

## WORKSHOP ON THE RECEPTION OF JOSEPHUS BY JEWS AND CHRISTIANS FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO c. 1750

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**Kate Adcock**

*Josephus, Augustine, Sabellicus: the Duke of Norfolk's petition from the Tower of London*

In 1546 King Henry VIII determined to destroy the Duke of Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey. Norfolk was a successful general and Henry's long-serving councillor, Henry's uncle by marriage and an uncle of Ann Boleyn. He upheld Catholic religious practices and opposed the reformers on all issues except the supremacy of the king over the church in England. Norfolk and Surrey were imprisoned and treason charges devised against them. While Surrey awaited execution paraphrasing the Psalms in English, Norfolk petitioned the Lords. First, he asked for any of his own books to be brought to him, as he cannot get to sleep without reading. Secondly, he asked for permission to have bought for him Josephus' *De Antiquitatibus*, along with Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and the works of the Venetian historian Sabellicus (d. 1506), a book Norfolk was clearly familiar with.

In this paper I propose to put Norfolk's petition into the context of the developing reception of Josephus in England during his lifetime (1473-1554) and of his own reading and active use of historical texts. I hope to determine why, in prison on charges of treason, he desired to read, and to be seen to be reading, Josephus' *De Antiquitatibus*.

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**Michael Avioz**

*Allusions to Josephus in Abravanel's Writings*

What would a Jewish reader living in the Middle Ages do had he want to read Josephus' writings? If he lived in Spain or in Italy, there is a chance that he would have read it in Latin, or otherwise, he could have read it in Hebrew in *Sefer Yosifon* (The book of Josippon), an anonymous book composed in the tenth century. This book relied on the *Hegesippus*, a Latin adaptation of Josephus' *Antiquities* and *Wars of the Jews*.

One of these Jews who have found interest in Josephus is Don Isaac Abravanel, the Jewish commentator who lived in Spain and Italy during the Renaissance. Abravanel mentions Josephus explicitly in his commentary to the Bible several times. He differentiates between two compositions of Josephus: one addressed to the Jews (written in Hebrew), and the other – to the Romans (written in Greek or Latin). In this paper I shall argue that Abravanel had at his disposal both the *Josippon* in its Hebrew version and Josephus' writings in its Latin version. In addition, I will point to implicit allusions to Josephus found throughout Abravanel's writings. Among these cases are: the reason for the observance of the *Shemitta* (the sabbatical seventh year; Leviticus 26); The people's demand for a king (1 Samuel 8); King Solomon as magician; King Jehoiachin's relationship with Nebuchadrezzar, King of Babylon (2 Kings 24). Abravanel and Josephus also share a positive attitude towards Rome. These allusions and others may point to a greater influence of Josephus upon Abravanel than generally supposed.

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**Meir Ben Shahar**

*Jaddus the High Priest and Alexander the Great – Fact or Fiction? Religion, Politics and Historiography in late 17th Century England*

The tale of the encounter between Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest was acknowledged by medieval and early modern historians and thinkers as unassailable historical truth. Some, such as James Ussher and Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, combined the story with other ancient historians' reports whereas in the works of others, like Sir Walter Raleigh and Charles Rollins, who considered Alexander's perusal of the Book of Daniel (Ant. 11:337) the climax of his expedition, Josephus' account predominated. During the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Bishop John Overall enlisted Josephus' story in his *Convocation Book* to demonstrate that fealty is an obligation owed to the legitimate ruler and that allegiance should not be sworn to a usurper. Overall's *Convocation Book* remained unpublished for most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution the senior clergy of the Church of England faced a dilemma as to whether they were free to take the oath of allegiance to William III and Mary II as King and Queen of England or whether they were still bound by allegiance to James II. The Church of England was thus split between jurors and non-jurors. At this juncture the deposed Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft, published Overall's manuscript, to confirm that in the same way that Jaddus was bound by his oath of allegiance to Darius and therefore refrained from swearing fealty to Alexander and assisting him, so the Church elders were constrained from taking the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. These assertions fueled an extensive debate amongst the senior clergy that touched on both the exposition of Josephus' account and his credibility as a historian. My lecture will address this controversy.

