

An Introduction to Josephus, *Yosippon*, and Beyond: The Past, Present, and Future of a Josephan Legacy in Modern Scholarship

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Josephus is a booming industry in academia. Not, of course, economically speaking—no one is getting rich off of Josephus. But the steady outpouring of articles, monographs, dissertations, volumes, translations, commentaries, and even editions dealing with the Flavian historian these days constitutes a healthy, consistent stream. This was not the case a hundred years ago. Neither, however, is it an entirely new phenomenon. Around fifty years ago in his monumental bibliographical exercise, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (1937–1980), Louis H. Feldman could already lament the substantial uptick in Josephus scholarship produced between the respective five-year periods of 1909–1913 and 1961–1965.¹ This trend has not relaxed, as testified by the ballooning bibliographies of each new study and the persistent presence of Josephus' name in the tables of contents of hundreds of journal issues and edited volumes, even the odd popular piece.² We live in the heyday of Josephus scholarship.³ Yet (or thus), we think, and hope, that the field has room for another handful of original studies.

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- 1 Feldman's complaint is worth quoting: "As one who has read almost all of this material, the present writer is reminded of the anecdote which Cicero (*Pro Archia* 10.25) tells about Sulla, who rewarded a worthless poet who had composed an epigram about him with a present of property from proscribed persons, on the condition that he should not write anything thereafter. In addition to the *Desiderata* listed at the end of this study, we may be forgiven for expressing the hope—or prayer—that one of the wealthier foundations will establish a fund to give grants on similar conditions, or, at the very least, on the condition that scholars will read what has been written in their field before they embark with pen in hand" (*Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, 3). We hope that Feldman, apparently unimpressed with the bulk of Josephus scholarship, would not have disapproved of the present volume.
 - 2 See, e.g., Steve Mason's piece "Why Josephus Matters" published in *Marginalia* on December 3, 2021, which concludes: "In the complexities of Josephus' works lie inexhaustible riches for the historian as for the humanist."
 - 3 Anecdotally: the Society of Biblical Literature, one of the major academic bodies that collects a great many Josephus scholars within its folds, has even in recent years begun to sell sweat-shirts that read "I ♥ Josephus" across the front. More seriously, see Mason's "Flavius Josephus" entry in the online Oxford Bibliographies.

The anonymous ninth- or tenth-century Hebrew work called *Sefer Yosippon* lies at the other end of the spectrum from Josephus on several counts. Unlike Josephus, *Yosippon* has never been the target of a thousand-page bibliographical study. No edited volume has ever been dedicated to this text. From all appearances, serious scholarship on *Yosippon* seems barely to have begun as a widespread phenomenon. The major watershed moment in living memory came with the appearance of David Flusser's still-standard critical edition in 1978–1980.⁴ Yet this edition did not and has not sparked anything like the kind of attention that Josephus today receives. Perhaps *Yosippon* just needs time. After all, the critical edition of the Greek text of Josephus' writings, produced by Benedict Niese across seven volumes, antedates Flusser's *Yosippon* edition by nearly a hundred years (1885–1895).⁵ Or perhaps *Yosippon*'s relative obscurity owes to its anonymity, or the uncertainty of its provenance, or its original emergence within an oft-ignored historical period once referred to (and usually still treated as) 'the dark ages.' Certainly the fact that the work's modern edition, and much contemporary scholarship thereupon, has been written in modern Hebrew has contributed somewhat to its relative marginality,⁶ as has the historical unreliability with which the work has been saddled by critical readers for centuries now.⁷ Historically "unreliable" works, a dubious category for gauging pre-modern historiography, often dictates the modern popularity of ancient and medieval narrative texts. But whatever the case, while we live in the heyday of Josephus research, we are only just now, maybe, beholding the

4 Flusser, *The Josippon*. Flusser's other contributions to scholarship, consisting among other things of some 1,000+ articles in Hebrew, English, and German, was also to some extent focused on *SY*. See Lowe, "Bibliography of the Writings of David Flusser."

5 Niese, *Flavii Josephi opera*.

6 Moreover, the Hebrew-ness of *SY*'s standard edition will also have contributed to its lacking a modern translation until relatively recently. Josephus' works, for their part, were translated in English by William Whiston in 1732—Whiston's translations are still printed today and are widely available on the internet (e.g. on the Perseus website, linked to the Greek text, and on Richard Matthew Pollard's Latin Josephus Project site)—and have since received multiple translations into all of the major modern European languages, and also into Japanese, as it happens. *SY*, on the other hand, was only translated into German in 2010 (Börner-Klein/Zuber, *Josippon*) and has only just now received its first English translation at the hands of Steven Bowman (see Bowman, *Sepher Yosippon*).

