

## English Versions of Josephus in the Nineteenth Century: Omissions and Additions

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The origins of this paper lie in research related to the discovery of a Sequel to Josephus' history,<sup>1</sup> composed in English and published in a large and dense volume in London in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> No publisher or date is given on the title page of this volume, but I have argued in a study of the Sequel that its contents and presentation make it almost certain that the volume was published by the printing firm of J. & F. Tallis in early 1848.<sup>3</sup> In my concern in this initial study to establish the authors of the Sequel and to explain its idiosyncratic approach to Jewish history, I failed to appreciate that the text of William Whiston's translation of Josephus printed in the 1848 volume, which purports from the title page to contain "the complete works," has in fact been drastically abridged. The present study investigates and tries to explain this phenomenon.

The abridgement of the Josephus text in the 1848 volume was extensive. It included the excision of Whiston's translation of some of the most celebrated passages from the *Bellum Judaicum*, including the prologue (*BJ* 1.1–30); the description of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (2.117–166); Josephus as interpreter of dreams who is told by God that Vespasian will become emperor (3.351–353); Josephus' speech against suicide to his companions at Jotapata (3.362–383); the generals at Titus' Council of War (6.236–243); the prophecy

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1 I owe my initiation into the complex history of the Whiston editions entirely to Sally Shuttleworth, who in 2015 tracked down a reprint of the 1848 edition, with its inclusion of a Sequel to Josephus, during her research into 19th-century notions of the uncanny and the origins of an apparent reference by Josephus to teraphim as children's heads. I am immensely grateful to Sally for drawing my attention to this edition and its peculiarities, and for her support and encouragement as I became intrigued about the origins of the Sequel and the reasons for its publication in this form.

2 *The Complete works of the learned and authentic Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus: comprising the Antiquities of the Jews, a History of the Jewish Wars, three dissertations concerning Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, etc., and the Life of Josephus, written by himself. Translated by William Whiston, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge. With a Sequel to the History of the Jews: continued to the present time* (repr. Attic Books, 2008).

3 Goodman, "Disraeli family."

of Jesus son of Ananias (6.300–309); the sabbatical river (7.96–99); and the speech of Eleazar b. Yair at Masada (7.375–406).<sup>4</sup>

Other material excised from the text included the interesting episode in the *Vita* about John of Gischala and the supply of kosher olive oil (*Vita* 74–76) and numerous passages from the *Bellum Judaicum*, such as the long speech of Agrippa II in Jerusalem before the outbreak of the war (*BJ* 2.345–401); geographical descriptions of Galilee and other regions (*BJ* 3.34–58); prophecies and portents, including the application of the messianic oracle to Vespasian (*BJ* 6.285–315); the speech of Titus to defenders of Jerusalem (*BJ* 6.328–350); and the description of the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus in Rome (*BJ* 7.123–162). The redaction of *Contra Apionem* included the removal of the reference to the spread of the Jewish customs of fasts, lighting of lamps, and food taboos to the non-Jewish world (*CA* 2.282–284).<sup>5</sup>

It seems probable that this cutting of the Josephus text began only after the text of Whiston's translation of *Antiquitates Judaicae* had been typeset, since the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (pp. 1–475) seem to be transmitted in full—the volume includes, for instance, on pp. 443–457, the detailed account, with speeches, of the assassination of Gaius Caligula in book 19, despite the irrelevance of this material to Jewish history. It may be significant that the *Vita*, which is placed at the start of the volume, was assigned Roman numerals (pp. v–xxiii) for its page numbers, a practice I have not noted in other printings of the Whiston translation; it is a reasonable hypothesis that it was typeset and inserted into the volume at a late stage. It may also be significant that plates by the Tallis brothers are included at relevant places in the text of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, whereas there are none in the *Vita* and only four (irrelevant) plates to illustrate the whole text of “The Wars of the Jews:” Job before Book 1 (p. 476); Jonah before Book 2 (p. 506); Judith and Holofernes before Book 3 (p. 521); the Widow's Mite before Book 6 (p. 558).