William Sherlock (later Dean of St. Paul's), who unexpectedly proceeded to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereigns, devoted several pages to refuting Sancroft's interpretation and to elucidating the conditions according to which a monarch who ascends the throne through the exercise of force becomes a legitimate ruler in the eyes of God and man. Contesting this, Thomas Wagstaffe composed a rebuttal in pamphlet form, asserting that nothing might be extrapolated from Josephus' account due to his lack of credibility. Wagstaffe enumerated the arguments that historians up until the present day still cite in order to challenge Josephus' story, even incorporating a detailed chronological discussion of the time period of Darius, Alexander and Jaddus. Calling Josephus' credibility into question also threatened to undermine his testimony regarding the dawn of Christianity with all its attendant implications and thus other writers rallied in defense of his integrity. This controversy captures the *zeitgeist* of the 17<sup>th</sup> century - the intertwining of political stances, theological questions and critical thinking. In the context of this controversy, modern historiographical arguments juxtaposing Josephus' account with that of other historians and additional sources were raised for the first time and issues such as the cessation of prophecy, the power of precedent in Josephus' writings and fundamental questions regarding religion and state were probed.

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**Steven Bowman**

*Foundational Tales and Polemic in Sepher Yosippon*

The importance of Josephus for Christian identity cannot be denied; indeed, Josephus eventually became a saint in the Orthodox tradition. Earlier, in the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea redacted, if not codified, Josephus as a semi-sacred history of Christians – now Verus Israel – to illuminate the history of the recently canonized New Testament. The paper will explore some aspects of Josephus's *Bellum* in two seminal rewritings of the medieval period: the so called Pseudo Hegesippus and *Sepher Yosippon*, in particular the careers of Zepho ben Eliphaz and Herod ben Antipater. An examination of the questions of date and context may help illuminate some of the polemical elements that permeate these two influential texts that were considered – the first by Christians, the second by Jews – as the *ipsissima verba* of Josephus himself, although the authors of each never made that claim. Well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century these misconceptions and erroneous identifications prevailed and indeed still find their adherents in some quarters.

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### **Jesús de Prado Plumed**

*“Y lo que acerca de los Hebreos suele ser de autoridad”*: Josephus as a scholarly weapon in colonial Mexico's anti-Jewish polemics

If, as it was argued, the history of Iberian Christian Hebraism is a particularly neglected chapter of the general history of medieval and early modern Christians' interest in Judaica scholarship, the history of the colonial Mexican branch of that Iberian interest is virtually absent in the general assessment of early modern Hebraism. And yet, preserved in rare books libraries all over the Mexican territory or in Mexican collections abroad, there is a large amount of unpublished manuscripts and printed books, produced in Mexico or brought to New Spain during the three centuries of colonial rule (1521-1821), that prove the interest, teaching and learning of all matters Jewish by Christian scholars in those Spanish overseas territories. In line with a pervasive feature of Christian Hebraism in contemporary Europe, some colonial Mexico's scholars slanted their Hebrew scholarship toward a strong anti-Jewish polemical goal. That was the case of one of the first Jesuits to settle in Mexico, Castilian Antonio Arias (ca. 1565-1603). He taught philosophy and theology at the Jesuit College of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in Mexico City, the foremost educational institution of his time in the colony. Mexico's Biblioteca Nacional manuscript 319 gathers three unpublished works of Biblical and Hebrew scholarship by Arias. The last text preserved in that manuscript is a long *Apología contra los Judíos de este Tiempo*, where Arias puts two theses forward: first, Jesus is the true Messiah; second, Jews are wrong denying Jesus' status. He builds his argument out of a complex and detailed array of written sources – Biblical, Classical, Christian and Jewish, obviously taken from Hebraist compilations. Josephus plays an important role in this argument, both as a classical historian and as a faithful source of Jewish traditions. Arias reads Josephus against the background of a comprehensive list of available Jewish sources – Talmudic, Targumic and medieval – and accounts by classical authorities such as Church fathers or Graeco-Roman historians.

In my paper I will argue that this reading of Josephus in the rather unexpected setting of colonial Mexico for polemical purposes is just one more example of how he was read in the larger context of European Christian Hebraism. I will rely on the textual evidence of the argument presented in the unpublished manuscript from Mexico's Biblioteca Nacional that I will discuss but also on the evidence of editions of Josephus' works available in colonial Mexico's libraries. My claim will be that Josephus, as proved by those early modern Mexican readings, enjoyed a remarkable success far beyond the European borders, served the purpose of anti-Jewish polemics even where no Jews were ever suspected to settle and generally became a turning point in the writing of antiquarian history that shaped early modern scholarship, following an uninterrupted tradition from medieval times all through to the early modern era.

