — perhaps even to the people in Rome.⁶⁴⁷ The *BG* advertises Caesar as a general campaigning in Gaul from 58–51 BC (allegedly) on behalf and in defence of Rome. The *BC* addresses the question of responsibility for the great civil war (49–45 BC) and presents Caesar as an agent of the interests of the Republic, as opposed to the self-serving Pompeians.⁶⁴⁸

A survey of some of the *BG*'s formal features illustrates its relevance for understanding the perspective Josephus attempts to create.⁶⁴⁹ Because of their important function in Rome, Caesar must have composed his memoirs with painstaking care. There is no immediate precedent for Caesar's style in the Roman memoir tradition. A feature that has attracted much scholarly attention is Caesar's consistent use of a third-person perspective to describe his own actions.⁶⁵⁰ Most scholars agree that Caesar turned to Greek historiographical tradition for inspiration, in particular Xenophon's *Anabasis*.⁶⁵¹ In addition to this, Caesar includes various elements characteristic of historiographical texts, such as speeches and digressions.⁶⁵² He rarely judges the characters staged in the *BG* explicitly, but the character Caesar least of all. The narrative action is presented in a "write-

⁶⁴⁵ For Caesar's work in their propagandistic context, see most notably Barwick (1951); Rambaud (1953), and Collins (1952; 1972). See more recently Riggsby (2006) 207–15; and Krebs (2017).

⁶⁴⁶ On Caesar's *Commentarii* as a means of communication with Rome see briefly Krebs (2017) 31–35 (also for references to further literature).

⁶⁴⁷ Wiseman (1998).

⁶⁴⁸ Collins (1972) 956; Krebs (2017) 30.

⁶⁴⁹ See for a systematic study of the artfulness of the narrative of the *BG*, see Riggsby (2006). Helpful guides to Caesar's self-characterizations in the *BG* and the *BC* are Batstone (2017). See also Raaflaub (2017) 22–27; Fairbank (2017).

⁶⁵⁰ Marincola (1997) 193–96 discusses the impartial perspective Caesar attempts to create by using the third-person perspective. E.g. Riggsby (2006) 150–55 and Batstone and Damon (2006) 143–46 also highlight Caesar's motive to create an impartial narrative perspective by his use of the third person. See also Pelling (2013), summarized above.

⁶⁵¹ See e.g. Fornara (1983) 181–82; Marincola (1997) 197; Mellor (1999) 174; Flower (2012) 57. For some reservations see Batstone and Damon (2006) 144.

⁶⁵² For Caesar's use of historiographical features, see Fornara (1983) 181–82; Marincola (1997) 196–98; Mellor (1999) 173–76. On the atypical use of speeches in the *BG* see Riggsby (2006) 142.

as-you-go basis”⁶⁵³ that, like Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, has the effect of shaping personal memoirs into objective history.⁶⁵⁴

It is within this framework that Caesar presents a eulogizing and promotional message about himself to his audience: his victories are on behalf of Rome and Gaul (e.g. 1.7.4–5; 1.30–31; 6.1), and even his enemies recognize Caesar’s superiority (e.g. 1.30). Correspondingly, it appears that Caesar deliberately adapts the traditional style of Roman memoirs to communicate his promotional message in the impartial fashion of the Greek historiographical tradition.⁶⁵⁵

However, as Christopher Pelling underlines, there is an important difference between Xenophon’s formal self-presentation of his own work and that of Caesar. Whereas Xenophon might have “published” the *Anabasis* pseudonymously and used a penname, Caesar’s memoirs lack such pretence. Some of Xenophon’s readers (“Reader B” in Pelling’s language)⁶⁵⁶ might not have been familiar with its authorial origin and so Xenophon might have aimed at creating an appearance of his self-praise as *truly* coming from another person.⁶⁵⁷ This may have been one of the reasons why Xenophon hardly inserts explicit authorial interventions in the autobiographical sections of the *Anabasis*.⁶⁵⁸ However, achieving this was no realistic possibility for Caesar. Everyone in Rome knew the author of Caesar’s memoirs and so everyone knew that “Caesar-the-narrator” and “Caesar-the-character” were one and the same person. On this basis, Pelling argues that Caesar frequently uses authorial interventions to confirm the intentions of the character Caesar, which creates a perspective that he loosely classifies as a “semi-first person.”⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵³ To use the words of Riggsby (2006) 192.

⁶⁵⁴ This air of objectivity is frequently emphasized among scholars, see in addition to the authors mentioned above e.g. Adcock (1956) 74–76. So also Riggsby (2006) 149–52. On turning personal memoirs into historical narrative, see Marincola (1997) 197–98; Batstone and Damon (2006) 144–45. For the argument that Caesar’s use of the third person facilitates comparison with other characters see Nousek (2004) ch. 4.

⁶⁵⁵ That Caesar’s literary projects were largely successful becomes evident from their reception. Also in antiquity Caesar was recognized among the most impressive authors writing in Latin. See e.g. Cicero, *Brut.* 252–53; Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.114; Suetonius, *Div. Iul.* 55.

⁶⁵⁶ Pelling (2013) 44.

⁶⁵⁷ Pelling (2013) 67.

⁶⁵⁸ Pelling (2013) 43ff.

⁶⁵⁹ Pelling (2013) 55.

The foregoing might help us to explain some aspects of the perspective Josephus attempts to create in the *BJ*. Josephus introduces his own character inconspicuously at the end of the second volume (2.568). After this, he takes centre stage in the narrative action of civic unrest in Galilee (2.569–646). Josephus continues to be the main character in much of Book 3, especially during the siege of Jotapata and its immediate aftermath (3.141–442). After his capture, he features occasionally in the narrative, perhaps to avoid making himself a too dominant character.⁶⁶⁰ In one of the final paragraphs of the *BJ* we read that Josephus is among those falsely charged by the *Sicarius* Jonathan and Catullus, the Roman governor of Cyrenaica (7.437–53). On this occasion it is casually mentioned that this is the same Josephus as the author of the work (7.468). Other than this casual remark, after the proem has made it clear that the author is a central character in the drama (1.22), Josephus maintains a consistent distinction between his role as historian and character throughout the *BJ*.⁶⁶¹

Of course, Josephus does not *need* to say that author and character are the same person. He rather exploits his credentials and identity from the beginning, to confer authority on the work (esp. 1.3). Josephus claims to be writing to people familiar with his personal story (1.22). His personal stamp is further underlined by, for example, the special focus on Josephus' family. Thus, the character Josephus exclaims at the end of a speech that his family is trapped in Jerusalem and might become victim of either famine or war (5.419). The audience also learns about the imprisonment of his father (5.533) and mother (5.544–45). He leaves no room for uncertainty about the connection between the character Josephus and the author of the work.

A superficial comparison between the *BJ* and the formal aspects of Xenophon's and Caesar's autobiographical narratives offers suggestive parallels. Like Josephus, both Xenophon and Caesar consistently use the third person to describe their own deeds and maintain a strict separation between author and character (unlike Thucydides and Polybius). They describe their own actions much more elaborately than Thucydides and from a more consistent point of view than Polybius, indeed to some extent resembling the scale and perspective of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*.⁶⁶² As Steve Mason points out, the title of Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* resembles that of Josephus'

⁶⁶⁰ Marincola (1997) 199.

⁶⁶¹ Hirschberger (2005) 144–45.

⁶⁶² In case of Caesar not counting Hirtius' eighth "closing" part.

Bellum Judaicum (Ιουδαϊκός Πόλεμος or Περὶ τοῦ Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου; *AJ* 1.203, 18.11; 20.258; *Vita* 27, 412–13).⁶⁶³ Another major point of comparison is the repertoire of tactics used by Josephus in Galilee, which at some points seems to echo Caesar's *commentarii*.⁶⁶⁴ Mason also observes that both works were originally produced in seven volumes.⁶⁶⁵ The latter may also have been the case with the *Anabasis*, although there is discussion about whether the seven-tome structure should indeed be ascribed to Xenophon.⁶⁶⁶ Thus, it may very well be that Josephus turned to the memoir-like histories (or history-like memoirs?) of Xenophon and Caesar as a source for inspiration for the autobiographical sections in the *BJ*.

Moreover, as I shall investigate in more detail below, Josephus rarely provides explicit commentary in relation to his own character or character traits. He mitigates first-person intrusions so typical of Caesar's narrative style (only in *BJ* 3.202). This is particularly striking because Josephus is usually very explicit in his judgment of other characters (§2.4.2). In this regard, he closely resembles Xenophon's practice.

In other matters Josephus' practice is closer to Caesar than Xenophon. Xenophon might have attempted to sell his text as if written by someone else and while he was in exile, although both issues remain a matter of debate among scholars. In Josephus' case — as in the case of Caesar — it would have been evident to the audience who the author of the work was. Following up on Pelling's point, this has significant ramifications for how the autobiographical sections of Josephus' text could have been received and appreciated by its readers.

⁶⁶³ Josephus also uses Ἰουδαϊκὰ or Ἰουδαϊκὴ πραγματεία, see *AJ* 13.72, 173, 298. On the title of the *BJ*, see Rajak (2002) 201–2.

⁶⁶⁴ On Caesar as a model for Josephus' self-fashioning in the *Vita*, see Mason (2001) xlii–ii. See in relation to the *BJ* Mason's commentary ad loc in his 2008 commentary on *BJ* 2.

⁶⁶⁵ See Mason (2016a) 85 and (2016d) 100. Scholars have assumed a superficial influence on Josephus' 20-volume *AJ* on similar grounds in case of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' 20-volume *Roman Antiquities*. On the similarities between Josephus' *AJ* and Dionysius *Rom. Hist.* see e.g. Thackeray (1929) 56–58, 73; Heinemann (1939–1940); Bickermann (1952) 68, 70–71; Shutt (1961) 92–101; Attridge (1976) 43–60; Rajak (1982); Villalba I Varneda (1986) 69–88; Gabba (1991) 214–16; Sterling (1992) 284–90; Feldman (1998a) 7–8; D. R. Schwartz (2016a) 36, 51. The interest in Josephus' potential use of Dionysius has been reinvigorated in Cowan (2018).

⁶⁶⁶ Most scholars consider the seven-tome division of the *Anabasis* a later addition, though it is uncertain when this may have happened. There is no substantial evidence supporting this claim, as has been argued recently in Buzzetti (2014) 313–15.

Yet it is as important to highlight the differences concerning the historical circumstances in which Caesar and Josephus “published” their work. Caesar, as I have noted above, wrote his commentaries while absent from Rome. They were read aloud to the senate and perhaps even to the people of the city *by someone else* and could by virtue of this have served as effective political instruments. Josephus was more limited in his options: he wrote the *BJ* in Rome and presumably would *himself* have had to recite sections of the work on certain occasions. This makes the question of how to handle the rhetorical aspects of his personal narrative even more pressing.

The attempt to achieve an appearance of objectivity and impartiality in the *BJ* becomes evident when contrasting its procedures with those encountered in the *Vita*, where he consistently employs a first-person perspective. In the *Vita* Josephus presumably writes about his own actions in Galilee as the author of the *AJ*, celebrating his character as an exponent of the Judaeen constitution in that specific capacity.⁶⁶⁷ Josephus parades his virtues and aggrandizes them throughout the *Vita*. He confidently boasts about his distinguished background and education (*Vita* 1–12a), extensively goes through the achievements during his public life (12b–413), and summarizes some of the peculiarities of his domestic life (414–29).⁶⁶⁸ The kind of explicit self-praise we find in the *Vita* is rarely encountered in the *BJ*. The contrast in style can be illustrated by one minor example: Josephus explicitly comments on his virtuous character and achievements in spite of his youth in the *Vita* (80–83). In the *BJ* he leaves a similar judgment to the character Titus (3.396). The message of both passages is identical, but the forms of presenting that message are very different.

The upshot of this discussion is that Josephus clearly attempted to create an impersonal and objective perspective for his self-characterization in the *BJ*. To fully comprehend its complexity, we need to look beyond Greek historians such as Thucydides and Polybius as vantage points to explain Josephus’ use of the third person. Looking to Thucydides’ practice of self-characterization would have offered Josephus hardly any direction, given the minor role Thucydides ascribes to himself as a character in his work. Polybius alternates between a third- and first-person perspective for

⁶⁶⁷ On the relation between the *Antiquities* and the *Vita* see e.g. Barish (1978); Cohen (1979) 104–5, 170; Bilde (1988) 104–6; Mason (2016c) 59–65.

⁶⁶⁸ For an outline of the contents and structures of the *Vita*, see Mason (2001) xxi–xxvii; also (slightly differently) Bilde (1988) 104–7.

rhetorical reasons. A similar procedure would have been a realistic option for Josephus. Yet it appears that Josephus attempted to create a narrative perspective similar to those encountered in the works of Xenophon and Caesar, both of which are usually conceived as stylistically innovative. Consequently, we need not restrict ourselves to claiming that Josephus followed or had to follow the standard conventions of Greek historiography represented by Thucydides and Polybius.

5.3 The Art of Moderating Self-Praise in the *BJ*

Chapter 4 surveyed the moral problems related to self-praise and the rhetorical techniques and strategies usually employed to moderate it. These observations form the point of departure for the rest of this chapter. I argue that Josephus follows standard Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions and employs a variety of techniques to create a convincing narrative perspective and moderate his self-praise in the *BJ*.

The analysis of Chapter 2 indicated that Josephus is explicit in his praise and blame of individual characters and groups throughout the *BJ*. Illustrative are his encomium of Herod (1.401–30), his attack on the tyrant Simon (4.503–8), his obituary for the chief priests Ananus and Jesus (4.318–25), and his concluding condemnation of Judean tyrants and revolutionaries (7.253–74). Minor characters receive similar treatments. One could point to John Hyrcanus I (1.68–69), Phasaël (1.271–73), Nero (4.491–93), or Vitellius (4.651–52). Such explicit praise and blame also features in the extended autobiographical narrative (2.569–3.442). We have already discussed Josephus' introduction of John of Gischala (2.585–89). Additionally, in the beginning of *BJ* 3 Josephus praises the generals Niger of Peraea, Silas the Babylonian, and John the Essene (3.11, 26–28 [on Niger cf. 2.520; 4.359–63]) for their courage. He admires the character of the Galileans (3.41–43), the courage of the Jotapatans (3.150–57), and the organization of the Roman army (3.70–109). He finds virtue in the Roman decurion Aebutius (3.144 [cf. 4.36] and praises the extraordinary achievements of Eleazar son of Sameas and the Galilean brothers Netiras and Philip (3.229–33).

It is difficult to imagine Josephus praising (or blaming) his own character in similar terms, especially when reciting parts of the *BJ* in front of a live audience in Rome. Recall that Plutarch and Quintilian comment on the fact that an audience eagerly listens to someone bestowing praise on

others, whereas it has a general dislike of self-praise (Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 542E; *Precepts* 816D–E; Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.22–24). If Josephus took the tastes of his audience into account, he would have been careful to shape the most impressive version of himself as part of his historical narrative. Simultaneously, he would have wished to make sure that the excellence of his character was not lost. The following sections will isolate the most important literary techniques by means of which Josephus aimed to accomplish this.

5.3.1 Other Characters Praising Josephus

First, Josephus often uses other characters to praise him.⁶⁶⁹ In Chapter 4 we encountered various critics commenting on the potential effectiveness of this technique (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1418b 26–27; Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.21; (Ps.)Hermogenes, *Meth.* 25). Ancient historians also use it. Thucydides uses the voice of Brasidas to establish that he is among the most powerful Athenians on the mainland (Thuc. 4.105.1). Xenophon frequently employs rivals and enemies to bestow praise on himself. Emblematic are the comments of his Spartan rival Cheirisophus (*Anab.* 3.1.45).⁶⁷⁰ In Polybius' *Histories*, Demetrius recognizes the excellence of the author's advice (*Hist.* 31.12.1). Julius Caesar makes frequent use of this technique, for example when he is praised by the leaders of the Helvetii after he has defeated them (*BG* 1.30.1–3).

Perhaps most illustrative is Cicero's elegant self-praise in the *Brutus*.⁶⁷¹ In this history of Roman oratory, Cicero subtly establishes the claim that his own oratory has made earlier works, such as those of his predecessor Curio, obsolete and forgotten. The claim is bold and effectively comes from Cicero himself. Yet it is cleverly put in the mouth of Cicero's friend Brutus, who guesses that it must have been Cicero's oratory that has resulted in a flood of new volumes causing the work of earlier orators to disappear from sight (*Brut.* 123). Moreover, by voicing the praise in this manner, Cicero himself can pretend humility while underlining the veracity of Brutus' claims (123):

⁶⁶⁹ On this aspect of self-characterization in ancient historiography, see esp. Marincola (1997) 214–15.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. Flower (2012) 128. Cf. e.g. *Anab.* 4.3.10; 7.5.10 (compare with 5.6.15–8.26), 6.39. See for further discussion Flower (2012) 142–45.

⁶⁷¹ On Cicero's self-fashioning in his rhetorical works, see most systematically Dugan (2005). See also Misch (1973) 332–36.

Et ego, inquam, intellego, Brute, quem dicas; certe enim et boni aliquid attulimus iuventuti, magnificentius quam fuerat genus dicendi et ornatius; et nocuimus fortasse, quod veteres orationes post nostras, non a me quidem—meis enim illas antepono—sed a plerisque legi sunt desitae.

I recognize very well, Brutus, to whom you refer. I have, I am sure, contributed some benefit to the rising generation in showing them a more elevated and more elaborated style, and perhaps too some harm, in that the older orations in comparison with mine have ceased to be read by the majority; not by me, however, since I prefer them to my own (trans. Shackleton Bailey LCL).

In response, Brutus confirms the superiority of Cicero's oratory: "Place me among that majority!"

Likewise, Cicero closes the *Brutus* by interweaving the end of Hortensius' career (301–30) with an elaborate account of his own oratorical training and achievements (304–27). Again, he establishes the claim through a dialogue with his conversation partners. Cicero himself claims that Antonius and Crassus epitomize the highpoint of Roman oratory. Yet Atticus disagrees with Cicero's outline and his judgment that perfect eloquence was realized by these orators (292–97). He notes that Antonius and Crassus were evidently great orators, but immediately renders Cicero's claim that Crassus' speech in support of the Servian constitution taught him oratory to be absurd. To illustrate this, he compares it to Lysippus' claim to have used Polyclitus' Doryphorus as a model (296). It is implied that Cicero's claim that Crassus was his teacher is ridiculous. Cicero's style is far superior to that of Crassus, just as Lysippus surpassed Polyclitus. While the character Cicero makes Antonius and Crassus the capstone of Roman oratory, the narrator Cicero subtly makes his own career its endpoint.⁶⁷²

Josephus uses similar techniques to characterize himself in the *BJ*. For example, at the dawn of the siege of Jotapata, a Judaeen deserter brings Vespasian the news of Josephus' arrival in the city

⁶⁷² As is elaborately argued by Dugan (2005) 172–250. See also the analysis in Prost (2014).

and urges him to attack immediately: the capture of Josephus would cause the collective fall of Judaea (*BJ* 3.143). Vespasian himself “perceives Josephus to be the most sagacious of his enemies” (3.144: τὸν συνετώτατον εἶναι δοκοῦντα τῶν πολεμίων). In the scene of Josephus’ release (4.622–29), Vespasian elaborates on Josephus’ brave defence during the siege of Jotapata, emphasizing the latter’s energetic disposition (4.624: δραστήριος). He continues that Josephus had accurately foretold Vespasian’s rise and confirms his status as a messenger of God’s voice (4.626: διάκονον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ φωνῆς). Also Titus recognizes “Josephus’ toughness in his misfortunes” (3.396: τό τε καρτερικὸν ἐν ταῖς συμφοραῖς ... τοῦ Ἰωσήπου). In an attempt to persuade Josephus to surrender, Nicanor states that Josephus is more admired than hated among the Roman commanders “on account of his virtue” (3.347: δι’ ἀρετῇν). He adds that Vespasian prefers to save “a man true to his birth” (3.348: ἄνδρα γενναῖον).⁶⁷³ Josephus’ greatness as an enemy general is universally recognized among the Romans.⁶⁷⁴

Josephus has a similar reputation among the Judaeans. During the first revolt in Tiberias people from every city of Galilee flock together in defence of Josephus when they hear about John’s treachery (*BJ* 2.622). Shortly afterwards, also the people in Jerusalem are vexed at the Jerusalem leaders when they learn of the secret mission to depose Josephus as a governor from Galilee (2.626–31), instigated by the leader’s envy caused by rumours spread by John about Josephus’ growing influence in Galilee.⁶⁷⁵ During the siege of Jotapata the people collectively crowd around Josephus when they learn of his plan to depart together with other notables, exclaiming that “they depended upon him alone” (3.193) and that “he was their hope for the deliverance of the city, inspiring them to

⁶⁷³ In fact, it is only the sight of Josephus when entering the Roman camp that makes the Roman commanders forget how angry Josephus had made them in the past (3.395), and Vespasian is merely eager to capture Josephus (3.340). It is only because of Titus that Vespasian decides to spare Josephus’ life (3.397), and then still Vespasian intends to send him to Nero (3.398). This point is observed by Mason (2016a) 124.

⁶⁷⁴ Shaye Cohen (1979) 91 also recognizes that both Vespasian and the Judaeans laud Josephus’ greatness as general, although he explains this in relation to Josephus’ vanity. Marincola (1997) 214 recognizes this as a possible literary technique.

⁶⁷⁵ This constant struggle for influence and the φθόνος of Judaeans to Josephus is something we encounter frequently in both the *BJ* and the *Vita*. On Josephus’ struggle to maintain his *auctoritas* in the *Vita*, see Mason (2001) 36 and 40. On the concept of *auctoritas* see in more detail Galinsky (1996) 1996, 10–41. See my observations in Chapter 4 about the destructive power of φθόνος, specifically in reference to Plutarch (§4.3.2.4). Plutarch discusses its importance vis-à-vis autobiographical discourse and more generally. See also Quintilian on Cicero, *Inst.* 11.1.17–18.

exert themselves” (3.194). They continue that Josephus’ departure will sink the city, “as no one would have the daring to resist the enemy if the one who had given them confidence would be gone” (3.196).

Most conspicuously, in the cave episode he is accused of cowardice and treachery by his compatriots on account of his intention to surrender to the Romans (3.355–60). They crowd around him and urge him to take his life. Yet when establishing their point, they simultaneously confirm his reputation of excellence among the Judaeans: surrender and accepting his life as a gift of the Romans will prove that Josephus’ reputation of courage and cleverness will prove fake (3.358: *ψευδῇ μὲν ἄρα δόξαν ἀνδρείας, ψευδῇ δὲ καὶ συνέσεως εἶχες*). And if the fortune of the Romans has caused Josephus to forget himself (3.359: *ἀλλ’ εἰ καὶ σοὶ λήθην σεαυτοῦ κατέχεεν ἡ Ῥωμαίων τύχη*), his compatriots will have to step up for their ancestral customs themselves. Josephus artfully frames the accusations from his compatriots in such a fashion that they endorse his well-deserved reputation earned on account of his achievements in the preceding narrative.

Thus, Josephus usually refrains from explicitly commenting on his own character. He rather employs the voice of other characters to bestow praise upon himself. In doing so, he followed standard rhetorical practice.⁶⁷⁶

5.3.2 Josephus’ Praising His Own Virtues: Exceptions

While Josephus characterizes himself mostly in these and similar indirect terms, in some cases he uses his voice as a narrator to highlight his own character traits. This usually happens when Josephus’ actions can be misinterpreted and additional explanation is necessary to appreciate their true nature. With sagacity and inventiveness being among his most important character traits (see esp. §3.3.2.2), Josephus makes frequent use of clever rhetoric, tricks, and stratagems.

The narrator explains some of these to the audience.⁶⁷⁷ A representative example is the episode describing civic unrest in Tarichea (2.595–613). Josephus is accused of being a traitor on

⁶⁷⁶ So also Marincola (1997) 215.

⁶⁷⁷ Josephus uses similar tricks elsewhere. E.g. *BJ* 2.611: Josephus’ second trick (*ἀπάτη*) following the stratagem described above. *BJ* 3.197: Josephus decides not to mention his personal safety when discussing his intentional departure from Jotapata. See also 2.630 Josephus’ use of *στρατήγηματα* to beat the Jerusalem embassy. 2.635: Josephus uses a *δόλος* to capture the Tarichean elite and conquer the city back. 3.176: Vespasian’s indignation

account of his intention to send stolen goods back to Agrippa II, who has just been driven out of Jerusalem due to his efforts to prevent conflict between the Judaeans and the Romans (2.405–7). In defence of his actions, Josephus decides to face the mob and strikes a humble pose by putting on ragged clothing, sprinkling ashes over his head, clasping his hands behind his back, and putting his sword in his neck (2.601). The Taricheans are moved to compassion (οἶκτος) and the people from the countryside step forward and demand a share in the spoils. This is explained as follows: “they had assumed in advance from his outward appearance that he would not deny the things of which he was suspected, and that he attempted to earn a pardon by striking a pose to arouse pity” (2.603: προειλήφεσαν⁶⁷⁸ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ σχήματος οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ἀρνήσασθαι τῶν ὑπονοηθέντων ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ συγγνώμης πορισμῷ πάντα πεποιηκέναι τὰ πρὸς τὸν ἔλεον). The narrator immediately reveals the truth of the matter, showing that these considerations are misinformed: “But the humble pose was a preparation for a stratagem, and he employed an artifice to set up those angry at him in strife against each other [while he promised] to confess everything about which they were angry” (2.604: τῷ δ’ ἦν ἡ ταπείνωσις προπαρασκευὴ στρατηγήματος καὶ τεχνιτεύων τοὺς ἀγανακτοῦντας κατ’ αὐτοῦ κατ’ ἀλλήλων στασιάζσαι ἐφ’ οἷς ὠργίζοντο πάνθ’ ὁμολογήσων). The comment of the narrator clarifies that Josephus acted strategically, and that the resulting discord between the people from the city and those from the countryside was intentional.⁶⁷⁹ This would probably not have noted this point without this authorial intervention.

about Josephus’ στρατήγημα. 3.181–92 Josephus employing two στρατήγηματα to keep the Romans at bay (see esp. 3.190). 3.361: Josephus talking philosophy (φιλοσοφίᾳ) to persuade his compatriots not to commit suicide. 3.387: Josephus uses his inventiveness (ἐπίνοια) to come up with the trick of drawing lot to prevent himself being killed, resulting in his miraculous escape. 5.175: Josephus, perceives that his commonsensical rhetoric has no significant impact, decides to “depart to” (μεταβαίνω) examples from the Judaeian past.

⁶⁷⁸ Possibly προσειλήφεσαν, cf. Mason (2008) 402 n.3615.

⁶⁷⁹ Of course, Josephus’ ultimate purpose is not to cause discord but to solve it (cf. §3.3.2). On this occasion, his means are justified in view of this higher purpose.

5.3.3 Josephus' Words and Actions

Like other ancient writers, Josephus indirectly praises himself by describing his actions, which invite the audience to make judgements about his character.⁶⁸⁰

For example, when the character Josephus first appears in the narrative (2.568), his enterprising nature becomes immediately clear. In quick succession, he reorganizes the political system and wins the favour of the local inhabitants (2.569–84), fortifies the cities in the Galilee (2.572–75), raises and trains an army of novices (2.577–83), and secures supply lines for the army (2.584). It is not merely the list of actions that is important, but also the manner in which Josephus acts: he quickly *perceives* (2.569: οἶδα) the necessity of winning over the local elite and common people. He *recognizes* (2.573: γιγνώσκω) that the Romans will strike first in the Galilee. He not only supervises the construction works but labours together (2.575: συμπονέω) with his men. Josephus understands (2.577: συνοράω; 2.578: ὁράω) the principles upon which Roman military superiority is founded and arranges his own army in a similar fashion. He proves himself to be an excellent teacher (2.579), commander responsible for the training of his army (2.580: ἀσκέω), and motivator (2.583: Πολλὰ τοιαῦτα παραινῶν διέτελει). Josephus has limited time and resources, but tries to make sure the Romans find Galilee well defended. This illustrates the more general point made by the narrator that each of the Judaeans took up his mandate to the degree that his ardour and intelligence (2.569: προθυμίας ἢ συνέσεως) allowed. It is implied, but not spelled out, that Josephus' ardour and intelligence are most impressive.

