

Flavius Josephus and His Testimony Concerning the Historical Jesus

**Marian Hillar
Center for Philosophy and Socinian Studies**

The earliest references to Christianity and Christians in non-partisan non-Christian sources were made by the Roman historians Publius Cornelius Tacitus (56 C.E.-ca 117 C.E.) and Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (ca 69 C.E.-ca 140 C.E.) who criticized Christianity as an oriental superstition and a degraded cult that disrupted the social fabric and security of the state. Tacitus wrote in *The Annals of the Imperial Rome* published ca 115 C.E.: "To suppress this rumor, Nero fabricated scapegoats – and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilate. But in spite of the temporary setback the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome. All degraded and shameful practices collect and flourish in the capital. First Nero had the self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then on their information, large numbers of others were condemned – not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies."¹ Suetonius reported ca 120 C.E. in *The Lives of Twelve Caesars* that the Christians were considered Jews who produced political unrest in the imperium and for that reason were expelled from Rome by Claudius.² In another place he described them as spreading new and evil superstition: "... afflicti suppliciiis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis nouae ac maleficae..."³ These are relatively late documents and the references to Christ and Pontius Pilate reflect therefore information provided by Christians themselves via the Gospel stories which were already written.

The documents concerning Jesus outside the canonical Gospels are not abundant and recently were reviewed by R. Joseph Hoffmann in a succinct scholarly outline.⁴ The most interesting are the Jewish sources found in two collections: 1. The Talmud, comprising oral teachings called Mishnah and the discussions on the Mishnah, called Gemara. They were formulated during the fifth century C.E.; 2. The Midrash, i.e., a scriptural exegesis composed itself of edifying sermons, Haggadah, and of legally binding theological decisions, Halakha. It originated in the fourth century B.C.E., but the earliest collections date from the second century C.E. though it contains some older material. The Talmud rarely refers to events of the second Temple (between 168 B.C.E and 70 C.E.). Jesus is represented there with an anti-Christian twist, thus these documents are not reliable. Most of that material is of a legendary nature, therefore useless for historical evaluation. Moreover, the Talmud and Midrash underwent papal censorship over the centuries. The material that survived in various manuscripts was restored by Gustav Dalman in 1900.⁵

The most important and the most discussed are the short passages found in the Flavius Josephus book entitled *Antiquities of the Jews* and published ca 93 C.E. If genuine they would be the earliest evidence concerning Jesus written by a writer who was not a Christian. For that reason Josephus is the only Greek-language historian, who was widely read in the medieval West.

Flavius Josephus' Life (37- ca 100 C.E.)

All that we know about the life of Josephus comes from his own autobiography.⁶ Flavius Josephus, born as Joseph ben Matthias, “in the first year of the reign of Caius Caesar” (Caligula) in a priestly family, and through his mother he was descended from the royal Hasmonaean family. He was educated at the rabbinic school in Jerusalem where he distinguished himself. As a young man he decided to learn the tenets of the three major Jewish sects of his time. At the age of sixteen he joined the Essenes under the influence of a religious leader Banus and spent some time conducting an ascetic way of life. Then he joined the sect of the Pharisees, akin, according to him, to the school of the Stoics, and remained faithful to this sect for the rest of his life. He learned also about the Sadducees, though he gives us little information about them. We learn that he was married three times, had three sons from his second marriage and two from his third marriage, and that he had a brother, Matthias.

In the year 64 C.E. he was sent to Rome to obtain a release of certain priests who were sent there by the Roman procurator, Felix, for a trial. During his voyage the ship went aground in the Adriatic Sea, but he and his companions managed to be rescued and landed in the Italian city of Puteoli. He succeeded in his mission with the help of a Jewish actor, Aliturus, and the emperor's wife Poppea.

During his prolonged visit to Rome, Josephus became convinced about the invincibility of the Roman Empire and futility of fighting against it, so he decided to work toward peace in order to prevent a revolt. When he returned to Palestine in 66, however, troubles arose when the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, under whom Palestine was ruled, demanded taxes from the Jews and opposition against him arose in Caesarea. In Jerusalem Josephus opposed the nationalist party and argued against the war. That made him unpopular and he had to find a refuge in the Temple until his enemy, the extremist leader, Menachem, was murdered.

In order to stop the revolt, Gallus directed an expeditionary force against Jerusalem, but was driven out of Jerusalem and for rather unknown reasons decided to retreat. His Twelfth Legion was defeated in the autumn of 66 in the pass of Beth-horon. Now the war was inevitable and the moderates who tried to prevent it had no choice but to join it. The country was divided into six regional commands and Josephus was sent to Galilee as a legate and general in charge of the Jewish forces with a double mission to organize a regular Jewish army, fortify the towns and citadels, and, at the same time, to pacify a popular uprising and revolt against the king which was itself divided into various quarrelling factions. In Tiberias a certain Justus (d. 101 C.E.) was a leader of the war party and against the city of Sepphoris. This Justus reported later, now lost, in *The Chronology of the Kings of Judah which Succeeded One Another*, a rival to Josephus' account of the war and fall of Jerusalem.⁷ The city of Gischala was ransacked by the neighboring towns, then rebuilt by its leader, John of Gischala, and united against Romans. In Gamala a certain Philip in spite of the atrocities produced by the Romans in Caesarea, persuaded his countrymen to continue their allegiance to the Romans. Josephus had to deal with all these factions, with several bands of robbers who were recruited from among the poor people, as well as with interethnic fights between the Jews and the Greeks. There were some attempts on Josephus' life, especially by Justus, but he managed to escape to Tarichaeae. Among the specific things Josephus reports about his stay in Galilee is the defense of the non-Jews living among the Jews and allowing them to practice their own religion: “Everyone ought to worship God

according to his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force.” Evidently Josephus learned this attitude from the Hellenes.

When Vespasian’s forces invaded Palestine in the spring of 67, Josephus’ forces deserted and he was forced to find refuge in the fortress of Jotapata where, after a siege of six weeks, he surrendered in July 67. Josephus was a valued prisoner to be sent to the emperor Nero, but he took advantage of the situation and made a prophecy that Vespasian would become emperor. Thus Vespasian kept him in his custody until 69 when his troops would declare him emperor and treated Josephus more like an interpreter than a prisoner.

With the death of Nero in 68 a period of struggle for power followed in Rome with a succession of three emperors. During this time the war with Israel was suspended. In 69, when Vespasian was pronounced emperor, he freed Josephus who assumed now the name of Flavius, the family name of Vespasian. When Titus, the son of the emperor, was named general to lead Roman forces in a renewed war against the Jews, Josephus returned to Palestine and witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem. He was used by Titus as an intermediary to convince the Jews to give up their resistance and save the city by surrendering. Jews, in spite of Josephus’ oratorical skills, regarded him as a traitor.

After the war Josephus was given a parcel of land near Jerusalem for retirement from active life. He decided instead to go to Rome and became a Roman citizen and client of the Flavian family. He was given a house in which Vespasian lived as a private citizen and a pension for life. He was commissioned to write the history of the Jewish people and the war. In his *Life*, which was added to his *Antiquities of the Jews*, he mentioned the death of Agrippa II who died in 93. Thus Josephus’ own death probably took place around 100 C.E.

The first work of Josephus, commissioned by the emperor, was the *Jewish War*, published ca 75. It was modeled on Caesar’s *Gallic War*. As he stated himself he wrote it first in Aramaic for the Jews in the eastern Diaspora and then translated into Greek with the help of some native speakers.⁸ The purpose of publishing the translation was to fulfill his obligation to the emperor and present a truthful account of the events as an eyewitness and as a person acquainted with everything that was either said or done in the war. Josephus presents the war as an event that resulted from the loss of control by the legitimate rulers of Judaea and its usurpation by self-centered tyrants, zealots, and bandits. God chose to punish the Jews using Romans as his instrument and Josephus emphasized the futility of a war with the Roman power. Some scholars claim that Josephus’ *War* represents the Roman view of the war. He mentions that he had access in Rome to the *Commentaries* on the war written by Vespasian and Titus. The completed work received an imprimatur from Vespasian and Titus, the latter even signed the copies. Josephus sent a part of his work to King Agrippa II who ruled over northern territories of Palestine and contributed troops to the siege of Jerusalem, and who was present there in Titus’ camp.

His second work, *Antiquities of the Jews*, published ca 93 C.E., was modeled on *Roman Antiquities* by Dionysius of Helicarnassus published a century earlier. This work was not written under a Roman commission. Josephus’ aim was to show the antiquity of the Jewish culture, thus making a claim to respectability and recognition. It is based almost entirely on the biblical stories from the Greek version of the Septuagint with the addition of some legendary material and a few details from his own life and that of other historians. The book is dedicated to Epaphroditus, a scholar from Alexandria who settled in Rome and became Josephus’ friend and patron.

At the end of his life Josephus wrote an autobiographical note, *Life*, in order to defend himself against the charges made by his competitor, Justus of Tiberias, concerning his conduct during the

war. Josephus' goal was to tone down his anti-Roman activities in Galilee and hence it contains some discrepancies with the account in the *Jewish War*.

Josephus remained faithful to his culture and religion and he defended Judaism praising its excellence in his work originally titled *Concerning the Antiquities of the Jews*, but known since the time of Jerome under the title *Against Apion*, published ca 93 C.E. The work is a passionate apology of the Jews and their culture, their law, their religion, and their customs. It is addressed against an Alexandrian scholar who did not represent adequately Jewish history and culture. It is a valuable work because it contains many excerpts from works which are no longer available.