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### **Saskia Doenitz**

*The Macabees in Sefer Yosippon*

The *Sefer Yosippon* or *Sefer Yosef ben Gorion* was written in the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Italy. Its author reworked the works of Flavius Josephus into a description of the history of the Jewish people from the Babylonian Exile to the destruction of the Second Temple. The attribution of the book to Flavius Josephus contributed to a wide diffusion of *Sefer Yosippon* which was read among Jews in Sefarad, in Ashkenaz, in Byzantium, and in Palestine (and later also among Christians). But the unknown author of *Sefer Yosippon* did not use only the works of Josephus. The book includes the foundation story of Rome, apocryphal works of the Bible including the additions to the Septuagint in the Book of Daniel and Esther and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> *Book of the Maccabees*. It comprises the legend of the Septuagint and Josephus' *Antiquities* (Books 9-16). Chapters 50-89 of *Sefer Yosippon* are a reworking of Ps-Hegesippus' Latin paraphrase of the *Bellum Judaicum*, titled *De excidio Hierosolymitano*.

We do find here works of Jewish tradition which were not transmitted as part of the Jewish canon but were included in the Christian tradition. Moreover, also literature written by Christians is held worth to serve as a source for Jewish history (*De excidio Hierosolymitano*, Orosius' *Historia contra paganos* and others). The author of *Sefer Yosippon* felt the necessity to reintegrate all these sources into the Jewish canon.

This paper will focus on the description of the Maccabees and the Hasmonean Dynasty in *Sefer Yosippon*. The chapters in *Sefer Yosippon* represent a fine reconstruction of the events described in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees as well as in Josephus. The work played a key role in reintroducing the events of the Maccabean revolt and on the course of the Hasmonean period into medieval Jewish tradition after a period of "silence" inflicted by the rabbis. The paper will discuss the differences in the descriptions by Josephus, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees and the rewriting of these texts in *Sefer Yosippon*. In opposition to the disapproving Rabbinic view, the chapters in *Sefer Yosippon* show an ambivalent and sometimes even positive attitude towards the Hasmoneans.

The presentation in *Sefer Yosippon* also had influences on the reception of the Maccabees in medieval Hebrew literature. In a second part of the paper, the different perceptions of the Maccabees and the Hasmonean dynasty held by medieval Jewish writers will be examined, illuminating the various functions the Maccabean stories and for the self-understanding of the medieval Jewish communities in Europe.

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### **Rivkah Fishman-Duker**

#### *Josephus in Byzantine Chronicles: An Overview*

Byzantine world chronicles, written in Greek mainly from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, constitute a major genre of history writing in Byzantium. The relatively small literate public derived much of their knowledge of the past from these world chronicles which influenced the writing of history in the Greek Orthodox East and the Latin West. Written mainly by churchmen, monks or imperial officials, the chronicles generally have the following major characteristics: They begin with Creation and conclude with the authors' own times and convey an Orthodox Christian and pro-Imperial world view. The birth, life and crucifixion of Jesus, the founding of the Roman Empire and its conversion to Christianity serve as turning points in world history. Chroniclers frequently copy from earlier world Christian and Byzantine chronicles. Despite these similarities, the respective writers display individual preferences, predilections, choice of sources and foci.

Formerly considered boring, low-brow and of limited value, Byzantine chronicles have become a subject of greater interest over the past several decades. Scholars have reassessed their significance and emphasize their importance as indicators of the state of Byzantine culture and the views of the past in Byzantine society at the times of their respective composition. Among the leading proponents of the ongoing reevaluation of the genre are: Elizabeth Jeffreys, Roger Scott, *et. al.* (*The Chronicle of John Malalas*, c. 565); Joelle Beaucamp and Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (*The Chronicon Paschale*, c. 628/629); and William Adler and Paul Tuffin (*The Chronography of George Synkellos*, c.810), who have published learned translations, along with introductions and notes. In addition, J. Ljubarskij has contributed valuable insight on the popular and influential chronicle by George the Monk (867) and Eugene Lane and Thomas Banchich have translated and annotated part of the John Zonaras' chronicle (1118) and its prologue.

