

JOSEPHUS, JEREMIAH, AND POLYBIUS*

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Flavius Josephus remains an enigma. In his lifetime accused of treachery, duplicity, malfeasance, cupidity, cruelty, and assorted other crimes, Josephus has never lacked detractors and defenders. As a member of the priestly aristocracy of Jerusalem, he was sent to Galilee in 66 C.E. to serve there as one of the generals against the Romans in the first Jewish revolt. In the summer of 67, under the most suspect circumstances, he surrendered to the Romans and predicted that Vespasian — then only a competent general and not an obvious candidate for the purple — would soon become emperor. After his prophecy was realized, Josephus joined the propaganda bureau of the new imperial family. During the remainder of the war he attempted to convince the Jews to surrender; after the war he explained why he did and why they did not. His explanations were contained in the *Jewish War*, which he wrote in the seventies and early eighties while living in Vespasian's Roman villa and supported by an imperial pension.¹ A traitor, then? A spineless opportunist? Sympathetic modern scholars have denied these accusations. Some, especially students of ancient Judaism and early Christianity, have compared him with Jeremiah, while others, especially students of Greco-Roman antiquity, have compared him with Polybius.² In this paper I shall attempt to coordinate these two approaches and to determine what the

*The Book of Jeremiah is cited with slight modifications from the recent Jewish Publication Society version (Philadelphia, 1978); all other translations are mine. The works of Josephus are cited by the following abbreviations: *JW* = *Jewish War*; *JA* = *Jewish Antiquities*; *Vi* = *Vita*; *AA* = *Against Apion*.

1. For a recent discussion of Josephus's life and work, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* (Leiden, 1979).

2. The comparison with Jeremiah goes back at least to 1818-1819: Salomo Löwisohn, "Der Prophet Jeremias, Josephus Flavius, und Rabbi Isaak Abarbanel," *Sulamith: eine Zeitschrift zur Beförderung der Kultur und Humanität unter den Israeliten*, 5th year, II (no date), 168-181. More recent discussions include: Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 (1974), 244; David Daube, "Typology in Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980), 18-36, esp. 20, 26-27, and 33; *Josephus-Studien: Untersuchungen zu Josephus . . . Otto Michel . . . gewidmet*, ed. Otto Betz et al. (Göttingen, 1974), 207 (Marianus de Jonge) and 284 (Reinhold Mayer and Christa Möller); Helgo Lindner, *Die Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus im Bellum Judaicum* (Leiden, 1972), 26, 32-33, and 73; Willem C. van Unnik, *Flavius Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg, 1978), 53; Zvi Yavetz, "Reflections on Titus and Josephus," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975),

author of the *Jewish War* owes respectively to his Jewish and Hellenistic predecessors.³

I

The biographical parallels between Josephus and Jeremiah, and between Josephus and Polybius, are striking. In the early sixth century B.C.E., when Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians, Jeremiah, a priest and a prophet, predicted Babylonian victory and encouraged the Jews to surrender. Those who forecast Jewish triumph were vilified by Jeremiah as "false prophets." He in turn was accused of treason and was cast into the pit (that is, imprisoned) when he was caught attempting to leave the city. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. Jeremiah received handsome treatment from the Babylonians and appealed to his countrymen to accept, at least temporarily, the rule of their conquerors.

In the second century B.C.E. Polybius was an active member of the Achaean aristocracy. After the fall of Greece at Pydna (168 B.C.E.) he was brought to Rome as a prisoner. There, under the aegis of one of Rome's most important families, he wrote a history designed to explain the hows and whys of the Roman triumph and to justify his own actions, both his ambiguous ones during the Third Macedonian War and his "pro-Roman" ones afterwards. Thus the careers and political views of Jeremiah and Polybius closely parallel those of Josephus.⁴ These parallels raise two questions for students of the *Jewish War*: did Josephus know the prophecies of Jeremiah and the histories of Polybius? did he see himself as a Jeremiah or Polybius *redivivus*?

In the nineties of our era, when Josephus wrote his *Jewish Antiquities*, he

422-423. On Josephus and Polybius, see Emilio Gabba in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique XX: Polybe* (Geneva, 1974), 32; Paul Goukowsky, *Revue des études grecques* 90 (1977), 91; R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London, 1961), 103-104.

3. In this essay I generally shun detailed discussions of technical matters (for example the difficulties in reconstructing the original words of Jeremiah and Polybius) and do not provide complete bibliographic documentation. I treat only the Book of Jeremiah, not the Book of Lamentations; for its influence on the *Jewish War* see Lindner, 132-141, and Pierre Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch* (Paris, 1969), I, 144-145.