Testimonium Flavianum

The short passage concerning Jesus in book XVIII of Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews* is labeled Testimonium Flavianum (Flavian Testimony) and remains a center of interest since antiquity. However, this text is closely related to two other texts concerning James, the presumed brother of Jesus, and John the Baptist known from the Gospel stories. Thus these three passages should be analyzed together. They were considered until the sixteenth century as unquestionable extrabiblical evidence for the historicity of Jesus as he is presented in the Gospels. For that reason Josephus was the most widely read Greek-language historian in medieval and modern times. The first attempt at historical treatment of the accounts in the Testimonium comes from a German author, Christoph Arnold, who, in a work published in 1661, collected some pertinent ancient sources and opinions of his contemporary scholars. The authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum was questioned for the first time by Hubert van Giffen (Giffanus) in 1534. There is also a view shared by many scholars who believe that Josephus' *Antiquities* contained a passage concerning Jesus, but that it is not the one known today in the preserved Greek Testimonium Flavianum designated as the *textus receptus*. They suggest that that is a result of alterations to which the original text was subjected by zealous Christians. There were also several attempts at reconstruction of the presumed original text in Josephus' *Antiquities*.⁹

The most recent work, *Josephus on Jesus. The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* by Alice Whealey is the most extensive and complete historical study of the reception of these passages.¹⁰ Whealey makes her own evaluation of the Josephus passages. She assumes that the passage concerning James, the brother of Jesus, is authentic because it could not be introduced by Christians after the second century when the idea of Jesus having brother became unacceptable in order to preserve the perpetual virginity of Mary. For the Jesus passage she presents two arguments in favor of it being only slightly modified from its original form.

The first argument is based on the suggestion that the critics of the authenticity of the Testimonium made false assumptions about the motives of the ancient authors for citing the Testimonium thus jeopardizing its authenticity. The ancient authors, and she draws this conclusion from the example of Origen, supposedly did not cite Josephus as a relevant authority on anything in the New Testament, on Jesus, James, the brother of Jesus, or John the Baptist: "Probably the reason for this is Christians' relative inattention to their own history during the second and third centuries." And she dismisses the histories of Acts and of Hegesippus as no real histories of the church before Eusebius. For that reason the passage on Jesus was not cited or used before Eusebius.

The second argument is deduced from a comparison of various references to the *Testimonium Flavianum* in antiquity. She finds at least one variant version slightly different from the *textus receptus*. This difference could involve only the presence in the original Josephus text of a formulation about Jesus that “He was believed to be the Messiah” instead of the present version “He was the Messiah.” The Josephus original text was, according to Whealey, repeated by Eusebius but it was subsequently altered to the present form in all Eusebius’ works and in the *Antiquities* of Josephus.

Whealey’s argument does not consider the fact that using the Josephus passage, even in the dubitative form, if it existed, would be advantageous for the early Christians in their arguments with the Hellenes. Moreover, she ignores the confessional character of the remaining parts of the *Testimonium* found in the eastern Semitic sources and makes an assumption of the authenticity of the James passage which, however, could be interpolated very early in the second century.

1. Testimony on Jesus

Textus receptus

The passage in Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*¹¹ (Bk. XVIII.III.3, written in 93 C.E.) concerning Jesus is generally considered by scholars either as a Christian interpolation in its entirety or at least as containing an interpolation. It is found in all extant copies of the manuscripts, but all of them are relatively recent, not earlier than eleventh century. The paragraph is inserted between a story of how Pontius Pilate, Roman procurator between the years 26 and 36 C.E., suppressed a Jewish riot against the construction of an aqueduct with the temple tax money and the story of a subterfuge used by a citizen in Rome to seduce a Roman matron through the intermediary of the priests of the Isis temple. The English translation by William Whiston reads:

Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.¹²

This is clearly a Christian text, in addition it reflects the later, second century assumption about Jesus:

1. It positively asserts that Jesus, though a man, is a supernatural figure. This was not so assertively stated anywhere in the New Testament writings. Rather this opinion was established at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second.
2. His supernatural power was confirmed by his ability to perform “wonderful works,” i.e., miracles.
3. He was a “teacher” and what he taught was the “truth.” Therefore, the author of this statement denied truthfulness of any other teaching, especially Jewish in the historical context of his life. It is reminiscent of 2 Thess. 2:13.
4. He attracted many Jews and many Greeks, and in the historical context of his epoch it

would be a correct statement.

5. He positively and categorically was identified as the Messiah/Christ. The formulation implies that this was the belief of the writer. The term, however, was not well defined in early Christian thought and its Jewish meaning was of an earthly human who was charged with a special political mission.
6. He was condemned to be crucified by the Roman procurator Pilate, though through evidence presented by the Jewish leaders.
7. There is a positive statement that he appeared alive to his disciples on the third day after the crucifixion.
8. All this concerning Jesus was predicted by the prophets.
9. Christians, his followers named after him, still exist.

All scholars agree that a statement like this requires an uncompromised commitment. Thus it amounts to a confession of faith in Jesus as the Christian Messiah. If it were written by Josephus, the question could be: Was Josephus a Christian? There is nothing in his writings that would indicate this. On the contrary, he was solidly committed to his Jewish faith, and he interpreted prophecies in a quite different way from the standard Christian interpretation. For example, he agreed that Daniel predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, but he believed that the messianic prophecy, which was known even to Roman historians, was referring to Vespasian and his son Titus.¹³ His general attitude was in fundamental opposition to messianic personalities and looked for a literal sense in biblical interpretations. Thus the question remains, who wrote this Testimonium and how did he write it? Was there an original text in Josephus? If so what was the nature of this text and what changes did it undergo?

This version of the Testimonium was quoted by Eusebius in his works, *Demonstratio evangelica*, *Theophania*, and *Historia Ecclesiastica (Ecclesiastical History)*.¹⁴

There are only three known variants in the Testimonium Flavianum. One is a slightly different from the Eusebius quote by Jerome in his *De viris illustribus*,¹⁵ and the other two are references found in the Arabic chronicle of the world *Kitab al-Unwan* written by Agapius, Melkite bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, dated 942 C.E., and in the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, Patriarch of Antioch, dated from 1195.¹⁶

The quote of Jerome:

Its Latin text reads:

Eodem tempore fuit Jesus vir sapiens, si tamen virum oportet eum dicere. Erat enim mirabilium patrator operum, et doctor eorum, qui libenter vera suscipiunt : plurimosque tam de Judaeis quam de gentibus sui habuit secatores, et credebatur esse Christus. Cumque invidia nostrorum principum, cruci eum Pilatus addixisset, nihilominus qui cum primum dilexerant perseveraverunt. Apparuit enim eis tertio die vivens. Multa et haec alia mirabilia carminibus Prophetarum de eo vaticinantibus et usque hodie christianorum gens ab hoc sortita vocabulum, non defecit.

The quote of Jerome in English translation:

In this same time was Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him man. For he was a worker of wonderful miracles, and a teacher of those who freely

receive the truth. He had very many adherents also, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, and was believed to be Christ, and when through the envy of our chief men Pilate had crucified him, nevertheless those who had loved him at first continued to the end, for he appeared to them the third day alive. Many things both these and other wonderful things are in the songs of the prophets who prophesied concerning him and the sect of Christians, so named from him, exists to the present day.¹⁷

In this variant the difference is that Jesus “was believed to be Christ” instead of “he was the Christ” in the *textus receptus* of the Greek Josephus and that he was crucified “through the envy” instead “at the suggestion.”

The quote from Arabic history by Agapius:

For he [i.e. Josephus] says in the treatises that he has written on the governance [i.e. Antiquities] of the Jews:

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good, and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.¹⁸

In this text we find a statement that Jesus was a wise man, of good conduct and virtuous. There is no suggestion here about his supernaturalism; nothing about him being a teacher of those who receive the truth; nothing about his power to make miracles; moreover, there is no mention of the Jewish leaders conspiring to condemn him, but there is an explicit statement about his death. There is a statement, however, that he was reported to have appeared alive and therefore perhaps that he was the Messiah (or he could be thought to be the Messiah) about whom the prophets spoke.

The quote from the Syrian *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian

The writer Josephus also says in his work on the institutions [i.e. Antiquities] of the Jews: In these times there was a wise man named Jesus, if it be fitting for us to call him a man. For he was a worker of glorious deeds and a teacher of truth. Many from among the Jews and the nations became his disciples. He was thought to be the Messiah. But not according to the testimony of the principal [men] of [our] nation. Because of this, Pilate condemned him to the cross, and he died. For those who had loved him did not cease to love him. He appeared to them alive after three days. For the prophets of God had spoken with regard to him of such marvelous things [as these]. And the people of the Christians, named after him, have not disappeared till [this] day.¹⁹

The words in brackets are corrections according to the version in the al-Makin manuscript. This version differs from the *textus receptus* only by the change of the expression “He was the

Messiah/Christ” to “He was thought to be the Messiah/Christ.”

2. Testimony on James, the supposed brother of Jesus.

Another passage refers to James (*Antiquities* Bk. XX.9.1) as “the brother of Jesus who was called Christ [Messiah], whose name was James” who was condemned by the Sanhedrin to be stoned with some of his companions “as breakers of the Law” at the time when Ananus Jr. was the high priest. We can date this event more precisely at 62 C.E.

The text in Josephus:

When, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition [being rigid in judging Jewish offenders], he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrim of the Judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done.²⁰

This is a puzzling text and many scholars assume it to be authentic written by Josephus himself. It cannot be analyzed, however, in isolation from the Jesus passage. In the New Testament writing, Jesus is said to have brothers and sisters and one of them is James. There is, however, nowhere any indication that he was killed. There is a mention in Acts 12:1-3 of another James, the brother of John who was put to the sword by Herod Agrippa I, shortly before his death in 44 C.E. The Acts are considered to be written ca 85 C.E. therefore, if the James of Acts were the same as James of Josephus, he would be mentioned in there. There is no independent identification of the James from Josephus with James of the New Testament writings, the brother of Jesus.

The question of his identity remains tied to the authenticity of the Jesus passage. In one hypothesis, if Jesus represents a real person, and is not a composite figure, there is a real possibility that he had a brother and if Josephus mentioned Jesus in his Jesus passage, he also could have explained who that James was by writing “the brother of Jesus.” In the other hypothesis, however, if Josephus did not mention Jesus in the Jesus passage, then the expression “the brother of Jesus who was called Messiah” would be also a Christian addition. The title given to Jesus was the common expression used in the Gospels (Matt. 1:16, 27:17, 22; John 4:25). The James in Josephus, however, is a historical figure and it seems that he could be a religious revisionist, and we do not know what was his infraction of the Jewish Laws. As far as we can say, James, the New Testament brother of Jesus, is not reported to have broken any law.