Likewise, Josephus' speeches highlight his distinguished background and education in different manners.⁶⁸¹ As other scholars have illustrated, his speech about suicide in the cave of Jotapata has many parallels with Stoic thinking and also suggests Epicurean and Platonic influences (esp. from the *Phaedo*).⁶⁸² The first part of his bipartite speech in Book 5 shows both his practical

⁶⁸⁰ Cohen recognizes that Josephus' greatness becomes especially evident in the description of his own actions in Galilee, cf. Cohen (1979) 92.

⁶⁸¹ A point he establishes much more explicitly at *Vita* 1–12.

⁶⁸² The importance of Josephus' participation in Stoic intellectual discourse has most recently been pointed to in Niehoff (2016) 143–44; Niehoff (2018b) 99–100 (p. 100 on this particular speech). For Plato, compare e.g. *BJ* 3.372–73 with Plato's *Laws* 873C–D and the *Phaedo* 62B–C. Cf. Ladouceur (1980) 250–51; Price (2007) 16 (ultimately viewing Josephus' argument as a dismissal of the Stoic position, see p. 16 n.17); Mason (2009c) 227.

knowledge and political insight (5.362–74), echoing Agrippa II's speech in Book 2.⁶⁸³ Josephus displays his training in Judaeon history and traditions (5.376–419; cf. 6.99–110). He uses examples from the Judaeon past in a way that fits the Graeco-Roman discourse of learning through *exempla*. Note for example how he refashions biblical history about the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians (5.391–93):

μαχόμενοι δ' ἔπταισαν αἰεί. τοῦτο μὲν, ἥνικα βασιλεὺς Βαβυλωνίων ἐπολιόρκει ταύτην τὴν πόλιν, συμβαλὼν Σεδεκίας ὁ ἡμέτερος βασιλεὺς παρὰ τὰς Ἱερεμίου προφητείας αὐτός θ' ἔάλω καὶ τὸ ἄστυ μετὰ τοῦ ναοῦ κατασκαπτόμενον εἶδε· καίτοι πόσῳ μετριώτερος ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς ἐκεῖνος τῶν ὑμετέρων ἡγεμόνων ἦν, ὁ δ' ὑπ' αὐτῷ λαὸς ὑμῶν. βοῶντα γοῦν τὸν Ἱερεμίαν, ὡς ἀπέχθοιντο μὲν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τὰς εἰς αὐτὸν πλημμελείας, ἀλώσσοιντο δ' εἰ μὴ παραδοῖεν τὴν πόλιν, οὐθ' ὁ βασιλεὺς οὐθ' ὁ δῆμος ἀνεῖλεν. ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς, ἴν' ἐάσω τᾶνδον, οὐ γὰρ <ἄν> ἐρμηνεύσαι δυναίμην τὰς παρανομίας ὑμῶν ἀξίως, ἐμὲ τὸν παρακαλοῦντα πρὸς σωτηρίαν ὑμᾶς βλάσφημεῖτε καὶ βάλλετε, παροξυνόμενοι πρὸς τὰς ὑπομνήσεις τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων καὶ μηδὲ τοὺς λόγους φέροντες ὧν τᾶργα δρᾶτε καθ' ἡμέραν.

Thus, at the time when the king of Babylon besieged this city, our king Zedekiah, against the prophecies of Jeremiah, rallied against him and was taken captive and witnessed the complete destruction of the town and the temple. And yet how much more moderate was that king than your leaders, and the men under him than you. Jeremiah shouted that they had incurred the hatred of God because of their

Compare also the position of the Epicurean philosopher Lucretius in *De rerum natura* 3.72: “Some have killed themselves out of fear of being killed.” Also note the parallel speech by Eleazar in *BJ* 7.320–36, 341–88, in which exactly the opposite is argued (the nobility of suicide). See especially Ladouceur (1987); also Cohen (1979) 396; Van Henten (2007) 205; Weitzman (2004). Price (2007) discusses the speech of Eleazar elaborately, concluding that Josephus “felt [that] he had prepared the reader sufficiently for the correct interpretation” (22). See also the bipartite essay Mason (2011c) and (2012). On aspects of noble suicide in Josephus, see Van Henten and Avemarie (2002) 83–87. On Josephus’ own speeches and the speech of Eleazar, see Mason (2012) 151–52. Mason highlights the artificiality and occasional nature of these speeches. On the rhetoric and arrangement of the speeches in the *BJ* and the *AJ*, see esp. Runnalls (1997).

⁶⁸³ On which see e.g. Lindner (1972) 40–48; Villalba (1986) 99–100; Stern (1987) 77; Rajak (1991) 124–25; Den Hollander (2014) 144.

transgressions against him, and that they would be defeated if they would not surrender the city. Yet neither the king nor the people killed him. But you — I will cease to touch upon what happens inside of the city as I cannot accurately describe your transgressions of the law — curse and shoot at me, who points you towards your deliverance, provoked by reminders of your sins, not tolerating words about the deeds you perform on a daily basis.

As I observed in §3.3.5, Titus dispatches Josephus because of his ability to talk with the Judaeans in their own language (5.361: τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσει διαλέγεσθαι).⁶⁸⁴ This implies not merely the ability to converse in Aramaic or Hebrew, but also Josephus' knowledge of Judaeans' customs, traditions, and history. Unlike the Romans, Josephus is versed in the kind of learning and rhetorical registers to which the Judaeans' defenders of Jerusalem might be more receptive than the plain military logic the Romans offer. A non-Judaean audience might have appreciated the point that the Judaeans' Josephus would use arguments tailor-made to convince a Judaeans' audience. The speech is appropriate to the speaker and the circumstances. It enhances the plausibility of the entire episode and its functionality in the literary context.⁶⁸⁵

Moreover, Josephus highlights his knowledge about political and military experiences from the Judaeans' past — acquired through learning — in this episode. It also emphasizes his ability to use these examples as instruction for his internal audience. The *exemplum* carries its weight specifically as an argument to convince the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cease their resistance against the Romans and prevent future harm. The effectiveness of Josephus' speech confirms the suitability

⁶⁸⁴ Scholars have frequently recognized how Josephus contrasts the current situation with that of Judaeans' forebears and fashions himself as a Jeremiah-like prophet, a parallel strengthened by various biographical parallels and the language of lamentation. See esp. Lindner (1972) 26, 32–33, 73, 132–41. See also Daube (1980); Cohen (1982); Gray (1993) 72–74. In this context, it has been argued that Josephus' reasoning contains distinctively Jewish ideas, see Gray (1993) 43. Gray argues that the Jeremiah parallel should be placed in the context of Josephus' revelation at Jotapata. The sum of this revelation (that “God had decided to punish the Jews, and that fortune had passed to the Romans”, p. 41) contains *distinctively Jewish ideas* (p. 38ff.).

⁶⁸⁵ On the importance for historians to design the speech in accordance to speaker and occasion, see esp. Fornara (1983) 142–68. For a critical discussion and contextualization of Fornara's hypotheses, see Marincola (2007) 120–27.

of this argumentative register for the occasion: the people of Jerusalem are spurred to action and massively abandon the city to surrender to the Romans (5.420–23).⁶⁸⁶

Josephus employs Judaeen history in a similar fashion when he addresses John of Gischala in *BJ* 6.99–110, referring to Jechoniah as a “noble example” (καλὸν ὑπόδειγμα) for John to follow. Jechoniah’s decision has made him immortal (ἀθάνατος) in the memory (μνήμη) of the Judaeans, by voluntarily submitting instead of allowing Jerusalem to be destroyed (6.103–7).⁶⁸⁷ Thus, through his words Josephus displays both his specialized knowledge of the Judaeen past and his ability to employ that past to the benefit of the Judaeen community.

5.3.4 Josephus’ Praise of Other Characters

Chapter 4 examined Plutarch’s explanation that it might sometimes be effective to praise someone with virtues similar to one’s own. An audience listens more eagerly to a speaker praising others and will usually recognize the similarity (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 542C–E). Also Pseudo-Hermogenes recognizes the importance of praising others in addition to praising oneself (*Meth.* 25). Quintilian notes how Cicero attributes part of his successes to the virtue of the senate or even the to gods (*Inst.* 11.1.23–24). The larger point of their suggestions is that one can avoid the appearance of self-praise by praising others, sometimes even with the purpose of indirectly bestowing praise on oneself.

In a similar fashion, Josephus tends to praise men possessing aristocratic virtues similar to his own. His obituary of the high priest Ananus, which is the hinge point of the entire composition,⁶⁸⁸ is the clearest example (*BJ* 4.318–21; cf. 2.651; 7.267).⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁶ The strong emphasis on the prospective destruction of the temple will not merely have resonated among Judaeans. Josephus was attentively aware that the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was destroyed during the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian and gives this event a prominent place in his narrative (*BJ* 4.649). Josephus’ framing of the speech might very well have been designed with this knowledge as background.

⁶⁸⁷ On Josephus’ positive presentation of Jehoiachin, also in the *AJ*, see Feldman (1998b) 437–49. Sharon (2018) 4 suggests that Josephus may have drawn a comparison between *himself* and Jehoiachin, whereas the narrative context clearly suggests that the example is meant for John of Gischala.

⁶⁸⁸ Mason (2016a) 100.

⁶⁸⁹ As is pointed out in Price (2011a) 230. Ananus is a representative of Judaeen elite values; cf. Mason (2016a) 110–11. The potentially deeper meaning of this passage is articulated if we compare his portrayal in the *War*

οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοιμι δ' εἰπὼν ἀλώσεως ἄρξαι τῇ πόλει τὸν Ἀνάνου θάνατον, καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας ἀνατραπήναι τὸ τεῖχος καὶ διαφθαρήναι τὰ πράγματα Ἰουδαίοις, ἐν ᾗ τὸν ἀρχιερέα καὶ ἡγεμόνα τῆς ἰδίας σωτηρίας αὐτῶν ἐπὶ μέσης τῆς πόλεως εἶδον ἀπεσφαγμένον. ἦν γὰρ δὴ τὰ τε ἄλλα σεμνὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ δικαιοτάτος, καὶ παρὰ τὸν ὄγκον τῆς τε εὐγενείας καὶ τῆς ἀξίας καὶ ἧς εἶχε τιμῆς ἡγαπηκῶς τὸ ἰσότημον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ταπεινοτάτους, φιλελεύθερός τε ἐκτόπως καὶ δημοκρατίας ἐραστής, πρό τε τῶν ἰδίων λυσιτελῶν τὸ κοινῇ συμφέρον αἰετὶ τιθέμενος καὶ περὶ παντὸς ποιούμενος τὴν εἰρήνην· ἅμα γὰρ ᾗδαι τὰ Ῥωμαίων· προσκοπούμενος δ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον, ὅπως, εἰ μὴ διαλύσαιντο Ἰουδαῖοι, δεξιῶς διαφέροιντο. καθόλου δ' εἰπεῖν, ζῶντος Ἀνάνου πάντως ἂν <ἡ> διελύθησαν· δεινὸς γὰρ ἦν εἰπεῖν τε καὶ πείσαι τὸν δῆμον, ἥδη δὲ ἐχειροῦτο καὶ τοὺς ἐμποδίζοντας· ἢ πολεμοῦντες πλείστην ἂν τριβὴν Ῥωμαίοις παρέσχον ὑπὸ τοιοῦτῳ στρατηγῷ.

I might not be wrong in saying that the conquest of the city began with the death of Ananus. The wall was toppled and the state-affairs of the Judaeans ruined on that day, on which the high priest, the leader of their own salvation, was murdered in the centre of the city. A man revered by all and most distinguished, he — in spite of his noble birth, reputation, and the authority such as he held — nonetheless loved to treat even the most inferior as equals. Being singular in his love for freedom and an admirer of democracy, he always put public benefit before private profit and exerted himself to maintain peace above everything else. For he knew that Roman power was irresistible, yet provided for matters of war under compulsion, so that — if the Judaeans could not negotiate an agreement — it would be carried out properly. In general terms, if Ananus had lived there would no doubt have been a peace agreement. For he was a powerful speaker and would have persuaded the people, as he was already overcoming those who

with the characterizations of Ananus in the *AJ* and the *Vita*, where Josephus is rather more critical of Ananus. See *AJ* 20.197–203; *Vita* 193–96, where Ananus is involved in the Jerusalem embassy described in *BJ* 2.626–31.

opposed him. Yet if it had to be war, they would have produced a great delay for the Romans under such a general.

Josephus prides himself on his priestly background and thus belongs to the same social class as Ananus (1.3; 3.352).⁶⁹⁰ His first action in Galilee is to arrange the government in such a manner that would gain him local support (2.569–71). Josephus subdues those who opposed him (2.585–646) and proves to be a powerful speaker (3.361–82; 5.362–419; 6.99–110). His main concern is the safety of the people (2.638; 3.196). He recognizes the pointlessness of the Judaeen war against the Romans and pleads for a peaceful solution of the conflict (3.135–40; cf. 5.365). He follows the orders of his superiors in Jerusalem, although he cannot prompt a change of policy himself. He nonetheless manages to drag on the siege of Jotapata beyond all expectations (3.289, 316) and is so successful that he becomes a source of inspiration for others to revolt (3.289). He wearies out the Romans (3.329; 4.624) and delays them considerably. Considering these parallels, Josephus might very well have written his praise of Ananus with his own achievements in mind.

Josephus' praise of Herod's achievements and character, which features as the midpoint in *BJ* 1 (1.401–30), might be a similar case. Josephus singles out Herod's extraordinary building projects. He comments on Herod's renovation of the temple of Jerusalem (1.401–2), his projects throughout Judaea and Samaria by means of which he commemorated his friends, family, and himself (1.403–21), and Herod's projects beyond the borders of his kingdom (1.422–28). The impressiveness and lasting importance of Herod's projects is made explicit elsewhere in the *BJ* (esp. 5.161–83; 7.172–79, 285–303).⁶⁹¹ There is only one building programme that receives somewhat comparable attention: Josephus' fortification of all the major cities of Galilee (2.572–76). This modest project receives a much less superlative treatment than Herod's vast building projects. Yet their strategic importance becomes abundantly clear from the narrative: the walls built by Josephus make him a benefactor of

⁶⁹⁰ Josephus explicitly explains priesthood to a mark of nobility in the *Vita* in relation to his own status. *Vita* 1: 'Ἐμοὶ δὲ γένος ἐστὶν οὐκ ἄσημον ἀλλ' ἐξ ἱερέων ἄνωθεν καταβεβηκός ὥσπερ δ' ἡ παρ' ἐκάστοις ἄλλη τις ἐστὶν εὐγενείας ὑπόθεσις οὕτως παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ τῆς ἱερωσύνης μετουσία τεκμήριόν ἐστιν γένους λαμπρότητος. On the importance of priesthood for Josephus' literary identity see also e.g. S. Schwartz (1990) 58–109; Marincola (1997) 145; Mason (2001) 4 n.4; Gussmann (2008) 198–265; Price (2011) 230; Tuval (2013) 260–74.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. *BJ* 1.64, 75, 87, 118, 156, 265; 2.439; 5.238; 6.399–400, 409–13.

the people (2.607, 638). They briefly frustrate the Roman cause and bring safety to the people of Galilee (3.63, 111). Josephus exploits various opportunities to remind his audience that the fortifications are his doing (3.61, 111, 159, 464–5; 4.9, 56). Perhaps Josephus thought himself worthy of the praise he bestowed upon Herod and expected his audience to recognize this point without having to spell it out explicitly.

5.3.5 Josephus' Mistakes

Josephus undoubtedly puts his virtues as a general and statesman in the foreground and characterizes himself in a manner that suits his best interests. His self-portrayal is overwhelmingly positive.⁶⁹² Nonetheless, at some points he appears to be at least moderately critical towards his own actions. This mirrors Plutarch's advice that inserting minor mistakes might be an effective tool to moderate self-praise (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 543F–544C).

The most notable case is Josephus' failed attempt to take Sepphoris, presented as his first military move against the Romans (3.59–63). Immediately before Josephus' attack is narrated, the audience is informed that Vespasian has stationed a force of 1,000 cavalry and 6,000 infantry in the city (3.59).⁶⁹³ Josephus' action provokes the Romans and has disastrous consequences for the inhabitants of Galilee: "The entire Galilee was filled with fire and blood, and no calamity or disaster was left untried." (3.63: πυρὶ δὲ ἡ Γαλιλαία καὶ αἵματι πεπλήρωτο πᾶσα, πάθους τε οὐδενὸς ἢ συμφορᾶς ἀπείρατος ἦν). Josephus barely comes off any better in his second encounter with the Romans at Vespasian's arrival in the region. His men turn tail even before the enemy comes into sight, forcing Josephus to take refuge behind the walls of Tiberias (3.129–31). This is hardly the best possible entrance to make for Josephus as, supposedly, the impressive adversary of the prospective

⁶⁹² This includes the story of his surrender at Jotapata, about which Bilde writes that "any other version would have served Josephus' interests better." Bilde (1988) 51.

⁶⁹³ The narrator explains Josephus' failure on account of his own thoroughness when fortifying the cities in the Galilee: the walls of Sepphoris are designed to frustrate even a Roman attack (*BJ* 3.61). Although Josephus takes credit for the impressiveness of the fortifications of Sepphoris, it is left unsaid that he delegated the task in this specific to the inhabitants of the city (*BJ* 2.574). The *Vita* even allows that John fortified Gischala *against* him (189). He also claims to have fortified Sepphoris himself (188).

emperor.⁶⁹⁴ He could simply have excluded these episodes from the narrative. Yet perhaps he introduced these in an attempt to convince his audience of his impartiality and critical attitude, even towards his own actions from the past.⁶⁹⁵

Inserting this mistake serves a double function in the narrative. In addition to proving Josephus' critical attitude to his own actions as a general, it highlights his ability to learn from mistakes. Xenophon's *Anabasis* contains interesting parallels.⁶⁹⁶ Shortly after Xenophon takes up command, he is accused of making a mistake when deciding to pursue an enemy force of archers and cavalry with infantry troops only (*Anab.* 3.3.8–11). Xenophon admits that the accusations are justified, but adds that he was forced (ἡναγκάσθη) to pursue because his troops suffered badly (3.3.12). Xenophon's observation reveals an important strategic disadvantage. The Greeks have no cavalry and their Cretan archers and javelin-men do not have the range of the Persian archers. Consequently, Xenophon proposes to use slingers to defend the infantry and to use the few horses of the army to mount cavalry (3.3.16–20). The Greek generals follow Xenophon's advice, and they are

⁶⁹⁴ Another possible example is Josephus' trust in John to oversee the construction works in defence of Gischala (*BJ* 2.575), or his choice not to interfere with construction works in Sepphoris (2.574). The inhabitants of Sepphoris revolt against Josephus (2.629–30, 645–46) and are among the first to turn their back to the Judaeans cause (3.30–32, 61). John proves to be an extremely dubious partner, repeatedly undermining Josephus' authority (2.590–94, 599, 614–15, 625–27). Josephus makes it rather evident that John has an extremely cunning character. Yet the fact that Josephus only recognizes the threat of John at a very late stage in the narrative (2.620) might have struck his audience in Rome as somewhat naive. Likewise, Josephus' speeches regularly fail to have the desired effect. He fails to persuade the inhabitants of Jotapata that his planned departure is in their best interest (3.202: οὐκ ἔπειθεν δὲ τούτοις). The philosophical speech in the cave of Jotapata only infuriates his compatriots (3.384: παρωξύνοντο πρὸς αὐτόν). The first part of Josephus' bipartite speech before the walls of Jerusalem is met with mockery and curses, and missiles are thrown at him. He perceives that direct advice fails to persuade the inhabitants of Jerusalem (5.375: ὁ δ' ὡς ταῖς φανεραῖς οὐκ ἔπειθε συμβουλίαις).

⁶⁹⁵ The passages have significant functions in relation to the apologetic scheme developed by Josephus, cf. §5.4.3.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. e.g. Xenophon's failure to ask the right question at the oracle of Delphi — effectively forcing him to join Cyrus' expedition — and Socrates' rebuke immediately afterwards, *Anab.* 3.1.5–7. Note also how Xenophon learns from this experience and elsewhere in the narrative formulates his questions exactly as Socrates told him to do so, *Anab.* 6.2.15; 7.6.44. See also *Anab.* 4.2.13–18, where Xenophon decides to leave two Athenian captains behind, after which both are killed with many of their men.

much more successful in the skirmish that follows (3.4.1–6). Hence, Xenophon possesses the ability to learn from his mistakes and adapts his strategies to be more successful in the next encounter.⁶⁹⁷

That Josephus is familiar with the principle of learning from past mistakes becomes clear from his statement at the end of the Jotapata narrative: “a mistake induces caution among the moderate and guards them for causing something similar to happen” (3.440: τό γε μὴν πταίνειν, ὃ γίνεται τοῖς εὖ φρονούσιν ἀσφαλείας καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων φυλακῆς αἴτιον).⁶⁹⁸ With this in the background, look at the language Josephus employs when describing his failed attempt to take Sepphoris: “he only provoked the enemy more in going against the country” (3.62: παρώξυνεν δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν πόλεμον ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν) with his actions. That the strategic importance of Josephus’ own person spurs the Romans to action is also highlighted elsewhere in the narrative (3.143–44). Josephus perceives this and takes it into consideration when planning to leave Jotapata to prevent himself from dying in a futile exercise (3.193ff.). He attempts to convince the city’s inhabitants that his presence would only provoke the Romans to intensify the siege of the city (3.198: Ῥωμαίους παροξύνων μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τὴν πολιορκίαν).⁶⁹⁹ Josephus recognizes his earlier mistake and concludes that his departure is in the best interest of the inhabitants of Jotapata, because it might offer them a chance to survive (cf. §3.3.2.2). This epitomizes good leadership.

Thus, Josephus presents certain failures to avoid any impression of overweening pride in the *BJ*, although these failures arise naturally from the hopelessness of his task (hence he could hardly be blamed for them). This is probably intended to articulate and underscore Josephus’ critical abilities as a historian of the Judaeen-Roman conflict. Simultaneously, Josephus presents his mistakes in such a manner that it demonstrates his ability to learn from them and adapt his future strategies in view of his learning experience. This is an indispensable quality of a good leader.

⁶⁹⁷ On Xenophon’s mistakes, including discussion of this example, see Rood (2006) 53, 57–61; Flower (2012) 131–32; Pelling (2013) 65–66; Pelling (2017) 259; Rood (2018) 188–89. Note the contrast with Cawkwell (2004) 60: “he seems never to make a mistake ... The Xenophon of the *Anabasis* always was right and righteous.”

⁶⁹⁸ About this claim, see in more detail §3.3.1. The people of Jerusalem clearly failed to learn from their mistakes, but the moderate Josephus shows that he does. In case of his failed speeches he immediately comes up with countermeasures (3.203–6, 385–86, 387–91; 5.376–419).

⁶⁹⁹ On the apologetic features of Josephus’ argument, see §5.4.3.

5.3.6 Conclusions

To summarize, Josephus is usually remarkably outspoken about the importance of his subject, his virtues as a historian, and his praise and blame of other characters and groups in the *BJ*. He follows a decidedly different procedure when describing his own actions in Galilee. He is much more restrained and much less direct. Somewhat muting his own voice as a narrator, he employs the voice of various characters to bestow praise on himself. Likewise, Josephus' actions and words effectively show his virtues, in such a fashion that he does not need to evaluate them. He regularly praises characters that possess character traits similar to his own and presents some of his own failures. Presumably, one of Josephus' purposes with this indirectness is to moderate his self-praise and create a convincing and impartial narrative perspective.

5.4 Narrative Strategies: How Josephus Justifies His Self-Praise

The previous section focused on Josephus' application of rhetorical techniques in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*, collectively aimed towards moderating his self-praise and shaping a convincing narrative perspective. The following examines the narrative strategies that underpin the account in a more composite fashion, lending it its coherence and persuasive force. In consideration of the comparative analysis in Chapter 4, it identifies the following strategies that might be deployed at least partially for rhetorical purposes: 1) Josephus' defending himself against the wrongdoings of John and his compatriots in the civil war in Galilee (*BJ* 2.569–646); 2) Josephus' apology against the accusations of cowardice and treachery on account of his surrender to the Romans (*BJ* 3). In view of this apologetic current, 3) a separate discussion will be provided of the references to the divine in relation to the cave episode of Jotapata, which forms the climax of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in the *BJ* and has received extensive discussion in scholarship; 4) the tragic reversal of Josephus' circumstances after his capture (3.392 ff.).

The division between techniques and strategies is admittedly somewhat artificial. My reason for singling out self-justification, apology, and tragedy as strategies instead of techniques is that they overlap with Plutarch's identification of justified occasions of self-praise (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 539E–541F) rather than the passages where he discusses rhetorical adjustments (541F–

544C). Although I do not think that these strategies have a different purpose than the techniques singled out in the previous section, I consider them (even) more foundational to and closely intertwined with the themes and goals of Josephus' autobiographical narrative.

5.4.1 On Rhetoric, Meaning, and the Purpose of Josephus' Claims

Before moving on to analysing the rhetorical functions of the apologetic narrative currents, especially those encountered in the Jotapata episode, the issue of the deeper motives and purposes of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* must be addressed. This is necessary because of the difficulty scholars have encountered in explaining this apology. In their attempts to find an explanation, they have mainly concerned themselves with Josephus' historical motives for writing what he wrote. The main positions can be summarized as follows.

First, in the context of his investigation of how Josephus handled his sources and what this reveals about his changing interests from the *BJ* to the *Vita*, Shaye Cohen considers Josephus' explanation of why he stopped fighting the Romans one of his main motives in writing about the war.⁷⁰⁰ According to Cohen, Josephus accomplishes this apologetic aim by creating "a period of moderation and legitimacy sandwiched between periods of terror and anarchy." This period of legitimacy explains how he could eventually surrender and side with the Romans. Cohen finds Josephus' personal narrative and the surrounding story, which indicates a unified revolt, to be in conflict. He suggests that Josephus inserts the episode narrating the selection of generals (*BJ* 2.562–68) as a device to separate Josephus' legitimate mandate in Galilee from the period of anarchy and terror that precedes it.⁷⁰¹ This concern in the *BJ* fades by the time he writes the *Vita*, and the different motives of two works explain their different self-presentations.⁷⁰²

Michael Tuval has recently reinvigorated this argument. He claims that Josephus changed from being "convinced that the war he was fighting was a just war" to someone who "changed side

⁷⁰⁰ Cohen (1979) 232.

⁷⁰¹ Cohen (1979) 100.

⁷⁰² Cohen (1979) 97–100. At the conclusion at pp. 232ff. Cohen refers to the charges raised against Josephus by Judaeans and Romans. At p. 239 Cohen calls the autobiographical scheme developed in the *BJ* an "apologetic theory."

under rather questionable circumstances” and hence “inevitably faced various suspicions and accusations.” He says that one of Josephus’ central challenges in the *BJ* was to explain his conduct in such a manner that it would remove any ground for criticism.⁷⁰³

Writing in criticism of Cohen, Tessa Rajak contends that Josephus never favoured the cause of war but was obligated to do his duty. He sought to extricate himself when it was possible. She mainly speaks about aspects of apology in relation to the Jotapata episode, observing that this is a case in which Josephus in some ways detached himself from other members of his social class and their attitudes (the main subject of her book).⁷⁰⁴ Josephus presents so many particulars about the cave episode and his subsequent attitude because of this break. Like Cohen, she discusses how Josephus 1) expresses a silent prayer in which he claims not to surrender as a traitor but as God’s servant (*BJ* 3.354) and 2) openly describes accusations of treachery and cowardice from his compatriots when they heard about his survival (3.432–42). On the basis of these passages, Rajak concludes that these were charges raised against Josephus in real life.⁷⁰⁵

Along similar lines, in the context of her argument about Josephus’ self-fashioning as a prophet throughout his corpus,⁷⁰⁶ Rebecca Gray must explain the Jotapata cave episode and its aftermath.⁷⁰⁷ She contends that the purpose of the narrative is personal apology. Josephus’ reasons for providing such an extensive apology are caused by the historical events underpinning them. She claims that the *BJ* gives clear indications that Josephus’ actions gave rise to accusations of treachery and cowardice. However, she also considers the possibility that the apology reflects the later circumstances under which Josephus produced the *BJ*.⁷⁰⁸ Gray’s argument differs from that of Rajak and Cohen by her insistence that Josephus composed the Jotapata episode and its aftermath

⁷⁰³ Tuval (2013) 95–96.

⁷⁰⁴ Rajak (2002) 168.

⁷⁰⁵ Rajak (2002) 170–71. Martina Hirschberger (2005) has claimed that “[d]ie spannend konstruierte Geschichte seiner Gefangennahme beim Fall Jotapata ist eine klare Apologie gegen den Vorwurf des Verrates, der mehrmals darin thematisiert wird.”⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁶ Gray (1993) 35–79.

