

MARTIN FRIIS

Image and Imitation

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Mohr Siebeck

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Martin Friis

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Josephus' Antiquities 1–11 and
Greco-Roman Historiography

Mohr Siebeck

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To my parents

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Martin Friis, Copenhagen, September 2018

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List of Abbreviations

Josephus' works are abbreviated as follows: *J.W.* for *The Jewish War* (la. *Bellum judaicum*), *Ant.* for the *Jewish Antiquities* (la. *Antiquitates judaicae*), *Life* for *The Life* (la. *Vita*) and *Ag. Ap.* for *Against Apion* (la. *Contra Apionem*), cf. *The SBL Handbook of Style*, second edition, 2014, §8.3.7, 79.

The titles of the ancient works are all abbreviated according to the guidelines set forth in the *The SBL Handbook of Style*, second edition, 2014, 141-68. The abbreviations of titles and authors not mentioned therein follow the recommendations set forth in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary. Fourth edition* (2012).

<i>AJPhil</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i> (Baltimore, 1880–)
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (Berlin & New York, 1972–)
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i> (Pennsylvania, 1991–)
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i> (California, 1968–)
<i>CQ</i>	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i> (Cambridge, 1907–)
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EUP	Edinburgh University Press
<i>FGrHist</i>	F. Jacoby et al., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin, 1923-58; Leiden 1994–)
<i>HRR</i>	H. Peter, <i>Historiocorum Romanorum Reliquiae</i> (Leipzig, 1870 and 1906)
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i> (Harvard, 1890–)
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> (Israel, 1924–)
HUP	Harvard University Press
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (Michigan, 1843–)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> (Atlanta, 1890–)
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> (Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 1976–)
<i>JHS</i>	<i>The Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> (Cambridge, 1880–)
JHUP	The Johns Hopkins University Press
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> (Pennsylvania, 1889–)
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> (Cambridge, 1911–)
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i> (Leiden, 1970–)
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha</i> (Sheffield, 1987–)
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> (Oxford, 1899–)
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>LSJ</i>	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9th ed. with revised supplement (Oxford, 1982)
LXX	A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart, eds, <i>Septuaginta. Editio Altera</i> . (Stuttgart, 2006)
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i> (Cambridge, 1954–)

<i>OCD</i>	Hornblower, S., A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow, eds, <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary. Fourth edition</i> (Oxford, 2012)
OUP	Oxford University Press
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i> (Cambridge, 1882–)
PUP	Princeton University Press
<i>RRJ</i>	<i>Review of Rabbinic Judaism</i> (Leiden, 1998–)
SAP	Sheffield Academic Press
UEP	University of Exeter Press
UNCP	University of North Carolina Press
WSUP	Wayne State University Press

Chapter 1

Introduction

The *Antiquities* and Ancient Historiography

1.1. Introductory

This monograph argues and demonstrates that throughout the first half of his *Antiquities*, Josephus consistently presents himself as a capable ancient historian. In the following chapters, I shall touch upon several key aspects of his historiographical style, and argue that Josephus' literary strategy in the first eleven books of the *Antiquities* is closely comparable to those of several prominent Greco-Roman historians, including Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Sallust, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy.

Such an analysis, however, must be introduced by way of overview of the *Antiquities* (including Josephus' aim with the work and his intended audience) and the field of ancient Greco-Roman historiography in general. The present chapter therefore provides an outline of recent scholarship on the *Antiquities* and the recent developments within studies on ancient historiography. Following on a brief introduction to Josephus and his works (1.2.1), the next subsections outline recent scholarship on the *Antiquities* with particular emphasis on the relationship between this work and other ancient histories (1.2.2) and Josephus' aim and intended audience of the *Antiquities* (1.2.3). The final subsection specifies the overall scope and aim of the monograph as well as the content of the subsequent chapters (1.2.4).