4. The similarities extend even to details. After the defeat of his nation, each of our three figures is offered valuables (and/or land) from the spoils; see Jeremiah 39.11-40.6; Polybius 39.4; *Vi* 417-421. Of course, there are also crucial differences between Josephus and his two forerunners. Neither Jeremiah nor Polybius was a military commander who surrendered to the enemy. Neither joined the camp of the enemy and exhorted his compatriots to lay down their arms. The parallels remain in spite of these contrasts. Following Josephan usage I write that Jeremiah spoke to and about "Jews"; the correct term would be "Israelites" or "Judaicans." Josephus knows that the term "Jew" is appropriate only for the period after the return from the Babylonian exile (*JA* 11.173) but he ignores this principle frequently.

knew the Book of Jeremiah well. A large portion of book 10 of the *Antiquities* is a paraphrase of Jeremiah in which Josephus stresses precisely those parts of Jeremiah's life which parallel his own and adds, just in case the reader might miss the point, that Jeremiah also predicted the capture of Jerusalem "in our days" (10.79).⁵ Hence it is not implausible that in the seventies too Josephus knew Jeremiah. One of the orations which Josephus the historian ascribes to Josephus the confidant of Titus contains a plea for the Jews besieged in Jerusalem to respect Josephus just as their forefathers had respected Jeremiah in similar circumstances (*JW* 5.391-393). This passage shows that Josephus saw himself as the Jeremiah of his time. It also shows that the author of the *Jewish War* did not read Jeremiah very well, since that book describes in some detail how the Jews of Jerusalem maltreated the prophet and attempted to kill him.⁶

More problematic is Josephus's knowledge of Polybius. When writing the *Antiquities*, Josephus knew, either directly or indirectly, what Polybius reported about Antiochus the Great (*JA* 12.135-137) and Antiochus Epiphanes (*JA* 12.358-359; *AA* 2.84). Josephus speaks of the cyclical development of the Israelite constitution (*politeia*) in a manner reminiscent of — but not identical with — Polybius's analysis of the Roman constitution.⁷ Similarly, the *Against Apion* contrasts the *politeia* established by Moses with those established by Plato and Lycurgus, just as Polybius contrasts the Roman *politeia* with these paradigms. Following the comparison, Josephus lauds the Jew's readiness to die for his Torah (*AA* 2.223-235) and Polybius lauds the Roman's readiness to die for his state (6.52.10 and 54.3-55.4).⁸ Since Josephus apparently had some knowledge of Polybius when writing the *Antiquities*, it is not implausible that he had a similar degree of knowledge when writing the *Jewish War* with the assistance of Greek secretaries. Although the *Jewish War* does not mention Polybius, does not contain any uniquely Polybian phrase or idea,⁹ and does not assert that Josephus was a Polybius *redivivus*, it does describe the Roman army (3.70-109) in a manner which suggests that of Polybius (6.19-42).

I conclude then that the author of the *Jewish War* probably knew the works

5. On Josephus's paraphrase of Jeremiah, see Daube, "Typology in Josephus," 26-27; Gerhard Delling, "Die biblische Prophetie bei Josephus," *Josephus-Studien*, 116-117; Christian Wolff, *Jeremia im Frühjudentum und Urchristentum* (Berlin, 1976), 10-15.

6. Jeremiah 26 and 37-38; cf. *JA* 10.90-93 and 115.

7. *JA* 4.223; 5.135, 234; 6.84-85; 11.111-112; 20.229, 234, 251; Polybius 6. Philo apparently knew Polybius's analysis; see Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo* [1947] (Cambridge, 1968), II, 419-426.

8. Were such comparisons rhetorical commonplaces? Josephus repeats many of Polybius's historiographical dicta, but these certainly were commonplaces by Josephus's time; see Gert Avenarius, *Lukians Schrift zur Geschichtsschreibung* (Meisenheim/Glan, 1956), *passim*.

9. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus*, 104-106.

of both Jeremiah and Polybius. This conclusion, however, is not essential to my argument, because it does not much matter whether Josephus drew upon Jeremiah and Polybius directly or indirectly. Josephus explains the fall of Jerusalem by adopting and adapting a Jewish and a Greek response, the former Jeremianic and the latter Polybian, and it is the interplay between these explanations which is my theme.