⁷⁰⁷ Gray (1993) 41–52.

⁷⁰⁸ Gray (1993) 41. E.g. Cohen (1979) 232ff. allows accusations from Jews *and* Romans.

exclusively for a Judaeen audience.⁷⁰⁹ Her main argument is that he fashions himself as a biblical prophet, using language that could have appealed only to Judaeans:

But presumably those who made accusations against him in connection with his surrender to the Romans and his later activities on their behalf were Jews and not Romans. If it is correct that Josephus is writing with Jewish accusers in mind, and if it is also correct that he defends himself by claiming that he had been called as God's prophet, then it follows that his portrayal of himself as a prophet in this narrative is one that he thought would appeal to Jewish readers.⁷¹⁰

Tessel Jonquière has also advocated that Josephus fashioned the Jotapata episode to appeal to a Judaeen readership and that he “might have done otherwise” had he written for a Graeco-Roman audience. She claims that Josephus’ main reason for writing the way he did was “the severity of the accusations [of treachery] that were made against him.”⁷¹¹ Josephus accomplishes his apologetic aim by making prophecy, priesthood, and prayer the central elements to justify his own actions, which are according to Jonquière typically Judaeen in form.⁷¹²

What these studies share is the observation that personal apology features prominently in Josephus’ self-characterization. This is beyond dispute. Clearly, Josephus makes apology an important thematic current of his self-characterization in the *BJ*. It may very well be that accusations from various sides provoked him to fashion some passages in apologetic fashion, although the difficulty with this is that we know about them only by what Josephus says.

As was previously argued in this study, in addition to self-defence, Josephus probably had a variety of motives to write about his own conduct. As with the *BJ* in general, I consider it impossible to isolate a single purpose that comprehensively captures Josephus’ reasons for describing his own

⁷⁰⁹ Rajak (2002) 178 emphasizes the Jewish Diaspora as Josephus’ *primary* audience.

⁷¹⁰ Gray (1993) 51–52.

⁷¹¹ Jonquière (2011) 224.

⁷¹² Jonquière (2011) 225.

role as a governor and general in Galilee so elaborately.⁷¹³ As noted in Chapter 2, Greeks and Romans in Josephus' days regarded moral education and the teaching of politics among the most important functions of writing history. While Josephus does not offer many explicit lessons to his readers in the *BJ*, he shapes the characters of his narrative in keeping with Graeco-Roman conventions of characterization.

Josephus' aims for writing about his own deeds can partially be captured along these lines. He gives himself a prominent place alongside the statesmen and generals staged in his narrative and ascribes standard political and military virtues to his own character in the process. What would have added to this is that Josephus, writing in Rome, had the experience of fighting Vespasian, the supreme commander of arguably the most powerful army in the world. His audience in Rome would presumably have a great interest in such experiences. It is only natural that Josephus attempts to elaborate on his own courage and inventiveness in the process.⁷¹⁴

Furthermore, the function of Josephus' self-characterization can be explained as arising naturally from the historiographical outlook of the *BJ*, which largely deals with military and political issues. By characterizing himself as a great statesman and general, Josephus enhances his authority as a historian and expert of military and political matters and, by virtue of this, attempts to polish his public image in Flavian Rome. These considerations render it unlikely that Josephus wrote *solely* about his conduct in Galilee to respond to accusations raised against him by fellow Judaeans.

This interpretation prompts the question how Josephus' self-aggrandizement relates to his presentation of the accusations raised against him. Shaye Cohen was left puzzled that Josephus "rarely specifies the nature of these attacks and [that] we know neither the charges raised against

⁷¹³ Seth Schwartz (1990) 13 n.41 has picked up Cohen's point that Josephus presents himself as an ideal general. While Cohen employs this theme to reinforce the argument about the apologetic nature of the autobiographical sections in the *BJ*, Schwartz uses it to suggest that Josephus' social position when writing the *BJ* was rather secure and that this may have been the reason of his vanity. Hence, Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* is "not a self-defence against accusations or a response to gossip."

⁷¹⁴ See also Mason (2019a) 50–51: "It is understandable that Josephus, now writing in Rome, milks his personal conflict with Vespasian for his own image-construction. Who else could claim such experience? His aim is not to praise the Flavian ruler, but to display his own mettle as he had to face the world's greatest commander and army."

him (except in the affair of Jonathan of Cyrene) nor why they caused him such concern.”⁷¹⁵ The analysis of Chapter 4 perhaps offers a useful window to explain some of this. Perhaps the precise nature of the attacks on and charges raised against him were not Josephus’ primary concern. Considering Graeco-Roman ideas about practice of autobiographical discourse, I suggest that the emphasis on his adversaries might partially have been motivated by rhetorical considerations, namely, to create an appearance that Josephus was forced to justify his actions and for that reason wrote about them so elaborately. He writes this in support of his message of self-promotion, such as that he was divinely chosen and determined to carry out his divine mission. Josephus’ adversaries have made strong claims about his moral failings, so now Josephus is forced to put things right and show that his actions were good and noble, or so he claims. Ancient theorists such as Cicero, Quintilian, and Plutarch point out that self-defence and self-justification vindicate self-praise. While it is impossible to disprove that authors were urged to write about themselves motivated by apologetic concerns — who knows what they really thought? — it is evident that including apologetic currents is conventional in Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse.

The foregoing analysis suggested that apologetic features were sometimes exploited and artificially introduced for rhetorical purposes. Recall how Isocrates explains his choice to frame autobiographical discourse in terms of a fictional court case (*Ant.* 8), explicating that this allows him to write with a freedom about himself otherwise impossible. Pseudo-Hermogenes notes that claims of necessity are suspect (*Meth.* 25), presumably because they were frequently invented. Note that even Augustus frames his autobiographical work in apologetic fashion.⁷¹⁶ He wrote his *Vita* in 25 BC, shortly after the Cantabrian War. At this point Augustus had consolidated his own position as a princeps and built an impressive personal record. He nevertheless chose to put a strong emphasis on justifying his actions from the past in a work addressed to his intimates Agrippa and Maecenas.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁵ Cohen (1979) 232.

⁷¹⁶ On the apologetic features of Augustus’ autobiography see e.g. Powell (2008); Jones (2013) 462.

⁷¹⁷ See Plutarch, *comp. Dem. Cic.* 3.1 (= F5 in Cornell [2013]). Augustus’ memoirs contained a dialogue between Augustus and Lucius, the brother of Mark Antony, on account of the latter’s surrender after the Siege of Perugia in 40 BC. Lucius elaborately admits his wrongs when choosing to oppose Caesar. Augustus emphasizes the lies spread by Lucius, and the harms done to him for a long time. In response, Lucius praises the latter’s mildness. See Appian, *Civil War* 5.42.176–45.191 (= F8 in Cornell [2013]). We also read that

Surely, critical and dissenting voices would have existed, but they would hardly have posed a serious threat to Augustus or forced him to write about his past.⁷¹⁸ Thus, in addition to responding to possible fears and doubts raised by elites, it is reasonable to think that Augustus included aspects of apology to fashion his work in accordance with literary conventions.

In consideration of this, it is legitimate to ask whether Josephus might have exploited the accusations raised against him to moderate his self-praise. He typically uses antagonistic language throughout his corpus. He responds to anti-Judaean fabrications in the *AJ*,⁷¹⁹ embarks on an invective against Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 336–67),⁷²⁰ and elaborately refutes slander of the Judaean culture and constitution throughout the *CA*.⁷²¹ In the *BJ* he discusses historians of the Judaean-Roman conflict (*BJ* 1.1–2, 6–8) and fiercely attacks contemporary Greek historians (1.13–16). Such claims form natural points of contrast in Josephus' argument and sharpen his case in powerful fashion. It may very well be that Josephus cast some of the personal narrative in the *BJ* in apologetic form at least partially out of rhetorical considerations.

One might question what is meant by Josephus' rhetorical use of apologetic features. Rhetoric is sometimes explained as something devoid of any substance, merely introduced for stylistic purposes. Some Josephus scholars tend to distinguish between Josephus' biases and stylistic inventions on the one hand, and the facts hidden underneath these biases and inventions on the other.⁷²² For example, James McLaren writes, in relation to Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*

Augustus, fearing for his destruction, turned to Cicero for help out of necessity, Plutarch, *Cic.* 45.6 (= F13 in Cornell [2013]). Apparently, he also wrote that Gallius was sent away into exile *because* he had treacherously attacked Caesar, and that Gallius' death during his travels was not Augustus' doing, Suetonius, *Aug.* 62.2 (=F14 in Cornell [2013]).

⁷¹⁸ On the potential opposition against Augustus during his reign, see Raaflaub and Samons II (1990).

⁷¹⁹ On which see briefly Feldman (1998) 361–62, concentrating on Josephus' characterization of Joseph in Book 2 of the *AJ*. For a more elaborate discussion of the apologetic features of the *AJ* and references to secondary literature, see Ribary (2014).

⁷²⁰ For a discussion and overview of scholarship of the famous Justus digression, see Rodgers (2006). See for further references and discussion Appendix.

⁷²¹ General discussion of Greek historiography (*CA* 1.6–68); Manetho (1.227–87); Chaeremon (1.288–303); Lysimachus (1.304–20); Apion (2.1–144); Apollonius Molon and others (2.145–50). For an overview of the contents, structures, themes, and purposes of the *CA*, see Barclay (2007) xvii–lii.

⁷²² For an elaborate discussion (and criticism) of such approaches, see especially the scholarship of Mason, e.g. Mason (2009b); Mason (2011a); Mason (2016b) 1–86.

of the “tension between the supposed comprehension of the situation and the actions undertaken,”⁷²³ proposing that “Josephus’ description of actions and events, however distorted it may be, should take precedence over any statements in the narrative that ascribe motivation and intention to his character.”⁷²⁴ McLaren’s approach assumes that it is possible on the basis of Josephus’ texts only to look through Josephus’ presentation of historical facts and recover the core of historical facts underpinning Josephus’ presentation.⁷²⁵ Chapter 2 observed that rhetoric formed the communicative basis through which Graeco-Roman historians expressed themselves. It is inherently part of the meaning of their compositions. This also impacted the way the ancients described narrative action. I have argued that Josephus sets up the ways in which he describes such action in highly rhetorical fashion. This pertains to his characterization practices in general (§2.4.3.2) and to the ways in which he characterizes himself. In case of the latter, Josephus describes his own actions in such a manner that they underline his virtues as a character but also his intentions and motivations (§3.3.2–3; §5.3.3, 4; cf. below). Josephus’ actions and his intentions and motivations are part of the same rhetorically fashioned narrative. It is therefore impossible to recover the meaning of Josephus’ text without studying its structures, themes, biases, and rhetoric.⁷²⁶ To put it bluntly, if we remove the rhetorical features from the text, we are left without a text.

By admitting that we cannot look beyond Josephus’ rhetorical presentation of history, we can perhaps start looking *at* the text itself and see how its apologetic features add to the unity and coherence of Josephus’ autobiographical narrative. With these considerations in mind, we now turn to investigating the narrative strategies of Josephus’ self-characterization in the *BJ*.

⁷²³ McLaren (2007) 60.

⁷²⁴ McLaren (2007) 61.

⁷²⁵ McLaren (2007) 66.

⁷²⁶ Kraus (2010) 416. See also Lendon (1999); Laird (2009). Especially Wiseman (1979) and Woodman (1988) have been catalysts in the study of Graeco-Roman historiography. This approach is frequently viewed as thought to come at the expense of history; see e.g. Lendon (2009). In relation to Josephus, this is not the case for e.g. Mason (2011a). Inspiring discussions about the nature of historical texts are e.g. Barthes (1967); White (1973); White (1987); Gay (1974); Gay (1975).

5.4.2 Josephus vs. John: Challenge and Response in the Galilee Stasis (*BJ* 2.569–647)

Chapter 3 argued that the lack of references to banditry, civil war, and tyranny in Josephus' Galilean career can be explained in relation to his successful attempt as governor to "bring an end to civic trouble in Galilee" (2.647: Τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ Γαλιλαίαν ἐπέπαυτο κινήματα). Cohen has called attention to what he explains a period of moderation and legitimacy (cf. above), which he sees as Josephus' artificial separation between his autobiographical narrative and the earliest phases of the war, marked by the episode that deals with the appointment of generals (2.262–68).⁷²⁷ In the remainder of *BJ* 2, Josephus develops a compositional scheme (or "pattern") of "challenge and response," which means that he fashions the narrative as a series of illegitimate challenges to his authority, to which he responds. This adds a sense of urgency and self-justification to the entire episode. At the same time, this scheme gives Josephus' actions a structured and organized appearance.

Josephus begins this scheme by setting up a contrast between himself and John. The narrative implies that Josephus' mandate in the region is legitimate. He is appointed by an assembly in Jerusalem (2.562–68) and shows himself to be a man of action with impressive organizational talents and political and military insight (2.569–84; cf. §3.3.3.2). Immediately after this, John of Gischala is introduced as a villain (2.585–89; cf. §2.4.2) and a threat to Josephus' authority in the region (2.590–94). Although John has appeared earlier (2.575), only here is the full extent of his viciousness and scheming revealed. The timing of this episode — immediately after Josephus has established his legitimacy as a general and governor in Galilee — is precise. This introduction singles John out as the source of Josephus' problems.

These problems begin with John's attempts to increase revolutionary activities (νεωτερίζω) by instructing his bandits (λησταί) to perform their raids (ἄρπαγαί) more vigorously than ever. He also spreads false rumours that Josephus intends to *betray* (προδίδωμι) the Judaeian cause (*BJ* 2.594). The Dabarittha affair in Tarichaea is presented as simultaneous to these events, and Josephus

⁷²⁷ Cohen (1979) 100: "But by dividing the early history of the war into two parts, by severing almost all links between the two parts — and we remind the reader that the device used for separation, the list of generals, may be an invention of Josephan literary technique —, by characterizing the first period as tyrannical and the second as legitimate, Josephus was able simultaneously to condemn the fomentors of war and to justify his own involvement."

implies a clear correlation between both, not least because John provokes (παροξύνω) the Taricheans against Josephus (2.599). The occasion that causes Josephus' difficulties in Tarichea is the initiative of some young men to ambush the steward of Agrippa II and Berenice and take his possessions (2.595: ἀφείλοντο). In the action that follows Josephus is called a traitor (2.599: προδότης). The problems in Tarichea are exactly the kind of challenges John aimed to kindle with his increase in revolutionary activities. In other words, the text indicates a strong correlation between the figure of John and the subsequent challenges posed to Josephus' authority.

Josephus continues to remind the audience of the illegitimacy of his mandate in the narrative that follows. One of the motifs employed is envy (φθόνος), which, as Mason notes, is a theme that Josephus develops throughout his corpus.⁷²⁸ We soon find John coming up with a new plot caused by his increased envy (*BJ* 2.614: ἐπέτεινεν τὸν φθόνον) against Josephus. The elite of Jerusalem — responsible for sending funds to John, issuing a decree against Josephus, and sending a contingent of soldiers under the leadership of four prominent citizens — also act *out of envy* (2.627: κατὰ φθόνον). This renders their motives dubious, although the leaders in Jerusalem have the formal authority to deprive Josephus of his command.

Josephus calls those responsible for robbing the steward of Agrippa II and Berenice “some young men” (2.595: νεανίσκοι τινές). Rajak points out the importance of the young-old distinction as a theme developed by Josephus in the *BJ* and highlighted some ways in which Josephus' use echoes Thucydides' work.⁷²⁹ Arthur Eckstein shows how the destructive rashness of youth is a theme developed more systematically in Polybius' *Histories*, arguing that Josephus' inspiration may have come from reading this particular source.⁷³⁰ Indeed, Josephus regularly refers to youths (νεανίσκοι; more often νέοι) acting as hotheads (θερμότεροι) and rushing to conflict on any given occasion (e.g. 1.117; 2.225, 286, 290, 303, etc.). Earlier in his narrative Josephus relates a similar episode where he classifies the robbery of imperial servants “another case of lawless (or “bandit-like”) uproar” (2.228:

⁷²⁸ Mason (2008) 406 n.3657. See also e.g. 1.208, where it is impossible for Herod to escape envy (φθόνος) on account of his success (εὐπραγία).

⁷²⁹ Rajak (2002) 83 refers to Thucydides as a possible source for inspiration for the young-old distinction. So also Mader (2000) 69–72.

⁷³⁰ Eckstein (1990) 192–94. So also Mason (2008) 186 n.1409.

ἄλλος ληστρικὸς θόρυβος).⁷³¹ Classifications such as these serve as constant reminders to the audience about the dubious motives of Josephus' adversaries and signal how Josephus' efforts to defend his position against threats is justified.

There is ample material in Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse that may have inspired Josephus' choices to frame the narrative in this fashion.⁷³² For instance, in the *BG* Caesar introduces himself in the narrative in response to the threat of the Helvetii to the Republic (*BG* 1.6–11). In Caesar's presentation of the events, the warlike nature of these people poses a serious threat to the Roman people. Conflicts from the past and these "people's hostile disposition" (*homines inimico animo*) compel Caesar to decline their request to pass through Roman lands and forces him to implement military measures against the Helvetii (1.8 ff.). This pattern repeats itself on various occasions. New developments regularly oblige Caesar to respond to a variety of threats (e.g. 1.33; 3.10; 4.5; etc.). In this manner, Caesar presents his campaign as a defensive one, in accordance with Roman conceptions of defensive and just warfare. The scheme creates an appearance that the extension of Roman borders and Caesar's great personal achievements are a by-product of his defensive campaign.⁷³³

Josephus' social context and position in Rome differed from Caesar's. Correspondingly, the *BJ* lacks the *BG*'s concerns with Roman politics. Nonetheless, the narrative strategies applied by Josephus in his personal narrative in some ways resemble those developed by Caesar in the *BG*. By inserting a scheme of challenge and response, Josephus provides his autobiographical narrative a sense of urgency and self-justification. This provides him with ample opportunities to elaborate on his many virtues in the process while acting in the best interests of the Galilean community (cf. Chapter 3).

⁷³¹ On this passage see Mason (2008) 187 n.1422.

⁷³² Riggsby (2006) 157–89 problematizes the hypothesis that Caesar required no justification for writing the *BG*.

⁷³³ To date, the most comprehensive discussion of justification themes in the *BG* is Albert (1980) (esp. 20–69). See also e.g. Brunt (1990) 309–14; Ramage (2001); Riggsby (2006) 175–88.

5.4.3 Reading Josephus' Self-Characterization as Apology: His Betrayal to the Romans

The preceding sections have shown that Josephus went to great pains to shape his personal narrative in *BJ* 2 in a rhetorically convincing manner while simultaneously praising his own virtues. It is reasonable to expect a similar care on Josephus' part pertaining to the structure and presentation of his campaign against and surrender to the Romans in *BJ* 3. The following section shows that Josephus includes apologetic elements to lend his narrative its tone of self-justification. Before returning to the *BJ*, it is useful to offer some comparative background.

For apologetic pretence in autobiographical discourse we might turn to Xenophon's *Anabasis*. As scholars have frequently observed, apology is an important thematic current in the autobiographical sections of this work.⁷³⁴ In Book 5, Xenophon's idea to establish a colony along the coast of the Black Sea causes great uproar among the Greeks. Each of the charges is spelled out in detail, and special emphasis is placed on Xenophon's alleged intention to glorify himself (*Anab.* 5.6.19–26). When Xenophon takes the floor, his obligation to respond is clear: "And so Xenophon was forced to rise, saying the following" (5.6.27: ὥστε ἡναγκάσθη ὁ Ξενοφῶν ἀναστῆναι καὶ εἰπεῖν τὰδε).⁷³⁵ That Xenophon speaks and acts in good faith becomes evident from earlier passages, where the audience is informed that Xenophon's motivation is not self-glorification but the benefit of his soldiers and Greece (*Anab.* 5.6.15–18). This highlights the necessity and legitimacy of Xenophon's personal apology.

⁷³⁴ For a more elaborate discussion on narrative strategies of apology in the *Anabasis*, see Flower (2012) 141–67. More briefly Marincola (1997) 211. The apologetic features are so prominent that scholars have considered the main purpose of the *Anabasis* to be apologetic (like the *BJ*). Schwartz (1889) was the first to recognize the apologetic purpose of the *Anabasis*. See further e.g. Dürrbach (1893); Erbse (1966); Azoulay (2004). For a discussion of this position see Reichel (2005a) 63–67.

⁷³⁵ Cf. Flower (2012) 142–43. Xenophon consults the gods via the soothsayer Silanus before sharing his idea with the army (5.6.15–16). Yet it is Silanus who betrays Xenophon's trust and spreads the false rumour that Xenophon wants them to settle down, because he selfishly wants to return to Greece as soon as possible to secure the money he had obtained during the campaign (5.6.17–18). The blame is clearly on Silanus, even before Xenophon gets in trouble.

In Book 7 we encounter another apology, concerning Xenophon's final crisis of leadership as a general of the Greek army (7.6.1–44).⁷³⁶ The Thracian king Seuthes II fails to pay the Greek mercenary army. When two Spartan generals invite the Greeks to join a campaign against Tissaphernes, Xenophon is accused of hindering the Greeks from joining the Spartan campaign long ago. It is also said that he has kept Seuthes' pay for himself (7.6.7–10). The speech that follows not only exculpates Xenophon from these charges (7.6.12–22) but also provides him with an opportunity to elaborate once more on his efforts on behalf of the Greek army in the past (7.6.23–38): the Greeks blame the one they used to call their father (πατήρ) and benefactor (7.6.38: εὐεργέτης).⁷³⁷ By framing the *Anabasis* in apologetic fashion and lending the narrative a sense of urgency, Xenophon furnishes himself with numerous opportunities to explain the legitimacy of his actions as the appointed general of the Ten Thousand and underscore his personal virtues in a sophisticated and comprehensive manner.

Similar apologetic currents are traceable in Caesar's *BC*. The work opens with a setting of conflict. It is said that the Pompeians force decrees upon the majority of the (Caesarian) senators. Especially the decision that Caesar should abandon the command of his legions, while Pompey maintains his, causes great uproar (*BC* 1.1–5). Pompey allegedly acts out of hostility (*inimicitia*) towards Caesar (1.3.4) and his selfish quest for an unrivalled reputation (1.4.4: *dignitas*). Caesar's good name is slandered in the process and it is evident that Pompey steers towards a violent solution of the conflict (1.4.5: *rem ad arma*). Pompey does not consider seniority in appointing provincial commands. Pro-Pompeian consuls fail to perform the proper rites when leaving Rome. They lack any respect for private and cultic property when recruiting troops (esp. 1.6.5–8). In his quest for

⁷³⁶ For the subtle interplay between apologetic speech and explanatory comments by the narrator in the *Anabasis*, see Grethlein (2012) esp. 30–35. See pp. 31–32 for the passage discussed above. On this scene see also Flower (2012) 159–66.

⁷³⁷ Obviously, Xenophon's presentation of the decision to join Seuthes in his speech is backed up by the narrative (*Anab.* 7.1.5, 7.2.12, 15, 23–30). Cf. Grethlein (2012) 32. Throughout the *Anabasis* the narrator highlights Xenophon's readiness to share the burdens of his soldiers and his efforts on their behalf (e.g. 3.4.47–49; 4.4.12–13; 4.5.1–22; 6.3.10–23; 6.5.7–25; 7.3.45). For discussion see Flower (2012) 135–37. The closing sections of the *Anabasis* again emphasizes Xenophon's poverty, disproving any claim of self-enrichment on Xenophon's part (7.8.1–6). Similar rhetoric underpins e.g. Paul's reasoning in 2 Cor. 10–13, which has been discussed in the previous chapter.

unrivalled reputation, Pompey ignores established Roman customs: “all rights, divine and human, were thrown into confusion” (1.6.8: *omnia divina humanaque iura permiscentur*).⁷³⁸

Immediately after sketching this tumultuous setting, Caesar enters the stage and receives news of what has happened in Rome.⁷³⁹ He delivers a speech to his soldiers, which elaborates what is at stake for him *and* for the Republic (1.7).⁷⁴⁰ In the first part (1.7.1), Caesar claims that he has been the victim of “a perpetual series of injustices (*iniura*) inflicted by his enemies.”⁷⁴¹ These enemies have influenced and twisted Pompey, causing him to harbour envy (*invidia*) and disparagement (*obtrectatio*) against Caesar’s fame (*laus*). This while Caesar has always praised and promoted Pompey’s *honor* and *dignitas*. In the second part (1.7.2–6) Caesar discusses legal issues and the rights of the tribunes. He points out the disastrous consequences caused by similar examples from the past: subversive legislation, violation of tribunal rights, people separating from temples and elevated places. In the final part of the speech (1.7.7), Caesar appeals his soldiers to defend (*defendo*) the honour (*existimatio*) and reputation (*dignitas*) of the man under whose leadership they have been extremely successful in undertaking public matters and waging war. In response, Caesar’s soldiers exclaim that they are ready to defend (*defendo*) their commander against any injustices (1.7.8: *iniura*). In the following scenes Caesar sets out to Ariminum (leaving the controversial crossing of the Rubicon unmentioned) and leads his legions towards Rome.

The correspondence of speech and narrative reality emphasizes Caesar’s correct judgment of the situation and his integrity.⁷⁴² Accordingly, Caesar’s march to Rome is presented as a defence

⁷³⁸ Translation of the *BC* follow Damon LCL.

⁷³⁹ Caesar does not mention that he crosses the Rubicon, the act that officially started the civil war. Compare with other sources on the event, e.g. Suetonius, *Jul.* 31–2; Plutarch, *Caes.* 32.7–8, where this speech is said to have been delivered *after* crossing the Rubicon. The narrative choices and framing on Caesar’s part are obvious. Cf. Grillo (2011) 245 n.10.

⁷⁴⁰ On the stylistic aspects of this speech see Batstone and Damon (2006) 56–7.

⁷⁴¹ The motif of Caesar’s indignation at how his enemies treat him features frequently: see e.g. *BC* 1.9, 1.32, 1.85, 3.90.

⁷⁴² Note how the Pompeian motives outlined by Caesar in this speech closely resemble the narrative immediately preceding it. On the artful placement of Caesarian and Pompeian competing viewpoints, see Grillo (2012) 136–40. Note how, by contrast, Pompey’s presentation of the facts misses any correlation with the narrative reality presented by the narrator. Compare e.g. Pompey’s claims about Caesar’s soldiers in 6.1–2 with the actual disposition of Caesar’s soldiers in 1.7.8–8.1. Either Pompey is presented as willingly

of both Caesar's personal honour and that of the Republic against severe injustices. In the process, Caesar presents himself as a champion and advocate of Roman public rights.⁷⁴³

Whereas Xenophon and Caesar make special use of speeches to accomplish a sense of self-justification, the apologetic pretence of Josephus' surrender to the Romans in the *BJ* arises from the composite portrait of the personal narrative as a whole.⁷⁴⁴ In relation to this, some scholars have observed a disparity between the episode narrating Josephus' surrender to the Romans (3.340ff.) and what immediately precedes it, especially in regard to Josephus' failure to offer any overt comment about why he joined the war and whether he opposed it in its earliest phases (as he does in *Vita* 28–31). As Shaye Cohen notes, the apologetic motifs in the cave story of *BJ* 3 explain why Josephus stopped fighting the Romans, but they do not offer an explanation about why he went to war in the first place. According to Cohen, this is something Josephus obscures deliberately in order to exculpate his own class (the priestly aristocracy and the rich nobility).⁷⁴⁵ James McLaren also observes this gap between the Jotapata episode and what precedes it, commenting on the narrative logic:

[i]f anything, it would make a stronger line of argument for Josephus to be able to show how he and other Jews supposedly opposed to the war actively went about doing their best to bring about a negotiated settlement. At no stage does Josephus present himself as undertaking such a course of action.⁷⁴⁶

misrepresenting the facts, thus misleading his audience and giving them a strategic disadvantage by thinking that Caesar has a weak position, or he has no clue of what is going on in Caesar's camp.

⁷⁴³ See also Batstone and Damon (2006) 57.

⁷⁴⁴ So also Marincola (1997) 211.

⁷⁴⁵ Cohen (1979) 100: "BJ explains why Josephus stopped fighting the Romans. A crucial issue it never faces is why Josephus began fighting the Romans. Why was he chosen as general? Why was he, a priestly aristocrat, a revolutionary? V attempts to provide the answer."