The next section opens with an overview of the different types of ancient Greco-Roman histories and their varied outlook and content (1.3). This outline illustrates how there is ample room for a work such as the *Antiquities* within the field of ancient historiography. The final section provides an analysis of developments in the twentieth century within the study on ancient Greco-Roman historiography (1.4.1) and an overview of recent discussions on the generic classification of ancient histories (1.4.2).

1.2. A Jewish History for a Non-Jewish Audience

1.2.1. Flavius Josephus and his works

Flavius Josephus (c. 37–100 CE) ranks among the most important and prolific Jewish¹ authors of the first century CE. In chronological order, his bibliography consists of the following four works: his monograph on the Jewish War (*The Jewish War*) in seven books published around 73/74 CE; a lengthy account of the previous history of the Jewish people (*The Jewish Antiquities*)² in twenty books written over a period of approximately twenty years and published in c. 93 CE³; a short autobiography (*The Life*), and finally an apologetic essay in two books (*Against Apion*), both of which were published after the *Antiquities* around the turn of the century.⁴

Josephus' works were all published in Greek.⁵ By his own account, however, his monograph on the Jewish War was originally written in his native tongue, Aramaic, and later translated by the help of assistants (cf. *J.W.* 1.3).⁶ No such linguistic assistance is mentioned in any of the subsequent works.⁷ H. St. J. Thackeray posits that Josephus might have made use of translators in the *Antiquities* as well.⁸ This supposition has, however, been heavily criticized by several subsequent scholars.⁹ In general, we have sufficient reason to assume that during his stay in Rome Josephus could have attained some proficiency in Greek (e.g. *Ant.* 20.263 and *Ag. Ap.* 1.50).¹⁰ Whatever familiarity he might have had with Latin and Latin literature is, however, open to conjec-

¹ On this and related terms (including Josephus' terminology), see Cohen 1994 and id. 1999, 69–106; Goodman 2005; id. 2007b, and id. 2007c; Mason 2004, xiii, n. 1 and 2007; Miller 2010 and id. 2012; Schwartz 2005 and id. 2007a, and Williams 1997, 252–3. Of particular relevance for the present study is Spilsbury 1998, 36–42.

² The title of this work varies. Brill's Josephus project, for instance, adheres to the alternative title *The Judean Antiquities*, cf. Mason 2004, xiii, n. 1. In order to avoid confusion (and for the sake of brevity), in what follows, the work will be simply referred to as the *Antiquities*.

³ On the dating of the *Antiquities*, see Bilde 1988, 103–4 and Mason 2004, xvii, n. 3.

⁴ On the dating of the individual works, see Bilde 1988, 79 (on *The Jewish War*); 103–4 (on *The Antiquities*); 104–6 (on *Life*), and 113 (*Against Apion*).

⁵ On Greek as the *lingua franca* during the Hellenistic age, see Kaimio 1979, Rajak 1983, 46–64, and Swain 1996, 17–42.

⁶ On the Aramaic version, see Attridge 1984, 193, n. 16 and Sterling 1992, 234, n. 43.

⁷ See Rajak 1983, 63, n. 49 and *ibid.*, 233.

⁸ See Thackeray 1967a, 100–24 and *id.* 1967b, xiv–xvii, similarly Schutt 1961, 59–78 and Mason 1991, 48–51.

⁹ E.g. Attridge 1976, 39; Bilde 1983, 34–6 and *id.* 1988, 132–3; Feldman 1998a, 178, n. 23, and Rajak 1983, 233–8.