7 While all scholars acknowledge that *SY* commanded considerable respect as historiography throughout the Middle Ages, the (post-)renaissance world became critical: Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) has been charged with being "the first to doubt its worth," (in his "Elenchus Trihæresii Nicolai Serarii" [1605]) and "Jan Drusius (d. 1609) held it to be historically valueless on account of its many chronological mistakes." Gottheil and Schloessinger, "Joseph ben Gorion." Modern scholars no longer look to *SY*'s narrative for historical data, although note Kenneth Atkinson's chapter in the present volume.

dawn of an era in which *Sefer Yosippon* demands its own scholarly subfield. And given *Yosippon's* tremendous historical significance, it probably should.⁸

All of this is to say that this volume brings together scholars and studies from an established domain of study—the works of Flavius Josephus—with those of a rather fledgling sphere—the work known as *Sefer Yosippon*. Studies in these respective areas make up Parts 1, 2 and 3 of this volume. Furthermore, as icing on the cake, this volume contains a final collection of chapters (Part 4) that go beyond the study of Josephus and *Yosippon* proper into the examination of their various afterlives. This group of essays joins a widespread body of recent scholarship that is as diverse in methodology and disciplinary boundaries as it is illuminating of how Josephus' *Nachleben* fared across languages, regions, cultures, and eras. The essays found here serve as a microcosm of that variegated milieu: we have chapters on Josephus and/or *Yosippon* in High Medieval art, modern Israel education, nineteenth century English print culture, Christian literature in Western Europe, Medieval Ethiopian historiography, and twentieth century Israeli poetry. These chapters constitute a series of discrete yet integral contributions to the admittedly inchoate, yet no less important, field of Josephan reception history.

If indicative of assorted specialist interests, the twenty-two essays that comprise this volume still cohere closely inasmuch as their separate objects of inquiry all ultimately trace themselves back to one person, Titus Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 CE), born Yosef ben Matityahu, and to the four (really three) works that he wrote in his latter years while resident at Rome: the *Jewish War* (ca. 75 CE), an account of the Judean-Roman tensions that ended with the Roman-Jewish War (66–74 CE) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE; the *Jewish Antiquities* (ca. 93/94 CE), an account of the Jewish people from ancient times to near Josephus' present, addended with a short autobiographical work called the *Life*; and *Against Apion* (post-94 CE), a two-book apologetic work aimed at anti-Jewish notions current within certain cultural discourses of the ancient Mediterranean world. Taken together, this substantial first-century literary corpus, composed in Greek, constitutes the evidentiary bedrock of all the inquiries made in the chapters to follow.

There are several things that we the editors hope that this volume will do within the scholarly arena. First, we hope that this tome will provide a welcome tonic to ongoing Josephus scholarship proper. The several major Josephus volumes that have appeared in the past—volumes well-known to every Josephus

⁸ Scholars who in recent years have analyzed *SY* in any level of depth, most of whom have chapters in the present volume, routinely take exception to the scant attention modern scholarship has paid to that text.

scholar—have often proved major stimulants toward collective progress in the enterprise of studying and understanding Josephus' works.⁹ And they have done so in different ways. One way in which the present volume should advance the field is in the classical manner, which is to say in helping to recreate, explicate, illuminate, and frame the language, literary strategies, rhetorical proclivities, socio-historical contexts, and cultural influences that may be identified within or around the Greek text of Josephus' writings. Another, new way in which this work should advance Josephus studies is by placing Josephus research alongside research on *Sefer Yosippon*, a text built in several ways upon Josephus himself. Thus, the second major hope we have for this volume is that, as the first intentional amalgamation of *Yosippon* studies of which we know, it will enliven *Yosippon* research in the aggregate *and* at the same time situate that work beside its traditional fountainhead, the works of Josephus. Of course, this juxtaposition demands that scholarly attention also be paid to the *Latin* Josephus tradition, for it is from the Latin translations and adaptations of Josephus' *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities* that the author of *Sefer Yosippon* drew his primary source material. While this volume has no section on Latin Josephus traditions per se, it is to be hoped that the Latin substrate lying beneath many of the essays herein will serve as a strong signal to that important, nascent, growing field of study as well. Finally, it is our aim that this volume signpost for the broader scholarly realm the enormous amount

9 Most recently there is Chapman and Rodgers, *Companion to Josephus* (2016), which provides a widespread and systematic introduction to Josephus and his reception on the model of the recent 'handbook' fad popular among academic publishers (yet no less valuable to scholars for that!). Akin to this volume in certain ways will be the still-forthcoming Atkinson, *Oxford Handbook of Josephus* (2023/2024). The more traditional and intensive 'Josephus studies' volumes include a cluster from the first decade of the twenty-first century: Pastor, Stern, and Mor, *Flavius Josephus* (2011), Cohen and Schwartz, *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of ancient Judaism* (2007), Rodgers, *Making History* (2007), Sievers and Lembi, *Josephus and Jewish History* (2005), and Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus & Flavian Rome* (2005). One should also mention here Böttrich, Herzer, and Reiprich, *Josephus und das Neue Testament* (2007), in addition to Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (1998) and Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*—the latter two works, while compilations of essays by a single author, have a size and have had a force within the field of Josephus studies equal to any of the other volumes mentioned here. Add to this the earlier collections published as *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium* volumes from 1998 to 2003, as well as Parente and Sievers, *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period* (1994). These volumes have been a significant stimulant in Josephus studies along with the many co-eval monographs and articles. The mid 1980s also witnessed a volume of similar effect, still often cited to this day: Feldman and Hata, *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (1987). Finally, we should note that journals have begun to produce similar scholarly artifacts: consider the 2021 special issue (Volume 19) of *JSIJ*, usually called "the Josephus issue." It is in the vein of this larger history of compilatory scholarly exercises that the present volume seeks to establish itself.

of interesting, informative, worthwhile work that remains to be done in and around the study of Josephus and his reception. As one of the most widely-read authors of all time, as one of the most important historians of the ancient Mediterranean, as one of history's most integral—and embattled—Jewish figures, Josephus merits serious and sustained scholarly scrutiny, as does his later legacy. This volume seeks to sustain, perhaps even help shape and re-invent, that academic industry.