It is most likely that the Christians identified him with James of Josephus and altered the original text. This alteration would have to be done relatively early since from the middle of the second century the idea of Jesus having a brother was becoming unpopular. They also created other stories about his death and his role in the destruction of Jerusalem, discussed below, that do not fit into Josephus’ account and are clearly a Christian religious interpretation of history.

3. Testimony on John the Baptist.

There is a third testimony describing John the Baptist and his mission (*Antiquities* Bk. XX.V.2). John, an ascetic preacher, probably a member of one of the Essene sects, was “commanding the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God.” The text states that Herod Antipas (4-39 C.E.) had him imprisoned and killed fearing a rebellion against the ruler imposed by the Romans which could be produced by large gatherings of crowds that John attracted.

Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards each other, and piety towards God, and so come to baptism; for that the washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins only, but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified by righteousness. Now, when others came to crowd about him, for they were greatly moved hearing his words, Herod, who feared that lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late.²¹

The picture of John the Baptist presented in the Gospels does not correspond to the picture given by Josephus. Josephus presents a different nature of John’s baptism which was a purification of the body, while the soul was purified by righteous behavior; also, different motives for his imprisonment and killing by Herod Antipas than those known from the scripture. There is no relation between Jesus and John the Baptist in Josephus’ account. Moreover, it is placed after the story of Pilate’s dismissal thus its chronology does not correspond to that of the Gospels. This passage is also cited by Origen. There is no reason to doubt its authenticity, but it throws some light on the way the Gospel stories were written. John the Baptist was most probably one of many religious preachers and activists inspired by the political and social situation in Palestine of the first century, full of religious fervor not unlike that seen in modern times among the televangelists prophesying disasters, wars, social upheavals and calling their adherents to repentance for imaginary sins. He was imprisoned and executed by Herod Antipas for fear of political upheaval. Christians linked him and his death later with the supposed prophecies that the Messiah would be preceded by a messenger.

Testimony of Josephus among Christian writers

There is no evidence in the preserved documents that any Christian writer before Origen read in its entirety *Antiquities* of Josephus or was aware of the passage about Jesus. The first evidence of the use of Josephus by a Christian writer is by Theophilus of Antioch who, in his apology *To Autolycus* written ca 170-186, used *Against Apion*. A similar use of *Against Apion* we find in Tertullian’s *Apology* dated ca 197. Minucius Felix (fl. ca 200 C.E.) in his apology, *Octavius*

(33.4), recalls the theme of *The Jewish War* with Rome that the Jews lost because of their own sinfulness. There is some indication that Irenaeus (ca 130-ca 200) may cite a small fragment of Josephus' *Antiquities* directly or from secondary sources. He states that according to Josephus, Moses was raised in Egyptian palaces and married an Egyptian princess (*Antiquities* Bk. II. 9-11). But he could not be familiar with book XVIII because he erroneously places Jesus' death and Pilate's rule in the reign of Claudius, the date he derived from John 8:57.²² Clement of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clemens, d. ca 225) in *Stromateis*,²³ written ca 190-210, quotes Josephus' calculations for the years from Moses to David and from David to Vespasian. He was probably familiar with *The Jewish War* and indirectly with *Antiquities*. At best Josephus is cited as an authority on Jewish history and religion and not on things pertaining to Christianity. He was read primarily by the Hellenes,²⁴ as he had a bad reputation among the Jews. His works cited are *Against Apion* and *The Jewish War* which were apologetic and addressed to the Greek and Roman contemporaries of Josephus. *Antiquities* was a much larger work and its first part concerned with biblical history was of interest to the Hellenes and to the church fathers. Therefore, probably readers rarely went through the twenty volumes.

Origen

Origen (185-232) is the first author who knew all the works of Josephus and cites him as an authority on Christian figures. He is also the first Christian writer who refers to Josephus citing the exact book number.

The first reference Origen gives is in his book *Contra Celsum* written ca 248 C.E. and addressed to the Hellenes:

I would like to tell Celsus, who represented the Jew as in some way accepting John as a baptist who baptized Jesus, that someone who lived not so long ago after John and Jesus wrote that John was a baptist, baptizing for a remission of sins. For in the eighteenth book of Jewish Antiquities Josephus testifies that John was a baptist, who promised purification to those who were baptized. The same author while not believing in Jesus as the Christ, in seeking for the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple ought to have said that the plot against Jesus was the reason these things came upon the people. However, although not far from the truth, he says that these things happened to the Judeans for killing James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus called the Christ, since they killed one who was so righteous.²⁵

Origen's statement is a reply to a rather complicated and convoluted discussion with Celsus concerning Jesus' baptism, descent of the Holy Spirit, and as a trustworthy witnesses of these events. The point which Origen wants to make is 1. that John the Baptist was the baptizer of Jesus. Josephus testifies about John as being a baptist in his eighteenth book of *Antiquities* (Bk. XVIII.5.2). However, Josephus does not make the connection with Jesus. 2. Josephus also, though not believing "in Jesus as the Christ [Messiah]," is a witness by his testimony to the killing of James the Just, the brother of Jesus "called the Christ [Messiah]" as the cause of the fall of Jerusalem, whereas, according to Origen, he should have said that it was the plot against Jesus. According to Origen, what actually is important is what Josephus said. The purpose of Origen's using these two points is to prove to the Hellenes that Jesus was really the Messiah (in

the later Christian sense) proven by what Josephus testifies, in spite of his otherwise negative opinion.

That Josephus did not believe in Jesus as the Christ [Messiah] does not follow from the neutral statement that Jesus was called Christ (ho adelphos Iesou tou legomenou Christou) which is contained in the twentieth book of *Antiquities* (Bk. XX.9.1). A Jew such as Josephus could make such a statement without any compromise because he understood Christ/Messiah in the Jewish sense of a royal figure either apocalyptic or contemporary. There is plenty of evidence from his (Jewish) interpretation of the biblical prophecies that this would be the meaning of the term by Josephus if he used it. On the contrary, the Christian writers and interpreters, modern and ancient from the second century interpreted this term as divinity.²⁶

Origen wants to say here that the baptism by John was a visible sign of Jesus as being the Christ/Messiah as well as of the destruction of Jerusalem. Origen did not have to refer to the miracles performed by Jesus because Celsus already accepted the miracles performed by Jesus though he explained them as Jesus' use of magic and trickery. But it would be favorable for Origen's position if he used a statement about Messiahship, even if dubitative, and a statement about the resurrection if they were in Josephus. Thus it is puzzling that he does not refer to them in any of his works while reading into Josephus the Christian interpretations. For example, he identifies a certain Zechariah, son of Baruch, who was killed in the temple by Zealots, as reported by Josephus,²⁷ with Zechariah, son of Barachiah, father of John the Baptist.²⁸ It seems that the same process was involved in identifying James in Josephus with James in the Gospels. The Gospels, in spite of being a late literary product, do not say anything about James' death.

There are several points of divergence with the description of James' death by later Christian sources. They do not mention "the others" who were killed with him. They do not give any specific information about James' opponents. Josephus simply states that they were Saducean priests with Ananus as the instigator. Christian sources in Acts and the Gospels describe the scribes and Pharisees who were the opponents of Jesus. In the Josephus account the law-observing Jews, i.e., the Pharisees are sympathizers of James. Also, later accounts of James' death do not mention anything about the political consequences of James' death for the high priest. This indicates that the story of James in Josephus (except his identification as "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ") is not an interpolation by Christians, but it also puts under a question mark the identification of Josephus' James with the one in Acts and the Gospels.

The question, now, which scholars developed about the whole issue of the Testimonium Flavianum following the statement by Origen is: What was the exact expression of Josephus through which he denied the Messiahship of Jesus? This is an artificial question, a result of speculations derived from Origen's comment on Josephus. Josephus did not have to express his denial of Messiahship of Jesus in any special, singular or specific way. The issue simply did not exist for him, for this it is sufficient to pay attention to what he says about the Jewish religion and prophecies in *Antiquities* or in *Against Apion*. Thus it cannot be surmised that the text of Josephus known to Origen contained any reference to Jesus as the Messiah. Probably it contained an extended paragraph on James since Eusebius also quotes Josephus as saying: "Those things [the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple] happened to the Jews in requital for James the Righteous, who was the brother of Jesus known as Christ, for though he was the most righteous of men, the Jews put him to death."²⁹ If it is true that there was such a statement in Josephus it could only be an interpolation done already before Origen. One more point should be emphasized – it means that the text was available to the public if Origen could read it in

Palestine. Whealy makes a special note that the text of Josephus could not be interpolated or modified before Eusebius because it was not available. As we indicated before, Christians identified a certain James listed in the Josephus work with the James of the Christian tradition and amended the text accordingly. This modification about James is probably the earliest change introduced to Josephus.

There is no statement in the present Josephus works indicating that he put the blame for the fall of Jerusalem on the killing of James. On the contrary, Josephus stated in the Preface to his *Jewish War*: “For that it was a seditious temper of our own that destroyed it; and that they were the tyrants among the Jews who brought the Roman power upon us, who unwillingly attacked us, and occasioned the burning of our holy temple.” Such an interpolation was probably inspired by the second century Christian historian Hegesippus, whose works survived only in a few quotations in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius quotes Hegesippus as well as Josephus attributing the fall of Jerusalem to the killing of James.³⁰

The other occasion for quoting Josephus by Origen is in his *Commentary on Matthew*. Origen’s purpose here is commenting on the statement in Matthew 13:55: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?” His objective is to collect all the extrabiblical information on James, and the other brothers of Jesus. He approves of the tradition found in the Gospel of Peter and the Protoevangelion³¹ for reasons of piety claiming that Jesus’ brothers were actually his stepbrothers. The other tradition concerning James was the work of Josephus’ *Antiquities* about which he writes:

And James is he whom Paul says that he saw in the Letter to the Galatians ‘but I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother’ (Gal.1:19). And this James was so celebrated with the people for his righteousness that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the *Jewish Antiquities* in twenty books, when wanting to seek for the reason why such great calamities befell the people that even the temple was destroyed, said that they happened because of God’s anger at what they did to James the brother of Jesus called the Christ [Messiah]. And the wonderful thing is that, although not accepting that our Jesus is Christ, he testified to the great righteousness of James.³²

In this passage Origen repeats the same statement as before concerning “James the brother of Jesus called the Christ [Messiah].” Again he claims that Josephus attributed the destruction of Jerusalem to the killing of James. This idea is found in Hegesippus³³ and was repeated by Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Jerome.³⁴

Attribution of the destruction of Jerusalem could not be written by Josephus who discusses it at length in quite a different light. But there is also the possibility of another explanation of Origen’s statements. There is no evidence that Origen cites exactly the words of Josephus, rather he reads into the Josephus account of James’ death the standard Christian interpretation. The impulse for such interpretations could arise from Josephus’ own evaluation of the Jewish socio-political situation at this time when the sicarii became highly active and even gained a concession from the Roman procurator, Albinus, to release their prisoners: “This was the beginning of greater calamities; for the robbers perpetually contrived to catch some of Ananias’ servants....”³⁵ Moreover, he certainly was familiar with the Hegesippus account either directly or

through Clement of Alexandria, his teacher, who is reported by Eusebius to repeat the Hegesippus account.³⁶

Eusebius of Caesarea

Eusebius is probably the most important witness to the testimony of Josephus because he is the first Christian writer who uses Josephus extensively to confirm events described by him as historical facts of the first century. But in his eagerness to Christianize all reports he is utterly uncritical in the evaluation of his sources. Though he found many parallels between the New Testament text and Josephus' writings, he ignores completely the chronological discrepancies. Eusebius is also important because he cites the sources which are no longer available, especially Hegesippus, who lived in the first half of the second century and was the author of the first history of the Christian church.