¹⁰ See Rajak 1983, 46–8.

ture, since he himself does not comment on this issue (compare *Ant. rom.* 1.6.2).¹¹

Josephus' works have proven highly useful for our understanding of the history of the Jewish people and the socio-political developments in Palestine in the Hellenistic period. In particular, his historical works from *Ant.* 12 and through to *J.W.* 7 constitute one of the principal extant sources for our knowledge of the period from the death of Philip II of Macedon in 336 BCE to the end of the Jewish War in 73 CE. Similarly, his autobiography and his apologetic essay are immensely valuable as evidence for the self-perception of Jews and their relationship to their Greek and Roman neighbours in the first century CE.¹²

Finally (and for our present concerns, most importantly), in the first eleven books of *Antiquities*, Josephus provides a meticulous and often highly creative retelling of the content of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible (from Genesis and through to Ezra/Nehemiah). For this reason, this part of the work has been frequently associated with the term 'Rewritten Bible'/'Rewritten Scripture'.¹³ It is therefore unsurprising that recent scholarship on this part of the work has focused almost exclusively on Josephus' rewriting tendencies.¹⁴

¹¹ See Foakes Jackson 1930, 249 and Thackeray 1967a, 118–20, see, however, Mason 2004, xix; Siegert 2005; Sievers 2013, and Ward 2007, compare also Brüne 1981, 175–7 and Millar 2006. In the latter half of the *Antiquities*, Josephus does, however, refer to Latin authors such as Livy and Strabo (e.g. *Ant.* 14.68). More on this below (4.4.2).

¹² On Jewish-Roman relations in this period, see Feldman 1998a, 46–50; Baldson 1979 *passim*; Goodman 1998b; 2007a; 2007d and 2007e; de Lange 1978; Lightstone 2011; Rabello 1980; Rajak 2001a *passim*; Schwartz 2001 and 2010; Whittaker 1984, 1–130, and Williams 1998a and 1998b. As for Josephus' own social standing in Rome, some scholars argue that he was treated as a foreigner and as one who was far removed from all circles of power (e.g. Cotton-Eck 2005 and Price 2005b). Others, however, maintain that he might have enjoyed closer ties with important figures in Roman high society (e.g. Curran 2011 and Mason 2010d). For more on this topic, see Bowersock 2005, Goodman 1994 and den Hollander 2014.

¹³ See Vermes 1973, 75–95, also Spilsbury 1998, 15–6 and Sterling 1992, 257–8. Recent studies of the term (and the works commonly associated with it) include Crawford 2008, Laato-van Ruiten 2008 and Zsengellér 2014.

¹⁴ E.g. Bilde 1988; Feldman 1998a; 1998b and 2004, and Spilsbury 1998 and 2005. For comprehensive outlines of the history of scholarship on Josephus in general, see Bilde 1988, 123–71 and Mason 2004, xiii–xvi. By way of comparison, classicists typically only display a limited interest in his works (see, however, Luce 2011 and Marincola 2004 *passim*). When they do, they often place him on the fringe of the established historiographical tradition. Jacoby, for instance, counted him alongside such other ethnographers as Justus of Tiberias and Arrian in his *Parthica* (e.g. Jacoby 1956b, 47). Similarly, in anthologies, Josephus is often grouped together with other Jewish historians (e.g. Bolin 1999; Hornblower 1994b, 51–2, and Sterling 2007). In general, Chapman laments the fact that 'many classicists have not read his [sc. Josephus'] texts' (Chapman 2009, 327, also Beard 2003, 543–8). Similarly, as she points out, 'modern classics doctoral programs have inspired very

However, S. Mason has recently argued that previous studies in Josephus (and the *Antiquities* in particular) generally lacked an interest in his capacities as an historian and author. Earlier scholars have not dealt ‘systematically with Josephus’ literary program in its context’.¹⁵ By contrast, more recent scholarship ‘tries to interpret Josephus in the standard sense of that verb: to read each part of his narratives in relation to the whole’.¹⁶ Yet, even ‘here there is considerable variation, from purely literary studies to those that concern themselves with Josephus’ first audience, in the vein of the “new historicism”’.¹⁷ Mason here highlights the contributions of H. Attridge (1976), L. H. Feldman (various), P. Bilde (1988) and G. E. Sterling (1992), and concludes that ‘(a)ll of this activity highlights the fact that we are now beginning, after nearly two millennia of acquaintance with Josephus, to ask about the shape, coherence, and significance of the *Antiquities* as a composition’.¹⁸ The present monograph is born out of my own fascination with Josephus and his capacities as an author as well as the sheer scope of his literary undertaking in the *Antiquities*. The monograph therefore constitutes my attempt at an answer to Mason’s question.