⁷⁴⁶ McLaren (2007) 60. McLaren also claims that Josephus "readily went into battle, taking command of the defence of Jotapata" (p. 60) and that "[i]f anything, the decision to make a stand at Jotapata indicates Josephus' lack of strategic and tactical ability. He had no military experience to draw upon." (p. 60 n.18). At no point does Josephus indicate that he went into battle against the Romans *readily*. This is frequently encountered interpretation of Josephus' autobiographical narrative. As we shall argue below, it ultimately rests upon an erroneous reading of the available text. Josephus' presentation of his own actions, choices, and

Cohen and McLaren are mainly interested in the underlying historical question about Josephus' role in the early phases of the war and how convincingly his narrative explains this. My question is rather about the nature of Josephus' literary presentation and how its different parts relate to each other rhetorically. If we attempt to appreciate Josephus' aims along the lines proposed in Chapter 3 — namely to convince his audience that he carried out his mandate to the best of his abilities; that he was among the most impressive generals of the conflict; and for that reason an authoritative expert of political and military issues — it becomes apparent why he does not highlight his resistance to Judaeans favouring an anti-Roman course in the earliest phases of the war. Raising this issue might have undermined his attempt to exploit his campaign against Vespasian to promote his public persona in Rome.

Nonetheless, *BJ*'s strong emphasis on Josephus' achievements as a virtuous general waging war against the Romans might have raised important questions among his audience in regard to some of the later stages of his career: how did Josephus survive? Why did he surrender instead of committing suicide? Should Josephus' decision to surrender be marked as cowardice and treachery? And to what extent did his previously virtuous disposition (or even his character!) change for the worse on the occasion? Some scholars have emphasized the specifically Judaeans stimulus for Josephus' apology.⁷⁴⁷ This is a sensible proposition, given that Josephus repeatedly mentions charges made against him by Judaeans (2.598–99; 3.358–59, 384, 438–42; so also Josephus himself 3.354, 381). Yet we should remind ourselves that it is Josephus himself who raises these charges, and they provide him with an opportunity to address the rationale underpinning his survival and surrender on his own terms. That Josephus employs the voice of certain characters to introduce certain thoughts in his narrative does not mean that he wrote to respond to the historical persons behind these characters, even if they might have voiced such criticism in real life. His compatriots in the cave were all dead at any rate (except one?), and those still alive in Jerusalem will have been too far removed from Josephus in geographical terms to be of significant concern. Questions of treachery

reasoning rather suggests the opposite. Moreover, the narrative also suggests that Josephus attempted to avoid making a stance against the Romans in Jotapata, but that he was stopped by the inhabitants of the city.

⁷⁴⁷ So e.g. Gray (1993) 41–52; Jonquire (2011).

and cowardice could have been asked naturally by an audience in and around Rome when reading or hearing Josephus' autobiographical narrative.

Although Josephus' integrity is frequently challenged by Judaeans, the Romans rather endorse his virtues and bravery (cf. §5.3.1). Note for example how Josephus responds to the charges raised by his compatriots (3.356–60), saying that “the Romans know the truth about that” (3.363: ἀλλ' οἷδ' αὖτις Ῥωμαῖοι τοῦτό γε). This might in fact be one of the narrative strategies he employs to convince Roman readers to share his presentation of what happened in the cave.

Let us take a closer look at the charges raised. As was noted elsewhere in this chapter, Josephus employs various characters and groups to raise these issues in the context of his narrative, thereby anticipating the questions before his historical audience could ask them. Thus, Josephus' compatriots in the cave of Jotapata claim that Josephus ought to die for the liberty of his country, as he has inspired so many other Judaeans to do (3.357). They add that Josephus' reputation of courage and inventiveness will turn out to be false (3.358) if he fails to comply, and exclaim that the fortune of the Romans has made him forget both himself and his responsibility to defend the glory of his country (3.359: ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ σοὶ λήθην σεαυτοῦ κατέχευεν ἡ Ῥωμαίων τύχη, προνοητέον ἡμῖν τοῦ πατρῖου κλέους). Josephus will die as a general of the Judaeans if he meets his death willingly, but as a *traitor* (προδότης) if he chooses to resist (3.359). Sentiments in Jerusalem take on a similar form when people hear about Josephus' survival and surrender (3.438–41): when time reveals the truth about what happened to Josephus, anger (ὀργή) replaces the affection (εὐνοία) people originally felt when hearing about the death of their general (3.438). Josephus is accused of *unmanliness* and *cowardice* (καὶ παρ' οἷς μὲν εἰς ἀνανδρίαν, παρ' οἷς δὲ εἰς προδοσίαν ἐκακίζετο). The city is filled with *vexation* (ἀγανάκτησις) and *curses* (βλασφημία) are heaped upon Josephus (3.439).

While some scholars have focused on the historical facts that formed the basis of Josephus' presentation of these charges, the following offers an interpretative attempt that concentrates on the logic that underpins Josephus' explanation of his decisions and actions in the literary context of the *BJ*. Part of the logic of his self-presentation might be recovered by looking at how Josephus explains similar choices by other Judaeans elsewhere in the narrative. As was discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, an important thematic current in the *BJ* relates to the futility of resisting

against and necessity to submit to Rome. In the first volume of the *BJ*, this is recognized by Herod the Great, who has a very pragmatic approach to foreign superpowers. He accepts Roman patronage without complaint, even if Romans do not always treat him — or Judaea — very well (e.g. 1.218–22). Other moderate statesmen also recognize the futility of fighting the Romans and try to find manners to bring about a more sensible policy. Agrippa II gives an elaborate speech that addresses the foolishness of going to war against Rome, advocating peace (2.345, 401: εἰρήνη) as the preferred alternative (2.345–401, 402–404). He temporarily “manages to hold off the threat of war” (2.406: τοῦ μὲν πολέμου τότε οὕτω τὴν ἀπειλὴν κατεῖχεν Ἀγρίππας). But the situation escalates when he attempts to persuade the mob to submit to Florus until the emperor appoints another procurator. He thus decides to send the magistrates and powerful of Jerusalem to Caesarea. The king himself withdraws to his kingdom (2.407).

The high priest Ananus chooses a somewhat different approach to achieve a similar purpose. Together with Joseph son of Gorion, he is appointed as the commander in chief of the entire war (2.563). Yet Josephus claims that he has a double agenda (2.651): “At least Ananus had the thought to gradually abandon preparations for the war and bend the insurgents and the folly of the so-called Zealots towards a more expedient course” (Ἀνάων γε μὴν φροντὶς ἦν κατὰ μικρὸν ἀφισταμένῳ τῶν εἰς τὸν πόλεμον παρασκευῶν κάμψαι πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τοὺς τε στασιαστὰς καὶ τὴν τῶν κληθέντων ζηλωτῶν ἀφροσύνην). The excellence of Ananus’ character and his efforts on behalf of the Judaeans are further praised in his obituary (4.318–25). Even if motifs such as these do not receive elaborate discussion in relation to the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*, Josephus’ explanation of his surrender should be appreciated along similar lines. As observed in §5.3.3, Josephus may have designed the obituary of Ananus at least partially to bestow praise on his own achievements and moderation when carrying out his task as general of the Galilee and oppose the Romans.

Additionally, that Josephus presents his own motives along these lines becomes evident from a variety of narrative features.⁷⁴⁸ As Mason observes, he highlights Roman power in the

⁷⁴⁸ Narrative anticipation of motifs of cowardice and treachery starts in *BJ* 2, where John is said spreads rumours that Josephus intends to betray the Judaeans (2.593: ἔπειτα διεφύμιζεν πόρρωθεν ὡς ἄρα προδιδοίη τὰ πράγματα Ῥωμαίοις Ἰώσηπος). This charge is indeed raised against Josephus immediately afterwards by an

immediate context of his autobiographical narrative. We encounter an elaborate digression that emphasizes the organizational strength of the Roman military (3.70–109). This happens shortly after the first altercations between Josephus' forces and the Romans have taken place, with disastrous results for Josephus and the whole region (3.59–63). The other skirmishes taking place before the siege of Jotapata emphasize the sheer inequality in strength between both forces. Placidus sweeps through the Galilee and catches and kills large numbers of Galileans (3.110). The only place where he encounters serious resistance is Jotapata (3.111–14). Likewise, the arrival of Vespasian and his impressive army in Galilee is described in detail (3.115–26). When the Judaeans only hear about this they turn tail, even before the enemy comes into view (3.127–29). The Romans conquer the city of Gabara quickly and massacre the entire population in the blink of an eye (3.132–34).⁷⁴⁹ Josephus makes sure that the impressiveness and effectiveness of the Roman army is imprinted in the minds of his audience before he embarks on his narrative of the siege of Jotapata.

This affirms that Josephus' task is a daunting one. Josephus is fully aware that he wages a war he cannot win.⁷⁵⁰ Immediately after taking up command of the military in Galilee, Josephus recognizes that discipline and experience are the main ingredients of the unconquerable power of the Romans (2.577: συνιδὼν ἀήττητον τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἰσχὺν) and notes the sheer contrast between the Romans and his own soldiers. Likewise, when his troops abandon him (3.129), Josephus concludes that he has insufficient (ἀρκετός) troops to take on the Romans, that the morale of the Judaeans has dropped dramatically, and that most Judaeans would gladly come to terms with the Romans if an opportunity would present itself (3.130). Josephus “already fears for the entire course of the war” (3.131: ἐδεδίει μὲν ἤδη περὶ παντός τοῦ πολέμου) and retreats to Tiberias.

angry mob stirred up by John (*BJ* 2.598–99). As observed by Mason (2008) 398 n.3562, Ananus is subject to similar lies and accused of being a traitor (προδότης) at *BJ* 4.224–32. See also e.g. 4.146, 4.254, 257, 346–52; 5.439.
⁷⁴⁹ Mason (2016a) 386–87. Mason also observes that there is barely any fighting in the Galilee (p. 362). See also *BJ* 3.132–34, where the Romans attack Gabara, kill all the inhabitants, and burn the city and all its surroundings down to the ground. On the literary strategy of magnifying the enemy in autobiographical historiography, see Marincola (1997) 215–16.

⁷⁵⁰ Also emphasized in Mason (2016a) 109–10. Using the example of *BJ* 3.136–40, Mason makes this point more generally in relation to Josephus' representation of elite values, with reference to Polybius: “Josephus portrays leading aristocrats, not least himself, as concerned chiefly with honour and the people's well-being.”

Similar considerations are accentuated when he arrives in that city (3.135–40):⁷⁵¹

‘Ο δ’ Ἰώσηπος ἦν πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν εἴλετο πόλιν αὐτὸς ἐνέπλησεν δέους καταφυγών· οἱ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς Τιβεριάδος οὐκ ἄν, εἰ μὴ πρὸς τὸ πᾶν ἀπεγνώκει τὸν πόλεμον, τραπήναι ποτε αὐτὸν ᾤοντο. καὶ κατὰ τοῦτό γε οὐ διημάρτανον αὐτοῦ τῆς γνώμης· ἑώρα μὲν γὰρ ποῖ ῥέψει τὰ Ἰουδαίων τέλους, καὶ μίαν αὐτῶν ἥδει σωτηρίαν, εἰ μεταβάλοινο. αὐτὸς δὲ καίπερ συγγνωσθήσεται παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις προσδοκῶν, ὅμως τεθνάναι μᾶλλον εἴλετο πολλάκις ἢ καταπροδοῦς τὴν πατρίδα καὶ τὴν ἐμπιστευθεῖσαν αὐτῷ στρατηγίαν ὑβρίσας εὐτυχεῖν παρ’ οἷς πολεμήσων ἐπέμφθη. γράφειν οὖν τοῖς ἐν τέλει τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων διέγνω μετ’ ἀκριβείας τὰ πράγματα, ὥς μήτ’ ἐπὶ μείζον ἐξάρας τὴν τῶν πολεμίων ἰσχὺν αὐθις εἰς δειλίαν κακίζοιτο, μήτε ἐνδεέστερον ἀπαγγείλας κἂν μετανοήσαντας σὺς θρασύνειεν, ἵνα τε ἡ σπονδὰς αἰρούμενοι ταχέως ἀντιγράψωσιν, ἢ πολεμεῖν ἐγνωκότες πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἀξιόμαχον αὐτῷ πέμψωσι δύναμιν. ὁ μὲν οὖν ταῦτ’ ἐπιστείλας πέμπει διὰ τάχους ἐπὶ Ἱεροσολύμων τοὺς τὰ γράμματα κομίζοντας.

That Josephus took himself to safety filled the city he had chosen as his refuge with fear. The people of Tiberias assumed that he would not have turned tail if he had not despaired for the entire course of the war. They did not fail to guess his opinion correctly: for he foresaw how the end of the Judaeans would come to pass and perceived that the only hope of salvation was a change of policy. Although he knew that he might receive a pardon from the Romans himself, he nonetheless preferred to die many deaths rather than utterly betray his country and disgracefully abandon the command entrusted to him to seek his fortune among those he was charged to wage war against. He thus determined to write to the authorities in Jerusalem about the affairs with accuracy, neither exaggerating the strength of the enemy — which might hereafter make him a coward — nor downplaying it — and perhaps encourage them when minds might already have changed — to the effect that if they preferred a treaty, they should answer him immediately, or, if they were determined to continue to wage war, they

⁷⁵¹ Mason (2016a) 109–10 uses the same example in reference to this point.

should send him a force that matched that of the Romans in strength. Having written these things down in a letter, he sent it with haste to Jerusalem by messengers.

Already at this point Josephus refers to motifs of betrayal (καταπροδίδωμι) and cowardice (εἰς δειλίαν κακίζοιτο), anticipating accusations that feature more centrally elsewhere in the narrative. In this and the preceding passage (3.130–31) he calls attention to the difficult position in which he finds himself, much like other Judaeans such as Agrippa II and Ananus. Josephus knows that it is pointless to fight the Romans and hence advocates a peace treaty. Yet to surrender without the consent of the authorities in Jerusalem would imply treachery and a disgraceful abandonment of the command entrusted to him, as he was commissioned to wage war against the Romans. In other words, Josephus presents himself as having no other option but to fight the Romans. His only motivation to keep up the resistance is his sense of duty and loyalty to his country.⁷⁵² Pragmatic political considerations such as these feature already at an early stage in the narrative.

It should be noted that Josephus emphasizes that loyalty to his country and his commission to wage war against the Romans kept him from obtaining a pardon from the Romans at this point (3.140). This implies that something has apparently changed when he plans to surrender himself to the Romans (3.355). As many scholars have observed, on that occasion Josephus presents his decision as motivated by a divine dream and therefore not entirely his own (3.351–54).⁷⁵³

⁷⁵² This corroborates Rajak's point that Josephus never presents himself as a wholehearted supporter of the revolt, cf. Rajak (2002) 168. Pace Cohen (1979) 97–100 and more recently Tuval (2013) 96: "He claims that as long as he was convinced that the war he was fighting was a just war, he did his best to defend his country and people, and did it in the most sincere, professional and ingenious way. However, when the Almighty Himself revealed to him that the cause for which he had been fighting was erroneous and that the divine favor had shifted to the Roman side, Josephus decided that he was willing to pay any price to stick to this new revelation. The impression he wants to convey is that it would have been much easier for him to commit suicide at Yodfat with his soldiers, rather than to surrender to the Romans and to be considered a traitor to his people. But he did it resolutely since God chose him for this mission, and he was not to be deterred by the prospect of being seen as a coward and renegade." Clearly, Josephus' considerations are more pragmatic and strategic than ideological (cf. Mason [2016] 109–10, cited above).

⁷⁵³ The aspect of divine authorization is frequently emphasized by scholars, see e.g. Attridge (1984) 192: "The 'revelatory' experiences at Jotapata which led Josephus to assume his prophetic role {*War* 3:351} probably represented a decisive turning-point in his understanding of his relationship with Rome as well." See also e.g. Cohen (1979) 98; Rajak (2002) 170; Gray (1993) 47; Hirschberger (2005) 159–60; McLaren (2007) 58; Jonquière

Immediately before handing himself over, Josephus mumbles a prayer indicating that he surrenders not as a traitor but as a messenger of God (3.354: μαρτύρομαι δὲ ὡς οὐ προδότης, ἀλλὰ σὸς ἄπειμι διάκονος). Subsequently, we read that Josephus “considers it to be a betrayal of God’s commands” (προδοσίαν ἡγούμενος εἶναι τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ προσταγμάτων) if he would be killed before delivering his message to Vespasian (3.361). Clearly, divine authorization is a central element of his strategy to explain why he could abandon his command after the siege of Jotapata but not before.

This is an important (and the most obvious) part of, but not the entire answer to, the question how Josephus’ presents the rationale underpinning his surrender. Effectively, the end of the siege itself already marks the end of Josephus’ commission to fight the Romans (cf. 2.568; 3.137). His compatriots exclaim that the fortune of the Romans has made him forget both himself and his responsibility to defend the glory of his country (3.359: ἀλλ’ εἰ καὶ σοὶ λήθην σεαυτοῦ κατέχεεν ἡ Ῥωμαίων τύχη, προνοητέον ἡμῖν τοῦ πατρίου κλέους) and advocate suicide as the most expedient course of action (3.356–60). Yet the character Josephus gives a different reading of what has happened. He disputes the charge that he has changed (3.363: ἡλλάχθαι τις ἐμέ φησιν), saying in his defence that “the Romans know the truth about that” (ἀλλ’ οἶδασιν Ῥωμαῖοι τοῦτό γε; discussed above). He also explains why the current situation requires surrender rather than suicide (3.365): “It is honourable to die for freedom, I agree as well, but only when fighting and only at the hand of those who took it from us. But *now* they neither meet us in battle nor do they attempt to kill us” (καλὸν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀποθνήσκειν· φημὶ καὶ γὰρ, μαχομένους μέντοι, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀφαιρουμένων αὐτήν. νῦν δ’ οὔτ’ εἰς μάχην ἀντιτάσσουσιν ἡμῖν οὔτ’ ἀναιροῦσιν ἡμᾶς).

It was previously argued that Josephus’ speeches do not always correspond to the reality presented in the narrative itself (§3.3.2.2; §3.3.5). Yet in this particular case Josephus’ reasoning is backed up by the narrative. The narrator clearly marks the end of the siege of Jotapata at *BJ* 3.339: “thus Jotapata was captured in this manner in the thirteenth year of Nero’s reign on the first of the month Panemus” (3.339: Ἰωτάπατα μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἐάλω τρισκαιδεκάτῃ τῆς Νέρωνος ἡγεμονίας ἔτει Πανέμου νομηνίᾳ). This strong emphasis on the end of the siege implies that there is no point in

(2011); Tuval (2013) 21–22, 96; Den Hollander (2014) 91–92. The Graeco-Roman background is less frequently commented upon, cf. §5.4.4.

continuing resistance against the Romans. In this way, the narrator subtly endorses the views as the character Josephus presents them in his speech.

To commit suicide after the siege has ended would be a sign of ignobility (3.368: ἀγενέστατος) rather than nobility (γενναῖος), as his compatriots claim.⁷⁵⁴ Josephus has fought the Romans bravely and it is largely because of his courage and sagacity that the Romans did not take the city at an earlier stage (esp. 3.171–75, 186–89, 190–92, 203–6, 222–28, 240, 258–70, 271–75; cf. Chapter 3). To best the Romans in war was never a realistic option (3.59–63, 70–109, 115–26, 30–31, 132–34, 135–40). Slowing them down is already an impressive military achievement considering that the Romans expected to make quick work of Jotapata (3.111: οἰόμενος ἐξ ἐφόδου μὲν αἰρήσειν ῥαδίως).⁷⁵⁵ Under Josephus' skilful leadership the Roman invasion is temporarily frustrated, with resistance that exceeds reasonable expectation (3.289: τῶν Ἰωταπατηνῶν παρὰ δόξαν ἀντεχόντων; cf. 3.316: “while the people of Jotapata still held out and endured the dangers beyond expectation” [Τῶν δ' ἀνὰ τὰ Ἰωτάπατα καρτερούντων καὶ παρ' ἐλπίδα τοῖς δεινοῖς ἀντεχόντων]). Josephus' accomplishments against the Romans warrant his reputation of courage and disproves any charges of cowardice and treachery.⁷⁵⁶

Another passage that must be considered in this light is the episode that narrates Josephus' plans to escape the city when realizing that it would inevitably fall (3.193–202). Josephus mentions that his motive to escape was his own preservation (3.193: τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σωτηρίαν). In the speech that follows he avoids mentioning his personal safety to those who try to stop him (3.197: τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν

⁷⁵⁴ Josephus associates the urge of his compatriots to commit suicide with a total state of despair (BJ 3.384): “But they had fenced their hearing, being in a despair on account of which they had dedicated themselves to death long ago” (οἱ δὲ πεφραγμένως ἀπογνώσει τὰς ἀκοὰς ἔχοντες ὥς ἂν πάλαι καθοσιώσαντες ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θανάτῳ). Classical writers frequently explain such despair to be the ultimate motivation for committing suicide, on which see Van Hooff (1990). Suicide is a last resort to preserve honour, usually attributed to losers in battle. It can be an honourable gesture, but classical authors note that in some cases it is an act of disgracefulness (see e.g. Pausanias, *Descr.* 7.16.6; Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 21.72.2).

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Josephus' comment about Ananus at BJ 4.321: Ananus would have been able to produce a *delay* (τρίβη) for the Romans, not beat them. See also the discussion above.

⁷⁵⁶ Compare this with Polybius' praise on the Achaean men who are falsely accused of siding with Perseus: instead of committing suicide they chose to defend themselves: “They were therefore justified in standing on their defence in submitting to trial, and employing every means to save themselves; for to put an end to one's life when one is not conscious of having done anything unworthy simply from fear of the threats of political opponents or the power of the conquerors is no less a sign of ignobility (ἀγεννία) than to cling to life at the sacrifice of honour.” (*Hist.* 30.7.8). Polybius, to be sure, clearly recognizes the necessity and honour of committing suicide in some cases, on which see Eckstein (1995) 40–54.

ἀσφαλές ὑποστελλόμενος).⁷⁵⁷ An important question is how to explain Josephus' concern with his personal safety. On a historical level, scholars have proposed that this episode illustrates Josephus' selfish concerns at the expense of the duty to his own people.⁷⁵⁸ Along similar lines, some scholars have pointed to the potted nature of Josephus' description of his own actions. They have observed alleged gaps and imbalances, especially between Josephus' commentary and his actions, that might offer indications of Josephus' motives when writing his narrative down.⁷⁵⁹

My interest is rather in the logic of Josephus' literary presentation of the account and how this logic can be explained in consideration of its narrative and comparative contexts. In relation to this, James McLaren has made an important observation about how the episode offers an implicit contrast with John's escape from Gischala (4.106–11): whereas John leaves the weak to fend for themselves, Josephus decides to stay motivated by a desire to care for those entrusted to him and his bravery.⁷⁶⁰

Previous analysis indicated that this passage might be partially drafted to anticipate accusations of cowardice and highlight Josephus' display of extraordinary bravery at the end of the episode (3.203–6; cf. §3.3.2.1). At this point, it needs to be added that Josephus' plan to escape and save himself can be plausibly explained in light of his character traits and strategic insight. As observed in Chapter 3 (§3.3.2.2), important character traits defining Josephus' actions in the narrative of the *BJ* are his sagaciousness and inventiveness (σύνεσις, ἐπίνοια). It would hardly suit such a character to sit down and wait in Jotapata until the Romans eventually capture the city.

This point is subtly underlined by various passages. Most notably, Vespasian himself expects that “the one he considered to be the most sagacious of his enemies” (τὸν συνετώτατον εἶναι δοκοῦντα

⁷⁵⁷ Or τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν, if one follows the Niese text based on the Codex Parisinus Graecus and Codex Ambrosianus (Mediolanensis). This reading would render the common perception about the text invalid. Other manuscripts support the singular ἑαυτοῦ and hence the reading presented in the following section.

⁷⁵⁸ E.g. Weber (1921) 98 comments upon the “Widerstreit zwischen eigener Rettung und Pflicht gegen das Volk” as a leitmotif of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*. This is one of the basic views underpinning much early Josephus scholarship, see e.g. Lindner (1972) 50, 57. More recently, Rappaport (2007) 71–77 gives special consideration to what he perceives as the discrepancy between Josephus' claims of courage and his cowardly actions.

⁷⁵⁹ So e.g. McLaren (2007) 58–61. For a more general bibliography related to this approach, see §3.3.3 n. 446.

⁷⁶⁰ McLaren (1998) 97.

τῶν πολεμίων) would attempt to escape without being noticed (λάθοι διαδράς). Accordingly, the Roman general takes measures to prevent this from happening and fences the entire city (3.144). Vespasian's expectations prove to be well-informed, because Josephus plans to escape on two occasions. When he perceives that the city is about to fall, he tries to escape, although eventually he decides to stay (= having no other option, cf. 3.203) out of pity for its people (3.193–206). When the city has fallen, he makes a similar attempt (ἐζήτει δρασμοῦ διάδυσιν). But now possible escape routes are too closely guarded by the Romans, preventing Josephus from escaping without being noticed (3.343: φρουρουμένων δὲ πανταχόθεν πάντων δι' αὐτὸν ὡς λαθεῖν οὐκ ἦν). It appears that Josephus acts in a manner that is consistent with the broader picture of his character: a sagacious person always tries to find ways to avoid being captured.

Furthermore, it might be asked whether Josephus' concern with his personal safety should be explained as contrasting with his duty to the Judaeans. Greeks and Romans might have recognized the logic of a general taking care of his personal safety to prevent getting killed in a pointless skirmish. Polybius' ruthless judgment about M. Claudius Marcellus acting "more like a simpleton than a general" illustrates this (*Hist.* 10.32.7–12).⁷⁶¹ Likewise, he praises Hannibal for the great care he took to provide for his own safety (10.33.2: τοιαύτην ἐποιεῖτο τὴν πρόνοιαν ... περὶ τῆς ἀσφαλείας αὐτοῦ), even when completely defeated in battle. This virtue allowed Hannibal to recover from his defeat and be of value later (cf. 10.33.1–7).⁷⁶² Josephus may very well have had similar considerations in mind when composing *BJ* 3.193–202.

If this is correct, *BJ* 3.193–202 underlines the care Josephus took to keep himself safe for strategic reasons. This is also what Josephus emphasizes in his speech: dying with the locals in Jotapata would be pointless because he could still be of service to the Judaeans if he succeeded in escaping. He mentions that, if departing, he might be able to gather an army of Galileans and launch a campaign elsewhere to divert Roman attention from Jotapata (3.199). Josephus also recognizes that the importance of his capture is one of the causes of the current concentration of Roman resources

⁷⁶¹ Translations of Polybius are based on the translation of Paton, rev. Walbank and Habicht, LCL.

⁷⁶² On these examples, see Eckstein (1995) 28–29, though the valour of risking one's life and dying in battle is given equal if not more emphasis. See for analysis and examples Eckstein (1995) 28–55. We observed in §3.3.2.1 that Josephus risks his own life on multiple occasions.

on the city (3.200: οὗς περὶ πλείστου ποιεῖσθαι λαβεῖν αὐτόν). Clearly, this is occasional rhetoric fashioned to convince the people of Jotapata to let him go. As in his other speeches, not everything Josephus says is necessarily true. We do not know whether Josephus really planned to muster an army and divert the Romans from Jotapata. This is unlikely from a historical point of view and Josephus may have attempted to deceive his compatriots.⁷⁶³

However, the truth of Josephus' other point — not historically but within the narrative world — is confirmed by a Judaeen deserter to Vespasian earlier in the narrative (3.143): the fall of Jotapata would cause the capture of all Judaea “if he [Vespasian] could get Josephus in his power (εἰ λάβοι τὸν Ἰώσηπον ὑποχείριον). Correspondingly, Josephus' departure from the city is of crucial importance for the further course of the war (cf. 3.440–41). As Josephus presents it, the Romans might really have pursued him when they learned of his escape and hence give the city of Jotapata a temporary relieve in their zeal to capture Josephus. Thus, Josephus' concern with his personal safety is perhaps motivated by his perception that the Romans are more concerned about him than about the city of Jotapata (cf. §5.3.4).

5.4.4 Josephus' Art of Survival and Divine Intervention (*BJ* 3.340–91)

As briefly touched upon in the previous section, Josephus assigns a central place to divine authorization in this scheme of self-justification, especially immediately after the conclusion of the siege of Jotapata (3.340–91). In Chapter 4 it was observed that various Greek and Roman authors advise to insert references to fortune and the divine to alleviate self-praise (Plutarch, *De laude* 542E; *Precepts* 816D–E; Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.22–24). This has incidentally been noted by Josephus scholars asking questions somewhat different from those of this investigation. My approach may offer a new angle of interpretation.⁷⁶⁴

BJ 3.340–91 contains a concentration of vocabulary related to fortune and the divine. Josephus manages to escape from the Romans and jump into a deep pit “with the co-operation of some divine power” (3.341: δαίμονίῳ τινὶ συνεργίᾳ). When he is hesitant to surrender to the Romans,

⁷⁶³ So e.g. Mason (2003c) 25, 121.