A deeper, more specific iteration of this volume's goals and contributions and meanings as we see it appears in the following sections of this introductory chapter. First, however, at the risk of endorsing some kind of historicism, we should mention briefly the genesis of this volume's contributions. In late March 2020, just in time for Covid-19, it was learned that we three editors were between us planning two different conferences with contiguous themes around roughly the same time in 2021: Jan Willem and Michael were planning a conference on Josephus with a strong *Yosippon* component to take place in Amsterdam in August 2021, while Carson was planning a heavily *Yosippon*-centric conference to occur in Bern in June or August of that same summer. We quickly joined forces and got to work planning a new conference, bigger and better, for August 2021. Yet, fools that we were, through the remainder of 2020 we were still anticipating an in-person conference, as yet unwise to the wiles of 'covid culture.' It was not until late March, in fact, that we capitulated to the demands of necessity and moved to a fully-digital, Zoom-based conference. The European Association for Jewish Studies, which had provided a grant to help fund the conference, graciously allowed for us to make this transition. And so, after further subsequent months of planning, we held a four-day, all Zoom conference from August 23 to August 26, 2021.

The conference was an unmitigated success. With two-dozen presenters and over a hundred participants, this four-day event realized in social interaction (albeit digitally mediated) what the present volumes aims to create on the page: a robust presentation by scholars analyzing a variety of topics related to Josephus of the critical, current issues involving Josephus pertaining to their individual fields of study. It also included two multi-instructor masterclasses and two digital outings pertaining to Amsterdam's Jewish heritage.¹⁰ The presented papers and the sustained discussions that accompanied them accrued

10 Namely, an interactive virtual tour of Vlooienburg, Amsterdam's Old Jewish Quarter, created and administered by Jitte Waagen and Tjmm Lanjouw of the University of Amsterdam's 4D Lab, and an audio-visual tour of the Ets Haim Library facilitated by the library's curator, Heide Warncke. Nienke Groskamp provided technological support for the entire conference, and a full report is available on the EAJS website. Support for the conference during various points in the planning process was proffered by the University

to a notably productive and stimulating set of conclusions, questions, and advances at various points in various fields. The majority of the papers presented at the conference have been revised and now appear in this volume. In addition, we commissioned several chapters from scholars who did not present at the conference as a way of balancing out this book's four sections. All of the chapters that follow, we feel, constitute valuable contributions to research.

Part 1 Flavius Josephus: Context, Greek Text, and Literary Features

Perhaps *the* major scholarly project concerning Josephus that is underway today is the Brill Josephus Project, namely the new English translations and full-length commentaries dedicated to individual books of all of Josephus' works that have been appearing sporadically since 1999.¹¹ Steve Mason is the editor of this series and in many ways one of the founders of the contemporary study of Josephus.¹² Thus we were very happy for Mason not only to give the conference's leading paper, but also to speak about the process of translating Josephus from Greek into English as a part of Masterclass 1. Mason's paper is also the leading content chapter of this volume—"Interpreting Josephus Contextually: Composition, Audiences, Messages, and Meaning"—and it works well as an entrée to the subsequent chapters. Mason's argument is a methodological one, is quite straightforward, and draws upon a long career of Josephus research. He calls it a "reference-point." His argument is already apparent from his title: namely, scholars must interpret Josephus contextually, and doing so requires attention to compositional practices, potential audiences, messages encoded at various levels in Josephus' texts, and a sophisticated approach to meaning. Basically, Mason is making a methodological argument for and a call to a literary-historical approach to Josephus, as opposed to the conventional historiographical use of Josephus *qua* historical source: 'we know that *x*

of Amsterdam, Bar-Ilan University, the University of Bern (and its Institute for Jewish Studies), and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

- 11 At the time of this writing, Steve Mason's own translation and commentary of *BJ* 4 has just appeared. Previous volumes are those by Paul Spilsbury and Chris Seeman on *AJ* 11 (2016), Jan Willem van Henten on *AJ* 15 (2013), Steve Mason on *BJ* 2 (2008), John M.G. Barclay on *CA* (2006), Christopher T. Begg and Paul Spilsbury on *AJ* 8–10 (2005), Christopher T. Begg on *AJ* 5–7 (2004), Steve Mason on the *Vita* (2001), and first of all Louis H. Feldman on *AJ* 1–4 (1999). We look forward to the appearance of forthcoming volumes.
- 12 Three of his groundbreaking works are Mason, *A History of the Jewish War*; Mason, *Josephus on the Pharisees*; and Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, and see also the essays compiled in Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*.

happened on *y* date because Josephus says *z*.⁷ Mason hereby sets the stage for assessing the means and the “stakes” of the future study of Josephus.

From Mason’s broad-spectrum argument the volume dives right into a series of more or less technical and more or less focused analyses of Josephan text. Erich Gruen’s radical treatment of “Josephus and the Bible” in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* aims to address several longstanding questions in the field. For one, what are we to make of the fact that, while Josephus claims to translate the Jewish Scriptures in Greek in his *Antiquitates*, his account of biblical history contains a plethora of non- or extra-biblical episodes (and ideas)? What does this tell us about how Josephus understood the sanctity of the ‘Scriptures?’ Relatedly, is there a method to Josephus’ madness? That is, does a “consistent pattern or purpose” emerge among Josephus’ numerous departures from the Hebrew Bible? Gruen’s return to this classic question involves using a series of case studies to support the argument that Josephus’ “claim of an exact duplication” must be understood (and was understood) as being of “symbolic significance.” Within Josephus’ therefore authoritative and “even strengthened” rewrite of sacred writ, furthermore, Gruen sees an adaptive strategy whereby Josephus could use variation, addition, and omission to address a variety of topics for an audience that knew the biblical original—far from sacrilegious, Josephus’ ‘Bible’ was a source of creative, fresh communicative technology.