II

Let us begin with Josephus's famous prophecy. The fortress of Jotapata has fallen and Josephus has taken refuge in a cave where he and the other survivors are discovered by the Romans. At that point Josephus remembers the nocturnal dreams

through which God forecast to him the impending disasters of the Jews and the future events of the Roman emperors. In the interpretations of dreams Josephus was able to understand correctly the ambiguous utterances of the deity. For, inasmuch as he was a priest and a descendant of priests, he was not ignorant of the prophecies of the sacred books. At that moment, being divinely inspired by them and drawing out of himself the dreadful images of his recent dreams, he offers a private prayer to God. "Since you have resolved to break [or: to chastise] the tribe of the Jews [or: since you have resolved that the tribe of the Jews sink] which you have created, and all *Tychē* has gone over to the Romans, and you have chosen my soul to announce the things that are to be, willingly do I surrender my hands to the Romans and live, but I call you to witness that I go not as a traitor but as your minister." (*JW* 3.351-354)

After Josephus is captured by the Romans he is brought before Vespasian and declares himself to be a "messenger of greater things," namely, that Vespasian will be emperor and master of the land, sea, and the entire human race (*JW* 3.400-402).

Although Josephus does not call himself a prophet (*prophētēs*) or ascribe to himself the power of *prophēteia*, these terms being restricted to figures of the Biblical period,¹⁰ he does see himself as the minister (*diakonos*; cf. *JW* 4.626) and messenger (*angelos*) of God who understands and makes known God's will. Josephus's knowledge of God's plans is based on his dreams; his ability to interpret the dreams is based on his priestly expertise in the prophecies of the Bible. At that moment in the cave he was divinely inspired to make the correct collocation of dream with Biblical prophecy, of revelation with text. This, then, is not a case of reading sacred scripture and awaiting its divinely inspired interpretation, a procedure we find elsewhere in ancient

10. Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus," 240-246; J. Lindblom, *Geschichte und Offenbarungen* (Lund, 1968), 169-170. Perhaps Jesus was a prophet, a Jeremiah *redivivus* (Matthew 16.14), but Josephus looked upon himself as something less than that.

Judaism,¹¹ but a case of remembering dreams and interpreting them in the light of Biblical prophecies.¹² It is unfortunate that Josephus did not reveal to us either the dreams or the prophetic texts upon which he meditated that day in the cave,¹³ but it is clear that this passage does not refer to the ambiguous oracle (*chrēsmos*) found in the sacred scriptures (*JW* 6.312-313) which spoke of either the Messiah or Vespasian. Here dreams, there an oracle. Here the disasters of the Jews, there the rule of the empire. Indeed Suetonius reports separately Josephus's prediction to Vespasian and the ambiguous oracle. The two are related but distinct.¹⁴

We turn now to the content of the divine message. Aside from his own selection to be God's minister, Josephus learned the following from his dreams and their interpretation: 1. God, the creator of the Jews, has decided to punish them;¹⁵ 2. *Tychē* has crossed over to the Romans; 3. Vespasian will be Caesar and emperor.

The first revelation obviously derives from the Biblical prophetic tradition. Practically all the prophets warn the Jews of some impending doom which will surely overtake them unless they repent. These utterances of doom are conditional prophecies, even if the condition, the refusal to repent, is not stated. In this respect the prophet is not a Greek oracle forecasting an inescapable Fate but a seer who "warns" the people of a punishment which is imminent but not inevitable. The classic expression of this ideology is Ezekiel 33. Jeremiah repeatedly tells the Jews that God is about to punish them for their sins, but almost as often he assures them that repentance will be followed by forgiveness and the repeal of the divine decree:

Thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Mend your ways and your actions, and I will let you dwell in this place. Don't put your trust in illusions and say, "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these [buildings]." No, if you really mend your ways and your actions; if you execute justice between one man and another; if you do not oppress the stranger, the orphan, and the widow; if you do not shed the blood of the innocent in this place; if you do not follow other gods, to your own hurt—then only will I let you dwell in this place, in the land which I gave to your fathers for all time. See,

11. See Daniel 9; Philo (A. Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis* [Heidelberg, 1960], 97-102; Valentin Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'écriture chez Philon* [Leiden, 1977], 25-26); Essenes and the Qumran sect (Otto Betz, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung* [Tübingen, 1960]; Maurya Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretation of Biblical Books* [Washington, D.C., 1979], 229-230).

12. Ulrich Fischer correctly says that *JW* 3.350-354 describes *Traumdeutung*, not *Schriftdeutung*; see his *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (Berlin, 1978), 169.

13. This reticence has not, of course, prevented numerous scholars from attempting to discover the prophetic texts in question. No one has yet attempted to reconstruct Josephus's dreams too.

14. Suetonius, *Life of Vespasian* 4 and 5; Fischer, 168-172.

15. This is the import of the text no matter what reading we adopt.

you are relying on illusions that are of no avail. Will you steal and murder and commit adultery and swear falsely, and sacrifice to Baal, and follow other gods whom you have not experienced, and then come and stand before Me in this House which bears My name and say, "We are safe"?—[Safe] to do all these abhorrent things! Do you consider this House, which bears My name, to be a den of thieves? As for Me, I have been watching, declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 7.3-11)

If the Jews do not repent, however, God will assist the Babylonians in the war against them (21.3-14). In three places (25.9; 27.6; 43.10) the Hebrew text has Jeremiah declare Nebuchadnezzar to be God's 'ebed, that is, servant or vassal,¹⁶ whom God has chosen as his weapon for punishing the Jews.