⁷⁶⁴ Cohen (1979) 109 n. 37; Gnuse (1996) 130.

“suddenly a memory of nightly dreams came into him, by means of which God had pre-signified to him the impending disasters of the Judaeans and the fate of the Roman emperors” (3.351: ἀνάμνησις αὐτὸν τῶν διὰ νυκτὸς ὀνείρων εἰσέρχεται, δι’ ὧν ὁ θεὸς τὰς τε μελλούσας αὐτῷ συμφορὰς προεσήμανεν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἐσόμενα). Josephus delivers a philosophical speech to his compatriots when they attempt to prevent his surrender, because “he believes it to be a betrayal of God’s edicts if he would die before the delivering the message” (3.361: προδοσίαν ἡγούμενος εἶναι τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ προσταγμάτων, εἰ προαποθάνοι τῆς διαγγελίας). When his compatriots turn out to be deaf to his arguments and attack him, he escapes by recourse to his resourcefulness (ἐπίνοια) and by “trusting in God’s protection” (3.387: πιστεύων τῷ κηδεμόνι θεῷ). Josephus survives his own trick of drawing lots, enabling him to escape the cave alive: “should one say by fortune or by divine providence” (3.391: εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας)?⁷⁶⁵ In what follows, his sudden change from virtuous fighter into abased captive prompts Titus to reflect on the power of fortune (3.396: δύναται τύχη) in times of war.⁷⁶⁶ In short, God, the divine, and fortune are prominent throughout this crucial episode of Josephus’ career.

As we have seen, these motifs help to rationalize and explain Josephus’ choices. It is likely that Josephus inserted them because of their rhetorical force. He uses similar amplifications in the *Vita*, where he emphasizes how he was saved a number of times not by his own virtues but by God’s protection.⁷⁶⁷ Looking beyond Josephus’ corpus, illustrative examples occur in Caesar’s *BG*. When

⁷⁶⁵ Compare with Caesar, *BG* 1.12.6, investigated in more detail above.

⁷⁶⁶ Compare this passage with Caesar, *BG* 6.30.

⁷⁶⁷ Josephus remarks that he was one of the eighty men to survive a shipwreck on his way to Rome. He points to his excellent swimming skills, getting him through the night. But the Cyrenian ship that appears at dawn should be ascribed to “God’s providence” (*Vita* 15, θεοῦ πρόνοιαν). In 80–83 Josephus elaborates on his excellent character, despite his young age. He highlights how difficult it is to be in a position of power (ἐξουσία) without escaping envy (φθόνος). Yet Josephus’ thinks (οἶμαι) he is protected by God on account of his virtues: “for those who accomplish what is right do not escape his notice” (83: οὐ γὰρ λελήθασιν αὐτὸν οἱ τὰ δέοντα πράττοντες). *Vita* 138: “but I, having entrusted my affairs to God, rushed out to arrive before the multitude” (ἐγὼ δὲ τῷ θεῷ τὰ κατ’ ἐμαυτὸν ἐπιτρέψας εἰς τὸ πλῆθος ὡρμήθην προελθεῖν). *Vita* 301: “and *perhaps* the providence was my deliverance, for had it not been for this I might have been destroyed completely by John,” (τάχα καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ προνοοῦντος τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας, μὴ γὰρ ἂν γενομένου τούτου πάντως ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωάννου διεφθάρην). *Vita* 425: “After these things those who maligned my good fortune constructed many accusations against me, but I escaped them all because of God’s providence” (πολλάκις δὲ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τῶν βασκαίνοντων μοι τῆς εὐτυχίας κατηγορίας ἐπ’ ἐμὲ συνθέντων θεοῦ προνοία πάσας διέφυγον). The theme of God protecting the virtuous is

the Helvetii trespass Roman land, the audience is reminded of the past defeat of the consul Lucius Cassius by the Helvetii (1.7.3). Accordingly, Caesar considers the Helvetii a great threat to the Roman people and responds immediately. When he defeats the Helvetian canton of the Tigurini a couple of sections later, this prompts him to reflect on the possibility of divine intervention (1.12.5–6):⁷⁶⁸

Is pagus appellabatur Tigurinus: nam omnis civitas Helvetia in quattuor pagos divisa est. Hic pagus unus, cum domo exisset, patrum nostrorum memoria, L. Cassium consulem interfecerat et eius exercitum sub iugum miserat. Ita sive casu sive consilio deorum immortalium, quae pars civitatis Helvetiae insignem calamitatem populo Romano intulerat, ea princeps poenas persolvit. Qua in re Caesar non solum publicas sed etiam privatas iniurias ultus est, quod eius soceri L. Pisonis avum, L. Pisonem legatum, Tigurini eodem proelio quo Cassium interfecerant.

The name of the canton was the Tigurine; for the whole state of Helvetia is divided into four cantons. In the recollection of the last generation this canton had marched out alone from its homeland, and had slain the consul Lucius Cassius and sent his army under the yoke. And so, whether by accident or by the purpose of the immortal gods, the section of the Helvetian state which had brought so signal a calamity upon the Roman people was the first to pay the penalty in full (trans. Edwards LCL).

Note the almost identical phrasing of Josephus' εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρηὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας (*BJ* 3.391) and Caesar's *sive casu sive consilio deorum immortalium* (*BG* 1.12.6).⁷⁶⁹ In both cases the narrator

thoroughly integrated in the *AJ*, to which the *Vita* was originally appended, as Josephus outlines in the prologue (e.g. *AJ* 1.14, 20). See e.g. Attridge (1984) 217; Bilde (1988) 80–101; Feldman (1998a) 192–97.

⁷⁶⁸ This example is also discussed in Marincola (1997) 208–9.

⁷⁶⁹ Another relevant passage from the *BG* is 6.29–30, where Caesar sends the commander Lucius Minucius Basilus ahead of the main army with all the cavalry. This to see if he can gain any opportunities by quick movement and the advantage of surprise. Basilus stumbles over Ambiorix, who barely escapes. The narrator concludes that “both in his exposure to danger and in his escape therefrom the influence of fortune was great” (*et ad subeundum periculum et ad vitandum multum fortuna valuit*, 6.30.4). He leaves it unsaid that Caesar’s

phrases the option of intervention of the divine or fortune rather unprecise, that is, as possible options rather than undisputable facts.⁷⁷⁰ We encounter something similar in another passage, where Josephus states that he was helped by “some divine power” (*BJ* 3.341: δαίμονίῳ τινί). He leaves the reader in the dark as to how exactly he was aided by the divine.

Yet observe that Josephus combines the possibility of divine intervention with his own cleverness in both cases. It is Josephus who manages to sneak away and jump into a pit (3.341), as Vespasian anticipated of someone so sagacious (3.143–44). It is his ingenious proposal that puts him in a position to prevent suicide and manage to escape the cave alive (3.387–91). At the same time the reader is distracted by references to divine intervention. This strengthens the impression that Josephus partially inserted these references for their rhetorical force, in accordance with Graeco-Roman autobiographical conventions.

5.4.4.1 *Josephus’ Dream at Jotapata* (*BJ* 3.351–54)

If Josephus employs such references to the divine as rhetorical amplifications, we might suspect this also of one of the most famous passage of the *BJ*: his dream at Jotapata (3.351–54):

ὥς δ’ ὁ τε Νικάνωρ προσέκειτο λιπαρῶν καὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς τοῦ πολεμίου πλήθους ὁ Ἰώσηπος ἔμαθεν, ἀνάμνησις αὐτὸν τῶν διὰ νυκτὸς ὀνείρων εἰσέρχεται, δι’ ὧν ὁ θεὸς τὰς τε μελλούσας αὐτῷ συμφορὰς προεσήμανεν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἐσόμενα. ἦν δὲ καὶ περὶ κρίσεις ὀνείρων ἱκανὸς συμβαλεῖν τὰ ἀμφιβόλως ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου λεγόμενα· τῶν γε μὴν ἱερῶν βίβλων οὐκ ἡγνῶει τὰς προφητείας ὥς ἂν αὐτὸς τε ὦν ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερέων ἔγγονος. ὦν ἐπὶ τῆς τότε ὥρας ἔνθους γενόμενος καὶ τὰ φρικώδη τῶν προσφάτων ὀνείρων σπάσας φαντάσματα προσφέρει τῷ θεῷ λεληθυῖαν εὐχήν, καὶ “ἐπειδὴ τὸ Ἰουδαίων,” ἔφη, “φύλον κλάσαι δοκεῖ σοι τῷ κτίσαντι, μετέβη δὲ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἡ τύχη πάσα, καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐπελέξω τὰ μέλλοντα

decision led to the discovery of Ambiorix in the first place. Caesar employs similar motifs in the *BC*, where he ascribes some of his successes to *fortuna* (e.g. 3.26.4; 3.95.1–2), although it sometimes works against him (1.52.3; 3.68.1). As has been noted by Grillo (2012) 154–55, Caesar’s use of *fortuna* in the *BC* results in a complex interplay between Caesar’s achievements and Fortune’s influence on human affairs.

⁷⁷⁰ In autobiographical discourse, see also Plato, *Ep.* 316D. We encounter similar phrases in non-autobiographical discourse. See e.g. Diodorus, *Lib.* 14.114.3; Plutarch, *Cam.* 13.2.

εἰπεῖν, δίδωμι μὲν Ῥωμαίοις τὰς χεῖρας ἐκὼν καὶ ζῶ, μαρτύρομαι δὲ ὡς οὐ προδότης, ἀλλὰ σὸς ἄπειμι διάκονος.

However, as Nicanor urgently pressed on and Josephus learned of the threats of the hostile multitude, suddenly a memory of nightly dreams came into him, by means of which God had pre-signified to him the impending disasters of the Judaeans and the fate of the Roman emperors. Now, he was able to understand the interpretations of dreams as ambiguously spoken by God, and by no means ignorant of the prophecies from the sacred books, as in fact he was himself a priest and from a family of priests. By means of these he was inspired just at that hour, and drawing back the horrible apparition of his recent dreams, he offered a silent prayer to God: “Because it seems to be your will,” so it said, “to bring to its knees the Judaeans which you created, and fortune has completely departed to the Romans, and you have chosen my soul to speak about what is to come, I give myself to the Romans voluntarily, so as to live. But I witness that I shall go not as a traitor, but as your servant.

Scholars have studied this passage frequently and elaborately. They usually interpret Josephus’ dream in relation to his prediction to Vespasian (3.399–402; 4.622–29) and the comparison Josephus draws with Jeremiah (5.391–93). Josephus’ self-presentation is explained in reference to biblical prophets admired and referred to by Josephus himself at various places in his corpus.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁷¹ E.g. Cohen (1979): Josephus presents himself as “a latter day Jeremiah” (p. 98), viewing himself “not as a traitor but as a Jeremiah *redivivus* ... who announced God’s will” (p. 232), having “divine authorization to cease the struggle” (p. 98). Bilde (1988) 52: “However, the decisive factor in interpretation is considering the narrative in the context of his whole work. For this incident depicts Josephus as a prophet unappreciated and persecuted by his own people, a picture which is found in other parts of his works. The narrative gives us the picture of Josephus as the chosen prophet who, in spite of and out of a hopeless situation, is saved solely by the hand of God. It describes a prophet who surrenders, not as a traitor and one who wishes to look after himself, but as one who acted solely on God’s word and as his servant, because God gave him a message to bring to both Vespasian (Rome) and to his own people. If the emphasis is placed on these characteristics, on God’s grace and on Josephus as a servant of God, then it is indeed possible to read this narrative in the context of important themes in the rest of his writings.” Also at pp.189–90: “Josephus was not merely a priest. According to his own assertion, he also possessed the gift of prophecy. In *Bell.* 3.340–408, he tells us that at an

On the basis of this comparative material, some scholars have concluded that Josephus must be addressing a Judaeon audience. As we have seen, some scholars have argued that Josephus develops distinctively Judaeon ideas in *BJ* 3.351–54 in an attempt to present himself as a Judaeon prophet.⁷⁷² Rebecca Gray claims that Josephus develops an interpretative scheme of sin and punishment — which she identifies as one of the fundamental schemes of Josephus’ reasoning in the *BJ* — that reaches back to the Deuteronomic historian and the great classical prophets of the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁷³ While acknowledging the importance of the motif in Polybius’ *Histories*,⁷⁷⁴ she also contends that Josephus’ use of fortune betrays a distinctly Judaeon tone. She refers to Daniel 2.31–45 to explain Josephus’ use of the motif to express “a distinctively Jewish understanding of history and of the rise and fall of empires.”⁷⁷⁵ Likewise, Tessel Jonquière aims to uncover Josephus’ method of self-justification in the Jotapata narrative. Emphasizing the importance of Josephus’ dream in the context of this narrative, she argues that Josephus uses the religious notions of priesthood, prayer,

earlier time in his life—just as his namesake Joseph, and his favourite prophet, Daniel—he had ‘nightly dreams’ in which God had predicted to him the impending fate of the Jews and that which would befall the ‘Roman sovereigns’. Josephus tell us that he remembered these nightly dreams while he was in the cave in Jotapata.” Rebecca Gray (1993) 35–79 (quotes are from pp. 37 and 42): “Josephus presents himself very much in prophetic terms” and that he defended himself against Judaeon adversaries by claiming that “he had been commissioned by God with an important *prophetic* task.” Robert Gnuse (1996) 24–26 (cf. pp. 135–42): “all scholars agree that Josephus ascribes prophetic skills to himself,” that he “received a prophetic calling at Jotapata,” and that in Josephus’ age dreams were connected to biblical prophecy. Gussmann (2008) 241–45 examines the relation between Josephus’ priestly and prophetic calling, observing the primacy of Josephus’ priestly calling. Michael Tuval (2013) 96 postulates that “it is very difficult to deny that in *BJ* [Josephus] presented himself as a faithful prophet of God.” See also e.g. Daube (1980); Cohen (1982); Hall (1991) 25–27; Spilsbury (2016) 126. Ferda (2013) argues that there are verbal, syntactical, and thematic parallels between the *BJ* and Jeremiah 7, concluding that the latter influenced Josephus’ account of the war. Den Hollander (2014) 91–105 offers an elaborate discussion about Josephus’ prediction to Vespasian, but deliberately avoids the question Josephus’ views on prophecy and prophets (see p. 91 n.114).

⁷⁷² Gray (1993) 37–40, 51–52. So also e.g. Blenkinsopp (1974), who holds that Josephus “wrote as a Jew and remained a Jew throughout” (p. 239) and continues that Josephus claims prophetic status in *BJ* 3.351–54 (p. 240 ff.). According to Blenkinsopp Josephus restricts the use of the term “prophet” to the canonical prophets. This explains Josephus’ hesitance to label himself a prophet explicitly can be explained. Aune (1982) has shown this claim to be wrong.

⁷⁷³ Gray (1993) 38.

⁷⁷⁴ Gray (1993) 39.

⁷⁷⁵ Gray (1993) 38–40.

and prophecy to respond to accusations of treachery raised by Judaeans.⁷⁷⁶ The explanation that Josephus fashioned himself as a Judaeen prophet has explanatory power only if he produced the passage to a specifically Judaeen audience. This explanation — if correct — would present a significant challenge for the hypothesis developed throughout this study, namely that the autobiographical passages in the *BJ* were consistently written in view of an elite audience in Rome.

The main problem with the position advocated by Gray and Jonquière is that it does not consider the classicizing tendencies in a militarily and politically oriented work of history (cf. Chapters 2 and 3), although one might argue that Josephus addressed different passages to different readers.⁷⁷⁷ It is possible that Judaeans other than those in Rome, perhaps even some who accused him of treachery, might eventually have read his work. They would not be the Judaeans whom Josephus includes among his readers (Agrippa II and his circle), from whom he could reasonably expect sympathy for his actions during the war. If he aimed to address other Judaeen readers, there is no explicit evidence for it.

Hence, the validity of the hypothesis proposed by Gray and Jonquière depends on whether Josephus' use of language and themes related to the divine — I shall focus primarily on discussing the notion of prophecy — are uniquely Judaeen. It is beyond any doubt that some of the notions referred to by Josephus might have been interpreted by Judaeen readers in terms of biblical prophecy. However, to claim that Josephus presents himself as a Judaeen prophet — in a specific biblical sense that only a Judaeen could have understood — in a military-political work written in Rome for initially local audiences is another matter. This is what the following sections will examine.

5.4.4.2 *Josephus as a Prophet: Compositional Observations*

Criticism has been raised against the position that Josephus presents himself as a prophet from various sides and in different contexts. The most fundamental doubts have been raised by Louis

⁷⁷⁶ Jonquière (2011) 224. See also p. 225: "We can, however, after this discussion, say more of Josephus' method of defending himself in *War*: he did it in such a way that he hoped would make his Jewish audience, who accused him of treason, understand."

⁷⁷⁷ So Price (2005); Price (2011a). See my discussion of this position in the introduction of this study (§1.4).

Feldman and Steve Mason.⁷⁷⁸ They have called attention to Josephus' use of prophet-language (e.g. προφήτης, προφητεία, προφητεύω) throughout his corpus, observing that Josephus refrains from calling himself a prophet anywhere. This is especially striking because he often uses prophet-language in the *AJ*, but rarely in the *BJ*.⁷⁷⁹ It appears that Josephus deliberately avoids prophet-language in cases where such language may have been applicable, perhaps to avoid association with the pseudo-prophets that appear elsewhere in the narrative, but above all to celebrate the Judaeen legacy of sacred books written by prophets in the distant past.⁷⁸⁰ With Feldman and Mason, I think that the best explanation of these two observations is that Josephus had no interest in spelling out his views about Judaeen prophecy in the *BJ* (unlike in the *AJ*), and certainly had no reason to characterize himself as a prophet.⁷⁸¹

We should then ask which language Josephus uses in *BJ* 3.351–54 and whether it is necessary to see it as a claim to prophet status. Josephus merely states that he remembers a dream (ὄνειρος) and that at that moment he is inspired (ἐνθους) by (ᾧν) the biblical prophets, about whom he has knowledge because of his priestly background (ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερέων ἑγγονος).⁷⁸² This experience makes him a servant (διδάκονος) of God with a mandate to surrender himself to the Romans and deliver his message to Vespasian.

⁷⁷⁸ Feldman (1990) 404–6 and Mason (1995). Sharon (2018) argues that while Josephus portrays himself as a Jeremiah-like figure in the *AJ*, he does not so in the *BJ*, or at least not in any systematic fashion. Concerning the *BJ*, Sharon suggests that “in the *Jewish War*, Josephus appears to depict himself as one in a string of prophets preaching to Israel, without any specific prophet in mind” (p. 7).

⁷⁷⁹ On prophet-language in Josephus' corpus, see Feldman (1990) 405–6; Mason (1995) 309. Josephus incidentally refers to biblical prophets (*BJ* 1.18; 4.381–88, 460; 5.391; 6.109). A special case is John Hyrcanus, who possessed the gift of προφητεία (1.68–69). Josephus also mentions experts about biblical prophecy like the Essenes (2.159). Josephus himself claims similar expertise on account of his priestly background (3.352). In reference to his contemporaries the narrator refers only to pseudo-prophets (2.261; 6.285–86). Judas the Essene is called a seer (μάντις), not a prophet (1.78–80: προφήτης). A full study of the issue of Josephus and prophecy is offered in Mason (2019b). This study challenges the conventional translation of the phrase τὴν τῶν προφητῶν ἀκριβὴ διαδοχὴν as “the exact succession of the prophets” in *CA* 1.41.

⁷⁸⁰ On this distinction, see Aune (1982) 419.

⁷⁸¹ Even in the *AJ* there is no exclusive connection between prophetic status and the ability to interpret dreams. For example, Josephus does not call Joseph, his biblical namesake, a prophet but ascribes his ability to interpret dreams to his wisdom, intelligence, and sagacity (e.g. 2.9–16, 63, 65, 72, 76, 87, 91), virtues Josephus repeatedly claims to possess in the *BJ* (cf. §3.3.2.2).

⁷⁸² On the centrality of Josephus' priestly authority in this passage, see Gussmann (2008) 241–45.

In addition to the dream episode, there are various passages in the *BJ* that have prompted some scholars to conclude that Josephus presents himself as a prophet. Josephus calls himself a messenger (3.400, 402: ἄγγελος);⁷⁸³ Vespasian recalls Josephus' words (φωναί) among the other signs (σημεῖα) that point to the possibility of divine providence (4.622–23: δαιμονίου προνοίας). Vespasian explains to his officers how Josephus predicted his emperorship (4.625: μαντεῖαι). In *BJ* 5 Josephus compares his own situation with that of the biblical prophet Jeremiah who made prophecies (τὰς Ἰερεμίου προφητείας) to Zedekiah and the Judean people, warning them against the imminent destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BC (5.391–93).⁷⁸⁴ The claim that Josephus fashions himself as a prophet in an appeal addressed to a Judean audience depends on interpreting his ability to receive and interpret divine dreams and predict the future as specifically prophetic and distinctively Judean.⁷⁸⁵

There are strong arguments against this hypothesis. First, in the *BJ* (in notable contrast to the *AJ*, representing the ancient biblical period) characters receiving a dream (ὄνειρος) are never called prophets. Dreams occur rarely in this work at any rate. In Josephus' case, the dream pre-signifies (προσημαίνω) the impending disaster (συμφορά) of the Judeans. Outside of the Jotapata episode, he uses this combination of vocabulary only once in the *BJ*:⁷⁸⁶ Herod the Great receives

⁷⁸³ Chapman (1998) 16–18 offers a different reading of this passage, explaining it as an example that exemplifies the necessity of taking into consideration both Graeco-Roman and Judean backgrounds for understanding Josephus' text. She refers to Greek tragedy, in which “the messenger tells the characters and audience in detail what has already happened off stage.” Simultaneously she acknowledges that through “his ability to predict the future through the application of knowledge gained through his previous dreams (*BJ*. 3.351–353), he is playing a latter-day Joseph and Daniel.”

⁷⁸⁴ On Josephus as a Jeremiah-like prophet, see e.g. Wolff (1976) 10–15; Daube (1980); Cohen (1982); Bilde (1988) 55–56; Gray (1993) 72–74; Gnuse (1996) 27–29; Gussmann (2008) 295–96. In this case, however, the emphasis is not put on Josephus and Jeremiah, but those listening to them who should repent from their crimes. *They* (note the emphatic use of ὑμεῖς) should take the past destruction of the temple as an example. The Jeremiah-Josephus parallel has been questioned in Lindner (1972) 73 n.2; Rajak (2002) 170–71; Tuval (2013) 124. Although subscribing to the general hypothesis that Josephus fashioned himself as a biblical prophet, the Jeremiah parallel has also been questioned by Sharon (2018).

⁷⁸⁵ Gray (1993) 37 identifies distinctively Judean and prophetic language in this passage. Gray points to Josephus' use of terms like that he claims to be a messenger (ἄγγελος) sent (προπεμπόμενος) by God in 3.400, and that Josephus claims that he is God's servant (διάκονος, 3.354). Ladouceur (1980) convincingly argues that such vocabulary frequently features in a military context.

⁷⁸⁶ Cf. the dream of Archelaus in *BJ* 2.112–113 and Glaphyra in 2.114–16. Archelaus, however, needs the Essene Simon to explain the dream.

various dreams (ὄνειροι) that pre-signify (προσημαίνω) the death of his brother Joseph (1.328). When Herod wakes up, he is visited by messengers (ἄγγελοι) that deliver news about these disasters (συμφοραί). Evidently, there are important differences between this episode and Josephus' autobiographical dream. Josephus does not describe Herod's dream experience in much detail. Herod's dreams are clear (σαφείς), whereas the dream of Josephus is ambiguously conveyed (ἀμφιβόλως) and requires interpretation (κρίσις). Nonetheless, *BJ* 1.328 is the only passage in the compositional context of the *BJ* that is in some degree comparable to Josephus' autobiographical dream. Scholars have never ascribed a prophetic status to Herod, so why would Josephus' case be different?

Second, the insight that the dream revelation offers to Josephus is not specifically prophetic. In *BJ* 6 the narrator elaborates on the oracles and omens predicting the imminent doom of the Judaeans (6.288–315).⁷⁸⁷ He laments that some cheats and pretenders misguide the people in Jerusalem by “not paying attention to nor believing manifest pre-significations and portents of the destined desolations” (6.288: οἷς δ' ἐναργέσι καὶ προσημαίνουσι τὴν μέλλουσιν ἐρημίαν τέρασιν οὔτε προσεῖχον οὔτ' ἐπίστευον). There is nothing specifically prophetic about what God intends to tell his people regarding the imminent doom of the city: it is manifest (ἐναργής), but not everyone pays attention to these pre-significations.

Josephus elaborates a similar point at 6.310–15, claiming that the Judaeans collectively ignore such signs. Anyone understanding (ἐννοῶν) Josephus' presentation of events should see that God cares for his people and sends “all kinds of pre-significations” (παντοίως προσημαίνοντα) intended to save them. The Judaeans have examples “written in their books” (ἀναγεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς λογίοις ἔχοντες). He also mentions “an ambiguous oracle found in their holy writings” (χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος

⁷⁸⁷ For a recent in-depth of this passage, in particular *BJ* 6.293–99, see Davies, “Covenant and *Pax Deorum*.” Davies argues that Josephus expresses his narrative in such a fashion that it contains different messages at the same time, evoking both Judaeans and Roman knowledge registers on account of his training in more than one literary tradition. For a more detailed discussion of the oracle in *BJ* 6.300–15 and its function in its narrative context, see Van Henten (2015) esp. 365–73; Van Henten (2018) 137–39. Becker (2006) 301–40 offers a detailed discussion of the connections between this passage and the Gospel of Mark.

ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐρημένος γράμμασιν).⁷⁸⁸ This material is available to Judaeans wise men and the point of concern is its interpretation (πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν περὶ τὴν κρίσιν).⁷⁸⁹ The interpretation of ambiguous oracles is conducted by *wise men* — presumably those learned in the holy writings of the Judaeans — though they can be (and have been) wrong. Prophets can be wise and learned,⁷⁹⁰ but learning is not the exclusive faculty of prophets.

Likewise, Josephus ascribes his ability to understand the interpretations of ambiguous dreams to his knowledge of the sacred books, which he in turn explains on account of his priestly background (3.352; cf. 1.3; *Vita* 1).⁷⁹¹ Josephus' knowledge of the future ultimately rests upon his priestly qualifications and accompanying exegetical competence, not privileged access to secret prophetic knowledge only revealed to him and unavailable to other Judaeans.⁷⁹² Josephus shows more resemblance to the learned men in *BJ* 6.313 than to the biblical prophets, except that they are wrong whereas he is right.

Third, Josephus further tells the reader that he was inspired (ἐνθους) when he received his dream (3.353). Some scholars have put significant weight on this term in reference to Josephus' alleged self-fashioning as a biblical prophet.⁷⁹³ However, in the *BJ* the term is also used to refer to

⁷⁸⁸ This oracle is probably the same one as the pre-signification received by Josephus in his dream (*BJ* 3.351–54) and proclaimed to Vespasian immediately after his capture (3.399–402). Though Josephus does not explicitly suggest that this specific oracle is the basis of his own prediction. On this see Rajak (2002) 191. See for further references Den Hollander (2014) 95 n.128; Van Henten (2015) 373.

⁷⁸⁹ Josephus uses the adjective σοφός only twice in the *BJ*. The other case occurs in 3.376, where Josephus refers in his speech against suicide to “the wisest among lawgivers” (τῷ σοφωτάτῳ ... νομοθέτῃ). Scholarly debate on this passage revolves around the issue of the exact origin of this oracle in the Hebrew Bible. For further discussion and references Tuval (2013) 126. Cf. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4.5; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.13.

⁷⁹⁰ See e.g. Josephus' characterization of Daniel in *AJ* 10.197–98. Daniel is referred to as belonging to the wise men in danger of execution. Elsewhere Josephus calls Daniel a prophet on account of his skill to interpret dreams (10.194, 200, 203–9, 263–80). Cf. Gray (1993) 32–33.