David Edwards’ chapter in some ways illustrates some of Gruen’s points in different relief. In “Ancient Jewish Court-Tales, Scriptural Adaptation, and Greco-Roman Discourses of Exemplarity: Joseph, Esther, and Agrippa I in Josephus’ *Antiquitates*,” Edwards shows how to biblical figures, the Joseph of Genesis and the Esther of Esther, provided exemplary mines of traditionary meaning for Josephus’ retelling of much later Jewish history, namely the court intrigues involving Agrippa I (*AJ* 18–19). In particular, these two “flawless paragons of virtue” from the sacred Scriptures illustrated so many of the things that Herod Agrippa, King of Judea from 41 to 44 CE, was not. Instead, Agrippa I was a paragon of ambition. In demonstrating this within discussions of Greek language, reader expectations, registers of exemplarity, and comparison with Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*, Edwards combines new insight into Josephus’ literary rhetoric with signals toward important methodological tenets, some new, some old.

Silvia Castelli’s chapter, “Narratology and Linguistic Variation in Josephus’ Cultic Laws and Constitution,” applies a method of functional linguistics, namely “register analysis,” to the language Josephus uses to discuss the law in his *Antiquitates Judaicae*. In so doing, Castelli exposes the contextual use of technical language by Josephus to explain the Mosaic *politeia* outlined in the Book of Deuteronomy by means of terms, categories, and concepts

familiar from the Classical Greek usage of authors like Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato. Josephus' engagement with this Greco-Roman technical lexicon has several broader implications. First, Josephus, while a Jewish author writing about Jewish things, must be studied within the broader context of Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature and culture.¹³ This applies not only to the examination of concepts and ideas present in Josephus' writings, but also to the fine-grained philological work of dissecting Josephus' Greek usage. The latter scholarly industry has been considerably easier for the past half-century due to Karl Rengstorf's *Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, but Castelli's study shows that close, careful, and comparative analysis is still needed to achieve a full understanding of Josephan grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

The final essay of this volume's 'Josephus proper' section is Ursula Westwood's "Free Speech and Moses' Laws: The Limits of *παρρησία* in Josephus' Works." Here we find a sustained treatment of Greek lexicography in Josephus which draws upon the broader context of ancient Greek literature to help illuminate the idea of candid, straightforward speech (*παρρησία*) in his writings. At the same time, Westwood shows that the Mosaic Law possesses a unique brand of *παρρησία* according to Josephus. Furthermore, she explains why such a discourse may have been particularly significant as one put forth during Domitian's reign, where frank and free speech were certainly not the rule. In line with previous essays, and bringing new information to bear on Josephus studies, Westwood's essay is another example of the value of historical contextualization, literary comparison, and intra-Josephan philology and lexicography in seeking to make sense of the Flavian historian's prose.

In part, this volume, like any other of its kind, seeks to push scholarship forward piecemeal. The above studies often take a fine-grained approach to Josephus' Greek text in order to proffer a particular insight or two, or three, into one or more distinctive pockets of Josephus or Josephus-adjacent research. At the same time, significant continuities connect these studies: Josephus' Bible, the concept of law and/or Torah in Josephus, the processual value of comparing Josephan vocabulary internally and of assessing lexical and conceptual comparanda between Josephus and the broader milieu of Classical and Hellenistic Greek literature—these things and more comprise overlaps in methodology and content that are suggestive both of scholarly best practices and of what is or might be interesting, or current, or important in the study of Josephus. As a

13 This has not always been scholarly commonplace, as Classicists have habitually ignored or eschewed Josephus as part of their proper remit: see Beard, "The Triumph of Flavius Josephus," esp. 543–545.

conglomerate, the essays in the first part of this volume therefore evince some harmony and thereby signal, or at least hint at, where Josephus studies has been, and where it is going.

Part 2 *Sefer Yosippon* and Latin Josephus: Manuscripts and Text Criticism

The structure of this volume is designed to serve as an argument in and of itself. We put studies on *Sefer Yosippon* together with research on Josephus proper as a signal to the value and importance of considering and contributing to such spheres of scholarship collaboratively. *Yosippon* must be understood in reference to Josephus, its traditional fountainhead, and this has methodological and conceptual implications. On the other side of the equation, Josephus' own writings and career may be illuminated, sometimes in surprising ways, by his literary *Nachleben* across regions, cultures, languages, and eras. Indeed, to attempt to interpret Josephus without an eye to his later reception can be a precarious proposition.

Part 2 of this volume deals with the nuts and bolts of manuscripts, text criticism, and the critical editions upon which modern scholarship on pre-modern literature usually relies. While more data-driven and descriptive by nature than some of the other chapters in this work, the two chapters that comprise this part of the volume contain the crucial information that provides the foundation for all of the others. Neither the Latin translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* nor the Hebrew text of *Sefer Yosippon* have adequate critical editions. Here the world's leading experts on these respective traditions provide critical insight into the state-of-the-art regarding these texts, creating one more scholarly space in which this volume contains the cutting edge of scholarship.