The most probable explanation of the decision by the publisher to omit so much material from Whiston's translation of Josephus is that the prime aim of the publication was less to provide readers with the history written by Josephus than to use the lure of Whiston's Josephus to market the substantial Sequel of Jewish history “to the present time,” which I argued in my original article was composed by the polymath Isaac D'Israeli in his old age and completed at speed by his children (Sarah and Benjamin, the future Prime Minister) after his

4 Goodman, *Josephus's The Jewish War*, 141–159, on “Passages with a Life of Their Own.”

5 Note that Josephus' reference in *CA* 2.282–284 to the spread of the Sabbath to the wider world was retained (p. 627).

death in January 1848, primarily because Benjamin hoped that it might bring in some money.<sup>6</sup>

In my original article I assumed that the decision to publish Isaac's *Sequel* in this fashion had been made by Sarah and Benjamin after their father had died. There are certainly many signs of haste in the 1848 volume, with numerous typographical errors, but the discovery of such extensive editing of the Whiston translation requires some re-evaluation of the process of publication. That the Josephus text was so thoroughly abridged suggests that the project was well underway before Isaac's death, since the volume was probably too large to have been typeset from scratch in the few months between his death and its printing (which must have taken place before the middle of May). If, as now seems likely, the publication plan was already well advanced by the time that Isaac died, it is probable that Isaac was also responsible for the abridgement, which would account for some of the selection of texts for excision: the removal of 'superstitious' material fits the approach to Jewish history which characterizes the account of Jewish history in the *Sequel*, and both the *Sequel* and Isaac's other writings show his facility in paraphrasing and excerpting the texts that he cites.<sup>7</sup>

Why should Isaac D'Israeli have selected the Whiston translation of Josephus rather than any other Josephus translation for this purpose? There had been many other renderings of Josephus into English before the middle of the nineteenth century, starting (in the seventeenth century) with the version published by Lodge in 1609, an anonymous revision of Lodge from the French of d'Andilly published in 1677, and the popular translation by L'Estrange, first issued in 1692. There was again a rash of new translations in the eighteenth century: Jackson in 1732, Court in 1733, Wilson in 1740, Thompson and Price in 1777, Clarke in 1785, and Maynard in 1789. But by the early nineteenth century the translation by William Whiston was by far the most popular, and Isaac, who was keenly aware of the vicissitudes of the book trade, will have known that presenting his work in the context of a new edition of Whiston was by far the most viable financial proposition.<sup>8</sup>

Whiston, a maverick scholar who had been the successor of Isaac Newton as Professor of Mathematics in Cambridge earlier in his career but lost his post because of his heretical Unitarian views about the Trinity, published his

6 Goodman, "Disraeli family," 159–160.

7 Ogden, *Isaac D'Israeli*.

8 On these other English translations of Josephus, see Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie*, 188–196 (on "englische und walisische Uebersetzungen"), but note that Schreckenberg did not include Wilson (1740) in his catalogue.

translation in 1737, towards the end of his life.<sup>9</sup> Whiston's income since his dismissal from Cambridge had depended on his writings and fees for lectures, and the motivation for producing a new translation of Josephus was in part financial, not least because his son John, who was only just establishing himself as a publisher, was appointed sole distributor.<sup>10</sup> But Whiston was also keen to promulgate his distinctive theological preoccupations, using public fascination with Josephus as a means to disseminate eight Dissertations, and for this purpose it made sense for him to promote Josephus' own value, insisting that the Jewish historian had been "a person of the finest Genius and Abilities, Honour and Integrity."<sup>11</sup>