Like many other Jews of his age,¹⁷ Josephus saw the Romans as the present day Babylonians of Jeremiah's prophecies. This equation is explicit in the *Jewish Antiquities* (Jeremiah predicted the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans) and implicit in the *Jewish War* (Josephus is Jeremiah; see above). Explicit, however, in the *Jewish War* is the idea that God is using the Romans to punish the wicked Jews (6.110) whose crimes resemble those catalogued by Jeremiah 7. The Jews have acted unjustly (4.334-344); have oppressed the downtrodden (4.557); have killed innocent people in the temple (4.312-344; 5.15-20); stolen (ibid.); committed adultery and other sexual crimes (4.558-563); sworn falsely (4.213-214); adopted untraditional and illegitimate religious practices (2.414; 4.154). Like the Jews of Jeremiah 7, the revolutionaries rely on the sanctity of the temple to protect them (6.98; cf. 5.564), but to no avail. The temple is no longer sacred; it has become a den of thieves (5.401-402). Like Jeremiah, Josephus assures the Jews that they can save themselves and their city if they repent. Let rebellion and iniquity cease and God will forgive them (5.415; 6.103).¹⁸

Both Jeremiah and Josephus see the foreign nation as an agent of God, and the war as a just retribution for the sins of Israel, but their views are not identical. First, for Jeremiah the Babylonians are God's servants in that they punish the Jews, while for Josephus the Romans are God's servants not only in that they punish the Jews but also in that they revere the temple of the God of Israel. Jeremiah has not a word about the piety and virtues of the Babylonians and their king. Second, for Jeremiah the enumerated crimes (such as idolatry, adultery, or theft) were committed by the Jews before the war with the Babylonians and the war is punishment for those sins. The Jewish revolt against Babylon is a further crime since it too is against God's

16. Ziony Zevit, "The Use of 'ebed as a Diplomatic Term in Jeremiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969), 74-77.

17. *Revelation of John, Syriac Apocalypse of Barukh, Fourth Sibylline Oracle, Lamentations Rabbati*. The Romans were also discovered in the Biblical Edomites and *Kitim*. For a brief introduction to typological thought, see Daube, "Typology in Josephus."

18. The importance of Jeremiah 7 was recognized by Lindner, 33 n.2.

will, but in Jeremianic thought the war is interpreted more as a punishment than as a further crime. In the *Jewish War*, however, the Romans attack and destroy the temple to punish the Jews for sins committed during the war, not least of which is the rebellion itself, here understood as religious sacrilege (5.390 and 399-400). The *Jewish War* does not explain the great revolt as the divine punishment for the pre-66 sins of Israel (contrast *Jewish Antiquities* 20.166). Both of these differences reflect the influence of Polybius upon Josephus, a point to which I shall return below.

The second part of Josephus's prophecy is the realization that "All *Tychē* has gone over to the Romans." Josephus's inveterate sloppiness in the use of technical terms precludes any general definition which might apply to all the occurrences of *Tychē* throughout the Josephan corpus. For example, in one passage (*JW* 4.622) Josephus equates *Tychē* (Fortune), *Eimarmenē* (Fate), and *Pronoia* (Providence). Each occurrence of the term must be studied separately.¹⁹ What, then, does *Tychē* mean here? On the basis of the Jeremianic background of the first part of Josephus's prophecy, I offer the following suggestion.

Although Biblical prophecies are usually conditional, they can be absolute and unconditional. This is presumed by Deuteronomy 18 which defines the true prophet as the one whose prophecies come to pass, and the false prophet as the one whose prophecies do not come to pass. No room here for repentance and other conditions. The tension between the conditional and the absolute lies at the core of the Book of Jonah and is manifest in almost every Biblical prophet.²⁰ According to Jeremiah God has chosen Nebuchadnezzar to punish the Jews. If the Jews repent, Jerusalem and the temple will be saved, but what of Nebuchadnezzar's empire? It will remain. Its glory and power are an unconditional gift from God. For reasons known only to God the Babylonians have been chosen for world dominion:

Thus said the Lord to me: Make for yourself thongs and bars of a yoke, and put them on your neck. And send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by envoys who have come to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem; and give them this charge to their masters: Thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Say this to your masters:

It is I who made the earth, and the men and the beasts who are on the earth, by My great might and My outstretched arm; and I give it to whomever I deem proper. I herewith deliver all these lands to My servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; I even give him the wild beasts to serve him. All nations shall serve him,

19. Lindner, 46-47, 89-94, and passim; R. J. H. Shutt, "The Concept of God in the Works of Flavius Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980), 171-187, devotes little attention to *Tychē*.