Saskia Dönitz's chapter on "The Hebrew Manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon*" stands first in this part for a reason. Not only has Dönitz's body of work, most particularly her 2013 volume, *Überlieferung und Rezeption des Sefer Yosippon*, been at the forefront of *Yosippon* scholarship for the past decade and more, Dönitz has also begun the critical and foundational task of assessing and reconstructing the Hebrew textual basis of *Yosippon*. David Flusser's critical edition of *Yosippon*, long since the standard edition for scholars, is an impressive work of scholarship.¹⁴ It is also highly problematic. As Dönitz has shown elsewhere,

14 Dönitz, "Josephus Torn to Pieces." The other current authority on the issue of *sy*'s Hebrew text is Peter Lehnhardt of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Dönitz and Lehnhardt

and as she presents here, a critical reappraisal of Flusser's edition, long since an important desideratum in the field, shows that a new Hebrew text of *Yosippon* is necessary, lest we attribute entire chapters to the original work (as best we can establish it) that were not in it and retain much later readings within a supposedly tenth-century text. The most important recent evidence showing this are the many Cairo Genizah fragments of *Yosippon*, which complicate Flusser's well-known construct, whereby *Yosippon* developed through three recensions (A, B, and C), each of which extended the earlier one substantially. In a very real way, then, Dönitz's essay herein is a call for a rethinking, perhaps a kind of restart, of *Yosippon* scholarship.

Not all those who have read and studied *Sefer Yosippon* have appreciated the nature of its sources. *Yosippon* is a Hebrew work, and Josephus wrote in Greek, but the author of *Yosippon* did not read Greek, at least so far as we can tell. Instead, *Yosippon* is based mostly upon the *Latin* Josephus tradition that developed between the fourth and sixth centuries. In addition, it uses the *Latin* Vulgate Bible (including Apocrypha), in addition to other sources (Livy and Vergil, e.g.). Thus, a study of *Yosippon* necessarily involves the study of its Latin sources, the most important of which are the Latin translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* and the late-fourth century Christian adaptation of the *Bellum Judaicum* called *De excidio Hierosolymitano* (*On the Destruction of Jerusalem*), or "Pseudo-Hegesippus."¹⁵

both presented on the most up-to-date information regarding *SY*'s text, the Cairo Genizah fragments, etc. at the "Seeking *Sefer Yosippon*," workshop held at the University of Bern on May 11–12, 2022 (sponsored by the SNSF under the auspices of the project, "*Lege Josephum!* Ways of Reading Josephus in the Latin Middle Ages;" see <https://www.legejosephum.unibe.ch>).

- 15 The state of the art regarding the Latin *War* and the Latin *Antiquities*—i.e. the Latin translations proper of both of Josephus' major works—has been established by David Levenson and Tom Martin in an ongoing body of work; see Levenson and Martin, "A Revised Classification;" Levenson and Martin, "Ancient Latin Translations;" Bay, "On the Multivocality;" Leoni, "Translations and Adaptations." For the state of the field regarding *DEH*, see, with bibliography, Bay, *Biblical Heroes and Classical Culture*, 17–69, as well as Bay's broader body of work in recent years. The standard critical edition of *DEH* is Ussani, *Hege-sippi qui dicitur* (1932), and no modern scholarly translation exists. For the Latin Josephus, since the critical editions (which need updating) of Blatt, *The Latin Josephus*, Vol. 1 (1958) and, much earlier, Boysen, *Flavii Iosephi Opera* (1898)—which only included *AJ* 1–5 (Blatt) and *CA* (Boysen)—the only modern critical editions yet to emerge are Bader, *Josephus Latinus* (2019), on *BJ* 1, and the recent critical edition by Randolf Lukas (Bochum) on *AJ* 6–7 (2022, continuing Blatt, as it were) and forthcoming work by David Levenson and Tom Martin on *BJ* 6 and *AJ* 13. It should also be noted here that the collected works of Heinz Schreckenberg constituted progress and stimulant in the later twentieth century regarding the Latin Josephus tradition (including *DEH*) within Josephus' reception writ large (including his reception in medieval art—see Heyden's chapter in this volume and

This being the case, the next chapter, like Dönitz's, also constitutes a kind of 'back to the basics' study for *Yosippon* scholarship. In his essay "Beyond Flusser: The Text of Latin *Antiquities* 13 and *Sefer Yosippon*," David Levenson introduces readers to the little-known yet highly-significant state-of-the-art as it pertains to the Latin *Antiquities* and its relationship to *Yosippon*. Levenson begins by presenting Flusser's influential thinking and arguments, which have (in)formed *consensus opinio* regarding *Yosippon's* relationship to its Latin sources for almost half a century. (One reason this summary is important is that Flusser's full thoughts are still only available in modern Hebrew.) Levenson then problematizes Flusser's hypotheses, based as they were upon incomplete information, and shows that the question of which manuscripts, or rather which manuscript groups, of the Latin *Antiquities* comprised the source for *Yosippon* is a question privy to multivocal manuscript readings and more than one codicological surprise. To move toward solving the mystery—or, really, just to try and map the terrain—Levenson provides up-to-date information regarding the manuscript groups of Book 13 of the Latin *Antiquities* and details the many important observations, and problems, that arise from this text-critical milieu. Like Dönitz, Levenson proffers a new starting-point for an informed text-based study of *Yosippon* and its Latin sources.