⁷⁹¹ *BJ* 3.352: “Now, he was able to understand the interpretations of dreams as ambiguously spoken by God, not unknowing of the prophecies from the sacred books, as in fact he was himself a priest and from a family of priests” (ἦν δὲ καὶ περὶ κρίσεις ὀνείρων ἱκανὸς συμβαλεῖν τὰ ἀμφιβόλως ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ λεγόμενα· τῶν γε μὴν ἱερῶν βιβλίων οὐκ ἡγνόνει τὰς προφητείας ὥς ἂν αὐτός τε ὢν ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερέων ἔγγονος). Cf. Gussmann (2008) 241–45. Gussmann is the most comprehensive study of priestly subjects throughout Josephus' corpus. See on this claim also e.g. Gray (1993) 53–58; Tuval (2013) 115ff.

⁷⁹² With Van Henten (2018) 137–39.

⁷⁹³ Gray (1993) 51–52, 69–70 notes the importance of this term in relation to Josephus' self-fashioning as a biblical prophet. She explains this term in reference to *CA* 1.37–41, which in her view “concerns only the type

Vespasian's "divine fury of mind" (4.33–34: δαιμόνιον τὸ παράστημα τῆς ψυχῆς), which causes his enemies to run. Likewise, Josephus also uses the word in relation to Titus' inability "to contain the anger of his frenzied soldiers" (τὰς ὀρμάς ἐνθουσιώντων τῶν στρατιωτῶν κατασχεῖν) when they pillage the temple of Jerusalem (6.260). What is more, Josephus says that he was inspired by the sacred books of the prophets. The aspect of achieving a state of inspiration by reading literature is something that would have had a familiar ring to Greek and Roman readers. Consider Longinus' discussion of the sublime — which he defines as excellence and distinction of language — in a treatise addressed to a certain Postumius Terentianus, a deeply educated man (1.3) and a lover of learning (44.1). Longinus puts a strong emphasis on the importance of inspiration and ecstasy (e.g. ἐνθους, ἐνθουσιάζω, ἐνθουσιαστικῶς, and similar terms) as something that defines the experience of sublimity on the part of author and audience (e.g. 3.2; 8.4, 7–8; 15.6; 18.1). More generally, he describes the essential effect of the sublime as "not to persuade the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves" (1.4: οὐ γὰρ εἰς πειθῶ τοὺς ἀκροωμένους ἀλλ' εἰς ἔκστασιν ἄγει τὰ ὑπερφυῶ).⁷⁹⁴ Correspondingly, reaching a state of inspiration caused by reading elevated literature cannot be linked exclusively to Josephus' views of prophecy. On the contrary, it is a state of being strongly rooted in Greek literary criticism of his days.

The foregoing analysis focused on the extent to which the immediate compositional context of the *BJ* warrants the hypothesis that Josephus characterizes himself as a biblical prophet. As Feldman and Mason have argued, a survey of Josephus' use of prophet language indicates that this is not the case. Josephus does not display any systematic concern to delineate his views on Judaeen prophecy in the *BJ*, let alone to characterize himself as a prophet. This point is corroborated by my observations on the language that Josephus employs in *BJ* 3.351–54 and related passages. First, the statesman Herod receives a dream similar to that of Josephus. Second, Josephus also writes that pre-significations (though not in the form of dreams) are there for every learned man to see, although

of prophecy that resulted in the composition of historical narrative" (p. 44), a passage which she discusses in detail at pp. 7–34. Mason (2019b) discusses Gray's position in some detail (pp. 535–37) in consideration of his own hypothesis of Josephus' Roman audience for the *CA*.

⁷⁹⁴ In this, he may have been influenced by the literary theories of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as De Jonge (2012) argues.

pretenders misinterpret such signs deliberately. The interpretation of such ambiguous signs requires not prophetic but exegetical ability and learning. Josephus possesses such qualities on account of his priestly background. Third, Josephus' state of inspiration reached by reading the holy books of the Judaeans cannot be viewed exclusively in terms of Judaeans prophecy. In the *BJ* he also uses it to describe the state of mind of Vespasian and Roman soldiers. Additionally, Greek and Roman readers might have recognized the principle of reaching a state of inspiration by reading elevated literature as highly familiar from their own traditions.

5.4.4.3 *Josephus' Dreams: BJ 3.351–54 and Vita 208–9*

One could nonetheless argue that Josephus' claims might have activated knowledge about biblical prophecy among Judaeans audiences. However, this hardly warrants the hypothesis that the Jotapata dream episode is specifically designed to address an audience that consists of Judaeans familiar with ideas of prophecy such as outlined in the Hebrew Bible. I have expressed my views on Josephus' audience on multiple occasions in this investigation. Following recent approaches, it was advocated that the crux for interpreting Josephus' text is the assumption that his audience at the very least should have been able to judge him on his ability to write Greek historiography, notwithstanding their exact ethnic background or Josephus' likely ambitions to aim at a wider readership and posterity. The prologue of the *BJ* clearly assumes such a readership and the following argues that there is no basis to assume a different audience for *BJ* 3.351–54. Given the local and social conditions of ancient book dissemination — which included oral recitations in front of a live audience — it is unlikely that Josephus occasionally said things that made sense *only* to Judaeans.⁷⁹⁵

In light of this, one could ask the following question: if Josephus was not concerned with outlining his views about prophecy or portraying himself as a biblical prophet, what was his concern when fashioning his decision to surrender in terms of a divinely inspired autobiographical dream? I

⁷⁹⁵ Paraphrasing Mason (2005b) 84: “making books public in the Roman world was a matter of disseminating the work orally and in draft copies through ever widening circles of friends and associates: it was local and social. It is difficult to imagine how Josephus could have been free of the constraints and conditions of his time.”

will argue that Josephus' use of this motif is consistent with the general historiographical outlook (=Graeco-Roman, military-political) of the *BJ*.

That dreams are a leitmotif in Josephus' self-fashioning becomes evident from his autobiographical account in the *Vita*, where we encounter a dream episode at the midpoint of the narrative (208–9). Before this dream, we find Josephus struggling against various adversaries obstructing him to fulfil his mandate in Galilee satisfactorily. He is “distressed and troubled” (λυπούμενος καὶ τεταραγμένος) by attacks on his authority from the Jerusalem embassy. Yet a “marvellous sort of a dream” (θαυμάσιον οἶον ὄνειρον) received at night during this moment of personal crisis motivates Josephus to raise himself up (διανίστημι) and retain his command in Galilee (210–11).⁷⁹⁶ After this divine revelation we see him taking up his responsibilities with renewed energy, overcoming his enemies one by one.⁷⁹⁷

It can thus be observed that Josephus presents his most crucial decisions in the *BJ* and the *Vita* as motivated by divine dreams. In the *Vita* the dream explains why Josephus retains his command in Galilee. In the *BJ* it explains why he abandoned it. Simultaneously, they are literary devices as much as explanatory tools, serving as hinge points and marking the climax of Josephus' autobiographical narratives.

Strikingly, the autobiographical dream in the *Vita* has received far less scrutiny among scholars. It has not been associated with claims of prophecy on Josephus' part. The *Vita* is an autobiographical work dedicated to Epaphroditus (430). We know very little about this man, but Josephus characterizes him as someone with a unique love of learning, especially pertaining to experiences of history (*AJ* 1.8–9). Josephus' subsequent comparison of Epaphroditus with King Ptolemy II makes it abundantly clear that he was a Greek (1.10–13). This raises a fundamental question: if Josephus' autobiographical dream would not have appealed to Greeks and Greek speakers, why would he have it as the climax of a work emphatically dedicated to a Greek?

Similar reasoning applies to the *BJ*. Although this work does not contain a personal dedication, Josephus explicitly presents it as a work in Greek addressed to Greeks and Romans (*BJ*

⁷⁹⁶ As observed in Mason (2001) 104 n.927. On the entire episode as a ring composition in relation to the preceding, see p. 105 n.933.

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Mason (2001) 104 n. 927.

1.3, 16). Why would Josephus give an autobiographical dream such a prominent place in a history explicitly addressed to such an audience if it would hardly have appealed to them?⁷⁹⁸ This is further underlined when considering that the *BJ* is composed much more carefully than the *Vita*. The *BJ* is, according to Thackeray, “an excellent specimen of the Atticistic Greek of the first century” with a “choice of vocabulary, well-knit sentences and paragraphs, niceties in the use of particles and order of words” and “a uniformly classical style without slavish imitation of classical models.”⁷⁹⁹ The *Vita* has rather been described as “rattled off in great haste” with “disturbing carelessness.”⁸⁰⁰ To make the same compositional blunder not once but twice — to make an autobiographical dream the narrative hinge point of a work primarily addressed to Greeks and Romans where this motif would not have had any appeal to such audiences but to Judaeans only — resists any logic.

5.4.4.4 *Dreams and Dream Reports in Graeco-Roman Contexts*

If we can demonstrate that the dream episode is a common *topos* in Greek and Roman autobiography and/or historiography of the kind Josephus tried to produce, this would make the explanation of a hidden agenda implicitly addressed to Judaeans unnecessary.⁸⁰¹

Dream reports — and signs revealing the future more generally — occupied an important place in Graeco-Roman cultural contexts. The language of pre-signification, signs, and seers — *προσημαίνω*, *σημείον*, *μάντις*, *μαντεία*, *μάντευμα*, etc... — would have had a familiar ring among those steeped into Greek literature and historiography. The seer (*μάντις*; *haruspex* in Latin) was an

⁷⁹⁸ In 1980 David Ladouceur published an article in which he scrutinizes the Masada episode and the suicide motif in the *BJ*. In the context of his argument, he also discusses the Jotapata cave episode in which Josephus delivers his speech on suicide. This speech forms a pair with Eleazar’s speech at Masada (In addition to Ladouceur [1980], see e.g. Lindner [1972]; Rajak [2002] 89; Runnalls [1997]; Chapman [1998] 106–68; Price [2007]; Mason [2016a] 539–45.). In response to Lindner’s observations that Josephus employs Septuagint language in the cave episode ([1972] 59–61), he contends that “[i]t is at any rate questionable methodology to explicate only through the Septuagint words and phrases isolated from their context in the midst of an Atticizing text directed to a Graeco-Roman audience, all the more when that context is preparatory to a central theme of late Stoicism, suicide.” See Ladouceur (1980) 249. Our argument rests on assumptions similar to those of Ladouceur.

⁷⁹⁹ Thackeray (1929) 104.

⁸⁰⁰ Mason (2001) xiii.

⁸⁰¹ In a like fashion, Niehoff (2011b) 19–21 explains the prominence of divine providence and predictive dreams in Philo’s *Life of Joseph* in reference to the prominence of Stoic thinking in Imperial Rome.

important figure, trained to read signs (σημεία) about the future.⁸⁰² More importantly, we frequently encounter generals and statesmen actively seeking, or sometimes being overwhelmed by, divine guidance, not in the least through oneirocratic media.

Dreams are not always perceived as reliable. For example, Homer's epic poems are permeated with encounters between humans and the divine. One of the most famous examples is the episode in the *Illiad* where Zeus summons Oneiros and sends him to mislead Agamemnon to help the Trojans. During the night, the god Oneiros sneaks into Agamemnon's tent in the Greek camp at Troy and takes the shape of the king's counsellor Nestor. He urges Agamemnon to battle in accordance with Zeus' instructions and Agamemnon listens to Oneiros' advice, which in the end proves to be deceptive (*Ill.* 2.4–22).⁸⁰³ Although this does not prevent him from extensively milking dream motifs elsewhere in his work (e.g. Scipio's dream in *De republica* 6.9–26), the deceptive nature of dreams is also emphasized in Cicero's *De Divinatione*.⁸⁰⁴ The work consists of a philosophical treatise about divination, framed as a dialogue between the brothers Marcus and Quintus Cicero. In Book 1 we mostly find Quintus outlining and arguing in favour of the importance of divination. In the second book Marcus refutes Quintus' views based on reasoning and scientific arguments.⁸⁰⁵ The reliability of dreams was not accepted by everyone.

Notwithstanding such dissenting voices, dreams frequently feature in classical historiography as reliable (though sometimes ambiguous) sources of guidance for statesmen.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰² On the Greek context see, especially Flower (2008). On the Roman context, see e.g. Wildfang and Isager (2000); Santangelo (2013), on the *haruspex* esp. pp. 84–114.

⁸⁰³ For a more comprehensive analysis of this passage, see Reid (1973).

⁸⁰⁴ On dreams see Cicero, *Div.* 2.119–47. See also the discussion on divination in Cicero's *De nature deorum*. See for further analysis of ancient views on the truthfulness of dreams Harris (2009) 123–228. For *De Divinatione*, see pp. 180–84. Harris tends to emphasize scepticism among ancients. Niehoff (2011b) 20 draws attention to *De Divinatione* as a response to the centrality of predictive dreams in Roman culture, especially in Stoic thinking.

⁸⁰⁵ As more often, however, because of the specifically rhetorical outlook of the treatise it is difficult to determine Cicero's actual viewpoints on dreams. For the view that Cicero's *De Divinatione* is not an outright rejection of divination but offers various philosophical perspectives on the subject see Schofield (1986).

⁸⁰⁶ Another interesting parallel, though not immediately relevant for our present purposes (we are currently discussing Josephus' as general/politician, not as a historian), is Dio's dream in which he is urged to write down the things he sees. The episode emphasizes Dio's privileged access to certain information and thus lends credit to his historical narrative. Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 78.10.1–2.

Herodotus is particularly fond of dream episodes as explanatory devices. For example, we find the Persian king Cambyses dreaming that his loyal brother Smerdis would take his throne. Cambyses II fears this to become true and sends someone to kill Smerdis (*Hist.* 3.30). At the end of the narrative, we learn that two Magian brothers discover Cambyses' actions and employ this knowledge to mislead him. One of the brothers happens to have exactly the same appearance as the deceased Smerdis and even bears the same name (3.61). In the end, Cambyses finds out that his immediate response to the dream did not *prevent* his brother from taking the throne but in fact *caused* another Smerdis, a Magian, to usurp it. He accidentally dies when he realizes his mistake (3.64–66).⁸⁰⁷ Thus, in Herodotus view dreams are highly ambiguous, but that they will come true is beyond dispute.

As was observed in Chapter 3, Xenophon makes divine signs an important *topos* in the *Cyropaedia*, a work that reflects on issues of ideal leadership. He claims that gods will *pre-signify* (προσημαίνω) the future if men care to consult them. Ignoring such signs will inevitably lead to the destruction of statesmen and nations. Elsewhere Xenophon relates that the gods frequently use dreams to communicate with men (e.g. *Eq. mag.* 9.9; *Symp.* 4.33). Josephus develops a similar explanatory scheme in the *BJ*. The Judaeans not merely wage war with the Romans but also with God (*BJ* 2.539, 3.354, 4.104, 288–89, 323, 370, 573; 5.19, 343, 378). God punishes the Judaeans for deliberately ignoring numerous signs forecasting the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans (1.28; 2.650; 4.386–88, 623–26; 5.409–11; 6.109–10, 288–315). Evidently, as other scholars have pointed out, the views outlined by Josephus coincide with the biblical and Judaeian scheme of sin-divine punishment. Such ideas might have featured at the back of Josephus' mind when he wrote the *BJ*.⁸⁰⁸ Yet in a work addressed to Greeks and Romans we must recognize this explanatory scheme as an important *topos* in Graeco-Roman political literature.

The lesson that statesmen should always look for signs from the gods looms large over Xenophon's self-characterization in the *Anabasis*. Xenophon is the only character in the work who is said to undergo such experiences. Especially the passage narrating how Xenophon took up

⁸⁰⁷ On this episode see in more detail De Jong (2006). For an overview of dreams and divination in Herodotus, see Harrison (2000) 122–57.

⁸⁰⁸ As is the common interpretation for this scheme in the *BJ*, see e.g. Farmer (1956) 20–21; Attridge (1984) 196–200; Bilde (1988) 75; Gray (1993) 38; Rajak (2002) 92, 94–103.

command of the Athenian part of the Greek army is notable. He receives a dream immediately before the occasion.⁸⁰⁹ The scene occurs at a moment of a severe crisis for the Greeks, shortly after the murder of most of their generals by the Persian Tissaphernes (3.11–15):

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπορία ἦν, ἐλυπεῖτο μὲν σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο καθεύδειν· μικρὸν δ' ὕπνου λαχὼν εἶδεν ὄναρ. ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ βροντῆς γενομένης σκηπτὸς πεσεῖν εἰς τὴν πατρῶαν οἰκίαν, καὶ ἐκ τούτου λάμπεσθαι πᾶσα. περίφοβος δ' εὐθύς ἀνηγέρθη, καὶ τὸ ὄναρ τῇ μὲν ἔκρινεν ἀγαθόν, ὅτι ἐν πόνοις ὦν καὶ κινδύνοις φῶς μέγα ἐκ Διὸς ἰδεῖν ἔδοξε· τῇ δὲ καὶ ἐφοβείτο, ὅτι ἀπὸ Διὸς μὲν βασιλέως τὸ ὄναρ ἐδόκει αὐτῷ εἶναι, κύκλῳ δὲ ἐδόκει λάμπεσθαι τὸ πῦρ, μὴ οὐ δύναίτο ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἐξελθεῖν τῆς βασιλέως, ἀλλ' εἴργοιτο πάντοθεν ὑπὸ τινων ἀποριῶν. ὁποῖόν τι μὲν δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ὄναρ ἰδεῖν ἔξεστι σκοπεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβάντων μετὰ τὸ ὄναρ. γίγνεται γὰρ τάδε. εὐθύς ἐπειδὴ ἀνηγέρθη πρῶτον μὲν ἔννοια αὐτῷ ἐμπίπτει· τί κατάκειμαι; ἡ δὲ νύξ προβαίνει· ἅμα δὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ εἰκὸς τοὺς πολεμίους ἤξειν. εἰ δὲ γενησόμεθα ἐπὶ βασιλεῖ, τί ἐμποδὼν μὴ οὐχὶ πάντα μὲν τὰ χαλεπώτατα ἐπιδόντας, πάντα δὲ τὰ δεινότατα παθόντας ὑβριζομένους ἀποθανεῖν; ὅπως δ' ἀμυνούμεθα οὐδεὶς παρασκευάζεται οὐδὲ ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀλλὰ κατακείμεθα ὥσπερ ἐξὸν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν. ἐγὼ οὖν τὸν ἐκ ποίας πόλεως στρατηγὸν προσδοκῶ ταῦτα πράξειν; ποῖαν δ' ἡλικίαν ἐμαυτῷ ἐλθεῖν ἀναμείνω; οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγ' ἔτι πρεσβύτερος ἔσομαι, ἐὰν τήμερον προδῶ ἐμαυτὸν τοῖς πολεμίοις. Ἐκ τούτου ἀνίσταται καὶ συγκαλεῖ τοὺς Προξένου πρῶτον λοχαγούς.

Now when despair had set in, he was distressed as well as everybody else and was unable to sleep; but, getting at length a little sleep, he saw a dream. It seemed to him that there was a clap of thunder and a bolt fell on his father's house, setting the whole house ablaze. He awoke at once in great fear, and interpreted the dream in one way as a good one, because in the midst of hardships and perils he had seemed to behold a great light from Zeus; but looking at it in another way he was fearful, since the dream came, as he thought, from Zeus the King and the fire appeared to blaze all about, lest he might not

⁸⁰⁹ A similar episode occurs in Xenophon, *Anab.* 4.3.8.

be able to escape out of the King's country, but might be shut in on all sides by various difficulties. Now what it really means to have such a dream one may learn from the events which followed the dream — for they were these: Firstly, on the moment of his awakening the thought occurred to him: "Why do I lie here? The night is wearing on, and at daybreak it is likely that the enemy will be upon us. And if we fall into the King's hands, what is there to prevent our living to behold all the most grievous sights and to experience all the most dreadful sufferings, and then being put to death with insult? As for defending ourselves, however, no one is preparing or taking thought for that, but we lie here just as if it were possible for us to enjoy our ease. What about myself, then? From what state am I expecting the general to come who is to perform these duties? And what age must I myself wait to attain? For surely, I shall never be any older, if this day I give myself up to the enemy." After this he got up and first of all summoned the captains of Proxenus (trans. based on Brownson, revised by Dillery, LCL).

The dream signifies Xenophon's crucial decision to take command of the Athenian army. It is presented as a hinge point in the *Anabasis*. It marks a turning point in Xenophon's personal fate and that of the Ten Thousand. The entire army is in great despair (ἀπορία), and Xenophon himself is distressed (ἐλυπέϊτο). The dream spurs Xenophon to action: he considers that no one (οὐδεὶς) is making plans to defend the Greeks against the Persians. Obviously, this is a literary invention to highlight the importance of the episode for the plot development in the *Anabasis*: not all the Greek generals had been killed by Tissaphernes. Sophaenetes and Ceirisophus were still alive, so certainly some people must have been making plans.⁸¹⁰ However, by emphasizing this aspect, Xenophon creates the impression that he is the only hope of the entire Greek army: *he rises up* (ἀνίσταται) when the Greek army needs him most.

That Xenophon's dream became a paradigmatic example becomes evident from its reception. In *De Divinatione* Cicero's brother vigorously defends the reliability of Xenophon's dream (1.25), although Cicero himself does not comply with the views of his brother. Lucian refers to

⁸¹⁰ As noted in Flower (2012) 128.

Xenophon's dream in defence of narrating his own personal experience. He clearly assumes the details of the account ("when he told one time how he dreamed that a bolt of lightning, striking his father's house, set it afire, and all the rest of it") to be commonplace knowledge among his audience: "certainly you know it" (ἴστε γάρ). He claims that in Xenophon's case such an account presumably must have had a certain usefulness, especially because he related it in times of war and in a desperate state of affairs (*Somn.* 17: καὶ ταῦτα ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ ἀπογνώσει πραγμάτων, περιεστώτων πολέμιων, ἀλλὰ τι καὶ χρήσιμον εἶχεν ἢ διήγησις).⁸¹¹

Considering this, it is perhaps no surprise that there are significant parallels between Xenophon's dream in the *Anabasis* and Josephus' dream in the *BJ*.⁸¹² Their narrative contexts and functions are remarkably similar. Both Xenophon and Josephus feature as important characters in their own history, describing their situation — to use the words of Lucian — "in time of war and in a desperate state of affairs, with the enemy on every side." Both Xenophon and Josephus are caught in a deep personal crisis — or "a desperate state of affairs" (Lucian) — when they receive/remember their dreams. The contents of their dreams are ambiguous and require interpretation. Their dreams motivate them to make a controversial decision that is ultimately not their own but inspired by a divine revelation: Xenophon the Athenian takes up command of the Athenian section of the Greek army in an expedition that was started by Cyrus the Younger, a friend of Sparta and enemy of Athens. Josephus abandons his position as general commissioned to fight the Romans and surrenders to those he was commissioned to fight. Also note that Xenophon is no professional diviner (on some occasions he needs one) but a soldier and general.⁸¹³ On this occasion, however, he showcases the ability to interpret (ἐκρίνεν) the twofold meaning of his ambiguous dream.⁸¹⁴ Xenophon's *Anabasis*

⁸¹¹ So also Huitink and Rood (2019) 79–80.

⁸¹² The parallel is mentioned by Hirschberger (2005) 159 n.47. Compare also *Vita* 208–9 with the *Anabasis* 3.1.11 and 15: "he was distressed" (ἐλυπεῖτο) but after the dream "he rose up" (ἀνίσταται). Also, Josephus *seems* (ἔδοξά) to have seen someone speaking to him, whereas *it seemed* to Xenophon (ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ) that the house of his father was set on fire by a clap of thunder and a lightning bolt.

⁸¹³ Cf. again Lucian, *Somn.* 17: "Surely he doesn't take us for interpreters of dreams?" No, my friend ... no, the story had a certain usefulness" (μὴ ὀνείρων τινὰς ὑποκριτὰς ἡμᾶς ὑπείληφεν;" οὐκ, ὦ γαθέ ... ἀλλὰ τι καὶ χρήσιμον εἶχεν ἢ διήγησις).

⁸¹⁴ On which see further Flower (2012) 204–5.

may very well have been among the literature that inspired Josephus to frame his surrender to the Romans as motivated by an autobiographical dream.

Xenophon's dream is arguably the most famous one but by no means the only example. Romans exploited similar strategies of explanation when claiming and justifying political and military authority in autobiographical writing.⁸¹⁵ There are various accounts of Roman statesmen and generals ignoring divine warnings. This usually ends in great disaster. The biographical tradition surrounding Caesar's life — who perhaps not coincidentally rarely mentions the gods in his memoirs — is a point in case. Suetonius notes that Caesar was utterly indifferent to the signs of the gods and even manipulated them willingly (Suetonius, *Div. Iul.* 59). Omens and dreams forebode Julius Caesar's death on the Ides of March. His choice to ignore them resulted in his death.⁸¹⁶ It is commonly agreed among most ancient writers that Caesar was the agent of his own destruction, paying dearly for his impiety.

Seven of the twenty-three fragments surviving from Sulla's work relate to the divine.⁸¹⁷ Plutarch states that Sulla highlighted aspects of fortune and divine intervention to such an extent when fashioning his public persona that it went at the expense of the reputation of his own virtues (*Sull.* 6.5). He refers to how Sulla's memoirs open with a statement that the most reliable advice for any statesman is "that which the divine orders him at night (6.6: ὡς ὃ τι ἂν αὐτῷ προστάξῃ νύκτωρ τὸ δαιμόνιον).⁸¹⁸ The literary tradition about Sulla — most likely based on Sulla's memoirs — is permeated with miraculous dreams through which Sulla foresees the imminent future and receives divine guidance.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁵ See e.g. Misch (1973) 244–48, 269–71; Hopkins (1978) 231–240; Potter (1994) 146–182. More recently Santangelo (2013) 233–66 (specifically focusing on the rise of the monarchy). For further references, see Ripat (2006) 167 n.1 and 2). In relation to Josephus see Cohen (1979) 109; Gnuse (1996) 130; Marincola (1997) 210–11.

⁸¹⁶ See e.g. Cicero, *Div.* 1.119; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.* 2.57.2; Valerius Maximus, *Fact.* 1.7.2; Plutarch, *Caes.* 63; Suetonius, *Div. Iul.* 77.4, 81.4–7; Appian, *BC* 2.116; Cassius Dio 44.17–18. For further analysis of divine signs in the Caesar tradition, including references to the texts mentioned above, see Santangelo (2013) 236–40. On the traditions about portents predicting Caesar's death, see esp. Ripat (2006) 167–73.

⁸¹⁷ Plutarch, *Mar.* 26.3; *Sulla* 6.4–7, 17.1–2, 19.5, 27.3–6; Plutarch *Public Affairs* 786E; Cicero *Div.* 1.72.

⁸¹⁸ = Cornell (2013) F13. See for further discussion Santangelo (2013) 70–71.

⁸¹⁹ Sulla made a special case of being *Felix*. For an extensive discussion of the Sulla tradition, see Noble (2014).

Augustus appears to have shaped his public persona in similar fashion.⁸²⁰ The advent of the Second Triumvirate went hand in hand with a series of divine prodigies and omens that signified the end of the Republic and Octavian's rise to power (e.g., Dio 45.17, 53.20.1).⁸²¹ Suetonius tells that Augustus was very sensitive to both his own dreams (*somnia*) and those of others. In the subsequent passage he relates a dream received from Jupiter Capitolinus, a story which presumably came from Augustus' memoirs (*Div. Aug.* 91.1–2; cf. Dio 54.4.4). Thus, dreams probably formed a significant component of Augustus' self-fashioning in his autobiographical writings.⁸²²

Various emperors followed in Augustus' wake.⁸²³ For my purposes the traditions about Vespasian's rise to imperial power are most illustrative.⁸²⁴ It appears that Vespasian created a public image that his rule was the result of a divine consensus. This will have served him well as propaganda legitimizing his newly established rule.⁸²⁵ Suetonius refers to no less than eleven divine portents (*Vesp.* 5.1–7), among which a dream (*somnium*) of Vespasian himself that forecasted his successes (5.5). Remarkably, Suetonius and Cassius Dio also mention that the highborn prisoner Josephus predicted both Vespasian's rule and his own release (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 5.6; Cassius Dio 65.1.4).⁸²⁶

Josephus himself shows awareness that his prediction about Vespasian was one of many and that his fate was closely intertwined to the rise of the Flavian house.⁸²⁷ His dream at Jotapata is only the first indication of his foreknowledge about "the fate of the Roman monarchs" (*BJ* 3.351: τὰ περὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἐσόμενα). This motif is expanded significantly in the remainder of the narrative. Immediately after his capture Josephus declares to Vespasian that he and his son will be emperor (3.402). The narrator informs the audience that Vespasian only gradually starts to trust Josephus' prediction, when "other signs foreshadowed imperial powers" (3.404: τὰ σκῆπτρα δι'

⁸²⁰ On dreams and the supernatural in Augustus memoirs, see further Weber (2000) 147–60, 322–27, 372–79; Wiseman (2008).