20. There is an enormous bibliography on this topic. On Jonah see Elias Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York, 1967), 1-49. On prophecy see Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed* (New York, 1979), passim, esp. 29-33 and 67-69.

his son and his grandson, until the turn of his own land comes, when many nations and great kings shall subjugate him. The nation or kingdom that does not serve him, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and does not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I visit, declares the Lord, with sword, famine, and pestilence, until I have destroyed it by his hands. (Jeremiah 27.2-8)

God, the creator of the world, can do with his creation as he likes. He has decided to give the Babylonians an empire — a temporary one, true, but an empire. In this conception the sinfulness or righteousness of Israel is as irrelevant as is the sinfulness or righteousness of the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Tyrians, and Sidonians — or, indeed, of the Babylonians themselves. Jeremiah even assigns a predetermined length of time (seventy years) to the Babylonian empire or the Babylonian exile (25.12; 29.10). The Jews will err badly if they attempt to anticipate the appointed time (see below), since repentance and piety do not affect the divine decree.

These ideas neither originate nor end with Jeremiah. The author of a Sumerian lament over the destruction of Ur has Enlil declare:

The verdict of the [divine] assembly cannot be turned back,
 The word commanded by Enlil knows no overturning,
 Ur was granted kingship, it was not granted an eternal reign,
 Since days of yore when the land was founded to (now) when people have multiplied,
 Who has (ever) seen a reign of kingship that is everlasting!²¹

Several Babylonian prophetic texts describe a predetermined sequence of empires.²² Job (12.23) complains that God whimsically and capriciously exalts and destroys nations while Daniel (2.21) praises God's ability to appoint and remove kings.²³ A predetermined succession of ages and empires is one of the distinctive traits of Jewish apocalyptic literature. In all these texts empires rise and fall not because of piety and impiety but because of a divine decree.

It is this unconditional, absolute, and predetermined divine favor which graces now this empire and now that, which Josephus calls *Tychē* in *JW* 3.354. Josephus was familiar with this idea from Jeremiah 27 (as his paraphrase in *Jewish Antiquities* 10.89 demonstrates),²⁴ from Daniel, and perhaps from contemporary apocalyptic literature. In the first part of his prophetic prayer he, like Jeremiah, calls God "the creator"; in the second part he states that all *Tychē*, that is, universal sovereignty through unconditional divine

21. Translated by Samuel Noah Kramer in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. James Pritchard, 3rd. edition (Princeton, 1969), 611 and 617.

22. W. G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London, 1978).

23. Neither writer is referring to reward and punishment; contrast *Ben Sira* (*Ecclesiasticus*) 10.8.

24. Josephus has Jeremiah say that it is "necessary" (*dei*) or "fated" (*peprōtai*) that Jerusalem fall to the Babylonians. See also *JA* 10.142.

favor, has passed to the Romans. *Tychē* is no autonomous power, as in Polybius, but is the manifestation of the divine will, as Josephus says in *JW* 5.367, "*Tychē* from all directions has passed over to them [the Romans]. God, who causes sovereignty to pass from one nation to another, is now upon Italy."²⁵ The individuals upon whom in particular *Tychē* now rests are, of course, Vespasian and Titus. For both Jeremiah and Josephus the divine authorization of a pagan empire involves the divine authorization of a particular monarch.

The Jotapata experience plays an important role in the structure of the *Jewish War* as a whole.²⁶ Its presence explains the absence (aside from passing references in *JW* 1.23; 3.404; 4.623) of the other Flavian *omina imperii* known from Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dio. Josephus wanted it known that Vespasian's sole divine legitimation was through Josephus the Jewish prophet, just as he wanted it known that Vespasian was first acclaimed emperor in Judaea, the land of Josephus the Jewish prophet.²⁷ But the real importance of the Jotapata episode is evidenced by the fact that the character and legitimacy of the war against the Romans are considerably lower after the prophecy than before it. The prophecy is a major turning point in the war.²⁸

The fomenters of the first stage of the war, from the riots under Florus until the victory over Cestius (*JW* 2.277-561), are called tyrants, brigands, and miscreants. Although Josephus accuses these revolutionaries of polluting the city and the temple (424 and 455), of debasing the ancestral religion with illegitimate innovations (414), and of desecrating the Sabbath (456 and 517), he mentions only once that God has turned aside from his temple on account of these crimes (539). Josephus neither characterizes revolutionary activity as inherently impious nor interprets the war as some condign visitation upon the Jews for sin committed before the war. No reference either to prophets and pseudo-prophets, oracles and omens, warnings and portents. The war is a product of Jewish political extremism and Roman error. Perhaps priests and