Ancient history comprises a significant part of these works. While chronicles differ as to the amount of material on the pasts of the Persians, Greeks and Romans, all include material on the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. These writers coopted Biblical history as *historia sacra* which they viewed as a prelude to the Incarnation and the eventual triumph of Orthodox Christianity. In addition, Jews were one of the peoples of the ancient world, along with Egyptians, Greeks, Babylonians and Romans, whose histories appear in the chronicles.

Therefore, in varying degrees, Byzantine chroniclers referred to and used the works of Josephus, particularly *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Jewish War*. Heinz Schreckenberg lists many of these references in *Die Flavius Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden, 1972). In his chapter, "Josephus in Byzantium," (*Josephus, Judaism and Christianity*, eds. L. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit, 1987), Steven Bowman states that Josephus' importance mainly derived from Eusebius' extensive citations which reflected his respect for the Jewish historian as an authoritative witness to Jesus, John the Baptist, James and the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem. Hence, the brief references to Josephus in the chronicles of Malalas and the *Chronicon Paschale*. Subsequently, Synkellos, George the Monk, George Kedrenos (1057), Zonaras and Michael Glykas (1118) included large sections of Josephus' works which served as a, if not, *the* major source for the history of the

Jews from the third/second century BCE until the aftermath of the Great Revolt against Rome in the early seventies CE and provided information regarding earlier periods.

This study will focus upon the following topics:

- 1) The identification and mention of Josephus and the contexts in which he appears; Josephus in comparison with other sources.
- 2) The actual material from Josephus and the use of versions of his works via Eusebius and others; and material possibly taken from Josephus which is not identified as such.
- 3) The use of Josephus for Christian purposes.
- 4) The extensive use of Josephus by Synkellos (whose work ends in 284), George the Monk, Kedrenos, Zonaras and Glykas.
- 5) The wider implications of the inclusion of large selections attributed to Josephus (a version of *Antiquities* which contains passages from the *Book of Jubilees*) and actually written by Josephus (*Antiquities* and *War*) into the corpus of Byzantine chronicles. This infusion of Josephus begins with George Synkellos in the ninth century and continues with most of his successors. It may attest to a recovery of ancient texts and a desire for greater historical accuracy. In his classic study, *Byzantine Humanism: Its First Phase* (tr. H. Lindsay and A. Moffatt, Canberra: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 1986), Paul Lemerle designated the ninth century as the time of a revival of classical Greek texts, culture and learning in Byzantium. The restoration of Josephus as an essential historical work, especially as straight history without overly Christian connotations, may represent a harbinger of this phenomenon.

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### **Gohei Hata**

*William Whiston's Josephus in the first edition published 1738*

To the best of my knowledge, no English translation of the works of Josephus has ever exerted such a great influence upon their readers as that of William Whiston's English translation made in 1737.

In the beginning of my paper, I will first make a brief reference to a history of English translations made prior to the publication of W. Whiston's translation. I will mainly refer to the translations made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and I may refer to the translation of Morisyn which is imagined to have been made toward the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the discussion of W. Whiston's translation, I will point out the following points: (1) Whiston made his English translation based on Havercamp's Greek texts whose traditions are now thought to be not good ones. Despite the use of inferior texts, his translation won the reputation of the best English translation ever made. Perfect and flawless! ; (2) Whiston made a right judgment in not including the Fourth Book of Maccabees as a work of Josephus in his *Works of Flavius Josephus* by saying that it was not written by Josephus; Whiston made a number of footnotes, and some of them are clearly anti-Jewish.

It was Robert Trail who pointed out the defects of W. Whiston's English translation in his *Jewish War of Flavius Josephus* published in 1847-1851. It was Arthur Richard Shilleto who revised Whiston's English translation in his *Works of Flavius Josephus* published in 1889-1890. He deleted most of Whiston's footnotes and truncated some of them. He tried to improve Whiston's "strange and erratic" understanding of Josephus.