1.2.2. *The Antiquities and ancient historiography*

Josephus is typically categorised as an ancient historian. Yet, surprisingly, only rarely has the first part of the *Antiquities* been analysed as a genuinely historical work. Instead, historiographically oriented studies of Josephus’ writings have mainly focused on his description of the events in Palestine in the Hellenistic period from the rise of the Ptolemaic kingdom and through to the aftermath of the Jewish War, which corresponds to the content of the twelfth book of the *Antiquities* and through to the seventh book of *The Jewish War*. The detailed manner in which Josephus describes this period lends itself well to analyses of his capacity as a critically competent historian.¹⁹ As we shall see, however, this is also true for his portrayal of the preceding period in the first half of the *Antiquities*, which Josephus himself seems to have considered an intrinsic part of his overall historical chronicle.²⁰ For, as is the case

few dissertations relating to Josephus, in contrast with the many treating the historiography of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus’ (ibid.).

¹⁵ Mason 2004, xvi.

¹⁶ ibid.

¹⁷ ibid.

¹⁸ ibid, xvi, also 2010b, 103–4.

¹⁹ E.g. Bilde 1983 (consider, however, N. Hyldahl’s response in Hyldahl 1985 and Bilde’s subsequent reply in Bilde 1985); Lindner 1972; Mader 2000; Schutt 1961, and Schwartz 1990.

²⁰ On the structure of the *Antiquities* as a whole, see Bilde 1988, 89–92; Mason 2004, xx–xxii; Thackeray 1967a, 58, and Sterling 1992, 248–9. To judge from his statements in

with his monograph on the Jewish War and the second half of the *Antiquities*, the first half of the latter work is just as firmly rooted in the literary traditions of ancient Greco-Roman historiography.

To be sure, a few scholars have previously touched upon the historiographical aspects of *Ant.* 1-11, if only to a limited extent. For instance, Feldman argues in his 1982 article on Josephus' portrait of Saul that 'no systematic study has yet been made of Josephus' historiographical methods as seen in this portion of the *Antiquities*'.²¹ He might well have intended to rectify this deficiency in that article. His analysis, however, is very brief and narrowly focused on the differences between the Isocratean and Aristotelian schools of thought.²² Similarly, in his 1986 monograph (a revision of his 1981 doctoral dissertation), P. V. Varneda seeks to outline and analyse Josephus' overall historiographical method. The monograph covers both works concomitantly with particular emphasis on Josephus' accounts of causes as well as his narrative style, and with only a passing interest in his many different methods of self-presentation as an historian.

In general, most scholars argue that Josephus' literary endeavour in the *Antiquities* is most comparable to that of other Near-Eastern historians like Artapanus, Demetrius, Eupolemus, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Pseudo-Philo and Nicolaus of Damascus.²³ Bilde points out that there are many stylistic similarities between Josephus' works and those of Thucydides and Polybius and he argues that '(f)rom the point of view of language, style and form, Josephus belongs to Greek and Hellenistic literature, and as a writer he belongs to Greco-Roman historiography'.²⁴ Yet, in light of Josephus' implied intentions with the work, 'he is to be related closer to Old Testament and Jewish tradition than to Hellenistic literature and historiography'.²⁵ This attitude echoes that of Rajak who argues that the similarity between the *Antiquities* and the works of the Greco-Roman historians 'is a superficial (*sic*) one'.²⁶ For, '(i)n a variety of respects, Josephus is performing a task different from the Greek and Roman writers'.²⁷ Sterling voices similar sentiments in his analysis of

Ag. Ap. 1.1-2, it would appear, however, that Josephus had not succeeded in convincing his readers that the Jewish people had a rich history worthy of being read and studied in its own right. For more on this topic, see Haaland 2011, Barclay 2005 and id. 2013, xxii-xxiii.