The Jesus paragraph is not quoted by any writer before Eusebius of Caesarea (260-ca 341 C.E.). He quotes it in three of his works: *Demonstratio evangelica* (Bk. III.5.124; written ca 303 and 313), in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Bk. I.11.6-7; books 1-7 were written between 311 and 313), and in *Theophania* (Bk. V.44) considered the last work written during the years between 333 and 340. The most important is the quote in his *Ecclesiastical History* as it was used in later citations of the Testimonium rather than directly from Josephus. This work is known in seven primary manuscripts from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. It exists also in a Syriac translation and a Latin version by Rufinus.

Eusebius quotes the Jesus paragraph together with the John the Baptist paragraph (*H. E.* I.11.4-5) at the occasion for disputing the date of the Jesus passion in a document which was made a requirement for reading in schools by emperor Maximin in the early fourth century (*H. E.* IX.5.1). This document which Eusebius calls *Memoranda* was probably the apocryphal text of *Acta Pilati* in which the time of the passion of Jesus was dated as the year 21 C.E. It does not correspond to the dating of Pilate by Josephus since he was appointed procurator for Judaea in 26 C.E. Eusebius' goal was to harmonize the Josephus chronology with that found in the Luke (3:2) chronology about the beginning of John's mission and baptism of Jesus. This would explain why he quoted first the John paragraph and followed it by the Jesus paragraph, though they are in reverse order in the Josephus text. For that reason he does not comment on the content of the Jesus paragraph in *Ecclesiastical History*, but emphasizes only the positive view of these figures. At the same time, Eusebius ignores many contradictions found between Josephus and New Testament chronology. In quoting the Jesus passage the Messiahship of Jesus was not in question or disputed, it was obvious to Eusebius.

Eusebius, however, introduces comments in the paragraph (Bk. I.11.1) preceding the description of the death of John the Baptist falsifying the meaning of the Josephus text in a clear attempt to Christianize John. Thus he reads into Josephus the Gospels' interpretation claiming that Josephus said that "For her sake [Herodias] ... he put John to death and was involved in war with Aretas, whose daughter he had slighted." Josephus linked the marriage to Herodias with the war with King Aretas, but not with the death of John.

In *Demonstratio evangelica* (Bk. III.2.102-5.124) and in *Theophania* (Bk. V.1-45) Eusebius enters into a polemic with his contemporary Jews and Hellenes in an attempt to show Jesus' divine side through his high ethical standard and his miracles. In the part directed at the Jews he intended to demonstrate that the Old Testament prophecies referred to Jesus. In the part directed towards the Hellenes, the unbelievers in the prophecies, he explicitly says that he will "argue about Christ as an ordinary man." First he argues against those who treat Jesus as a deceiver

from Jesus' own teaching and high moral standards. Then he will argue for the divine side of Jesus from miracles, and from trustworthiness of the disciples. He enters into a polemic with the docetists asking rhetorical questions in an attempt to confirm Jesus' human appearance and passion. For that reason he quotes the Testimonium as a very useful tool for him and as historical evidence for proving his point.

But in explaining the text of the Testimonium he draws attention only to: 1. The fact that Jesus "attracted to himself many Jews and Greeks." 2. Therefore, he must "have had some extraordinary power beyond that of other men" that is expressed in miracles. And to confirm the fact that Jews indeed joined Jesus, he refers to the Acts of the Apostles and to the existence of a church in Jerusalem entirely Jewish until the time of Hadrian, claiming that mission to the Gentiles began only after the resurrection (*Theophania*, Bk. IV.27-31). It seems that this insistence on the explanation of gathering the Jews and the Gentiles by Jesus is related to the fact that in Eusebius' time it would be less intelligible, since practically only Gentiles were joining Christians then. But considering that the text referred to Jesus' time it was nothing unusual. 3. Thus these facts reported by Josephus constitute and are "independent" of the disciples' testimony that persuaded "many thousands of Jews that he was that Christ of God, who had been predicted by the Prophets."³⁷

The other passage Eusebius quotes is in reference to "James the brother of Jesus known as Christ." The occasion for quoting it is a narration of the episode in the history of the early church in Jerusalem after Paul was sent to Rome for a trial. According to Eusebius the Jews killed James because "they could not endure his testimony any longer" "declaring that our Savior and Lord, Jesus, was the Son of God." Next Eusebius makes reference to Clement of Alexandria who mentions as in his *Outlines* (Book VIII) James "the Righteous, who was thrown down from the parapet and beaten to death with a fuller's club." Afterwards Eusebius cites a fifth book of Hegesippus:

Control of the Church passed to the apostles, together with the Lord's brother James, whom everyone from the Lord's time till our own has called the Righteous, or there were many Jameses, but this one was holy from his birth He alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place, for his garments were not of wool but of linen. He used to enter the Sanctuary alone, and was often found on his knees beseeching forgiveness for the people A representative of the seven popular sects already described by me asked him what was meant by "the door of Jesus," and he replied that Jesus was the Saviour. Some of them came to believe that Jesus was the Christ: the sects mentioned above did not believe either in a resurrection or in One who is coming to give every man what his deeds deserve, but those who did come to believe did so because of James. Since therefore many even of the ruling class believed, there was an uproar among the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, who said there was a danger that the entire people would expect Jesus as the Christ.

In a continuation Hegesippus tells the story how James was tricked by the Scribes and Pharisees and killed. The quote ends with the following:

Such was his martyrdom. He was buried on the spot, by the Sanctuary, and his

headstone is still there by the Sanctuary. He has proved a true witness to Jews and Gentiles alike that Jesus is the Christ. Immediately after this Vespasian began to besiege them.³⁸

Thus the death of James would occur in 70 C.E. What is interesting now is that Eusebius emphasizes “that even the more intelligent Jews felt that this was why his martyrdom was immediately followed by the siege of Jerusalem, which happened to them for no other reason than the wicked crime of which he had been the victim. And indeed Josephus did not hesitate to write this down in so many words: ‘These things happened to the Jews in requital for James the Righteous, who was a brother of Jesus known as Christ, for though he was the most righteous of men, the Jews put him to death.’” Next Eusebius proceeds to quote the known passage from *Antiquities* concerning the trial of James by the Sanhedrin.

From the above we might suggest a hypothesis that a likely source of the Testimonium Flavianum and the passage on James is Hegesippus. We find in him most of the necessary elements found in the extant Josephus text.

Whealey argued that Christians “could not have tampered with the official copies of *Antiquities* before 313 A.D. ” and that “an unofficial version of *Antiquities* ... would have been of limited use.”³⁹ Well, if Origen writing in Palestine could have a copy of the text, and he mentions twenty books of *Antiquities* which were placed in the library in Rome,⁴⁰ he certainly had one, and it could be copied and modified.

We can draw several conclusions from Eusebius testimony. If it is true that Origen and Eusebius accurately quote Josephus concerning the siege of Jerusalem, the Josephus text existed already in a modified form available to them. By the same token the texts of the Jesus passages were interpolated as a logical result of the Christianization of the Josephus account of history, and it was easy to adjust the passage on James to the Christian version known from the Gospels. There was no need to modify the Josephus text on John the Baptist since his account is neutral. However, it was interpreted in a Christian way twisting the meaning of Josephus’ story.

We may safely say that some interpolations, such as the one concerning James, were done already before Origen and that probably there existed several versions of the Josephus modifications.

Jerome of Stridon

Jerome’s (340-420 C.E.) work *De viris illustribus*, published in 392 C.E., survived in over one hundred manuscript copies which attests to its great influence on Christian thought. The motive for writing it was to impress the non-Christians and to indicate that they, too, had intellectuals and erudites. Jerome quotes Josephus with a few variations from the *textus receptus* found in Eusebius: 1. instead of saying “he was the Christ” Jerome wrote “he was believed to be Christ” (*credebatur esse Christus*); 2. in the following sentence the *textus receptus* says “at the suggestion” which is a liberal translation of the Greek *endeixei* (it really means “by the presented evidence” or “at the indictment”), Jerome uses the Latin *cumque invidia* (in translation “through the envy”). Jerome followed here the text of Matthew 27:18 and Mark 15:10 which says *διὰ φθόνου* (“through the envy”). The Syriac versions of the Testimonium use the expression “according to [or upon] the testimony.” 3. Jerome uses the term “*de gentibus*” instead of “many from ... the Greeks” which is closer to the Syriac versions.