25. Josephus's use of the term *basileus* (= king) for the Roman emperors (*JW* 3.351) is not the result of Jeremican influence since such usage was becoming common during the Flavian period. See Hugh J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions* (Toronto, 1974), 120-121, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd English edition by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker (Chicago, 1979), 136. For the usage elsewhere in the *Jewish War* see 4.596; 5.58 and 563; and cf. 1.5; 4.546; 5.409. When speaking directly to Vespasian, however, Josephus avoids the term (*JW* 3.400-402). On the reference to *Tychē* in *JW* 5.367 see Lindner, 29, 43-45, 92-93, and 144.

26. A point unappreciated by Lindner, 145.

27. Vespasian was first acclaimed in Egypt. A. Henrichs, "Vespasian's Visit to Alexandria," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 3 (1968), 76-80, suggests that Josephus wanted to defend Vespasian against the charge of ambition.

28. I am substantially expanding a point first made in *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 98-100.

Pharisees oppose the war (411) but at this point Josephus minimizes the sacrilegious character of the revolt.

This conclusion is supported by the great oration which is placed in the mouth of Agrippa (345-401). The bulk of this speech treats political and practical considerations: the Jews cannot win, the Romans are too powerful, all other nations have already submitted to Rome, the time for rebellion is past, the Jews have no allies, the Romans will be merciless and so on (345-389 and 394b-401). Agrippa adds briefly (390-394a) that the practices of Judaism, if observed, will interfere with military activity, but if ignored, will alienate the God upon whom the Jews rely for assistance. Agrippa also asserts that God supports the Romans, but does not say that rebellion is sacrilegious, that God has already indicated his disfavor to the Jews, that the war is a punishment sent by God, or that the Romans are the agents of God. All of this is omitted.

In the second stage of the war, which runs from the selection of revolutionary generals until Josephus's capture and prophecy, we still hear nothing about divine punishment and vengeance, but we also hear nothing about the tyranny and wickedness of the revolutionaries. The war at this point is the heroic and unified struggle of the Jews against the Romans, the former led by their priests and aristocrats, including the noble Josephus, the latter led by the ideal general Vespasian.

Once Josephus is safely in the hands of the Romans and has been relieved of his prophetic burden, the third stage begins. Once again the war is led by brigands and miscreants who commit every conceivable crime and profane everything holy and sacred. They despise the warnings of the true prophets (4.386-389; cf. 6.109), refuse to heed true oracles and omens (6.288-315), and suborn prophets to serve them (6.285-286). Here the notions of impiety and sacrilege are central; God is using the Romans to exterminate the revolutionaries and to purify the city.

In this stage of the war Josephus the historian puts a great oration in the mouth of Josephus the Roman propagandist (5.362-419). Josephus reminds the revolutionaries (and the readers of the *Jewish War*) of the political and practical considerations raised by Agrippa in his oration, but stresses the religious aspects of the rebellion. *Tychē* and God are on the side of the Romans. The Romans treat the Jewish holy places more reverently than do the Jews. And further:

In sum, there never was a time when our ancestors succeeded through force of weapons or failed through entrusting their cause to God, not weapons. By waiting in place they were victorious, as seemed right to their judge, but by fighting they always lost. . . . Thus force of arms has never been granted to our nation; defeat is the sure outcome of fighting. Those who dwell in a holy place must, I believe, entrust everything to God for judgment and scorn human might when they can persuade the judge on high. (*JW* 5.390 and 399-400)

The very act of rebellion is here considered a rebellion against God. Agrippa had said that warfare would entail the violation of certain Jewish laws; Josephus says that warfare by Jews is sacrilegious. Jews win victories by pleasing the Lord, not by relying on their weapons. Whence Josephus derived this striking idea is not clear,²⁹ but his source may have been Jeremiah. The Babylonians have won — what now? What should the Jews do? Jeremiah assures them that the Babylonian empire will not endure (50 and 51) but warns them not to take any action against the state. They must pray for the welfare of Babylonia until God shall decide to redeem them through his own power (29). Redemption is certain, but the Jews are not to anticipate the appointed time or to believe that their own military activity is essential to what will take place. Let them wait, pray, be pious, and, in the interim, let them support the state. It is not far from this “eschatological quietism” to the political thinking of many Talmudic rabbis, early Christians, and Josephus.³⁰