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### **Karen M. Kletter**

*Anxiety or Influence?: the legacy of Josephan apologetic in the High Middle Ages*

Medieval readers of Josephus in the Latin West inherited a complex tradition of the incorporation of these works into their received history. Of the numerous factors that might influence or to some extent control the way any single given text or collection of works was used or read in the Middle Ages, the most potent of these factors was surely the influence of esteemed earlier scholars. A hallmark of the earliest Christian uses of Josephus works was its application to apologetics, a genre whose importance decreased as Christianity gained status in the Roman Empire. However, this feature of

Christian interest in Josephus works, though transformed, never disappeared. Medieval Christian exegetes and historians continued to turn to the works of Josephus to demonstrate the antiquity and thus the authenticity of aspects of Christian intellectual and cultural practice. Josephus' apologetic work, *Contra Apionem*, was little copied during the Middle Ages. However, there is apologetic content in all of Josephus' works. For example, in the *Antiquitates* Josephus ascribed to Jewish patriarchs the invention, establishment, or preservation of certain arts, sciences, and crafts to assert the antiquity of Jewish religious and intellectual traditions, traditions to which Christians could be viewed as the most authentic heirs. The focus of this paper is an examination of some of the ways in which this established Christian use of Josephus was further developed and, to some extent, reinterpreted in the High Middle Ages. I will also consider the tension created by the convention of conspicuously assimilating aspects of Jewish history, which helped form the basis of a complete Christian history, while ostentatiously rejecting aspects of Jewish tradition.

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### **Edith Parmentier**

*Herod's death rewritten by Eusebius*

Herod's last days were portrayed in particularly dramatic and detailed narration by Josephus in *War* and *Antiquities*. Contracting a mysterious illness, Herod finally succumbs to a painful agonizing death in 4 BC. The present communication deals with what this episode can tell us about the initial reception of Josephus in Christian historiography.

Herod's death did not attract historians' interest prior to the fourth century. Any discussion of Herod himself is only present in religious literature, and exclusively in relation to the slaughter of the innocents. From the first to the third centuries, the rare authors who do mention Herod's death, only do this in order to situate the date of Archelaus' reign. The only historiographical heir of Josephus is Eusebius of Caesarea, who introduced a development on Herod's death in his *Church History*.

Eusebius' interest in Herod is related to the question of the date and place of Jesus Christ's birth. At the beginning of his work *Church History*, the episode of Herod's death is used to illustrate the divine providential punishment for a crime as the slaughter of the innocents.

Eusebius quotes Josephus at length and the comparison of the texts allows us to raise historical questions (like, for instance, the events retained from Josephus and the Gospels) historiographical questions (like the treatment of Josephus' data in Eusebius' theological perspective) and narratological questions (like the choice of narrative structures compared with those of the source).

Thus, after a short presentation of the historical facts according to the primary sources, I will analyse Eusebius' reception of Josephus, considering his narratological strategy in dealing with Josephus' account. I will also show that while the *Church History* teaches us nothing new about Herod's death (on the contrary) and makes significant alterations to the source, Eusebius gives Josephus' text a new prophetic character that would become quite striking in the popular imagination of Jews and Christians and would prove to be propitious for its ulterior diffusion.

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### **Daniel Stein Kokin**

*"That Noble and Famous Jew": Josephus and His Writings in the Renaissance Italian Imagination*

Josephus's continued popularity in Renaissance Europe is well-known, the dissemination of his writings amply charted. Yet there has been surprisingly little consideration of his place in the humanist imagination. By offering a survey of Josephus's reception among a variety of Renaissance authors, stressing his singular importance for the Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459), my paper addresses this critical lacuna. Manetti is the logical starting place for any investigation into the Renaissance perception of the man he calls "that noble and famous Jew." One of the first humanists to possess a nearly-complete collection of his writings, Manetti was also the earliest known to make extensive use of them in his own literary production.

My study argues that Josephus's liminal status--on the boundary between Greek and Jew, Jew and Roman, and (thanks to the *Testimonium Flavianum*) Jew and Christian--rendered him a critical model and resource for humanists eager to synthesize Jewish sources (real or imagined) with their pagan and Christian counterparts. I further note that writers tended to emphasize one side of his identity or

another, in accordance with their specific needs. Thus while the philosopher Pico della Mirandola or academician Giambattista Gelli refer to Josephus as Greek Church father and historian, respectively, for Manetti and polemicist Pietro Galatino, his identity as Jew is paramount. In the case of the Sicilian Jewish convert best-known as Flavius Mithridates, I suggest that Josephus even functioned as a personal model. Since Mithridates first adopted the name Flavius while at work in Rome in 1481, it appears as a sign of kinship with the ancient Jew who acquired this same name in the context of his own service to the Romans.