Jerome is known not to quote Josephus directly but to follow the citations of Josephus by

others.⁴¹ Thus we can confidently state that he quoted the Testimonium Flavianum from Eusebius rather than the original Josephus' text. The only significant change he made is the one from "he was Christ" to "he was believed to be Christ." One possible explanation for it is that it could refer to the adherents mentioned in the preceding part as "he had many adherents ... and was believed to be Christ [by them]." Such a modification does not change the sense of the *textus receptus*, it is only an explanatory alteration, similar to the change in the following sentence. Moreover, the lack of an explicit statement about the death of Jesus in Jerome's version and in the *textus receptus*, in contrast to such a statement present in the Michael, Agapius, and early Latin versions of Pseudo-Hegesippus, supports the hypothesis that Jerome himself was the author of the modification concerning the Messiah. Whealey argued that the Testimonium Flavianum originally contained the expression "he was believed to be Christ" in the Josephus text and in the Eusebius transcriptions in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Only later was it changed to "he was Christ" in the Josephus text as well as in all the works of Eusebius. Such a hypothesis assumes the other parts of the Testimonium to be original. If Josephus wrote them, they would attest to his being a Christian.

Pseudo-Hegesippus

Pseudo-Hegesippus (fl. in the fourth century C.E.) is the author of the work on the fall of Jerusalem entitled *De Excidio Hierosolymitano*, written around 370 C.E. This work is an adaptation of *The Jewish War* and is known from the oldest manuscript dating to the sixth century. Whealey assumes that he did not know Eusebius' works quoting Josephus. All his sources, except Josephus, are in Latin and in his time Eusebius was not yet translated into Latin. In this work based on Josephus' *The Jewish War*, he makes reference to the Testimonium Flavianum giving its extensive summary:

Luebant enim scelerum suorum supplicia, qui postquam Iesum crucifixerant divinatorum arbitrum, postea etiam discipulos eius persequerentur. Plerique tamen Iudaeorum, Gentilium plurimi crediderunt in eum, cum praeceptis moralibus, operibus ultra humanam possibilitatem profluentibus invitarentur. Quibus ne mors quidem eius vel fidei vel gratiae finem imposuit, immo etiam cumulavit devotionem De quo ipsi Iudaei quoque testantur dicente Iosepho historiarum scriptore, quod fuerat illo in tempore vir sapiens, si tamen oportet, inquit, virum dici mirabilium creatorem operum, qui apparuerit discipulis suis post triduum mortis suae vivens secundum prophetarum scripta, qui et haec et alia innumerabilia de eo plena miraculi prophetaverunt. Ex quo coepit congregatio Christianorum et in omne hominum penetravit genus, nec ulla natio Romani orbis remansit, quae cultus eius expers relinqueretur. Si nobis non credunt Iudaei, vel suis credant. Hoc dixit Iosephus, quem ipsi maximum putant, et tamen ita in eo ipso quod verum locutus est mente devius fuit, ut nec sermonibus suis crederet. Sed locutus est propter historiae fidem, quia fallere nefas putabat, non credidit propter duritiam cordis et perfidiae intentionem. Non tamen veritati praeiudicat, quia non credidit sed plus addidit testimonio, quia nec incredulus et invitus negavit. In quo Christi Iesu claruit aeterna potentia, quod eum etiam principes synagogae quem ad mortem comprehenderant Deum fatebantur.

They were suffering the punishments for their crimes, those who, after having

crucified Jesus, the arbiter of divine affairs, then were also persecuting his disciples. For many Jews and even more Gentiles believed in him and were attracted by his teaching of morals and performance of works beyond human capability. Not even his death put an end to their faith and love, but rather it increased their devotion... Of this the Jews themselves give the testimony, Josephus the writer saying in his history that there was at that time a wise man, if it be appropriate, he says, to call man the creator of miraculous works, who appeared alive to his disciples three days after his death according to writings of the prophets, who prophesied both these and innumerable other things full of wonders about him. From him began the congregation of Christians, even infiltrating every race of humans, nor does there remain any nation in the Roman world that is without his religion. If the Jews do not believe us, they might believe one of their own. Thus spoke Josephus, whom they esteem a very great man, and nevertheless so devious in mind was he who spoke the truth about him, that he did not believe even his own words. Although he spoke for the sake of fidelity to history because he thought it wrong to deceive, he did not believe because of his hardness of heart and faithless intention. Nevertheless it does not prejudice truth because he did not believe, rather it adds to the testimony because, unbelieving and unwilling he did not deny it. In this the eternal power of Jesus Christ shone forth, that even the leading men of the synagogue who delivered him up to death acknowledged him to be God.⁴²

This reference is important because it provides independent of Eusebius evidence on the existence of some text in Josephus concerning Jesus. That it is used directly from Josephus is confirmed by the Pseudo-Hegesippus using also the reference concerning the deceived Roman matron, Pauline, which follows the Jesus passage in *Antiquities* (Bk. XVIII.9.4; *De excidio* Bk. II. 4). He also makes reference to the passage on John the Baptist though the interpretation of his death is that found in the Gospels – as a punishment for admonishing Herod for his marriage to Herodias (*Antiquities* Bk. XVIII.5.2; *De excidio* Bk. II.12.2).

In the evaluation of the Pseudo-Hegesippus fragment we have to emphasize that it is not a direct quote, but contains most elements found in the *textus receptus*. Pseudo-Hegesippus insists, however, that Josephus was a non-believer, though for the sake of “fidelity to history” he spoke the truth, and “he did not believe even his own words.” Thus he could have known the version of Josephus known also to Origen (if Origen knew one). Also he puts most blame on the Jews, but he does not excuse Pilate saying “Pilate is not excused.” What that belief consists of is indicated by Pseudo-Hegesippus in the last sentence – that the leading men of the synagogue acknowledged that Jesus was God. This was obviously a Christian interpretation of Jesus from the beginning of the second century and could be deduced by interpreting the passage “there was at that time a wise man, if it be appropriate, he [i.e., Josephus] says, to call man the creator of miraculous works.” So there was no specific statement about the Messiah in the original Josephus’ text as it is present in the *textus receptus*. Even if there was in the original Josephus a passage mentioning the Messiah, the term could not be used in the meaning of God but only in the Jewish meaning of the royal figure, though highly exalted.

The other point which is discussed by Whealey is the unclear statement found in the *textus receptus* concerning Jesus as a “teacher of those who receive truth (τάληθη) with pleasure.” In

this form it would be a confirmation of Josephus' confession to the Christian faith. Dubarle⁴³ noticed that his phrase may be a mistake for the more intelligible phrase "teacher of those who receive other customs (*t' all' ethe*) with pleasure." This would correspond more closely to the intelligible phrase of Pseudo-Hegesippus that Jesus attracted his followers "by his teaching of morals."

Thus if Eusebius quotes Josephus' paragraphs concerning Jesus from a Josephus manuscript, the discrepancy with the Pseudo-Hegesippus version would indicate that the Eusebius source was already a modification introduced by the early Messianic/Christian followers of Jesus and that Pseudo-Hegesippus may have disposed of a slightly different modification.

The Latin translations of Josephus

Josephus was a widely read Greek-language author in the Latin West primarily due to his early translations. *The Jewish War* was probably translated already at the end of the fourth century by an unknown author. Rufinus (340-410 C.E.) translated Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* into Latin and when Cassiodorus' (Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, 490-583 C.E.) group translated Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* into Latin in the sixth century they used the Rufinus Latin version of Josephus' passages on Jesus and John the Baptist instead of translating them directly from the Josephus Greek original. Certainly it is possible that they used Rufinus' translation of the Testimonium because it was more favorable to Jesus. But because they used also the John the Baptist passage which appears in proximity to the Jesus passage in Eusebius' book, they used it simply for the sake of convenience. Other passages in the Latin *Antiquities* do not follow Rufinus' translation of *Ecclesiastical History*. The result is that in the Latin West there were only three variants of the Testimonium Flavianum: that of the Latin *Antiquities*, of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, and that of Pseudo-Hegesippus' *De excidio Hierosolymitano*, which are one and the same text with only slight recensional changes.

The eastern Greek Sources

Theodoret (393-457 C.E.), the fifth century theologian and historian, bishop of Cyrus, in his *Commentary on Daniel* 10 (on Dan. 12:14) states clearly that Josephus did not accept the Christian message though he did not hide the truth that Daniel had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. Theodoret referred to Josephus' *Antiquities* Bk. X. 10.7 And he was also familiar with Eusebius *Demonstratio evangelica* and *Ecclesiastical History*. From this Whealey draws the conclusion that he was familiar with a dubitative form of the Testimonium Flavianum in these works and perhaps in the Greek *Antiquities*. She makes a guess that it was a version "reading something like 'he was believed to be Christ.'"

Two other historians, Cedrenus of the eleventh century and Pseudo-Simon Magister of the tenth century, have a version of Testimonium slightly different from the *textus receptus* in ascribing to the disciples of Jesus that they considered him Christ. They seem to depend on Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.

The fifth century Egyptian monk, Isidore of Pelusium, knew quite extensively Josephus' *Antiquities*, but he does not allude to the Messiah statement, only to the statement about "the teacher of those who receive the truth." Again Whealey suggests that his version of Josephus might contain the dubitative account of Jesus' Messiahship.⁴⁴

The eastern Syriac and Arabic sources

In 1971 Shlomo Pines, an Israeli historian, wrote a treatise evaluating the Testimonium Flavianum in light of the two neglected records: 1. the Arabic historical work by Agapius, the Melkite bishop of Hierapolis (Manbij), entitled *Kitab al-Unwan* and dated 942 C.E., and 2. the Syriac *Chronicle* authored by Michael the Syrian, patriarch of Antioch, dated 1195. Both works were edited earlier but ignored by scholars studying the problem of Testimonium Flavianum.⁴⁵

Agapius' work is known in a single manuscript but is also quoted by a thirteenth-century Christian Coptic historian Jurijis al-Makin. It deals with the history of the world from the beginning to the tenth century. The occasion for quoting Josephus' *Antiquities* is a discussion of the philosophers who referred to the day of the crucifixion of Christ (al-mashich) and who described fantastic cosmic and astronomical events that supposedly occurred. Among them he refers to the letters of Pilate to Emperor Tiberius in which the cause of these events is ascribed to the crucifixion of Jesus. Immediately afterwards Agapius cites the Testimonium and discusses the succession of the high priests in Jerusalem following the Eusebius account in his *History* (*H.E.* Bk. I.10.1-6).