This tripartite division of the Jewish war (and the *Jewish War*) is the result of Josephus's self-perception. The revolutionaries responsible for the outbreak of the war are guilty of foolishness, tyranny, and to some extent, of impiety, but they cannot be accused of flouting God's will. Josephus intentionally suppresses at this point any mention of prophecies and oracles. Neither Josephus nor the rest of the Jews yet had any knowledge of God's desires. Their participation in the war was a mistake but a forgivable one. Although Josephus does distinguish between the criminals of stage one and the aristocrats, among them himself, of stage two, the basic point remains. Before an understanding of the divine plan was vouchsafed to Josephus in the cave neither he nor anyone else of the revolutionaries could be accused of impiety and sacrilege.³¹ Nor could the war itself be said to be antithetical to Judaism. However, once Josephus the prophet made his pronouncement, the revolutionaries had no excuse. They fought against both God and the Romans. Now

29. Lindner, 33 n. 1, points to the stories in Chronicles in which God fights for his people (2 Chronicles 13.13-20; 14.8-14; 20.1-29), but these stories ascribe some military initiative to the Israelites (Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles* [Jerusalem, 1977], 112-117) and are not included here by Josephus in his list of exempla. At best this tradition will explain only part of Josephus's ideology.

30. On the views of rabbis and Christians see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, et al. (Edinburgh, 1979), II, 312 n. 83; Emilio Gabba, “L'impero romano nel discorso di Agrippa II,” *Rivista storica dell' antichità* 6-7 (1976-1977), 190 n. 5. Jeremiah 29.1-7 is directed to the Jews exiled to Babylonia, but Josephus may have deduced (perhaps correctly) that the same policy was to be pursued by the Jews of Judaea. I do not know why Jeremiah 29.1-7 is omitted in *JA* 10.

31. In the *Jewish War* it is clear that Josephus's seance in the cave represents a political about-face; Lindner, 58-59, combines the *Jewish War* with the *Vita*, but the two works have separate agenda and must not be contaminated (see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*). For a discussion of the reasons for the appearance of the omens in *Jewish War* 6 instead of *Jewish War* 2, where they belong chronologically, see Lindner, 129-132.

Josephus could mention those other signs, among them the ambiguous oracle, which confirmed the veracity of his message (*JW* 6.288-315). Thus Josephus's *apologia pro vita sua* and self-perception as a seer in the Jeremianic tradition determined the structure of the antirevolutionary polemic of the *Jewish War*.

III

The God-oriented historiography of the *Jewish War* is unclassical. Greek and Roman historians judge various events to be worthy punishments inflicted "by the Gods," but these sentiments are *disjecta membra*, not ingredients of a coherent structure. Polybius does not speak of the rise of Rome as the reward bestowed upon their loyal worshipers by the gods of Italy, nor does he interpret the fall of Greece as the just punishment meted out by the gods to those who had abandoned the ancestral religion. Polybius instead appeals to rational considerations to explain these events. He does not deny the power of the irrational in history, but he assigns much less to it, under the name *Tychē*, than Josephus assigns to God.³²

In spite of this fundamental contrast, there is at least one area of agreement. Polybius often mentions the violation of temples, regarding it as the height of impiety. After plundering temples in Pergamum, Hiera Komē, and Temnus, Prusias returned to Bithynia, "having waged war not only on men but also on gods. During the retreat Prusias' infantry suffered much from hunger and dysentery, so that it seemed that the anger of the gods (*mēnis*) visited him instantly for these reasons" (32.15.14). While describing these actions of Prusias, Polybius mentions (32.15.6) that he had earlier described Philip acting in a similar insane fashion. The reference is to 5.11.1-6, a strong denunciation of Philip for sacking Thermus, a passage which follows a digression concerning the evils of impiety (*asebeia*) and the obligation incumbent upon rulers to respect the gods and their temples. Polybius even conjectures that Philip's death pangs were caused by the anger of the gods (*mēnis*) on account of his lawless behavior (*paranomiai*, 23.10.14). All in all, Polybius devotes some dozen passages to the violation of temples as the epitome of *asebeia*.³³ One feature of the *Jewish War* not readily explicable by the Biblical tradition is Josephus's obsession with the temple and the temple cult. The wicked revolutionaries polluted the temple with their crimes. They

32. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians," *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford, 1977), 141-159; Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories* (Paris, 1977), 37-60. On *Tychē* in Polybius see for example Kurt von Fritz, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity* (New York, 1954), 388-397, and Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, 1972), 58-67.