Whiston's translation was composed in instalments and at great speed (in 25 months), with publication dependent upon subscriptions. It was intended to compete in particular with the popular version published by L'Estrange in 1692, which was reissued in fourteen editions, in whole or in part, between 1702 and 1785. His was not the first attempt to supplant L'Estrange: the translation by Jackson in 1732 was specifically presented as "compared with the translation of Sir R. L'Estrange," and the translation by Court, which first appeared in 1733, was reprinted in 1754. Whiston seems to have been particularly aware of the rival attractions of Jackson's publication, which boasted that it included "A Compleat Collection of the Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus;" Whiston thus noted specifically (on p. 1177), that his own edition of the genuine works has deliberately omitted the Fourth Book of Maccabees, which "is in the other Editions of Josephus," on the grounds that it was not genuinely written by Josephus.<sup>12</sup>

It is not entirely clear why Whiston's version of Josephus had become by 1848 so much more popular than these rival English translations, but throughout the nineteenth century it was the only version from the previous century to be reprinted, with around 200 dated new printings of Whiston in the nineteenth century and 34 undated printings, and new printings both in the United Kingdom (in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and Halifax)

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9 *The genuine works of Flavius Josephus, the Jewish Historian: Translated from the Original Greek, according to Havercamp's accurate edition containing Twenty Books of the Jewish Antiquities with the Appendix, or Life of Josephus, written by himself. Seven Books of the Jewish War and Two Books against Apion with plans, maps, notes, indexes, eight dissertations, by William Whiston, M.A., Sometime Professor of the Mathematicks in the University of Cambridge* (London, 1737).

10 Feingold, "Rake's Progress," 16–26.

11 Feingold, "Rake's Progress," 19.

12 Basic publication details of most of these editions can be found in Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie*, 190–193.

and in North America (both in the United States, in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Auburn, and Cleveland, and in Canada, in Kingston, U.C.).<sup>13</sup> The only attempt to supplant the domination of this lucrative market by new editions of Whiston was by the clergyman Robert Traill, who published a new translation of the *Bellum Judaicum* in 1847–1851 (reprinted in Boston in 1858 and in London in 1862 and 1868). But Traill's work failed to make a significant dent in the popularity of the Whiston version, in part because of the existing ubiquity of reprints of Whiston and in part because plans to publish his new translation of the *Antiquitates* ended after his untimely death in the Irish famine.<sup>14</sup>

The publishers of the numerous reprints of Whiston's translation resorted to a variety of marketing methods, appealing to the different interests of potential readers on the title pages of their editions. Some emphasized the authority of Josephus as "The Learned and Authentic Jewish Historian."<sup>15</sup> Some referred to Josephus' martial qualities as a "Celebrated Warrior"—an odd attribute in light of his evident failings as a general in Galilee, but possibly reflecting references to the martial virtues of Joseph ben Gurion on the title pages of early printed English translations of *Sefer Yosippon*.<sup>16</sup> The authority of Whiston himself was sometimes emphasized, with references to his academic prestige in Cambridge, derived from his expertise in mathematics; no later edition seems to have made use of Whiston's own accurate reference to himself in the original printing of his work in 1737, where he was described as "Sometime Professor" in Cambridge, perhaps because the description "sometime professor" might raise awkward questions about how Whiston had come to vacate his university post.<sup>17</sup> Some new editions advertised themselves as "accurate" or "improved" (without indicating in what respect they were "improved") or (in North America) as "from the last London edition."<sup>18</sup> Christian readers were

13 Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie*, 191–193.

14 *The Jewish War of Flavius Josephus: A new translation by R. Traill. Edited with notes by I. Taylor*, 2 vols, London, 1847–1851.

15 For example, the printings by H.G. Bohn (London, 1845; 1852); J.H. Beardsley (Auburn and Buffalo, 1857); The Arundel Print (New York, 1880).

16 For example, Lackington, Allen & Co. (London, 1806; 1811; 1820); Baynes (London and Edinburgh, 1825); T. Tegg (London, Dublin and Glasgow, 1822; 1825); J. Grigg (Philadelphia, 1825).