From the philological and comparative studies, we know that Agapius' text of the Testimonium is in all probability translated from a Syriac version of the Greek original. Agapius used Syriac rather than Arabic sources. One of his sources was the writings of Theophilus of Edessa, who died in 785.⁴⁶

The Syriac version of the Testimonium is found in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (1126-1199). He lived over two centuries after Agapius and probably used as his source for the Testimonium a translation or adaptation into Syriac of Eusebius' *Chronicon* by James of Edessa who died ca 708 C.E. James of Edessa also seems to be the source for Theophilus of Edessa.⁴⁷ Michael's version has several points in common with the *textus receptus*, especially with the Syriac translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. Philological studies suggest that both these versions come from the same translation of the Greek original. This assumption is based on the occurrence of the expression that Jesus' disciples came from "other nations" in all these versions: the Syriac translation of the Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and Michael's version. The major difference is in the formulation "He was thought to be the Messiah [or 'Perhaps he was the Messiah']" against "He was the Messiah" in the *textus receptus*. Since both texts go back eventually to a Greek original, it was postulated by A. Merx in order to explain the differences, that Michael's version reflects the original text of Eusebius, which was "afterwards to some extent modified and so brought into the form which is now preserved in the Greek manuscripts."⁴⁸ This explanation would fit with the existence of the Jerome version of the Testimonium but not necessarily with the Origen and Pseudo-Hegesippus evaluation of Josephus.

Another possibility, less likely, is that the Michael text was the result of Agapius' version contaminated by the Syriac translation of the *textus receptus* in the Eusebius *History*.

Comparing the Michael Syriac version with the Arabic Agapius version we find similarity in the assessment of Jesus' messiahship "he was thought to be the Messiah" (or "it seemed that he was the Messiah") and "he was perhaps the Messiah" which is the meaning close to the one in the Syriac version. Also there is a similarity in the expression "from ... other nations." Thus it was suggested that the Syriac text from which Agapius' translation derives was similar or identical with Michael's source text.

But there are also significant differences. We find in Agapius' version an omission of the positive and categorical statements about Jesus' supernatural power and status "if it is fitting to

call him a man.” Agapius’ version states that Jesus was of good conduct and was virtuous. There is no indication here of Jesus’ miraculous works. Next there is no indication that Jesus was a teacher of truth as is found in the *textus receptus* and in the Syriac translations. Such a statement would imply that the author accepts his teaching as truth. There is no reference in Agapius’ version to Jesus being condemned by the principal men among the Jews. In contradiction to all other versions of the Testimonium, Agapius’ version reads that the disciples “reported that he appeared to them three days after the crucifixion” alive. This statement considers resurrection as a report only not as an established fact.

Agapius’ text contains the statement in the last sentence, “accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.” This phrase is a fusion of two sentences, one in the middle and the other at the end of all other versions of the Testimonium. It was suggested by Pines that in the early text of the Testimonium there was one sentence which was split into two in later versions. Moreover, Agapius’ text does not have the sentence about “the tribe [or people] of the Christians.” Logically, it would fit in the context, but it could have been omitted by the Arabic translator. Moreover, in the last sentence in Agapius’ version, the prophecies refer to the figure of the Messiah and not to Jesus, as is stated in all other versions.

The question now arises, what was the source of these Michael and Agapius versions? Were they derived directly from the Josephus writings or indirectly through translations and adaptations? The *Jewish War* was translated into Syriac by the eighth century, but there is no indication of a Syriac translation of *Antiquities*. Detailed philological analysis of Pines suggests that the author of the source for Michael and Agapius used Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*. But eventually the source of the Testimonium has to be traced to a Greek original.

It is inconceivable, according to Pines, that Agapius or his sources weakened the references to Jesus in the first two sentences and added a skeptical phrase “reported” to the Testimonium. They must have found them in the text passed down to them. On the other hand, both versions of Jerome and Michael could be a result of contamination of the *textus receptus* with the neutral text represented by Agapius’ version.

Agapius in his chronicle claims that the quote on Jesus by Josephus comes from Josephus’ work “*On the Governance of the Jews*” (or “*On the Institutions of the Jews*”) which is identified by using another passage as the *Antiquities of the Jews*. Michael’s version of the Testimonium is also said to be extracted from the same Josephus work.⁴⁹ The tradition of these titles of Josephus’ work does not derive from the known versions or from Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*. Thus it has to derive from an unknown source which was used by Agapius.

The passage immediately preceding the Testimonium in both Agapius and Michael the Syrian have much in common and both may derive from a common Syriac source. But its source can not be identified – it is neither Josephus, nor Eusebius. The passages immediately following their versions of the Testimonium have a relation to Josephus’ *Antiquities* and to Eusebius’ *History* but they did not derive from these last writings directly.⁵⁰ The ultimate source is, however, postulated according to one hypothesis as the unchristianized version of the Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* with the exception of one statement – namely, that Herod limited the appointment of the high priest to one year only. But we find this in Eusebius’ *Demonstratio evangelica*.⁵¹

Another question is the relation of Agapius’ version to the original Greek version supposedly composed by Josephus himself. In this connection the statement of Origin is relevant referring in

three passages to one statement from Josephus (*Antiquities* XX.9.1) “James the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ (Messiah).” Also he claims that Josephus ascribed the fall of Jerusalem to the death of James, and Eusebius even quotes his text. There is, however, nowhere such a statement by Josephus to be found. In two of these statements Origen also claims that Josephus did not believe in Jesus though in *Contra Celsum* Origen stated that Josephus was not far from the truth ascribing the fall of Jerusalem to the death of James. Origen may have known a version of the Testimonium similar to Agapius’ but it would probably have to be more negative. Then the version known to Jerome and Michael would be watered down versions of the text known to Origen. On the whole, however, it seems that he did not know any version of the Testimonium at all.

So either there was no passage in the original text of Josephus on Jesus and he was not interested in him, and his unbelief was inferred from the overall evaluation of Josephus’ Jewishness, or if there was such a passage it was different from the known *textus receptus*. Then this text of Agapius may have relevance to Josephus’ original text – it is noncommittal but not hostile to Jesus. Still the existence of the Agapius’ version does not prove that there was an original Testimony in the Josephus’ *Antiquities*.

The version of Michael the Syrian could also be regarded then as an amalgam of the Agapius’ version and that of Eusebius contained in his *History*. Jerome’s version also might reflect this situation through an unknown version of Eusebius’ *History*, but it is unlikely. The simpler explanation of these two versions is by an introduction of a stylistic explanatory alteration.

The neutral text of Agapius would attest only to the existence of a historical Jesus. Josephus as a historian, could have written it. On the other hand, in the early years it might have been important for the Christians in arguments with Hellenes. It is possible that such a version could have escaped Christian censorship.

It could also be a Christian adaptation in a less affirmative form than the known *textus receptus* of the passage in Josephus’ *Antiquities* which was much more negative or hostile to Christianity.

According to Pines the title Messiah was not applied to any eschatological figure that actually lived during the Roman period prior to Jesus. Jesus would be known to supporters and opponents under this name hence the expression “Brother of Jesus who was called Christ (Messiah).”

Now we can analyze the conclusions drawn by Alice Whealey from the analysis of the texts found in Josephus’ *Antiquities* and their citations by other Christian writers:

1. There is no evidence of the use of the Testimonium originally by Christians (before Eusebius in the extant text) to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, though later Christians used it for that purpose. Whealey suggests that this was so because there was no explicit positive statement in the Josephus text to this effect.

It is equally possible that there was originally no statement about Jesus at all or at least about Jesus being the Messiah.

2. No ancient author had any doubts about the authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum. This is hardly an argument because ancient Christians accepted almost any story concerning the life of Jesus.

3. Citations of the Testimonium in Syriac sources points to the existence of a skeptical variant before the time of Theophilus of Edessa in the eighth century (or James of Edessa in the sixth century).

Again, the dubitative sentence is an explanatory one and does not change the overall meaning of the passage, especially if the part relating to the supernatural character of Jesus remains.

4. Citations of the Testimonium by Theodoret, Agapius, Michael the Syrian, and Pseudo-Hegesippus indicate that there were fourth century copies of *Antiquities* independently transmitted by Pseudo-Hegesippus into his *De excidio Hierosolymitano* and by Eusebius into his *Ecclesiastical History* that contained a variant reading like “he was believed to be the Christ.” This statement must have been in the past tense as it is transmitted by Jerome (*credebatur*), Pseudo-Hegesippus (*crediderunt*), Michael the Syrian, and Agapius.

Theodoret’s reference like that of Origen do not indicate the existence of any negative statement denying the messiahship of Jesus in Josephus. Pseudo-Hegesippus does not quote Josephus only states that they, i.e., the disciples, “believed in him” that is in his teaching, not that they believed that he was the Christ; though at the end Pseudo-Hegesippus comments that even those who killed him believed that he was God. That is obviously a projection of his own belief. There is no indication of a skeptical variant in the Eusebius works at all. Jerome’s version is explained easily by a stylistic modification and it does not change the meaning of the whole Testimonium. The past tense is explained by the stylistics of the narrative.

5. This dubitative version of the Testimonium survived in the copies of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius which were used by Jerome and by the Syriac author who was, in turn, used by Agapius and by Michael.

1. There is no evidence that Jerome found the dubitative version of the Testimonium in his copy of Eusebius. Most likely the change he made was an explanatory one referring to the disciples who believed that he was the Christ. 2. The Syriac version of Michael and the Syriac translation of the Eusebius *History* reflect the same translation of the Greek original containing the *textus receptus* of the Testimonium. Both versions use the same wording or expressions in sentences rendering the Greek *textus receptus*, and in the point where they deviate from the Greek version, they deviate in the same direction.⁵² Moreover, Michael’s version differs in that it states “He was thought to be the Messiah” and “Pilate condemned him to the cross and he died.” Whealey follows the explanation of A. Merx who suggested that the Greek original of the Syriac version of *Ecclesiastical History* was the earliest redaction and afterwards was modified and brought in line with that preserved now in the Greek manuscript.⁵³ There is no indication of such a version, as Eusebius’ text would have to be changed in all of his works and in their translations. It is difficult to imagine, in view of how widely he was used, that there would not survive a copy with his supposedly original dubitative Testimonium. Michael’s version, “He was thought to be the Messiah,” is an explanatory recension for why he had followers. 3. Whealey suggests that the Agapius’ version is derived from the same Syriac translation of the presumed dubitative original *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius. The Agapius and Michael versions would be two examples deriving from the same original Syriac version. 4. This leads to a conclusion that there was only one Syriac version: the Syriac translation of the *Ecclesiastical History* (and also of *Theophania*, whose Greek original does not exist any longer) of Eusebius which represented the dubitative *textus receptus* of the Testimonium.