²¹ Feldman 1982, 45.

²² See *ibid.*, 46-52. For a recent study of Isocrates' influence and ancient historiography, see Marincola 2014.

²³ E.g. Feldman 1996 and id. 1998a, 20-3; Foakes Jackson 1930, 255-6; Schutt 1961, 79-92; Sterling 1992, 263-82, and Wacholder 1974, 52-7. For more on the works of Eupolemus and Nicolaus, see Wacholder 1974 and 1962, respectively.

²⁴ Bilde 1988, 202.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 205.

²⁶ Rajak 2001b, 245.

²⁷ *ibid.*

Josephus' works and argues that he exhibits closer ties to Near-Eastern non-Jewish historians, such as Hecataeus, Berossus and Manetho, and the aforementioned Jewish historians than with Greco-Roman historians such as Thucydides, Polybius and Dionysius.²⁸

To be sure, scholars have pointed to the similarities between Josephus' work and those of his Greco-Roman colleagues. For instance, Thackeray has argued that *Ant.* 17-9 'betray the idiosyncrasies and pedantic tricks of a hack, an imitator of Thucydides'.²⁹ Significantly, however, none of these 'tricks' are (in Thackeray's opinion) attributable to Josephus himself but rather to his aforementioned anonymous assistant, who may also have been at work elsewhere in the work, such as in the account (in *Ant.* 4.54-6) of how the rebellious Korah and his followers were consumed by a mighty fire.³⁰ Similarly, several scholars have compared Josephus' work with Dionysius' *Roman Antiquities*.³¹ In most cases, however, they only point out the most obvious parallels between these works, such as their matching titles and comparable lengths of twenty books each.³² Sterling, for instance, argues that Josephus deliberately exploited Dionysius 'or the school that he represents formally – just as the Hellenistic Jewish historians had utilized different Hellenistic traditions – but maintained his distance when he was forced to declare his own allegiances'.³³ In general, whatever similarities there may be between the

²⁸ See Sterling 1992, 238, 244-5 and 258-90, similarly id. 2007. Sterling himself distinguishes between an Occidental and Oriental literary tradition (e.g. Sterling 1992, 244-5), and argues that in contrast to *The Jewish War*, the *Antiquities* 'stands in a Near Eastern tradition of historiography which emphasizes native traditions' (ibid, 245).

²⁹ Thackeray 1967a, 108, also id. 1967b, xv.

³⁰ See Thackeray 1967a, 113-4, compare Brüne 1981, 161-4. On at least one occasion in his *LCL* edition, R. Marcus also points to the similarities between this work and Herodotus' *Histories*, cf. Marcus 1966, 329, n. b, see also Brüne 1981, 164-8. Likewise, Brüne notes that on various occasions Josephus' choice of phrasing is reminiscent of that of other ancient Greek authors including Xenophon and Polybius, see Brüne 1981, 168-75. Similarly, other scholars have provided comparisons between Josephus and Polybius. Yet, they primarily focus on the similarities between Polybius' work and Josephus' attitude towards Rome as expressed in *The Jewish War* and the latter half of the *Antiquities*, see Cohen 1982, Gruen 2011 and Walbank 2006d.

³¹ E.g. Attridge 1976, 53-7, 159-64 and 170-6; id. 1984, 217; Cohen 2002, 25-6; Feldman 1982, 51-2; id. 1998a, 7-8; Foakes Jackson 1930, 247-7; Momigliano 1978, 16 and 19; Sterling 1992, 284-90; Thackeray 1967a, 56-7 and 1967b, ix-x, and van Unnik 1978, 37-8. Shutt, for instance, argued that Josephus' literary style in the *Antiquities* was highly influenced by that of Dionysius (Shutt 1961, 97-101), compare, however, Ladouceur 1983.