While the above instances testify to the frequency and range of Josephus reception in the Italian Renaissance, the case of Manetti points arguably to the most substantial use of Josephus' writings by an individual humanist. In the *Contra Judaeos et Gentes* and *De Dignitate et Excellentia Hominis*, Manetti largely follows Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* (AJ) in his account of biblical history, including his explanation for the decline in human longevity. In addition, Josephus's patently non-miraculous version of the Septuagint legend (in which the translators collectively discuss their undertaking) plays a prominent role in Manetti's *Apologeticus*, the defense of his translation of the Psalter from Hebrew. There is furthermore evidence, hitherto overlooked, that Manetti used the *Testimonium Flavianum* in a 1447 Jewish disputation in Rimini.

Perhaps most strikingly, Josephus also plays a critical role as a buttress for human dignity in Manetti's above-referenced *De Dignitate*. For it is his account of the fall of man which Manetti uses not only to refute Pope Innocent III's pessimistic view of man, but also to claim that this view stems from his lack of knowledge of Hebrew and therefore inadequate knowledge of the Bible.

In sum, by carefully examining these and other passages in which Josephus's legacy appears particularly significant, my paper contributes substantially to our understanding of the Renaissance reception of this most "noble and famous Jew."

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### **David Taylor**

#### *The reception of Josephus in Syriac Christianity*

There has been no previous study of the reception of Josephus among Syriac Christian authors. The evidence for such reception is not extensive, but the 6th book of the Jewish War was translated into Syriac and included at the end of one of the most famous Syriac pandect bible manuscripts (which has the romantic name 7a1), dating to the end of the 6th/start of the 7th century. The 6th book was also included in another bible manuscript, of the 8th-century (8g1). Passages from other books of the Jewish War were quoted in other Syriac texts, most notably in an 8th-century anti-Jewish text by Sargis the Stylite. This might suggest that a complete Syriac translation of the Jewish War once existed. The so-called 'Testimonium Flavianum' concerning Jesus, taken from the Antiquities, was also known in Syriac, via the Syriac translation of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History. More generally, Josephus was also a source for Syriac historians and chroniclers – presumably directly from the Greek text. Through a Syriac mix-up, the fables of Aesop in Syriac also ended up being attributed to Josephus.

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### **Joan E. Taylor**

#### *Josephus on the Essenes: Hippolytus, Porphyry and Eusebius*

As a rule, the use of Josephus' material on the Essenes by later authors has been considered in relation to possible sources. Josephus may have accessed sources used independently by Hippolytus, for example, which would account for the variants in Hippolytus' account of the Essenes, otherwise so clearly reflective of *War 2*. However, in New Testament scholarship, early citations are used in textual rather than in source criticism, given that manuscript alteration may have taken place long before extant codices provide clear proof of this phenomenon. While questions of editions of Josephus' texts have been considered in regard to the *Testimonium Flavianum*, and other passages relevant to Christians, the material about the Essenes may also prove fruitful for consideration. What kind of edition of Josephus did Eusebius have, given that he used Porphyry's version of Josephus for his description of the Essenes? Can we use the reception of Josephus in later writers to query the stability of Josephus' text within the ancient world?

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## **Katja Vehlow**

*Fascinated by Josippon: Four translations into the vernacular by Hans Schwyntzer, Georg Wolff, Peter Morwen, and James Howell*

This paper analyzes the fascinating and complex publication history of one of the many versions of the Antiquities circulating among sixteenth- and seventeenth- century German and English readers. This particular version of the Antiquities, in its core a twelfth-century Iberian version of Josippon composed by Abraham Ibn Daud of Toledo, became one of the first Hebrew works to be translated into the vernacular and circulated widely amongst German- and especially English-speaking Protestants. The English translations alone were printed over thirty times, with the last edition appearing in a Quaker Press in Vermont, in the year 1819.