6. This dubitative version was the original text written by Josephus himself.

The dubitative text introduces only an explanation of why Jesus attracted followers. Still it is uncompromising in the belief of the supernatural nature of Jesus, his power, his truth, and the confirmation of his resurrection. It is hardly conceivable that Josephus would write such a statement.

7. Only a positive statement denying the belief in Jesus as the Messiah would explain why Origen, Pseudo-Hegesippus, and Theodoret characterized Josephus as an unbeliever.

The statements by Origen, Pseudo-Hegesippus, and Theodoret do not require any additional negative statement in the text of Josephus. The whole analysis of the Antiquities, if Origen and others read this work, is sufficient evidence.

8. The use of the past tense in the *textus receptus* derives from the past tense used originally rather than from the text being created *ex nihilo*. Christians and copyists in the fourth century would rather use the present tense.

However, not necessarily, the past tense is a logical stylistic consequence of a narration introduced by “Now, there was about this time Jesus ...”

9. For the statements “if one must call him a man” and “the prophets having foretold these things,” Whealey argues that they are original since Pseudo-Hegesippus transmits them. Moreover, she claims we do not know what Josephus actually could have meant by this. He did not have to believe that Jesus was not a man or that the prophets had foretold his crucifixion and resurrection.

The first sentence, “If one must call him a man ...,” might be interpreted as non-committal. But then follows an affirmation of his supernatural character by a positive statement about his “wonderful works.” The prophecies and resurrection are again presented in an affirmative way as if they actually happened. Concerning the messianic prophecy, Josephus had a quite different view, and obviously he would not believe in the resurrection.

10. There is also some evidence from the Pseudo-Hegesippus reference that the original text read that people received with pleasure the “moral teaching” rather than “the truth.” This alteration should have taken place early in the fourth century since the Jerome, Rufinus, and Syriac Eusebius works use the word “truth.”

This reference in Pseudo-Hegesippus is not a citation of Josephus but a comment of the writer, elaborating on the source text. And such an interpretation is a logical explanation of the context of Jesus’ teaching.

In summary we may conclude that originally there was no statement about Jesus or identification of a certain James with the “brother of Jesus in the Josephus” text. These were Christian interpolations done very early, probably at the end of the first century. Additional evidence that there was no particular figure of Jesus, who would resemble the Jesus of the Gospels, comes from the text of Justus of Tiberias, a rival of Josephus. His book, *The Chronology of the Kings of Judah which Succeeded One Another*, now lost, was read by Photius (815-897 C.E.), Patriarch of Constantinople, in the ninth century. He wrote: “I have read the chronology of Justus of Tiberias He begins his history from Moses, and ends it not till the death of Agrippa, the seventh [ruler] of the family of Herod, and the last king of the Jews; who took the government under Claudius, had it augmented under Nero, and still more augmented by Vespasian. He died in the third year of Trajan, where also his history ends. He is very concise in

his language, and slightly passes over those affairs that were most necessary to be insisted on; and being under the Jewish prejudices, as indeed he was himself also a Jew by birth, he makes not the slightest mention of the appearance of Christ, or what things happened to Him, or of the wonderful works that He did.”⁵⁴

The Old Russian Version of “The Jewish War”

In the Greek manuscripts of another work of Josephus, *The Jewish War*, there is no mention of Jesus or John the Baptist. As attested by Josephus himself, the work was written originally in Aramaic (no manuscript is known) to convince the Jews of the futility of resisting the Roman power. Josephus explained that it was the seditious temper of the Jews that destroyed his country and that there were tyrants among the Jews who brought the Romans, and that the Romans unwillingly attacked the Jews and burned their temple. The reason for their defeat of the Jews was that God now was on the side of the Romans.⁵⁵ Josephus then rewrote the work into Greek (ca 75-79 C.E.) with the help of some assistants in Rome and it is puzzling why there are no passages concerning the Jesus movement if the passages in *Antiquities* are at least partially authentic.

The confusion with respect to the authenticity of the paragraphs mentioning Jesus in Josephus’ *Antiquities* was introduced by the discovery of some thirty manuscripts (dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries) of *The Jewish War* in the Old Russian language which are modified versions of the Greek manuscripts. These are not simple translations from the Greek because they contain some material which is not in the Greek manuscripts and some material from the Greek text is omitted in the Slavonic version.

These Slavonic manuscripts of the *War* were discovered in the eighteenth century by Russian scholars, but a German scholar, Alexander Berendts, was the first who, in 1906, collected and translated them into German. However, they include eight passages which are related to the origin of Christianity and are not present in the known Greek manuscripts: three passages referring to John the Baptist, four to Jesus, one to the first Christians. Berendts worked on the translation of all of the text, but he published only books I-IV (1924-1927). The interest in these manuscripts was sharpened by the relevance of the additional material to the history and origin of Christianity. The text was then published with a French translation by Victor M. Istrin in 1934/1938 and eventually in English translation in 2003 by H. Leeming, K. Leeming, and L. Osinkina.

Scholars were divided in their opinions on the origin of this text. Berendts claimed that the text was translated from an early Aramaic manuscript of Josephus and not from the accepted Greek manuscript. Moreover, he also considered the additions in the Slavonic text as authentic, by Josephus himself. Robert Eisler accepted Berendts’ view but added that some of the additions were expanded and interpolated later by Christian copyists. Eisler claimed that there were two redactions of *The Jewish War*, the first in 71 C.E., a translation from the Aramaic and the other, an adaptation after 75 C.E. for the Roman readers. Victor Istrin opened a new era in the studies of the Slavonic text and claimed that it was based on one manuscript only and was not a literal translation from the Greek as Eisler claimed. On the contrary, it represented a free translation with insertions and modifications which cannot be traced to Josephus himself, but indicate a special interest and tendency of the translator. Nikita A. Meščerskij maintained that the text is a translation from the authentic Josephus Greek text but contains many modifications. Another researcher, Alice Whealey, accepted this conclusion and suggested that the text is a medieval

elaboration.

An exhaustive analysis of the Slavonic manuscripts by Meščerskij and only now available in English indicates that the Old Russian manuscripts were translated from the Greek exemplar in the eleventh century and that the translated Slavonic text represents a modification of the original text by the removal or addition of material suitable for representing the history of Christianity. This conclusion was done from a philological analysis of the Slavonic text which preserved many Greek words and from an analysis of the contents of some additions which could not have originated with Josephus. The Slavonic translation thus constitutes an impressive literary document of the early Old Russian language.⁵⁶

We may summarize, after Meščerskij, the evaluation of additions to the Slavonic text: 1. There is no evidence that the additions to the Old Russian version of *The Jewish War* were made from some other edition of the text. At best, the translator might have had a copy of the Greek text with some marginal comments by earlier readers and included them in his translation. 2. These additions are a product of his literary creativity and derive from his ideological and stylistic inclinations. 3. They reveal why the Old Russian translator and his Christian readers were interested in *The Jewish War*. This work was widely read by orthodox Russian Christians and constituted a written document from the epoch validating the claim to the historicity and truth of Christianity and its victory over Judaism. It constituted a confirmation of their point of view that the destruction of the Jewish nation was a just divine retribution for the rejection of Christ. Moreover, for the Russian readers *The Jewish War* was also a saga recounting the formation of the “second Jerusalem,” Constantinople, which they viewed as an inspiration for their own national aspirations. And the continued interest from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries Meščerskij explains in these words:

From the standpoint of the representatives and defenders of official ideology in the period of the formation of a centralized Russian state, events of world history such as the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman emperor Titus and the devastation of Constantinople by the Turkish sultan Mohammed II, were compared as events of one and the same significance. If for the ideologues of the Great-Russian centralized autocratic state, Moscow had become the “third Rome” after the fall of the “second, new Rome” – Constantinople, – then to no less a degree, from their point of view, did Moscow deserve to be called also the “third, new Jerusalem” and the “new Israel” after the devastation of the “second Jerusalem” of the Byzantine Empire. The fall of Constantinople, like the fall of Jerusalem in the earlier era regarded as divine retribution for apostasy and lawlessness of its inhabitants, gave the glory of these ancient centers of orthodoxy and piety to the “third Rome” and the “new Jerusalem” of Moscow in the minds of the ideologues defending their view of the world role of the Muscovite autocratic realm. The *History* of Flavius Josephus was so widely read in Russian society in the 15th – 16th centuries precisely because it happened to be included in a series of works that aided the interpretation and justification of the world-historical role of the centralized Moscow state and thus raised the prestige and increased the glory of Russian aristocracy.⁵⁷

We will close the discussion with a quote from Meščerskij:

When considered in their entirety, interlinked by ideology and style, these

additions represent a complete and sustained literary and artistic achievement, which found a broad response among Old Russian readers. And so, although the Old Russian Josephus is formally classified as translated literature, it can be regarded as the work of a Russian author.⁵⁸

Thus, in conclusion, as was indicated by Meščerskij, most of the additions if not all, are elaborations of the Old Russian translator. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of some earlier insertions either directly to the text of the Greek manuscript or marginal comments which later were incorporated by the copyists.