Part 3 *Sefer Yosippon*: Traditions, Intertexts, and (Re-)Interpretations

This volume's Part 3 seeks to build toward a more robust understanding and broader scholarly arena as it pertains to Josephus' Hebrew afterlife in *Sefer Yosippon*. This text, penned in Southern Italy around the beginning of the tenth century with the Classical Hebrew style and vocabulary of the Jewish Scriptures, is ripe for more concentrated attention.¹⁶ Over the past three decades, and picking up considerable speed in the last ten years or so, research in *Yosippon* has built upon Flusser's foundation to start exposing and exploring

as discussed below). In addition to Schreckenberg's earlier work, see Schreckenberg and Schubert, *Jewish Historiography and Iconography*; Schreckenberg, "The Works of Josephus;" Schreckenberg, "Josephus und die christliche Wirkungsgeschichte;" Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*; Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus*.

16 For brief introductions, see more recently Bowman, "*Sefer Yosippon*: Reevaluations;" Dönitz, "Sefer Yosippon (Josippon)" and Dönitz, "Historiography Among Byzantine Jews;" more classically, see Flusser, "*Josippon*, a Medieval Hebrew Version of Josephus" and Baer, "The Hebrew *Sefer Yosifun*."

the literary, linguistic, and ideological landscapes of what would become one of history's most widely-read and influential works of Jewish historiography.¹⁷ The basic information regarding this work is now known and widely accessible. Its textual development, reception, and later translations have all received attention (although there remains a great deal more to do in this domain as well). Yet, for all that, the actual study of *Yosippon* as literature, as a history, as a text, as a narrative seems barely to have begun. The first and second chapters of the work, containing respectively a reworked table of nations and a story of Roman antiquity interwoven with biblical myth and legend (read: historiography), have received serious consideration by multiple researchers, yet the other eighty-seven chapters of the work have scarcely been touched. Granted that this is beginning to change. But it is still the case that one seeks in vain for studies on particular chapters of *Yosippon*, or particular themes in *Yosippon*, or particular philological problems in *Yosippon*, or close comparison of *Yosippon* with other texts—in short, all of the kinds of studies that contribute to a robust scholarly understanding of a text or author are for the most part still wanting when it comes to *Yosippon*. We hope that this volume can help stimulate, and accelerate, and consolidate the research that will fill those gaps.

Ruth Nisse is another of the few scholars who have published on *Sefer Yosippon* to date. In her 2017 book, *Jacob's Shipwreck*, Nisse undertook an extensive discussion of *Yosippon's* place in Medieval Jewish-Christian dialogue. In her chapter "The Beginning of the End: *Yosippon's* 'Aeneid' and Adso's Apocalypse," which inaugurates Part 3 of the volume, Nisse exemplifies the value of comparative study between *Yosippon* and roughly contemporaneous literature, in this case the mid-tenth century *Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist* by Adso of Montier-en-Der. She compares how these two texts negotiate the meaning of Roman authority in a post-Carolingian age and with sometimes divergent, sometimes similar interests and commitments.

Jan Willem van Henten and Carson Bay in the next two chapters each assess one chapter of *Sefer Yosippon* vis-à-vis its source material and the manifold tradition that lay behind it. Van Henten, in "The Maccabean Mother and Her Seven Sons in *Sefer Yosippon* 15: Interconnections with Previous Versions of the Martyrdom and Important Motifs," examines the story of the Maccabean mother-martyr and her seven sons known from 2 Maccabees 7 and 4 Maccabees in its idiosyncratic Hebrew form in *Yosippon*. Van Henten's is a close analysis

17 In addition to the above, see Bay, "The Jerusalem Temple and Jewish Identity;" Bay, "The 'Maria Story' in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew;" Börner-Klein, "Jews and Romans as Friends and Foes;" Bowman, "'Yosippon' and Jewish Nationalism;" Bowman, "Dates in *Sefer Yosippon*."

that brings out a number of important features of this chapter, which rewrites the story of a noble Jewish mother and her sons refusing to capitulate to the Seleucid King Antiochus, preferring to die by torture, thus becoming the earliest martyr figures. The features van Henten identifies include its notably biblical language and its correlation with Christian discourses about sainthood.

Bay's contribution, "Killing Matthias: *De excidio* 5.22 and *Sefer Yosippon* 81 (נפ)," does something of the same thing for *SY* 81. Bay shows how *Yosippon* adapted and reworked his Latin source for this chapter, Pseudo-Hegesippus, teasing out a few particular aspects of *Yosippon's* editorial technique: these include the creative recycling of biblical language, a concentration upon theological ideas (namely, Yahweh, Temple, and covenant), and the redemption of the story's main Jewish narrative figure/historical actor, a man named Matthias. Matthias, killed alongside his sons by the Jewish rebel leader Simon in *SY* 81, not only resembles the Maccabean mother-martyr in his death, but references her and her story in a final speech he makes before his demise, which ties *SY* 81 to *SY* 15, and therefore Bay's chapter to that of van Henten.

The reader will find a much broader discussion of *Sefer Yosippon* in Steven Bowman's chapter on "Yosippon as an Innovative and Creative Genius." Here Bowman draws upon a lifetime of studying *Yosippon* to outline the literary and narrative value of *Yosippon*, almost a kind of poetics of the work. Having just published the first English translation of *Sefer Yosippon* at the time of writing, Bowman is in a unique position to speak with some authority to aspects of *Yosippon* as a work that requires attention or bear remembering. Moreover, this chapter puts forward with new supporting evidence a longstanding conviction of Bowman's, implicit in his chapter's title: namely, that *Yosippon's* author evinced considerable innovation and creativity in penning his Hebrew text. This chapter thus also serves as a tool with which one can approach other chapters in this work: do the preceding and proceeding chapters, for example, support the idea of *Yosippon's* notable ingenuity? Conversely, the other chapters in this part of the volume can help fill in the details behind Bowman's argument.