⁸²¹ See for further discussion Santangelo (2013) 240–46.

⁸²² Wiseman (2008).

⁸²³ See also Potter (1994) 146. In relation to Josephus: Den Hollander (2014) 96–97.

⁸²⁴ For an overview and discussion see Lattimore (1934); Morgan (1996); Levick (1999) 67–69.

⁸²⁵ See e.g. Scott (1936) 1–20; Nicol (1978) 96. More recently Den Hollander (2014) 97–98; Davies (2017) 79–85.

⁸²⁶ For Josephus' reception among Romans see also Tacitus *Hist.* 2.101; 5.1–2, 10–13. See for brief discussion Mason (2016a) 49–50; Mason (2016d) 90.

⁸²⁷ As Josephus himself attempts to explain as well. See for further discussion Den Hollander (2014) 91–105; Davies (2017) 153–64.

ἐτέρων σημείων προδεικνύντος). In *BJ* 4 Vespasian realizes that his fortune and favourable circumstances must be guided by “divine providence” (δαίμονίου προνοίας) and that “some righteous destiny” (δικαία τις εἰμαρμένη) had given him power over the world. He recalls “numerous signs from everywhere that had foreshadowed his rule, especially the voice of Josephus” (4.623). Thus, Josephus highlights that his prediction is part of a broader current of divine portents revolving around Vespasian’s rise to the Principate, although he singles out his own as the most important one.⁸²⁸

5.4.4.5 *Summary and Conclusions*

Considering the previous discussion, it is difficult to see how the language and motifs Josephus employs to fashion his surrender to the Romans and prediction about the Flavians characterizes him as a biblical prophet, exclusively designed to counter Judaeans accusations of cowardice and treachery. It is not disputed that Judaeans not familiar with Greek traditions — or Judaeans familiar with Judaeans and Greek traditions — might have understood parts of Josephus’ narrative in terms of biblical prophecy. Yet how Josephus characterizes himself in view of his audience in the context of a composition imbued with classicizing features is a different matter.

First, as Feldman and Mason have shown, Josephus makes no systematic attempt to outline his views about Judaeans prophecy in the *BJ*. The most immediate parallel episode in the *BJ* is Herod’s predictive dream about the death of his brother Joseph. To suggest that Josephus’ main concern with *BJ* 3.351–54 was to present himself as a prophet is therefore implausible.

Second, that Josephus includes an autobiographical dream both in the *BJ* and the *Vita* can hardly be coincidental in view of his professed audience for both compositions. This is especially the case because Josephus makes these dreams a compositional turning point in both cases, marking the most important decisions of his career.

Third, a cursory survey of dream episodes in Graeco-Roman historiographical and autobiographical traditions also renders the hypothesis that Josephus specifically designed the passage to address a Judaeans audience untenable. My analysis of the available evidence provides solid arguments that suggest the contrary. The general message that statesmen and generals should

⁸²⁸ See also Den Hollander (2014) 96–97.

be sensitive to divine portents to be successful would have had a familiar ring among Greeks and Romans. Those steeped in Greek and Latin autobiography and historiography would have frequently come across similar dream episodes, with Xenophon's autobiographical dream in the *Anabasis* as most notable example.

What is more, Josephus connects his own fate with the rise of the Flavian dynasty through his dream. He presents his own prediction to Vespasian as one among many other portents. His prediction is how Romans like Suetonius and Greeks like Cassius Dio remembered Josephus. This implies a natural interest in the origin of the prediction, spelled out by Josephus in *BJ* 3.351–54.

In view of these arguments, I propose an interpretation of *BJ* 3.351–54 that fits its broader literary context: as a virtuous statesman and general, it would have been no option for Josephus to deliberately ignore a clearly divine sign such as a dream. He had already perceived that it was impossible to best the Romans in battle before his dream. The dream signifies the insight that he is not merely waging war against the Romans but also against God. Ignoring this would inevitably have caused not only personal misfortune but also collective disaster for his people. As a general and statesman, Josephus had the responsibility to make decisions that would ultimately serve the Judaeans. Waging war not only against the Romans but also against God (as the Judaeans tyrants had done) would not have served Josephus personally, nor the Judaeans. God's messages to his people did have the potential to prevent the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, if only the Judaeans — like Josephus and other Judaeans notables — would have recognized and interpreted them for what they were.

5.4.5 Josephus' Misfortunes in the *BJ*

In Chapter 3 I argued that Josephus furnishes some parts of his self-characterization with a distinctively tragic colour. This use of tragic language and themes is thoroughly anchored in the tragic vision of the Judaeans-Roman conflict developed by Josephus throughout the *BJ*. Taking into consideration the fact that Josephus writes autobiographically, the following section presents a reading complementary to my earlier observations.

As was observed in Chapter 4, Plutarch renders self-praise acceptable for the unfortunate man. The reason is that such a man bears up against fortune and carries his pride rather than appealing to compassion and immersing themselves in self-pity and abasement in adversity. By doing so, the unfortunate rises from humiliation to a state of pride. He is not considered offensive and arrogant but great and unconquerable (*On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 541A–B). Similarly, Cicero claims that when speaking about oneself, one can earn the goodwill of the audience by relating one's misfortunes and difficulties (*Inv.* 1.16.22). Elsewhere he tries to sell his own story to Lucceius by claiming that “[n]othing takes more care to the reader's pleasure than changes of circumstance and reversals of fortune” (*Fam.* 5.12.4). In consideration of Josephus' audience, framing his personal narrative along such lines would be a sensible choice from a rhetorical point of view.

In Chapter 3 it was argued that Josephus puts a consistent and overwhelming emphasis on his virtues throughout his personal narrative. Some of his main aims with exploiting his experiences of waging war against Vespasian might have been to shape an authoritative narrative persona for himself as historian and public figure in Rome. Yet this is hardly something he could have said explicitly to his readers or hearers.

Perhaps in correspondence to this, Josephus calls attention his own experiences in Galilee in terms of misfortune in the prologue of the *BJ* (1.22): “For I shall not conceal any of my own misfortunes, as I am about to speak to those who know them anyway” (οὐδὲ γὰρ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ τι συμφορῶν ἀποκρύψομαι, μέλλων γε πρὸς εἰδότας ἐρεῖν). If we accept the remarks of Plutarch and Cicero as relevant points of comparison, Josephus might have attempted to create an impression of a humbled man nonetheless priding himself in the considerable achievements of his people — including those of himself — *in spite of* collective and personal misfortunes.

On top of this, as was pointed out in Chapter 3, Josephus' choice of words in 1.22 connects his personal narrative with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (1.9–12, 1.26, 27–29). He sees the Judeans as a people that had “advanced to the greatest prosperity and then dropped to the most extreme of disasters,” in comparison to which “all the misfortunes that happened of old are inferior.” As an extension of this, Josephus might have pointed out the necessity of outlining his virtuous

defence against Vespasian to his audience, so that they could have pictured the tragedy of his personal misfortunes at a later stage.

At any rate, assuming prior knowledge about his misfortunes, Josephus invites his audience to criticize him on the spot should they recognize any factual errors. By drawing upon this intimate communicative relationship, Josephus creates an impression of mutual trust and openness.⁸²⁹ The choice of characterizing his autobiographical story as a tragic one in the prologue of his work might be rhetorically intended to avoid this impression.⁸³⁰

While one finds a steady increase of dramatic and sometimes explicitly tragic action in the narrative of the siege of Jotapata, Josephus makes his own surrender the pinnacle of the Galilean tragedy (cf. Chapter 3). The following scenes illustrate how Josephus applies a tragic framing to his self-characterization and simultaneously praises his own virtues. For a more detailed analysis of the relevant passages, one should consult §3.3.1, where I make some observations on the compositional function of 3.432–42, and §3.3.4, where I discuss the tragic tone of Josephus' self-characterization in *BJ* 3.

First, Josephus characterizes the dramatic encounter with his compatriots whereby his life is at stake in terms of his most extreme misfortunes (3.386: τὰς ἐσχάτας συμφοράς) and hardships (3.387: ἀμνηχανία). This in turn forces him to draw on his inventiveness, which enables him to survive (3.391; with the help of God or fortune). Thus, Josephus' extreme peril offers him an opportunity to highlight his cleverness.

Second, Josephus' entrance into the Roman camp is framed as a sudden reversal of fortune (3.394: μεταβολή). This incites the Roman commanders to forget their previous anger (3.395) and

⁸²⁹ For a similar point about Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*, see Wiater (2017).

⁸³⁰ Marincola (1997) 211 notes how Josephus uses notions of pity and fortune in the autobiographical sections and how these are framed in accordance with Graeco-Roman conventions of self-praise. Cf. Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 541A–B and Quintilian, *Inv.* 1.16.22. See more generally Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12.4. For the possibility of reading the tragic currents of Josephus' self-characterization as a rhetorical strategy, see §5.4.5. A similar appeal to πάθος is employed by Demosthenes in *On the Crown*. Most notably, the alliance with Philip of Chaeronea, the pinnacle of Demosthenes' political career is presented as a failure, a heroic attempt to achieve something great but nonetheless a failure. See *Crown* 18.199–201, 270–275. See for further discussion Yunis (2001) 109; idem (2005) 32 n.11. For a more systematic treatment of pathos in *On the Crown* see Katula (2016). For further discussion of this current, see §5.4.5.

Titus to reflect on the power of fortune, the quick turning of the scales in war, and the general instability of human affairs (3.396). Josephus' abasement from virtuous fighter to disgraceful captive is a scene that arouses pity and compassion among those watching. These reflections imply the impressiveness of Josephus' past achievements, but we also find admiration of his present disposition: Titus is seized by "the endurance displayed by Josephus in his misfortunes" (τό τε καρτερικὸν ἐν ταῖς συμφοραῖς). By virtue of Titus' reflections, Josephus is turned from a piteous captive into a moral *exemplum* for others to follow.⁸³¹

Third, Josephus' capture by the Romans is not only a personal blow, but one that affects the Judaeans collectively (3.432–37). The news of Jotapata's capture and especially the fiction of Josephus' death is received in Jerusalem as such a great disaster (3.432: τὸ μέγεθος τῆς συμφορᾶς) that it filled the city with thirty days of mourning. Even though the news of Josephus' death turns out to be fake, the picture of universal mourning highlights that the Judaeans perceived Josephus as among the most important representatives of their cause.

In each of these three cases Josephus pairs his adversities with an accompanying emphasis on his virtues and/or importance. This observation corroborates the hypothesis that he employs tragic language and themes to rhetorically moderate his extensive self-praise in the *BJ*.

5.5 Conclusions

This chapter attempted to provide a systematic analysis of the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by Josephus to moderate the praise he bestows upon himself in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ*. My analysis indicates that Josephus puts much effort into creating a convincing and impartial narrative perspective. He makes systematic use of standard Graeco-Roman rhetorical and literary conventions in the process. The persuasive force of this perspective is encapsulated in the composite portrait arising from the rhetorical techniques and features entrenched in the

⁸³¹ Note the contrast with the actions of e.g. the Roman commander Metilius (2.450–54), who capitulates before asks for peace terms. The Romans lay down their arms but are surrounded by Eleazar's Judaeans and killed to the last man. Only Metilius saves himself by *begging* and promising to undergo circumcision and side with the Judaeans. The phrasing implies Metilius' weakness. On the contrast between both episodes see Chapman (2005a) 293–96.

narrative. Collectively, these features lend the narrative its logic and coherence. Whether Josephus succeeded to actually convince his historical audience is a question beyond the scope of my investigation, and most probably impossible to answer at any rate. Yet at the very least it is possible to appreciate the artfulness of Josephus' effort.

My most important interpretative proposals are as follows. First, my point of departure was to analyse Josephus' use of the third person and the scale of his personal narrative in the *BJ* in a Graeco-Roman comparative context. I have advocated the necessity of moving beyond Thucydides and Polybius as points of comparison to explain the perspective of Josephus' autobiographical narrative. In terms of scale and style, Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Caesar's *BG* are perhaps more helpful to understand Josephus' choices related to "person and perspective."

Second, Josephus' attempt to create an impartial and objective perspective is further underlined by his use of a variety of literary techniques — for example, using the voice of other characters to praise himself rather than using his own voice as narrator, showing rather than telling his own virtues, praising characters similar to his own, and inserting minor mistakes to highlight his critical abilities as historian.

Third, I have proposed to explain the apologetic passages in Josephus' autobiographical narrative in view of Graeco-Roman autobiographical and rhetorical conventions. Scholars have frequently pointed to how these currents might reveal Josephus' purposes for writing about his own deeds so extensively: in some passages he apparently felt compelled to respond to accusations of cowardice and treachery raised against him by Judaeans critics. My aim was to illustrate that claims of necessity and apology feature frequently in Graeco-Roman autobiographical texts. In some cases, they are demonstrably used for rhetorical purposes. Correspondingly, Josephus' strong emphasis on his military and political virtues throughout the narrative (cf. Chapter 3) might at least partially have prompted him to furnish his personal narrative in terms of self-justification and apologetic.

In addition to this, the focus of the analysis was on trying to explain the rationale underpinning Josephus' apology by examining, first, how its different parts relate to each other and, second, how the motifs of personal apology relate to the rationale of the composition of the whole *BJ*. On the basis of this, I have argued that Josephus presents his motivations in such a way that his

disposition closely resembles that of other (virtuous) Judaeans statesmen (e.g., Herod the Great, Agrippa II, and Ananus the high priest). His fashioning of the charges invites his Roman readers to accept his interpretation of the events. Roman characters are the ones to consistently underscore Josephus' greatness in the context of the narrative, whereas the Judaeans challenge him on multiple occasions. Josephus' attempts to escape the city are consistent with how his character is portrayed more generally. There are indications that Josephus intended the care he took for his personal safety to be understood along pragmatic-strategic lines. A good general should always try to keep out of the hands of his enemies so that he can be of value at a later stage in the war. Dying for a lost cause (= Jotapata) would not have helped Josephus or the Judaeans. In other words, Josephus' presents his considerations as not *simply* selfish.

Fourth, one of the motifs that has traditionally drawn much attention among scholars is Josephus' autobiographical dream at *BJ* 3.351–54. Some scholars have cited this passage as proof that Josephus fashioned himself as a biblical prophet in an attempt to counter charges levelled against him by his compatriots. This view was challenged on multiple grounds. First, Josephus does not seem to have the slightest interest in establishing his views on Judaeans prophecy in the *BJ*, a history dealing with military and political issues and (in my estimation) consistently composed to suit the interests and tastes of elites in and around Flavian Rome. Second, dreams (or receiving a state of inspiration) do not feature prominently in the *BJ*, but where they do, they cannot be linked to Josephus' views of prophecy. The only episode that is remotely similar to Josephus' autobiographical dream in the cave of Jotapata is the dream received by Herod, a king and a general (not a prophet). Moreover, in the context of the *BJ* Josephus associates the interpretation of dreams with wise men, not prophets. Third, dreams regularly feature in *Graeco-Roman* autobiographical discourse. Ancient theorists recommend using references to fortune and the divine on account of their persuasive force. Especially Xenophon's symbolic dream in the *Anabasis* might point to Josephus' potential motivation for using this motif (in the *BJ* and the *Vita*) in view of an audience steeped in Graeco-Roman literary conventions.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The potential interplay between author and audience of the *BJ* has occupied a central place in the foregoing study. Ancient audiences had high expectations of historians. In view of such expectations, Josephus makes himself so central in his own history that it is impossible to ignore his presence as author and character. The purpose of this study has been to trace the thematic and rhetorical aspects of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*, particularly focusing on his self-fashioning as a character in his own narrative.

The foregoing study has developed a variety of propositions based on the systematic application of a set of interpretative criteria. It focused on understanding the vocabulary, phrases, and motifs used by Josephus to describe his own deeds. Informed by previous scholarship, the criteria that have determined my interpretations of the possible meanings of Josephus' self-characterization are 1) its immediate compositional context (the purposes, themes, and outlook of the text as a whole) and 2) Josephus' immediate cultural context (Flavian Rome). This study has attempted to give a reading of the different potential meanings of (part of) this communicative attempt by trying to recover Josephus' expectations from his readers based on their cultural norms and literary conventions (esp. historiographical, autobiographical, and their rhetorical backgrounds). Therefore, in addition to trying to recover the different meanings of the autobiographical sections in the compositional context of the *BJ*, this has been a comparative enterprise focusing on explaining Josephus' self-characterization in the context of the Graeco-Roman intellectual discourses that will have been familiar to his audiences in and around Rome.

Instead of repeating the conclusions of the individual chapters, it is perhaps useful to connect the dots among the most important arguments formulated in this investigation and present the highpoints of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*. Some critics have attempted to look through Josephus' narrative to obtain a better understanding of Josephus' life, career, or thinking. No one would deny the necessity and importance of such work. Yet, in keeping with a prominent stream of Josephus research, this study has shifted the focus to understanding the thematic and rhetorical aspects of Josephus' autobiographical narrative in view of an audience in and around Flavian Rome.

The first part of this study attempted to connect Josephus' autobiographical narrative with the general compositional aims and themes of the *BJ* in the context of the moral-didactic expectations that Josephus' audience would have had of a work of political and military history. Chapter 2 explored these expectations and showed how Greeks and Romans understood character in terms of moral-didactic exemplarity. Additionally, it attempted to highlight the complexity of Josephus' characterization practices and the deliberateness of his overt and moralizing style as a historian.

Chapter 3 began with a survey of scholarly views about the aims and purposes of the *BJ*. Recent scholarship has pointed to the difficulties of trying to explain the *BJ* as an attempt to communicate a single thesis. This approach focuses on the literary structures and themes of the work and how these offer the possibility to read different messages conveyed in the *BJ* as complementary. Applied to Josephus' self-characterization, this approach meant examining the language and themes used in the autobiographical sections in comparison with other material of the *BJ*. Josephus' self-characterization consists of a carefully composed narrative that is largely coherent with the moral-didactic aims and themes of the work. Moreover, Josephus stages himself as a recognizable character type and a moral example for others to follow, adhering to generic expectations of Graeco-Roman historiography. In terms of narrative structure, Josephus emphasizes his own importance for the Judaean cause. He notes how his capture caused happiness among the Romans and disaster in Jerusalem. I have suggested that Josephus' emphasis on his own importance is partially intended to create the appearance that the inclusion of his personal story is necessary to understand the plot development of the *BJ* and avoid the appearance of a self-aggrandizing digression.

More specifically, Josephus puts an overwhelming emphasis on his military and political virtues throughout the narrative. Josephus characterizes himself as an ideal general according to Graeco-Roman ideals. I have attempted to explain this emphasis as arising naturally from the historiographical outlook of the *BJ*, a work focusing on (according to Josephus' claim) the greatest conflict between cities and nations that has ever occurred in history. As I have outlined in Chapter 2, a historian was expected to offer moral didactic lessons through discerning recognizable patterns

of behaviour of individuals and groups staged in a historical narrative. By characterizing himself as a virtuous general in Graeco-Roman fashion, Josephus makes himself a character type recognizable for his audience, thus tailoring his self-characterization to the expectations of his readers.

Shaping an authoritative narrative persona would have served Josephus in other ways too. His actions in Galilee show his expertise on military-political subjects and thus enhance his authority as a historian. Additionally, Josephus could reasonably expect a considerable interest in his personal story among his audience by virtue of his unique experience of fighting the emperor himself in the conflict that had played a foundational role in establishing the Flavian Principate. It should occasion no surprise that Josephus takes an effort to exploit these experiences for his own benefit and that of his literary projects in Rome.

I have observed thematic continuity in two other directions. First, in *BJ* 2 Josephus makes his own policy against civic unrest and burgeoning civil war a central theme. Having dealt with internal problems in Book 2, Josephus creates the right conditions for taking on external war with the Romans in Book 3. Although the *BJ* is ultimately a narrative that explains the Judaeian failure to deal with its internal affairs (not unlike the Romans!), this explanatory scheme is also employed elsewhere in the work (most conspicuously in the case of Herod the Great). Second, Josephus portrays his surrender to the Romans — not the end of the siege of Jotapata — as the tragic highpoint of the Galilee narrative and connects it with the development of affairs in Jerusalem. This immediately ties in with his general use of tragic language and themes and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem as the tragic highpoint of the *BJ*.

Chapters 4 and 5 focused on explaining the particularities of Josephus' self-fashioning as a character in the *BJ* in the context of Graeco-Roman autobiographical discourse. Chapter 4 offered a general survey of this discourse vis-à-vis the decorum of self-praise. The most important insights obtained in this chapter have been applied to the text of the *BJ* in Chapter 5. From a rhetorical viewpoint, there are important points of contrast between Josephus' self-characterization and his presentation of other characters in the *BJ*. In Chapter 2 it was suggested that Josephus frequently embellishes his narrative with overt character judgments. Occasions of explicit praise and blame of individuals or groups are typical of his narrative style. The analysis of Chapter 5 suggested that

Josephus follows a different procedure when characterizing himself. This can be explained in relation to Graeco-Roman theorizing about the problems inherent in public self-praise. The composition and narrative build-up of the autobiographical sections suggest that Josephus significantly draws on Graeco-Roman historiographical and rhetorical conventions to establish an authoritative narrative persona. The evidence presented in this study indicates that Josephus was aware of the problems inherent in self-praise. Accordingly, he fashioned his narrative persona corresponding to (his understanding of) these conventions. Josephus consistently inserts a set of rhetorical techniques and strategies with the aim of creating an appearance of impartiality (use of the third person; showing rather than telling his own virtues; praising himself by using the voice of other characters; occasionally mentioning minor mistakes).

On the basis of a systematic comparison with Graeco-Roman autobiographical conventions, I have also argued that some of the themes encountered in the autobiographical sections of the *BJ* can at least partially be explained as rhetorical strategies. Throughout his personal narrative Josephus creates an appearance of self-justification and apology. Scholars pursuing other kinds of questions have explained these thematic aspects as prompted by the severity of the accusations raised against Josephus. The focus in the present study has been different. I have suggested that Josephus included these and related literary motifs — for example, his responses against injustices performed by (especially) John of Gischala in *BJ* 2; accusations of cowardice and treachery raised by his compatriots in the cave (3.355–60) and in Jerusalem (3.432–42); references to divine interference in 3.340–91 and Josephus' autobiographical dream in 3.351–54; the tragic framing of his surrenders story and its reception in Jerusalem (3.387–91, 392–98, 432–37) — at least partially to communicate his virtues as a general in a persuasive and appealing manner to an elite audience in Rome steeped in Graeco-Roman literary and rhetorical conventions. By applying such a rhetorical frame, Josephus subtly guided his audience towards accepting his vision of his actions in Galilee.

Although this study has aimed to offer the first systematic literary analysis of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ*, it is far from exhaustive and must be considered in view of its limited set of questions and aims. Throughout this investigation, I have focused mainly on questions of communication: which messages does Josephus attempt to get across in the autobiographical

sections of the *BJ*, to whom, why, and how? I have sought to place Josephus' autobiographical practice in the historical and cultural context of first-century Rome, using the general intellectual climate of the city in this time in accomplishing this. Such a general approach has obvious limitations. Thus, it is unlikely that Josephus actually knew the works of his younger contemporary Plutarch — one of the main points of comparison throughout this study — who reached the peak of his literary career only after the Flavian age.⁸³² Different questions and approaches may shed complementary light on Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* and sharpen aspects of the interpretations proposed in this study. One might ask, for example, how Josephus acquired knowledge of Graeco-Roman rhetorical practices. Did he in some manner go back to school when he arrived in Rome or did he acquire these skills at an earlier stage of his career in Judaea? Are there specific lexical choices that reveal what he had read and how he both fitted in and adjusted the philosophical tradition of the presentation of the self in Graeco-Roman literature? Did Josephus know Latin well enough to be able to read and to use, for instance, the works of Julius Caesar when he wrote the *BJ*? These are but a few questions that have been addressed only indirectly in this study, but that deserve to be investigated in more depth.

In spite of these limitations, the general picture that arises from my study is that Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* is a sophisticated attempt to harmonize Graeco-Roman historiographical (Chapter 2–3) and autobiographical conventions (Chapter 4–5). It epitomizes the complexity and depth of Josephus' characterization practices and his versatility as author.

⁸³² Jones (1966); Jones (1971) 20–27.

Appendix: Josephus and the Conventions of Self-Praise Elsewhere in His Corpus

My examination of Josephus' self-characterization in the *BJ* might raise several questions about Josephus' practice of self-praise elsewhere in his corpus (see briefly §4.4). The aims of the present study prevent us from embarking on a systematic analysis, but it might be helpful to offer a discussion of three of the most relevant passages: the conclusion of the *AJ* 20.262–67; the Justus digression in the *Vita* 336–67; and the digression on historiography in the *CA* 1.46–57. I argue that these three passages show Josephus' awareness and consideration of Graeco-Roman perceptions about self-praise throughout his corpus, thus corroborating the vision put forward throughout this study.

AJ 20.262–67

Let us turn first to the conclusion of the *AJ* (20.262–267):

λέγω δὴ θαρσύνσας ἤδη διὰ τὴν τῶν προτεθέντων συντέλειαν, ὅτι μηδεὶς ἂν ἕτερος ἠδυνήθη θελήσας μήτε Ἰουδαῖος μήτε ἀλλόφυλος τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην οὕτως ἀκριβῶς εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξενεγκεῖν· ἔχω γὰρ ὁμολογούμενον παρὰ τῶν ὁμοεθνῶν πλείστον αὐτῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιχώριον καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν παιδείαν διαφέρειν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων καὶ ποιητικῶν μαθημάτων πολλὰ ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβὼν, τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσεν συνήθεια. παρ' ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐκείνους ἀποδέχονται τοὺς πολλῶν ἔθνων διάλεκτον ἐκμαθόντας καὶ γλαφυρότητι λέξεων τὸν λόγον ἐπικομψεύοντας διὰ τὸ κοινὸν εἶναι νομίζειν τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα τοῦτο μόνον οὐκ ἐλευθέρους τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν οἰκετῶν τοῖς θέλουσι, μόνους δὲ σοφίαν μαρτυροῦσιν τοῖς τὰ νόμιμα σαφῶς ἐπισταμένοις καὶ τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων δύναμιν ἐρμηνεύσαι δυναμένοις. διὰ τοῦτο πολλῶν πονησάντων περὶ τὴν ἄσκησιν ταύτην μόλις δύο τινὲς ἢ τρεῖς κατάρθωσαν καὶ τῶν πόνων τὴν ἐπικαρπίαν εὐθύς ἔλαβον. ἴσως δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐπίφθονον γένοιτο οὐδὲ σκαιὸν τοῖς πολλοῖς φανήσεται καὶ περὶ γένους τοῦμοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων βραχέα διεξελεῖν ἕως ἔχω ζῶντας ἢ τοὺς ἐλέγχοντας ἢ τοὺς μαρτυρήσοντας. Ἐπὶ τούτοις δὲ καταπαύσω τὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν βιβλίοις μὲν εἴκοσι περιειλημμένην, ἐξ δὲ μυριάσι στίχων, κἂν τὸ θεῖον ἐπιτρέπη κατὰ περιδρομὴν

ὑπομνήσω πάλιν τοῦ τε πολέμου καὶ τῶν συμβεβηκότων ἡμῖν μέχρι τῆς νῦν ἐνεστῶσης ἡμέρας,
ἥτις ἐστὶν τρισκαίδεκάτου μὲν ἔτους τῆς Δομετιανοῦ Καίσαρος ἀρχῆς

Encouraged by the completion of what I had projected [sc. the *Antiquities*], I would now say plainly that no other person who had wished to do so, whether a Judean or a foreigner, would have been able to produce this work so precisely for Greek speakers. For among my compatriots I am admitted to have an education in our country's customs that far surpasses theirs. And once I had consolidated my knowledge of Greek grammar, I worked very hard also to share in the learning of Greek letters and poetry, though my traditional habit has frustrated precision with respect to pronunciation. Among us: they do not favour those who have mastered the accent of many nations and made their speech frilly with elegance of diction, because they consider such a pursuit to be common—not only among those who happen to be free citizens, but even among domestics if they desire it. They acknowledge wisdom only among those who clearly understand the legal system and who are able to bring out the force of the sacred literature. So, although many have worked hard at this discipline, barely two or maybe three have succeeded, and they have soon reaped the benefits of their labours. Perhaps it will not be a provocation to jealousy, or strike ordinary folk as gauche, if I review briefly both my own ancestry and the events of my life while there are still those living who can offer refutation or corroboration. With these matters I shall conclude the *Antiquities*, comprising twenty volumes and 60,000 lines, and, should the deity permit, I shall again make mention, cursorily, of both the war and what has happened to us until the present day, which belongs to the thirteenth year of the rule of Domitian Caesar and, in my case, the fifty-sixth year from birth (trans. Mason 2001, FJTC).