Bibliography

1. Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. Translated with introduction by Michael Grant (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), XV, 43.
2. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De vita caesarum*. Texte établi et traduit par Henri Ailloud (Paris: Société d'Édition, 1967) T. II, Claudius V. XXV. p. 134.
3. Suetonius, G. T., *op. cit.*, *Nero*, VI, XVI, p. 163.
4. R. Joseph Hoffmann, *Jesus Outside the Gospels* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1984), pp. 35-126.
5. Gustav Dalman, John Lightfoot, Randolph Parrish, eds., *Jesus Christ in the Talmud and Commentary on the Gospels from the Talmud and the Hebraica* (Resource Publications, 2002). Gustav Dalman, *The Words of Jesus Considered in the Light of post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language*. Authorized English version by D. M. Kay (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902). R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (New York: KTAV, 1903).
6. Flavius Josephus, *The Life*, in Josephus, *Complete Works*. Translated by William Whiston. Foreword by William Sanford LaSor, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981), pp. 1-21.
7. J. H. Freese, *The Library of Photius*, (London: SPCK, 1920), vol. I, c. XXIII. Photius, *Bibliothèque*, texte établi et traduit par René Henry (Paris: CNRS, 1959). Vols. 1-9, vol. 1, chap. 33, pp. 18-19.
8. Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, in Josephus, *op. cit.*, Praefatio, 1. *The Life*, in Josephus, *op. cit.*, 65. *Against Apion*, in Josephus, *op. cit.*, 1.9-10.
9. For review of the old literature, Louis H. Feldman, *Scholarship on Philo and Josephus (1937-1962)*, (New York: 1964).
10. Alice Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus. The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003).
11. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. XVIII.3.3, in Josephus, *Complete Works*. Translated by William Whiston. Foreword by William Sanford LaSor, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981). Josephus, *The Jewish War*, translated by G. A. Williamson, revised with a new introduction, by E. Mary Smallwood, (Harmondsworth, UK: 1986).
12. The Greek text can be found in Josephus, Flavius, *Flavii Josephi opera*, edidit et apparatu critico instruxit Benedictus Niese, (Berolini: apud Weidmannos, 1955, reprint of 1885-1895 edition), vols. 1-7.
13. Tacitus, *The Histories*, a new translation by Kenneth Wellesley (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1980), V.13. Suetonius, *Lives of Twelve Caesars*, with English translation by J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), Vespasian 8, p. 273. Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, Bk. X.11.7. In *The Jewish War*, *op. cit.*, Bk. VI.V.4 Josephus wrote: "But now, what did most elevate them [the Jews] in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, 'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and many of the wise men were

thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea.”

14. Eusebius, *The History of the Church. From Christ to Constantine, (Ecclesiastical History, H.E.)*, translated with introduction by G.A. Williamson, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1984). Bk. I.11.6-7.
15. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, in P.L. T. XII, chap. XIII, p. 601.
16. Shlomo Pines, “An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications,” in *Studies in the History of Religion*, edited by G. G. Stroumsa, *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1996), vol. IV, pp. 37-115.
17. Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, chap. XIII. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, (Peabody, MA, 1991), vol. 3, p. 366.
18. Translated by Shlomo Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 41-42. Also quoted by Wolfgang A. Bienert, *The Witness of Josephus*. In *New Testament Apocrypha*, Revised Edition, edited by Wilhelm Scheemelcher, English translation edited by R. McL. Wilson, (James Clarke & Co, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), Vol. 1, p. 491.
19. Translated by Shlomo Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
20. *Antiquities*, Bk. XX.9.1.
21. *Antiquities*, Bk. XVIII.5.2.
22. Irenaeus, *Demonstratio praedicationis apostolicae*, 74. *Adv. Haer.* 2.22. 6.
23. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*. Translated by J. Ferguson (Washington: Fathers of the Church, Catholic University, 1992), 15; 132.
24. Porphyry, *De abstinencia*, 4.11.
25. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, translated with an introduction by Henry Chadwick, (Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1965), I.47; II.13.
26. Cassiodorus (490-585 C.E.), *Historia Ecclesiastica Vocata Tripartita*, in PL. LXIX, 879-1214, Bk. I.2.4-5: “Ioseppus Christum vero aperte nominat et peonae crucis adiudicatum ..., quoniam haec referens quasi clamare videtur operibus deum esse Christum rerum quippe miraculis obstupescens.”
27. *Jewish Wars*, Bk. IV.5.4.
28. Matthew 23:35. Origen, *Commentary, op. cit.*, Bk. X.18, XVII.9.
29. Eusebius *H.E.* Bk. II.23.20.
30. Hegesippus in Eusebius *H.E.* Bk. II.23.4-18. “Immediately after this Vespasian began to besiege them.” The details of the circumstances of the death of James differ significantly in accounts of Clement, Hegesippus, and Josephus.
31. *Protevangelium Jacobi (The Infancy Gospel of James) (The Birth of Mary)*, in *The Other Bible. Jewish Pseudepigrapha. Christian Apocrypha. Gnostic Scriptures. Kabbalah. Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Willis Barnstone (San Francisco: HarperSanfrancisco, 1984), pp. 383-392.
32. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, Bk. X.17, (Matt. 13:55). (*Komentarz do ewangelii wedlug Mateusza*, przeklad Katarzyna Augustyniak, wstep i opracowal Emil Stanula (Krak?w: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1998).
33. Hegesippus, in Eusebius *H.E.*, Bk. II.1.3-18.
34. Jerome, *De viris illustribus, op. cit.*, 2,13.; Eusebius *H.E.*, Bk. II.1.3-5; Bk. II.23.19.
35. *Antiquities*, Bk. XX.9.3.
36. Clement of Alexandria, in Eusebius *H.E.*, Bk. II.1.4-5.
37. Comment of Eusebius in *Demonstratio evangelica* (Bk III.5.124-125): “If, then, even the historian's evidence shews that He attracted to Himself not only the twelve Apostles, nor the seventy disciples, but had in addition many Jews and Greeks. He must evidently have had some extraordinary power beyond that of other men. For how otherwise could He have attracted many Jews and Greeks, except by wonderful miracles and unheard-of teaching? And the evidence of the *Acts of the Apostles* goes to shew that there were many myriads of Jews who believed Him to be the Christ of God foretold by the

prophets. And history also assures us that there was a very important Christian Church in Jerusalem, composed of Jews, which existed until the siege of the city under Hadrian. The bishops, too, who stand first in the line of succession there are said to have been Jews, whose names are still remembered by (125) the inhabitants. So that thus the whole slander against His disciples is destroyed, when by their evidence, and apart also from their evidence, it has to be confessed that many myriads of Jews and Greeks were brought under His yoke by Jesus the Christ of God through the miracles that He performed.”

Comment of Eusebius in *Theophania* (Bk. V.45): “If therefore, as (this) author attests of Him, He was the doer of wonderful works, and that He made His Disciples,—not only the twelve Apostles, or the seventy Disciples, but also attached to Himself,—myriads of others both of the Jews and Gentiles; it is clear, that He possessed something excellent beyond the rest of mankind. For, How could He have otherwise attached to Himself the many, both of the Jews and Gentiles, unless He had made use of miracles and astonishing deeds, and of doctrines (till then) unknown? The Book of the Acts of the Apostles also attests, that there were many thousands of the Jews, who were persuaded that He was that Christ of God, who had been preached of by the Prophets. It is also on record, that there was a great Church of Christ at Jerusalem; which had been collected from among the Jews, even to the times of its reduction by Hadrian. The first Bishops too who were there, are said to have been, one after another, fifteen (in number), who were Jews; the names of whom are published to the men of that place, even until now. So that by these, every accusation against the Disciples may be undone; since, what was prior to them, and independent of their testimony, these attest of Him, (viz.), that He, the Christ of God, did by means of these wondrous works which He performed, reduce many, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, beneath His power.”

38. Eusebius *H.E.*, Bk. II.23.4-18.

39. Whealey, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

40. Eusebius *H.E.*, Bk. III.9.3.

41. Whealey, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

42. Pseudo-Hegesippus, *De excidio hierosolymitano (Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V)* in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, (Vindobonae: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1932; reprint by Johnson Reprint Corporation, New York, London: 1960). Vol. 66, pt 1, 2. Bk. II:12.1. Translation by Whealey, *op. cit.* pp. 31-32.

43. A. M. Dubarle, « Le témoignage de Josèphe sur Jésus d’après des publications récentes,» In *Révue biblique* 84 (1977) 52.

44. Whealey, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

45. Agapius, *Kitab al-‘Unwan. Agapius Episcopus Mabhugensis : Historia Universalis* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum : Scriptures Arabici, X), edited by L. Cheiko, (Louvain, 1954). Agapius, *Kitab al-‘Unwan, Histoire Universelle*, écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj (Patrologia Orientalis, V.4), edited with French translation by A. Vasiliev, (Paris 1912). Michel le Syrien, *Chronicle*, edited in facsimile with French translation by J. B. Chabot,; Vol. 1: Translation, (Paris 1899); Vol. IV: Syriac Text, (Paris 1910)..

46. Shlomo Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

47. Whealey, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

48. A. Merx quoted in Shlomo Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 61-62.

49. Pines, *op. cit.*, p. 77-79.

50. *Ibid.* p. 94.

51. *Demonstratio evangelica*, VIII.2.99.

52. Pines, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-62.

53. Pines, *op. cit.*, p.p. 61-62.

54. Photius, in *op. cit.*, vol. 1, chap. 33, pp. 18-19 as quoted by Whiston in Josephus, *op. cit.*, note on p. 18.

55. Flavius Josephus, *op. cit.*, *The Jewish Wars*, Bk. VI.2.1.

56. Alexander Berendts und Konrad Grass, *Flavius Josephus vom Jüdischen Kriege*. Buch I-IV, nach der slavischen Überetzung deutsch herausgegeben und mit dem griechischen Text verglichen, (Teil I; Dorpat, 1924-1926; Teil II, Dorpat 1927). Victor M. Istrin, André Vaillant et Pierre Pascal, *La ?Prise de*

Jérusalem? de Josèphe le Juif (Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 2 vols, 1934-1938). Nikita Aleksandrovich Meshcherskij, *Istorija Iudejskoj Vojny Iosifa Flavija v Drevnerusskom Perevode* (*History of the Jewish War by Joseph Flavius in the Old Russian Translation*) (Moscow-Leningrad: Akademia Nauk SSSR, 1958). H. Leeming, K. Leeming, ed., *Josephus' 'Jewish War' and its Slavonic Version: A Synoptic Comparison of the English Translation by H. St. J. Thackeray with the Critical Edition by N. A. Meščerskij of the Slavonic Version in the Vilna Manuscript Translated into English by H. Leeming and L. Osinkina*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003). Robert Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (London: 1931). Roger Pearse, "Notes on the Old Slavonic Josephus," in

<http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/josephus/slavonic.htm>.

57. In H. Leeming and K. Leeming, eds, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 40.