These texts were immensely popular – each was repeatedly printed, some more than a dozen times – but the question of why they were published, and what made them so successful, remains open. The translators explained that they chose this version for its comparative brevity and readability, its association with Josephus Flavius (although some were quite aware that theirs was a separate text, and even knew of Ibn Daud), and its political quietism. But there are also the unstated motifs, propelled by specific circumstances: Morwen, for instance, cautioned his readers to heed the warning inherent in the destruction of the Temple and to mend their ways while Howell pointed to the same text as demonstrating the wickedness of the Jews, and to reject the return of organized Jewish communities. My research so far suggests that Schwyntzer, Wolff, Morwen, and Howell primarily chose Josippon/Ibn Daud because they identified in various ways with the people of Israel (less with contemporaneous Jews) and because they found his political message appealing and relevant in the context of early modern Europe. I look forward to discussing these ideas in greater detail at Oxford.

My paper examines four works that were based on a 1529 Latin translation carried out by Sebastian Münster (1488 – 1552): *Josippi Judische Historien* (Josippon's Jewish Histories) by Hans Schwyntzer (d. after 1556) published in 1530, followed in 1557 by a second German translation by the Swabian Pietist pastor Georg Wolff von Grimma (fl. 1530 – 1561), *Josippon. Ejn kurtzer Auszug vnd Begriff Josephi / des hochberümpften Geschichtschreibers* (Josippon: A Short Excerpt of Josephus, the Very Famous Historian). Only a year later, Peter Morwen (d.c. 1573), a fellow of Magdalen College at Oxford published an English translation, *A compendious and most marueilous History of the latter tymes of the Jewes commune weale*. In 1652, in the midst of the debate surrounding the so-called "Resettlement of the Jews," James Howell (c. 1594 – 1666), the first royal historiographer, updated Morwen's translation in *The Wonderful, and Most Deplorable History of the Latter Times of the Jews, and of the City of Hierusalem*.

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## **Nadia Zeldes**

*The "Hebrew Josephus" and the Renaissance Quest for Jewish History: Diffusion, Interpretation, and Translation of Sefer Josippon among Jews and Christians in Italy and Sicily*

The belief that *Sefer Josippon* represented a Hebrew version of Josephus' original work, shared by Jews and Christians alike, persisted until the advent of modern scholarship. Thus, Yehuda Leon Mosconi (14th century), compiler of the best-known recension of *Josippon*, believed the author to be an eyewitness to the events of the Jewish War and the destruction of the Temple: in other words that the text of *Josippon* had been written by Josephus. For their part, medieval Latin sources also regarded it as a Hebrew version of Josephus, referring to it as the *Book of Joseph*, or simply *Joseph*. Accordingly, both Jews and Christians ascribed to the view that *Josippon* furnished authentic information on Jewish history. Despite its uncontested authority, or perhaps because of it, the text suffered many interpolations and reworkings during the Middle Ages, to the extent that, at present, scholars are still attempting to reconstruct the original text and its earliest versions.

Notwithstanding its wide diffusion, no translations from the Hebrew were available in Western Christendom before the appearance of the first printed editions, reducing this work's accessibility to non-Jewish scholars. But the growing interest by Christian scholars in Hebrew texts during the Renaissance, including the highly regarded *Sefer Josippon*, sparked Jewish-Christian intellectual encounters. Among the Christian scholars who attempted to gain access to this text I note Giannozzo Manetti, who could read Hebrew and procured a copy from a Jewish scribe; Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who avidly sought esoteric Jewish texts in order to learn more about Christianity—but who



concluded that the passages about Jesus in the “Hebrew Josephus” (*Iosephum apud Hebraeos*) were forgeries; and Pietro Ranzano, a Sicilian Dominican, who sought out Jews in order to attain a translation of a particular passage concerning the history of Palermo. Sicily also saw an attempt to translate *Josippon* from Hebrew into Castilian Spanish.

On the Jewish side of the fence, outstanding intellectuals, such as Isaac Abravanel and Abraham Zacuto, viewed this text as a reliable source of information on “general history.” This lecture traces the cultural-historical framework of these cross-religious encounters and analyzes the diffusion, interpretation, and endeavors to translate *Sefer Josippon* in Italy in the latter part of the fifteenth century. I suggest that a variant, no longer extant version of *Josippon*, which contained data on local history, may have circulated in southern Italy. I also suggest that the inter-religious encounters engaging the “Hebrew Josephus” imply a relatively open cultural atmosphere in which Renaissance Jewish and Christian intellectuals could interact. However, closer examination of the aims of the members of the different religions reveals that their true purpose was affirmation of the superiority of their convictions.