Kenneth Atkinson's "*Sefer Yosippon* as a Source for Hasmonean History: The Mysterious Story of John Hyrcanus and the Parthians" takes a different tack from Bowman and the studies the other previous chapters. It is, in fact, a complement to these other more literary and philological approaches. Remarkably, Atkinson argues here that *Yosippon* "should be considered a primary source" for John Hyrcanus' participation in Antiochus VII Sidetes' 131 BCE invasion of Parthia, despite its late date and multiple layers of source-texts. The historian's perspective afforded by Atkinson's chapter is an invaluable addition, and a methodological check, for a scholarship on *Yosippon* that has tended toward

text, language, and literature, and opens up new vistas for the possibilities of research into *Yosippon* and of what *Yosippon* might be able to tell us about ancient history. Not least, this chapter bids us be careful if we are tempted to see *Yosippon*, or other texts like it, as fundamentally derivative in nature given the layers of their source tradition, and thus to brush their historical value aside.

The final chapter of this *Yosippon* part of the volume is Daniel Stein Kokin's "*Sefer Yosippon* and *Sefer Masa'ot*: A Reconsideration." This chapter resembles Nisse's in its comparative approach, yet it also spans the divide between this part and the next in that Benjamin of Tudela, with whom Stein Kokin puts *Yosippon* in conversation, was a literary figure of twelfth-century Spain, miles and centuries removed from *Yosippon*'s ninth/tenth-century Southern Italy. Yet Stein Kokin's analysis of geographical and topographical discourse in *Yosippon* and Benjamin of Tudela (and his predecessor) deals with the text of *Yosippon* itself enough to merit inclusion in this section. Another advantage of Stein Kokin's study is the contribution it makes to one of the few aspects of *Yosippon* that has received marked attention in recent years: namely, *Yosippon*'s contribution to medieval geography and toponymy.

Part 4 Beyond Josephus and *Yosippon*: Reception, Afterlives, and Legacy

As Josephus' legacy grew across the centuries following the first century—and, for that matter, as *Yosippon*'s own legacy did so during and after the tenth century—the tradition expanded in multiple directions. Linguistically, Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*, for example, split into Semitic (Syriac) and Indo-European (Greek, Latin) tracks already in late antiquity. *Sefer Yosippon*, for its part, existed not only in expanding Hebrew editions but also in Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and Gə'əz within less than a half-millennium of its writing. Through the High Middle Ages into the Renaissance and beyond, both the Josephus and the *Yosippon* traditions, sometimes together and sometimes individually (though always notionally related), exploded in multiple vernaculars and textual forms. And all of this is to say nothing of the geographical, cultural, and broader traditionary outworkings of this larger Josephus-related legacy. Suffice it to say that, over the past millennium, Josephus and *Yosippon* became some of the most widely-read, popular, and influential historical texts in the Western world.

This being the case, it seems eminently reasonable—even inevitable—that a volume like this should dedicate a section to the later receptions of Josephus

and *Yosippon*. In Part 4 of the volume, the diversity of subject matter is pronounced. At the same time, however, it need not be argued that all of these chapters are telling part of the same story, the story of Josephus, as it were, not of his life but of his afterlife, of the legends and traditions and narratives that accompanied his name and reputation across time, text, and terrain. This broader story is enormous in scope, hence the diversity of time periods, media, and settings that frame these studies.

Martin Goodman's essay on "English Versions of Josephus in the Nineteenth Century: Omissions and Additions" adds to our growing knowledge of the fate of Josephus' writings in the English-speaking world. In particular, Goodman here builds upon the wealth of work he has done in recent years to expose an interesting feature of Josephus' nineteenth-century fate: the drastic abridgement of his text in an 1848 printing of William Whiston's translation purporting to contain "The complete works." Goodman shows that Flavius Josephus is not only a proper object of study for scholars of antiquity and the Middle Ages, but also provides worthwhile material for those interested in the modern world, as it continues to expand our knowledge of Josephus' latter-day fortunes.

Out of the printing press and into primary education, Meir Ben Shahaar's chapter, "Josephus on the School Bench," introduces the place and history of Josephus within modern Israel's educational system and its background. Here we get a glimpse into the future and past of a critical and idiosyncratic modern reception of Josephus. Long debated as a traitor to the Jewish people, Josephus has spent the past few hundred years, among other things, as an embattled figure in modern Jewish textbooks embodying a significant historical moment and catalyzing its capacity for pedagogy. Ben Shahaar's chapter exposes a little-known facet of Josephus' more recent afterlife and, as an added bonus, discusses a good deal of modern Hebrew scholarship that remains quite inaccessible to the larger, non-Hebrew reading scholarly sphere.

Katharina Heyden's essay, "Josephus Proudly Presents': Figurations of Josephus Presenting his Work in High Medieval Latin Manuscripts (12th and 13th centuries)," takes the volume on a graphic turn. By examining how medieval art depicts Josephus presenting his own work, Heyden offers not only visual evidence of Josephus' diversified traditional portfolio in the Middle Ages, but also a demonstration of how Josephus could function as a mirror for the changing artistic and educational norms of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Western Europe. Heyden can use Josephus as a cypher for discussing Jewish-Christian relations and the place(s) of Jews, in life and in the imaginary, during these formative centuries, touching upon the long-recognized and deep historical correlation between Josephus as author and 'witness' and Christian traditions and modes of anti-Jewish thought and discourse.