17 For example, T. Nelson (London and Edinburgh, 1854) described Whiston as "Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge" as if he were still in post; Lippincott, Grambo & Co. (Philadelphia, 1850) called him "the late William Whiston, A.M.;" Simms & McIntyre (London, 1847) printed simply "William Whiston, A.M."

18 "Accurate edition" (Lippincott, Grambo & Co., Philadelphia, 1850); "improved edition" (T. Nelson, Edinburgh, 1854); "from the last London Edition" (J. Grigg, Philadelphia, 1825).

sometimes lured by the advertising of Whiston's Dissertations on the title page (usually three, but sometimes seven) or by the advertised addition of new material for spiritual improvement.<sup>19</sup> Whiston's translation of the *Jewish War* was sometime printed in an abridged version for children.<sup>20</sup>

The different editions of Whiston's translation presented the works of Josephus in various different orders, selected in some cases perhaps simply to demonstrate originality. Whiston's original 1737 edition was published in two volumes, divided into the Preface to *Antiquities*, the *Antiquities*, the *Life*, and Justus of Tiberias' *Chronology* (taken from Photius) in the first volume; the second volume contained the eight Dissertations, the Preface to "Of the Jewish War or, his History of the Destruction of Jerusalem," "Of the Jewish War," and "Of the Antiquities of the Jews; Against Apion." In the nineteenth-century editions, which were usually contained within one volume, the Dissertations were generally either omitted or placed near the end of the volume (thus minimizing their importance), but the *Life* was usually placed at the start, placing emphasis on the personal testimony of Josephus as an eyewitness of some of the history about which he wrote.<sup>21</sup>

Among these later editions there exists a distinctive luxury volume, printed with numerous illustrations by the London Printing & Publishing Company in London and New York and including the Sequel to the History of the Jews which had first appeared in the 1848 edition published by the Tallis brothers.<sup>22</sup> No date is given on the title page of this edition any more than in the 1848 edition, but the contents of the Sequel make it almost certain that the volume was published ca. 1876 with an eye to the large potential Jewish readership in New

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Grigg's printing, dated on the title page to 1825, in fact claimed, implausibly, that it had been taken "from the last London edition of 1827."

- 19 The edition published by Simms and McIntyre (London, 1847) has three dissertations; Virtue and Yorston (New York, ca. 1874) has seven dissertations; an edition with a new preface about the early Church published by Kinnersley (New York, 1821) advertised the volume as "Revised, and illustrated with notes, by the Rev. Samuel Burder, A.M."
- 20 "Jerusalem Destroyed or the History of the Siege of that City by Titus, Abridged from Flavius Josephus, by the Author of 'Lily Douglas'" (Edinburgh, 1826); abridged text for the American Sunday School Union, by the Author of "Pierre and his Family" (Philadelphia, 1828).
- 21 For example, "The Life of Flavius Josephus" was printed at the start of the volumes published by H.G. Bohn (London, 1852) and by T. Nelson (Edinburgh, 1854).
- 22 *The complete Works of Flavius Josephus comprising the History of the Jews, &c, and the Life of Josephus, written by himself: Translated by William Whiston, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge. With a Geographical Summary of the Land of Promise, Illustrated with Coloured Maps. And a Sequel to the History of the Jews, continued to the present time* (London and New York: The London Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.).

York.<sup>23</sup> The London Printing & Publishing Company, a successor company to J.&F. Tallis, updated and changed the Sequel, altering the muddled numbering of the books of the Sequel in the earlier edition and correcting the 1848 text where it made no sense.<sup>24</sup>

Other changes in the 1876 edition included a reordering of Josephus' works: in the 1848 edition (pp. 576–593), Dissertations I–III had been placed between “Wars of the Jews” and “Flavius Josephus Against Apion,” whereas in the 1876 edition (pp. 564–581), Dissertations I–III were placed after *Against Apion*. The insertion throughout the volume (including the Sequel) of many hundreds of images, some of only marginal relevance to the text itself, may be explained by the desire to market the volume as a luxury product and by the ready availability of such images to the publishers, since the Tallis brothers had begun their careers as illustrators. Of more significance was the addition of a substantial “Geographical Summary of the Land of Promise, Illustrated with Coloured Maps” (pp. 812–820).