³² Of the aforementioned studies, the most substantial comparative analyses of the parallels between these works are to be found in Attridge 1976, Feldman 1998a and Thackeray 1967a.

³³ Sterling 1992, 290.

initial half of the *Antiquities* and the works of the Greco-Roman historians, scholars tend to regard them as of secondary importance to his literary connections to other Near-Eastern historians.

In this monograph, I however argue that the correspondences in style and substance between the first half of the *Antiquities* and the works of the Greco-Roman historians run much deeper than has often been assumed. To this end, I shall demonstrate that Josephus' specific strategies of self-presentation in *Ant.* 1-11 are all strikingly similar to, and consistent with, those of his Greco-Roman colleagues. In doing so, I of course do not intend to devalue Josephus' literary relationship with such historians such as Berossus, Manetho and Nicolaus of Damascus. A study of the literary connections between Josephus' writings and those of other Near-Eastern historians may well enrich our understanding of Hellenistic literature in, and around, the Levant and the particular, and peculiar, prevailing tendencies in ancient Jewish historiography. However, I do maintain that our understanding, and appreciation, of Josephus' literary efforts in the first half of the *Antiquities* might be greatly deepened, if we compare his strategies of self-presentation with those of the Greco-Roman historians. In doing so, it will soon become apparent that Josephus has much in common with his Western colleagues, and that he too has a rightful place among the great historians of the Greco-Roman canon.

1.2.3. Josephus' intended audience for and aim with the *Antiquities*

The identity of Josephus' intended audience remains one of the most frequently debated topics in recent scholarship on the *Antiquities*.³⁴

A small minority of scholars have argued that the work was primarily aimed at diaspora Jews.³⁵ Yet, considering that Josephus frequently comments on the most basic aspects of Jewish culture and religious beliefs, it would appear that the work was aimed at an audience that was not already well versed in these matters. For, as Mason writes, '(t)hroughout the entire book [sc. the *Antiquities*], he seems reflexively aware of the needs of gentile readers, and he does not assume any significant knowledge of Judean laws, calendar, or customs'.³⁶ To be sure, Josephus might well have included Jews amongst the potential readers of the work (e.g. *Ant.* 4.196-7 and 10.210). Yet, as Bilde concludes, 'it is completely senseless to imagine that they were the primary target of the work'.³⁷ For this reason, most scholars assume – rightly,

³⁴ On the intended readers of *The Jewish War*, see Bilde 1988, 75–8; Laqueur 1920, 126–8; Mason 1998b, 72–9; Momigliano 1990c, 26; Rajak 1983, 195–222, and Thackeray 1967a, 27–9 and id. 1989, x–xv.

³⁵ E.g. Laqueur 1970, 158–61; Migliario 1981, 92; 96, and 136, and Nodet 2007, 104.

³⁶ Mason 2004, xix, also id. 1998, 79–80, similarly Sterling 1992, 298.

³⁷ Bilde 1988, 102.

to my mind – that the *Antiquities* was primarily aimed at a non-Jewish audience.

Some scholars argue that the work was primarily intended for Greeks living in Greek cities of the Diaspora. Rajak, for instance, notes that there was a general ‘wilful ignorance about the Jews’³⁸, and that it ‘was this cast of mind which Josephus had set himself to shake when he presented the historical portions of the Bible in Greek dress, as an ‘archaeology’, to the attention of Greek readers’.³⁹