Combining the fields of ‘art’ and ‘text,’ next we have Yael Feldman’s chapter, “Between Josephus and *Yosippon*: Lamdan’s *Masada*.” This essay highlights how the various versions of Josephus’ narrative that came to exist over time—his own writings, Pseudo-Hegesippus, *Sefer Yosippon*, e.g.—created a tradition that sent reverberations of ambiguity into the poetry and national self-consciousness of twentieth-century Zionist and Israeli cultural-artistic discourse: that is to say, poetry, among other things. Couched within a discussion of martyrology, nationalism, and poetry, Feldman suggests that the poem *Masada* by Yitzhak Lamdan (1899–1954), penned in 1927, draws themes and inspiration not straight from Flavius Josephus—our ‘original’ and ancient source for the account of one of the most famous mass suicides of all time on the part of nearly a thousand Jews atop Mt. Masada in 74 CE—but (also?) from the later, much changed and very different version of *Sefer Yosippon*. In *Yosippon*, Jewish zealots die not by their own swords, but in battle against the Romans; as Feldman convincingly suggests, such an inspiration could have had consequential effects, troubling for some, on the conception, creation, and reception of Lamdan’s *Masada*.

Remaining in the twentieth century, though moving forward a few decades, Michael Avioz’s chapter on “Schalit’s Modern Hebrew Translation of Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae*: A Reassessment” provides a bibliographically-contextualized and extensive review and framing of an important translation of Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae* from 1944: that of Abraham Schalit. This chapter provides an overview of modern Hebrew translations of Josephus, a biographical sketch of Schalit himself, and a technical and helpfully categorized presentation of the structure and contents of Schalit’s translation, with a number of helpful examples.¹⁸

Moving back to textual reception history again, and moving back over a half millennium from the twentieth century of the previous essays, Yonatan Binyam’s “*Zena Ayhud (The History of the Jews): The Text and Context of the Ethiopic Version of Sefer Yosippon*” introduces perhaps one of the most interesting and perhaps one of the least-known trajectories of *Sefer Yosippon*’s afterlife: namely, the Classical Ethiopic (Gə’əz) version thereof, precipitated by Arabic and Judeo-Arabic translations from the Hebrew (apparently).¹⁹ Binyam traces the fortunes of *Yosippon* within this linguistic milieu and through the cultural

18 This chapter stems from the masterclass that began the conference underlying this volume’s contents, in which Avioz and Mason presented on modern Hebrew and English Josephus-translation efforts respectively.

19 See here Binyam, “Studies in *Sefer Yosippon*,” Vollandt, “Ancient Jewish Historiography in Arabic Garb,” Sela, *The Arabic Josippon*.

and geographical connections within it, providing a new and updated starting point for the continued study of an important, yet marginalized ‘version’ of Josephus’ story that eventually came to find a home in medieval Africa.²⁰

The volume’s penultimate essay returns us to the West, with Nadia Zeldes writing on “The Christian Reception of *Sefer Yosippon* in Western Europe.” Zeldes begins: “Christian reception of *Yosippon* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance rested on three assumptions: that it was authored by Josephus, that it could serve to confirm the historicity of Christianity, and that it could be used as a tool in religious polemics against the Jews.” Hereafter follows an illuminating voyage through many of the ins and outs of *Yosippon*’s interpretation, fate, and utilization (even weaponization) in Christian Western Europe across the Middle Ages.²¹ This essay is a fitting entrée to the finale to this volume as it elucidates the mutual implications of Josephus, *Sefer Yosippon*, and various later receptional spheres—that is, Zeldes moves back and forth between Josephus, *Yosippon*, and beyond.

The volume’s final chapter is, fittingly, itself an essay about endings. Andrea Schatz, in “Un-writing the End: Histories and Counter-Histories in the Early Modern *Yosippon*,” begins her chapter by considering the notable ending to Abraham Conat’s version of *Sefer Yosippon*, printed in Mantua in 1475. There, after the fall of the Temple and Masada, the narrative relates how Jewish captives were resettled across the Roman empire, in Sepharad and elsewhere; Josephus himself (Joseph ha-Kohen) is allotted the island in the Tiber River south of Rome, where he built homes, a synagogue, “and a *bet ha-midrash* to study there.”²² Schatz pitches this ‘new beginnings’ ending against the broader legacy of Josephus’ reception, in which a Christian reading of the *Bellum Judaicum* in particular supported the notion that Jewish history effectively ended around 70 or 74 CE. Such rewriting found contemporary parallels in works like Abraham Zacuto’s *Sefer Yuhasin* (Tunis, 1504), which also underplayed the terminal nature of Jerusalem’s 70 CE destruction. Based on this aspect of the habit of chronicling, Schatz then takes the reader through several Jewish and Christian attempts in the early modern period “to un-write and re-write *Yosippon*’s endings,” ending with an examination of the “comprehensive re-framing of *Yosippon*” in Menachem Man Amelander’s 1743 Yiddish edition (printed in Amsterdam). This volume thus ends with a discussion of endings, a consideration of how *Yosippon* catalyzed history and counter-history

20 A critical edition of this text has existed for almost a century now: Kamil, *Des Josef Ben Gorion (Josippon)*.

21 Cf. the more extensive recent account in Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the Renaissance*.

22 See p. 600.

between Jews and Christians many centuries after the work's first writing, and a millennium and a half from Josephus' lifetime.

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