Christian interests were not altogether ignored in the 1876 edition—the publisher included Whiston's Dissertation on Josephus' references to Jesus, John the Baptist and ‘James the Just’ (pp. 564–581) and the Geographical Summary refers to Palestine as “the Land of Promise of the Jew—the Holy Land of the Christian” (p. 812). But I have argued elsewhere that this volume was the first English edition of Whiston's Josephus (or, indeed, any translation of Josephus) to be produced primarily for a Jewish readership: there was no reference to the Dissertations on the title page, which instead proclaimed “The Land of Promise” as the title of the Geographical Summary. This marked the work's geographical content as suitable for Jews, and the anonymous author of the additions to the Sequel stressed the significance of New York's Jewish community, describing it as “the Mecca of American Judaism” (p. 809).<sup>25</sup> It was presumably for the benefit of Jewish readers that the publishers changed the running headings of the text of Josephus' *Antiquities* in Whiston's translation from “Antiquities of the Jews” to “History of the Jews,” emphasising the volume's role as a full consecutive account of Jewish history from the beginning to the work's original present time.

If this new edition was intended to convey knowledge of Josephus, as well as Isaac D'Israeli's Sequel, to a new Jewish readership, it is rather remarkable that the publishers appear to have made no effort whatever to remedy the gaps

23 Pages 808–811 bring the Sequel up-to-date, cf. Goodman, “Josephus, Isaac D'Israeli.”

24 Goodman, “Disraeli family,” 151–152.

25 Goodman, “Josephus, Isaac D'Israeli.”

in Josephus' narrative as they inherited it from the 1848 edition. It would be interesting to know whether any of the Jewish readers of the volume were ever aware that so many passages had been excised or abbreviated, and what they would have thought about this had they known, since by the 1870s Jewish attitudes towards Josephus varied considerably. On the one hand, he had come to be regarded as a prime source for the history of the Jewish nation through the work of historians in the first generations of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. On the other hand, he was seen as an example of Jewish accommodation to the culture and political system of the Roman Empire, to be either celebrated or abhorred, as Jews in many parts of Europe themselves faced the possibility of assimilation and acculturation into the wider society. Thus, some saw Josephus as a reliable historical source: in Germany, when Leopold Stein wished to praise the historian Joachim Jost at his funeral in 1860, he ranked Jost alongside Josephus as a great Jewish historian; in England, a writer in the *Jewish Chronicle* noted in 1855 that "the writings of both Moses and Josephus are in the hands of everyone." In France, a plaque erected in the Temple Buffault in Paris in 1877 by Daniel Iffla (Osiris), a dedicated French nationalist, celebrated Joseph FLAVIUS as one of the "illustres enfants d'Israel." Much more ambivalent was the attitude of Heinrich Graetz, who used Josephus' writings extensively as the primary source for his history in the first editions of volumes 3 and 4 of his *History* in the 1850s but attacked him for his politics in a new footnote in the third edition of volume 3 published in 1878.<sup>26</sup>

It is tempting, but difficult, to link the excisions in this edition of Josephus' writings to Jewish ambivalence about Josephus as a historian and as a man or to ambivalence about the Christian theology of William Whiston, whose translation the publishers had chosen to use. Yet I suspect that it was purely an accident, arising from the specific requirement of Isaac D'Israeli in the 1840s edition to make space for his extensive *Sequel*, that the first publication of Josephus' histories specifically designed to popularise his writings among English-speaking Jews happened to be missing so much of Josephus' text. I likewise imagine that it was incidental that neither the publishers in 1876 nor their readers were aware that Josephus' writings had been so considerably abridged.

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26 Goodman, *Josephus's The Jewish War*, 71–81.



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