Others, however, have suggested that the work was aimed almost exclusively at a Roman audience. As early as 1925, S. J. Case argued that the *Antiquities* was intended for the ruling elite in Rome in anticipation of the animosity levelled against Jews under Domitian.⁴⁰ This assumption was, however, heavily criticised by subsequent scholars.⁴¹ Bilde, for instance, maintains that the *Antiquities* (unlike *The Jewish War*) ‘is hardly primarily addressed to the government and ruling class in Rome, although this audience also plays a role for Josephus in *Ant.*’.⁴² In recent years, however, the notion that Josephus may have had a more or less specific set of Roman readers in mind has been restated by certain scholars, most prominently by Mason.⁴³

Finally, it has been suggested that the *Antiquities* was aimed at an all-inclusive non-Jewish audience consisting of both Greeks and Romans. Thus, Bilde proposes that the work was ‘addressed to two wide circles of readers in the Greco-Roman world’⁴⁴, one of which was comprised of ‘the vast non-Jewish public which was neutral towards the Jews and Judaism’⁴⁵, whereas the other consisted of ‘the numerous and influential circles which were favourably disposed towards and interested in Judaism’⁴⁶. In this way, the work was designed to serve two complimentary functions as both an apology aimed at the former group and a missionary statement aimed at the latter.⁴⁷

Scholars generally argue that Josephus’ account in the *Antiquities* of the history of his native people should be seen as having been guided by his authorial intentions with the work. As Thackeray notes, ‘the recent war had

³⁸ Rajak 2001b, 253.

³⁹ *ibid.*, also *id.* 1983, 226 and 228; *id.* 2005, 80–1, similarly Thackeray 1967b, viii.

⁴⁰ See Case 1925.

⁴¹ E.g. Sterling 1992, 304.

⁴² Bilde 1988, 102, also 103.

⁴³ E.g. Mason 1994; *id.* 1998, *id.* 95–101; *id.* 2003; *id.* 2004, xx, and *id.* 2010c, 89–92, also Cotton-Eck 2005.

⁴⁴ Bilde 1988, 102.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 102–3.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.* Similar proposals have been put forward by several other scholars, e.g. Spilsbury 1998, 16–22 and 114; Sterling 1992, 19 and 298–302, and Schwartz 1990, 177, n. 24, 198–200 and 209.

doubtless created a demand for such a work. Sculptures on the arch of Titus would serve to arouse curiosity in Rome concerning the history of this ubiquitous race, whose religious influence was already making itself felt in every household'.⁴⁸ As has been frequently pointed out, however, in the first century CE the Jewish people had become the object not only of curiosity, but also of animosity or even outright hostility.⁴⁹ Scholars therefore often assume that Josephus had intended that his *Antiquities* should serve a distinctly apologetic purpose as a defence of the customs, history and overall value of his native people.⁵⁰ As Sterling writes,

Rather than living in comparative isolation from the Greco-Roman world, Josephos (*sic*) presents a Judaism that interacts with that world. For Josephos the issue is not Judaism or Hellenism, but Judaism in Hellenism. He recasts Jewish history in these terms hoping to reconcile both Greeks to Jews and Jews to Greeks.⁵¹

Some scholars also argue for a strong correlation between Josephus' (hidden) agenda in the *Antiquities* and the expressed aim of his subsequent, highly apologetic essay *Against Apion*, in which he intends 'to convict (ἐλέγξει) our detractors of malignity and deliberate falsehood (τὴν δυσμένειαν καὶ τὴν ἐκούσιον (...) ψευδολογίαν), to correct the ignorance (τὴν ἄγνοιαν) of others, and to instruct (διδάξει) all who desire to know the truth (τάληθές εἰδέναι) concerning the antiquity of our race (περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχαιότητος)' (*Ag. Ap.* 1.3).⁵² Recently, however, it has been argued that the perceived apologetic features of the *Antiquities* may not be entirely indicative of Josephus' own authorial intentions. As Mason succinctly puts it,

The proposed motive of removing post-war animosity no doubt connects us with Roman realities in the late first century. But as an explanation of the *Antiquities* it defies the first principle of rhetoric: one's argument must suit one's audience.⁵³

Rather than assuming that Josephus had underlying apologetic motives for his literary endeavour, Mason argues for a stronger, and more direct, correspond-

⁴⁸ Thackeray 1967a, 55–6, referencing *Ag. Ap.* 2.284.