In this passage, which serves as the prologue of the *Vita*,⁸³³ Josephus briefly recounts his credentials for having undertaken an investigation about ancient Judaeian history and customs in the Greek

⁸³³ Cf. Barish, (1978) 66–71; Mason (2001) xiv; idem (2016c) 59–60.

language. In doing so he uses several commonplaces from Greek and Roman historiography, especially about the efforts made when composing the *AJ*, the difficulty of the task, and the extensive training he had to complete in order to undertake it (cf. §4.4).⁸³⁴

In other respects, Josephus also shows himself to be aware of conventions about self-praise. He knows that going through his own ancestry and actions — i.e., to write an autobiography — might cause him to be liable to envy (ἐπιφθονος) and strike the common people as gauche (σκαίος). Yet his audience consists of fellow elites, such as Epaphroditus and his circle. They have remained until the very end of Josephus' archaeology of the Judaeans and Josephus can reasonably assume mutual trust. They are *not* common people of the kind that is easily provoked to envy. It is implied that congenial minds will understand the soundness of an autobiographical appendix in praise of Josephus, the historian who has produced a monumental work such as the *AJ*.

Vita 336–37

Having outlined his rationale in the epilogue of the *AJ*, Josephus moves immediately to his personal story in the *Vita*. Throughout the treatise he displays the same confidence in his own virtues as elsewhere in his corpus.⁸³⁵ The conventional view held that Josephus' main purpose in writing the *Vita* was self-justification in reference to rival historian Justus of Tiberias. This hypothesis is rooted in Josephus' description of Justus' actions at *Vita* 36–42 — where he claims that Justus and his brother had an important role in causing “almost complete ruin” and promises to explain this “as the story unfolds” (41) — and in the strongly apologetic currents in the Justus digression (336–67).⁸³⁶

While Justus and his history may have been significant provocations, scholars have found problems with this hypothesis. Shaye Cohen argues that although Justus provided an occasion for

⁸³⁴ Josephus constructs similar claims at *BJ* 1.16 and *AJ* 1.9. On historian's claims of effort for composing their works see Marincola (1997) 148–58.

⁸³⁵ Although a closer look reveals adherence to Graeco-Roman rhetorical standards: he shows great confidence in his virtues and achievements, but simultaneously applies a variety of techniques to moderate his self-praise.

⁸³⁶ See e.g. Luther (1910); Laqueur (1920); Drexler (1923–1925); Thackeray (1929) 16–17; Schalit (1933); Rajak (1973); Mason (1991) 316–24. For more recent interpretations, again with a stress on Josephus' apologetic purposes, see e.g. Rodgers (2006); Stern (2010); Stern (2011).

Josephus' response, Josephus had other motives for producing the *Vita*. He identifies five themes that (in his view) turn out to be unrelated to the Justus apology.⁸³⁷ In a revision of her earlier argument, Tessa Rajak proposes that only the digression responds to Justus. She advocates that the remainder of the *Vita* addresses the concerns of the Judaeen aristocracy that survived the revolt, especially that part of it situated in the Diaspora.⁸³⁸ Per Bilde proposes that the *Vita* should first and foremost be read in its immediate literary context, which presents it as an autobiography aimed at demonstrating the unique credentials of the author of the *AJ*.⁸³⁹ Jerome Neyrey studies the *Vita* in view of the rhetorical encomium, arguing that the *Vita* aims at praise and blame and contains all the ingredients of a formal encomium.⁸⁴⁰ Mason also draws attention to the self-congratulatory tone of the *Vita* and its focus on the character of the *AJ*'s author,⁸⁴¹

Taking into consideration this reappraisal of Josephus' aims for producing the *Vita*, my aim in this section is to shed light on some of the rhetorical aspects of the Justus apology in view of the autobiographical conventions outlined in Chapter 4. While Josephus makes bold claims throughout the *Vita*, especially those in the digression might have been inappropriate in view of Josephus' more general aims.⁸⁴² In the first part of the digression Josephus addresses Justus' apparent claims about his role in Galilee (340–56). In the second part he contrasts Justus' virtues as a historian of the Judaeen-Roman conflict with his own (357–67). Among the claims made by Josephus is that he had direct access to the *commentarii* of Vespasian (358). The Flavians and Agrippa II endorsed his work (361–62). Titus insisted that knowledge about the Judaeen-Roman conflict should be transmitted only via Josephus' histories. He allegedly inscribed and ordered them to be made public (363). Agrippa II dispatched sixty-two letters to Josephus about his history of the Judaeen-Roman conflict (364–66).

⁸³⁷ Cohen (1979) esp. 144, 169–70.

⁸³⁸ See Rajak (2002) 152ff. (esp. 153–54). So also Rajak (1987). For her earlier views, see Rajak (1973).

⁸³⁹ Bilde (1988) 108–11.

⁸⁴⁰ Neyrey (1994).

⁸⁴¹ So Mason (1998); Mason (2001).

⁸⁴² Josephus makes the distinction between narrative (διήγησις) and digression (παρέκβασις) himself (*Vita* 367).

When looking at Josephus' framing of the digression, one finds the claims of necessity and apology frequently associated with autobiographical discourse (*Vita* 336–39). Josephus attacks the veracity of the histories produced by Justus and other rival historians, comparing their practice with the forging of contracts. Their practice is motivated by enmity (ἔχθρα) and partiality (χάρις). They lack any regard for the truth (ἀλήθεια). Justus speaks falsely (καταψεύδομαι) about Josephus and even fails to tell the truth (ἀληθεύω) about his native place. *Because of this* (ὅθεν ... γὰρ) Josephus — being a victim of false testimony (καταψευδομαρτυρέω) — is *now* (νῦν) under compulsion (ἀνάγκη) to defend himself (ἀπολογέομαι) and to speak about matters about which he has been silent *until now* (μέχρι νῦν) because of his own moderation (μετριοτής). As is shown by the Greek text, Josephus highlights the immediate urgency and necessity of providing *correct* information about both Justus and himself.⁸⁴³ One finds a similar emphasis in the closing of the digression: “but let these issues that had to be taken up against Justus through this digression be said by us until these” (367: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν πρὸς Ἰούστον ἀναγκαίαν λαβόντα τὴν παρέκβασιν μέχρι τούτων ἡμῖν λελέχθω). All of this might be perceived as commonplace rhetoric, which Greeks and Romans frequently associated with the conventions of autobiographical discourse.

What significantly adds to the impression that this digression is embellished with rhetorical techniques is Josephus' sudden and artificial change of perspective: instead of writing *about* Justus and the Tiberians, Josephus *explicitly addresses them*. This is notable because, like the *AJ*, the *Vita* itself is addressed to Epaphroditus (*AJ* 1.8–9; 20.268; *Vita* 430) and written for those who wish to learn more about ancient Judaeon history and its constitution and philosophy (*AJ* 1.5, 8–9, 12, 25). However, in this digression Josephus alternates between writing to Justus (*Vita* 340–44; 349–50; 354–56; 357–67) and to the inhabitants of his native Tiberias (345–48; 351–53). This procedure can perhaps be explained in light of Pseudo-Hermogenes' observations about Demosthenes' practice, about which he notes that it successfully alternates between addressing the Athenian assembly and his opponent Aeschines (*Meth.* 25). One can also point, for example, to Quintilian's observations that Cicero “makes greater claims for himself when confronting his enemies and detractors because

⁸⁴³ The Isocrates parallel has been noted by Mason (2001) 138 (pointing to the courtroom setting of the Justus digression).

he was forced to defend his policies when they were used against him (*Inst.* 11.1.23).⁸⁴⁴ In a like manner, Josephus proposes to speak *as if* Justus is present (*Vita* 340: ἵνα φῶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὡς παρόντα). He calls Justus out: “Ἰοῦστε, δεινότατε συγγραφέων” (“Justus, most skilful of historians”). Josephus not only detaches this part of the *Vita* from the main narrative in the form of a digression; he furnishes it with a style that suits his aim to speak about matters of which he had remained silent before on account of his own moderation (339), in an attempt to alleviate its offensiveness to his professed audience.

CA 1.47–56

Josephus employs similar language in the *Contra Apionem* when closing a discussion on comparative historiography. It is not entirely clear whether Josephus means “this digression” to be the entire section (1.6–56), the specific treatment of contemporary historiography (1.46–56), the section on Josephus’ own virtues as a historian (1.47–56), or only the polemics at the end of the section (1.53–56).⁸⁴⁵ Josephus’ attack on Greeks criticizing his work and the accompanying praise of his own work — focusing on issues of veracity, accuracy, impartiality, evidence, and rhetoric — are also touched upon in *BJ* 1.9–16 and fully developed in *Vita* 336–367.⁸⁴⁶ In the *CA* Josephus mentions his participation in the war and his qualification as an eyewitness of all the events during the siege of Jerusalem (*CA* 1.47–49). He also emphasizes that Vespasian and Titus were the most important witnesses of the reliability of his account, in addition to some prominent members of the Herodian family and Romans participating in the war (1.50–52).

At *CA* 1.50 Josephus notes that he “made use of some collaborators regarding the Greek language.” The role of these collaborators has been vigorously debated. Thackeray famously argued

⁸⁴⁴ We find something similar in Velleius’ outburst against the at the time of writing long-deceased Mark Antony (*Rom. Hist.* 2.65–66), a passage discussed more elaborately in Chapter 2. See also Velleius, *Rom. Hist.* 2.41.1, where Julius Caesar “grabs the pen” of Velleius and forces him to write more slowly. On the direct address of deceased persons in Latin literature, see Gowing (2005) 47, 57–58, 72.

⁸⁴⁵ For further discussion see Barclay (2007) 8–12 (on the historiographical section in *CA* 1.6–56), 41 (on the issue of the beginning of the digression). For the position that the entire section is a digression see Mason (1996) 209.

⁸⁴⁶ See Barclay (2007) 9.

that these should be perceived as literary assistants responsible for the style of Josephus' corpus. This hypothesis has been refuted by Tessa Rajak.⁸⁴⁷ In my view, Josephus attempts to demonstrate that he took great care for the style and language of the *BJ* with this statement — even though this was not his main occupation — to avoid being accused of carelessness and sloppiness. Sulla's dedication of his *commentarii* to Lucullus on account of the latter's superior skill in Latin and Greek demonstrates that such claims were not unusual among Romans (Plutarch, *Luc.* 1.3). This entails that correctness of language and style was a prerequisite for being taken seriously.⁸⁴⁸

This anticipates the more central part of Josephus' claim about his work, namely its veracity, reviving Josephus' argument in the *BJ* (esp. 1.13–16). Josephus refers to the accusations of “some evil persons” who had attempted to slander his history to be “an exercise as those of boys at school” (*CA* 1.53). This accusation sets Josephus' histories apart as *rhetorical* exercises rather than serious and durable history for statesman of the kind written by Thucydides and Polybius.⁸⁴⁹ Josephus ridicules this accusation by highlighting how veracity has always been his priority, whereas for the style of his work he had the help of some collaborators. Josephus' background as a priest and training in the philosophy of the Judaeian holy books safeguards the truth of the *AJ* (*CA* 1.54). Regarding the Judaeian-Roman conflict, Josephus was personally involved in many and witness of most events, and he had access to Vespasian's *commentarii* (1.55). This explicitly contrasts Josephus' practice to that of the Greeks, who care only about rhetoric and style (1.44–46). Thus, to challenge the *veracity* of Josephus' history demonstrates recklessness: even *if* these people had access to Vespasian's *commentarii*, they were certainly not present in Judaea as Josephus had been (1.56).

⁸⁴⁷ See Thackeray (1929) 100–24. The assistant hypothesis was refuted programmatically by Rajak (2002) 233–36.

⁸⁴⁸ In *AJ* 20.263 Josephus also claims that he made great effort to learn the Greek language and literature. On Josephus' study of Greek see esp. Rajak (2002) 46–64. On the importance of linguistic skills in relation to writing history cf. Polybius, *Hist.* 39.1 (Polybius slanders Albinus for writing history in Greek in spite of his incomplete mastery of the language); Plutarch, *Dem.* 2.2ff. As to why Josephus makes this specific point only in the *CA*, after publication of his earlier works: in my view this should be explained on account of the accusation that follows in *CA* 1.53 and Josephus' repeated claim that Greeks are obsessed with literary prowess in *CA* 1.23, 27; 2.292 (cf. *BJ* 1.13–16; *AJ* 1.7; 20.262–265). By claiming that he had literary collaborators Josephus both distances himself from rhetorical skill (see Barclay [2007] 36) and ensures that the quality of his work meets the required standards.

⁸⁴⁹ Cf. Barclay (2007) 112 n. 215, who points to the potential echo of Thuc. 1.22.4 and Polybius, *Hist.* 3.31.12–13.

In what follows, Josephus signals a break between the self-aggrandizement immediately before 1.57 and the main subject of the *CA*, which is the antiquity and excellence of the Judaeian *ethnos* and its constitution.⁸⁵⁰ “I have composed this digression out of necessity, wishing to point out the frivolity of those who promise to write histories” (*CA* 1.57: Περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων ἀναγκαίαν ἐποιησάμην τὴν παρέκβασιν ἐπισημῆνασθαι βουλόμενος τῶν ἐπαγγελλομένων τὰς ἱστορίας συγγράφειν τὴν εὐχέρειαν). As with the Justus apology in the *Vita*, Josephus emphasizes the necessity of elaborating on the excellence his work and his virtues as a historian. He may have done this in consideration of Graeco-Roman social norms and conventions related to self-praise.

⁸⁵⁰ This is Josephus’ declared purpose, see esp. *CA* 1.3, 58–59. On the various possible purposes of the *Apion* in light of the work’s potential audiences, also for further references, see Barclay (2007) li–liii.

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de *Joodse Oorlog*, een geschiedenis over de Joodse opstand tegen Rome van 66–70 n.C. en één van de meest invloedrijke niet-Bijbelse teksten in de geschiedenis van de westerse beschaving. Eén van de meest in het oog springende kenmerken van dit werk is de belangrijke rol die Flavius Josephus, de auteur, toeschrijft aan zijn eigen personage. Tot voor kort bestudeerden onderzoekers de autobiografische secties in dit werk voornamelijk om Josephus' leven en gedachtegoed te reconstrueren. Zijn omstreden levensverhaal — met name zijn beslissing om zich op basis van zijn interpretatie van zijn eigen droom over te geven aan de Romeinen en zijn lot aan de nieuwe keizers te verbinden in plaats van zelfmoord te plegen — heeft zowel binnen als buiten de wetenschap geresulteerd in sterke vooroordelen over deze Joodse historicus en de intellectuele kwaliteiten van zijn werk. Veel wetenschappers nemen op basis van Josephus' claims aan dat Josephus zo uitgebreid over zijn eigen daden schreef als reactie op beschuldigingen van zijn landgenoten. Mijn studie breekt met deze tendens en biedt de eerste systematische literaire analyse van Josephus' zelfkarakterisering in de *Joodse Oorlog*. De belangrijkste vraag die wordt beantwoord is hoe Josephus' beschrijving van zijn eigen personage kan worden uitgelegd in de context van de *Joodse Oorlog* als een werk geschreven in het Grieks voor een publiek in Rome. Door Grieks-Romeinse historiografische, autobiografische en retorische conventies als hermeneutisch vertrekpunt te nemen, beoogt deze studie nieuw licht te werpen op de autobiografische secties van de *Joodse Oorlog*.

Hoofdstuk 1 biedt een wetenschappelijke rechtvaardiging van de onderzoeksvragen en focus van dit proefschrift. Hierbij wordt ingegaan op enkele recente ontwikkelingen in het veld en de wijze waarop de autobiografische secties in de *Joodse Oorlog* door de jaren heen zijn bestudeerd. Ten eerste is in sommige studies een scherpe veroordeling van Josephus' karakter en daden te vinden. Dit heeft geleid tot enkele stevige vooroordelen over zijn werk die bepalend zijn geweest in de bestudering ervan. Ten tweede wordt duidelijk dat onderzoekers de autobiografische secties in de *Joodse Oorlog* bijna uitsluitend hebben bestudeerd met als doel het reconstrueren van zijn leven en gedachtegoed. Daarnaast biedt dit hoofdstuk een introductie op enkele fundamentele begrippen en methodologische uitgangspunten van deze studie (de literaire representatie van personages in

antieke historische werken en de wetenschappelijke bestudering daarvan; het lezen van Josephus' corpus in de context van het Rome van de late 1^e eeuw n.C.).

Hoofdstuk 2 bestudeert de bredere historische en historiografische context van de *Joodse Oorlog*. De focus van de analyse ligt op de moreel-retorische achtergrond van de literaire representatie van personages in Grieks-Romeinse geschiedschrijving. Als eerste wordt beargumenteerd, voornamelijk op basis van bestaande wetenschappelijke literatuur, dat Josephus intellectueel onafhankelijk opereerde van de nieuwe keizerlijke familie toen hij de *Joodse Oorlog* schreef en tegelijkertijd uitstekend thuis en geïntegreerd was in Rome. Omdat Josephus het zo goed voor elkaar leek te hebben, wordt hier al de vraag gesteld in hoeverre hij gedwongen was om zijn autobiografische verhaal op te schrijven als reactie op Joodse beschuldigingen aan zijn adres, zoals in het verleden vaak is gesteld door verschillende onderzoekers. Hierna ga ik uitgebreid in op waarom het belangrijk is om de morele en retorische dimensie in de Grieks-Romeinse literaire representaties van personages te herkennen. Ik sluit me aan bij het standpunt dat er in antieke historische werken een subtiele verschuiving plaatsvond van een (relatief) meer afstandelijke en klinische beschrijving van individuen en gebeurtenissen, zoals bij de klassiek Griekse historiografie, naar een meer persoonlijke, moraliserende en expliciet didactische toon in de Romeinse tijd. De toon die kenmerkend is voor Romeinse auteurs (en Griekse auteurs uit de Romeinse tijd) vinden we ook terug in Josephus' historische werken. Om dit te onderbouwen eindigt dit hoofdstuk met een uitgebreide reflectie op de morele en retorische kenmerken van Josephus' beschrijvingen van individuen en groepen in de *Joodse Oorlog* en hoe deze beschrijvingen aan lijken te sluiten bij de historiografische conventies van zijn tijd. Daarbij wordt eveneens ingegaan op enkele belangrijke thematische verschillen tussen de *Joodse Oorlog* en Josephus' andere grote historische werk, de *Joodse Oudheden*.

De nadruk van Hoofdstuk 3 ligt op het uitleggen van de autobiografische secties van de *Joodse Oorlog* in de context van het werk als geheel. Josephus geeft zijn eigen karakter een belangrijke rol in dit werk, waarbij hij met name in boeken 2 en 3 uitgebreid ingaat op de situatie in Galilea. Hij maakt gebruik van de moraliserende en didactische toon die we ook elders in de *Joodse Oorlog* vinden. Hij lijkt aan te sluiten op de verwachtingen van een erudiet en welgesteld publiek in

Rome, goed bekend met Grieks-Romeinse geschiedschrijving. Uit de analyse wordt eveneens duidelijk dat Josephus' zelfkarakterisering moeilijk te lezen is als een opzichzelfstaand verhaal. Het sluit naadloos aan op de doelen en de thematiek van de *Joodse Oorlog* als geheel (m.n. burgeroorlog; tragische thematiek; nadruk op Joodse excellentie en deugden). Josephus zet zich binnen dit thematische kader neer als een generaal volgens Grieks-Romeins model, waarbij onder andere zijn dapperheid, doorzettingsvermogen, vindingrijkheid en vooruitziende blik opvallen in moeilijke situaties als belangrijke karaktereigenschappen. Eveneens maakt hij zijn eigen personage een integraal onderdeel van de directe narratieve context en het doorlopende plot van de *Joodse Oorlog*. Op basis van de gedane analyse stel ik voor om Josephus' zelfverzekerde presentatie van zijn eigen karakter uit te leggen als 1) een poging om zijn unieke persoonlijke ervaringen als tegenstander van keizer Vespasianus uit te buiten met het oog op zijn publieke imago en sociale status in Rome; en 2) zijn autoriteit als expert en ervaringsdeskundige tijdens het conflict waar hij over schrijft te onderstrepen.

Hoofdstukken 4 en 5 bestuderen het probleem van zelfverheerlijking in geschreven werken en de implicaties daarvan voor het begrijpen van Josephus' heroïsche zelfportret in de *Joodse Oorlog*. Uit de analyse van het voorgaande hoofdstuk werd duidelijk dat Josephus een sterke nadruk legt op zijn uitmuntende karakter en talloze deugden. De vraag die ik beantwoord in deze hoofdstukken is welke literaire en retorische technieken hij gebruikte om desondanks een schijn van objectiviteit te wekken. In Hoofdstuk 4 wordt Josephus' praktijk van zelfkarakterisering in de bredere context van Grieks-Romeinse autobiografische conventies geplaatst. Er wordt geconcludeerd dat Josephus' zelfverzekerde houding goed te verklaren valt binnen een specifiek Romeinse context. Daarnaast wordt onder andere duidelijk dat Grieken en Romeinen behoorlijk terughoudend waren als het gaat om spreken of schrijven over jezelf, specifiek omdat het van hieruit een kleine (vaak onbewuste) stap is naar zelfverheerlijking. Tegelijkertijd stelden ze enkele retorische technieken en strategieën voor die gebruikt konden worden om de scherpste randjes van dergelijke zelfverheerlijking af te halen. Ik sluit het hoofdstuk af met enkele verkennende observaties over Josephus' eigen houding ten opzichte van het toeschrijven van lof aan hemzelf in zijn geschreven werken. Deze observaties geven een indicatie van het potentieel van Grieks-Romeinse autobiografische conventies voor het

uitleggen van Josephus' retorische keuzes in de beschrijving van zijn eigen personage in de *Joodse Oorlog*.

Hoofdstuk 5 onderzoekt Josephus' gebruik van retorische technieken en strategieën in de autobiografische secties van de *Joodse Oorlog*. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat Josephus zijn kennis van Grieks-Romeinse retoriek en autobiografische conventies aanboort om een schijn van objectiviteit te wekken bij zijn lezers in Rome. Daarbij ligt de nadruk op het vaststellen van Josephus' intenties toen hij de *Joodse Oorlog* schreef en niet zozeer de daadwerkelijke receptie van zijn historische lezers (die moeilijk, zo niet onmogelijk, is vast te stellen). De eerste stap betreft het analyseren van Josephus' gebruik van "persoon en perspectief" in zijn verhaal. In deze sectie wordt gesuggereerd dat hij geïnspireerd zou kunnen zijn door Julius Caesar en Xenophon van Athene, die eveneens autobiografische geschiedenis (of historische autobiografie) schreven. De implicatie hiervan is dat Josephus' kennis en gebruik van Grieks-Romeinse geschiedschrijving een stuk verder ging dan Thucydides en Polybius, waarvan (terecht) wordt gezegd dat deze schrijvers belangrijke modellen waren voor Josephus. Daarna ga ik in op de verschillende literaire technieken die Josephus gebruikt om zijn eigen personage in de *Joodse Oorlog* weer te geven. Het valt daarbij op dat zijn procedure wezenlijk anders is dan bij zijn weergave van andere personages in de *Joodse Oorlog*: waar hij normaal bijzonder uitgesproken en expliciet is (zie m.n. Hoofdstuk 2), probeert hij de deugden die hij aan zijn eigen personage toeschrijft (zie m.n. Hoofdstuk 3) op indirecte en verholde wijze te beschrijven. Vervolgens analyseer ik enkele mogelijke retorische strategieën, met name de apologetische en tragische aspecten van Josephus' autobiografische verhaal. Josephus' poging om dit verhaal een specifiek apologetisch karakter te geven is vaak verklaard als een reactie op beschuldigingen aan zijn adres vanwege zijn controversiële rol tijdens de opstand. Dat dergelijke beschuldigingen veelvuldig werden gebezigd en mogelijk Josephus' oren bereikten staat niet ter discussie. Tegelijkertijd wekken Josephus' specifieke literaire keuzes, bijvoorbeeld de beschrijving van zijn droom in de grot van Jotapata, de suggestie dat hij deze beschuldigingen juist gebruikt om een sterkere nadruk op zijn successen en zijn exemplarische gedrag tijdens de Joodse opstand acceptabel te maken, overeenkomstig Grieks-Romeinse autobiografische conventies.

Het algehele beeld dat mijn analyse oproept, is dat Josephus zijn autobiografische verhaal overeenkomstig zijn begrip van Grieks-Romeinse historiografische, retorische en autobiografische conventies schreef. Dit deed hij niet op mechanische wijze maar specifiek toegespitst op zijn doelen bij het schrijven de *Joodse Oorlog* en de taal, structuren en thema's die hij gebruikte om deze doelen te verwezenlijken. Hij opereerde relatief onafhankelijk van de Romeinse keizers en stelde hij het verhaal samen volgens voorwaarden die vooral hemzelf en zijn situatie in Rome dienden. Ook is het de vraag of hij zich genoodzaakt voelde om te reageren op eventuele beschuldigingen vanuit Joodse kringen over zijn rol tijdens de Joodse opstand tegen Rome. Het (gedeeltelijk complementaire) alternatief dat ik heb neergezet, is dat hij deze beschuldigingen juist gebruikte als een rechtvaardiging voor het schrijven van zijn eigen verhaal op een manier die hem erg goed uitkwam.

Het intellectuele en sociale landschap van Rome in de eerste eeuw n.C. biedt stevige aanknopingspunten om Josephus' autobiografische verhaal in de *Joodse Oorlog* binnen deze historische context te verklaren. Deze aanknopingspunten zijn op verschillende plaatsen te vinden. Ten eerste, als schrijver van het (volgens hemzelf) grootste conflict aller tijden en als tegenstander van de grootste generaal van dat moment, de zittende keizer Vespasianus, is het logisch dat Josephus zichzelf een rol toeschrijft die zo indrukwekkend mogelijk is. Daarbij zet hij zichzelf neer als generaal en leider volgens Grieks-Romeins model. Hij lijkt zijn unieke ervaring in Galilea als tegenstander van Vespasianus, de nieuwe keizer, optimaal te willen benutten ter verbetering van zijn sociale positie in Rome en/of zijn unieke expertise op het gebied van het Joods-Romeinse conflict kracht bij te willen zetten. Ten tweede, Josephus maakt in zijn verhaal gebruik van verschillende thema's en motieven die specifiek aan lijken te sluiten bij een lezerspubliek dat goed bekend is met Grieks-Romeinse historiografische conventies. Sommige van deze motieven wijzen erop dat Josephus technieken en strategieën gebruikte om zijn literaire zelfportret retorisch acceptabel te maken. Hij was zich zeer bewust van de precaire relatie tussen auteur en publiek en deed er bijgevolg alles aan om het vertrouwen van zijn lezers in Rome te winnen.

Curriculum Vitae

Born in Groningen, the Netherlands (1991), Eelco Glas studied Theology and Religious Studies in Groningen and Classics and Ancient Civilizations in Leiden. He obtained his BA-degree in 2014 and his MA-degree in 2016 (*cum laude*). He undertook archaeological fieldwork in Jordan and Israel and studied at Wolfson College and the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Oxford, as a visiting graduate student in 2016. In the context of his graduate studies, he was awarded a Florentino García Martínez Research Master Scholarship and a GUF-100 Award.

In January 2017 he obtained a position as PhD student at the University of Groningen, under supervision of Prof. dr. Steve Mason and Prof. dr. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, working on an independent research project “Flavius Josephus’ Self-Characterization in First-Century Rome: The Composition and Rhetoric of the Autobiographical Passages in the *Bellum Judaicum*,” funded by the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. During this period, he served as the secretary of the interfaculty research institute CRASIS, co-taught various BA-courses at the University of Groningen, and offered presentations of his research project in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, and Greece. He also undertook research at the Departamento de Filología Griega y Latina de la Universidad de Sevilla.

In February 2020 Glas took up temporary positions as Lecturer in Ancient History at the Faculty of Arts and Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Groningen. He is also Book Review Editor of *NTT: Journal of Theology and the Study of Religion*.