⁴⁹ E.g. Schäfer 1998 and Goodman 2007g, 452–4 and 462–8.

⁵⁰ E.g. Thackeray 1967a, 59; Bilde 1998, 101; Feldman 1998a, 132–62 and 660–1, and most prominently Sterling 1992, 297–308, see also Spilsbury 1998, 16. Although Josephus in *Ant.* 1.8–9 states that he began composing the work at the behest of his patron, Epaphroditus, Feldman suggests that 'we may conjecture that the real motive was that he felt either that the previous versions were unsatisfactory or that there was increased necessity for an answer to malicious critics of the Jews' (Feldman 1998a, 132). The negative attitude in antiquity towards the Jews and Jewish culture, history and religious beliefs is for instance exemplified in Tacitus' *Hist.* 5, see also Stern 1974–84.

⁵¹ Sterling 1992, 308, referencing Migliario 1981, 136; Bartlett 1985, 75, and Bilde 1988, 122; compare Spilsbury 1998, 11.

⁵² E.g. Feldman 1998a, 660.

⁵³ Mason 1998b, 70, similarly id. 2004, xix–xx and xxiv and Ribary 2014, 263.

ence between an author's medium and his message. In the preface to the first book, Josephus himself merely notes that he has decided to undertake the present endeavour in the expectation that 'the whole Greek-speaking world (ἅπανσι (...) τοῖς Ἑλλησιν) will find it worthy of attention (ἀξιᾶν σπουδῆς)' (*Ant.* 1.5). As Mason points out in his comments on Josephus' intended audience, '(t)he simplest solution is that Josephus expects gentile readers who are deeply interested in Judean culture'.⁵⁴

According to the principle commonly known as *Occam's razor*, the hypothesis that contains the least assumptions is often preferable to more complex ones. This monograph builds upon this principle and Masons' 'simple solution' and posits that the *Antiquities* was intended to serve as a history of the Jewish people addressed to a predominantly non-Jewish audience that Josephus took to be keenly interested in such a subject matter.⁵⁵ On occasion, he might well have intended for his account to carry a certain apologetic tone. Yet, I maintain that the driving force behind Josephus' literary efforts was a desire to present a gripping and compelling account of the history of the Jewish people to an audience interested in such matters.

1.2.4. Aim and outline of this monograph

This monograph argues that Josephus was well aware that his reputation as an ancient historian depended on his perceived capacities as a competent and critically capable author. This holds true for his accounts of near-contemporary events in his monograph on the Jewish War and the latter half of the *Antiquities*. As I shall demonstrate, however, Josephus' treatment of ancient events in the first half of the latter work betrays a similar sensitivity to the importance of image and imitation. We shall soon see that Josephus' strategies of self-presentation throughout this part of the work are often surprisingly similar to those of a number of prominent Greco-Roman historians. The present and following chapters therefore provide a systematic and comprehensive analysis of Josephus' strategies of self-presentation as an historian in that part of the work. My aim is to show how greatly he is indebted to the literary traditions of ancient Greco-Roman historiography as a whole. Thus, I argue that Josephus was well aware of the literary conventions commonly associated with this particular field, and that he consistently brought these to bear on his account in *Ant.* 1-11 of the earliest history of the Jewish people.

⁵⁴ Mason 2004, xix.

⁵⁵ The readers *may* even have possessed some knowledge (and even an appreciation) of certain aspects of Judaism, such as the existence of the Jewish scriptures and certain prominent historical figures (e.g. Moses and Herod). To judge from his pervasive explicatory tendencies, however, Josephus seems to presuppose that they were not well acquainted with all details of the societal and cultural practices of his native people. More on Josephus' explicatory tendencies below (5.4.2).

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