33. See the list of passages in Walbank, *Polybius*, 90 n. 149, to which add 30.26.9. Polybius was not alone in stressing this theme. According to Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.1 and 6.3.11, the Spartans were punished by the gods for seizing the acropolis of Thebes.

interfered with the temple cult. The pious Romans venerated the temple and sought to preserve it. Aside from chapter seven, discussed above, Jeremiah has hardly a word about the Jerusalem temple, its desecration and destruction. The Book of Lamentations, which Josephus and his contemporaries regarded as the work of Jeremiah, laments the loss of Jerusalem but says almost nothing about the loss of the temple and the temple cult. This silence is maintained in the rabbinic exegesis of the book of Lamentations.³⁴ Neither Kings nor Chronicles attributes the downfall of the kingdom of Judah to the desecration of the temple. Why then does Josephus emphasize this theme? Is it the result of a priestly outlook, or perhaps, a sign of the influence of the Polybian tradition? The *Jewish War* uses *mēnis* only once, in an oration placed in Titus's mouth (6.40), but its thesis is Polybian: the violation of a temple incurs the wrath of the god of the temple. This theme is much more central to Josephus than to Polybius or to any other ancient historian known to me, and although this emphasis will be the result of the Biblical background discussed above, the theme itself may be of Polybian origin.³⁵

The violation of temples is not the only crime which Polybius reports. In the later books of his history Polybius shows again and again that the enemies of Rome deserved to lose. They were cowardly, wicked, and/or insane (30.9.1; 30.11). Carthage was led by Hasdrubal, a liar, an effete coward, and a man who could give magnificent parties while his fellow citizens died of starvation. He also terrorized the populace with murders and other outrages (38.8.10-13). Pseudo-Philip was a veritable visitation from heaven who exiled, tortured, and murdered many of his subjects (36.10.2 and 36.17.13). Diaeus and Critolaus, the leaders of Achaëa, were supported by the worst element, those hated by the gods and injurious to their nation (38.10.8). This polemic resembles Josephus's even if each author utilizes his own vocabulary and stresses his own themes. Polybius speaks of insanity (38.16.7) and cowardice far more than Josephus and uses the abusive terms "tyrant," "wicked," "brigand," and "rebel" far less often. But for both Josephus and Polybius (at least in his late period), the anti-Roman leaders are criminals

34. S. J. D. Cohen, "The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash," *Prooftexts* 2 (1982), 18-39.

35. This point requires further investigation. On collections of temple epiphanies and other Hellenistic historical works concerning temples, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Second Book of Maccabees," *Classical Philology* 70 (1975), 81-88, esp. 86, and Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (Washington, D.C., 1981). 2 Maccabees, written in accordance with the canons of Hellenistic historiography, stresses the desecration and rededication of the temple; 1 Maccabees, written in accordance with the canons of Biblical historiography, does not. 2 Kings 21 views the destruction of the temple as punishment for the sins of Manasseh, but these sins include much more than the desecration of the temple. Similarly, 2 Chronicles 36.14 mentions the desecration of the temple but the actual destruction is punishment not for the desecration but for the maltreatment of prophets (36.15-17).

who deserve to lose.³⁶ Influenced by Jeremiah, Josephus adds that they are sinners too, punished by God, but Jeremiah's influence was not sufficient to allow Josephus to speak of punishment for sins committed before the war. According to both Polybius and Josephus the wickedness consists of actions during the war. The specific crimes which Josephus ascribes to the revolutionaries probably derive from the Jeremianic catalogue discussed above, but their application to political polemic derives from Polybius.

That Josephus is a follower of Polybius is demonstrated more by virtue than by crime. Jeremiah explains why the Jews deserve to lose but not once does he explain why the Babylonians deserve to win. In contrast, Polybius explains not only why the Greeks deserve to lose but also why the Romans deserve to win.³⁷ They are virtuous and have a constitution or way of life (*politeia*) which promotes virtue. Roman rule is based ultimately on the good will of its subjects (*eunoia*), which is secured through just and mild behavior. Individual Romans, notably Scipio Africanus and Scipio Aemilianus, exemplify these attributes. Africanus was kind and generous to his Spanish prisoners, thereby winning their good will (*eunoia*) and trust (*pistis*, 10.17.15). He treated the Carthaginians with greater kindness than they deserved (15.17.4-7; 15.19.5). In his youth Aemilianus acquired temperance, discipline, magnanimity, courage, and the art of being a gentleman (31.25.2-31.30.3), virtues which are illustrated by the succeeding narrative. He had great courage (35.4-5). He offered Hasdrubal several opportunities to repent and thereby save himself and his family (38.8.4 and 20.2). And, most famous of all, Aemilianus did not rejoice at the destruction of Carthage (38.21-22).

Although Josephus does not follow Polybian terminology, his portrait of the Romans, especially of Titus, is within the Polybian tradition. If Josephus saw himself as a Polybius, he might have seen Titus as an Aemilianus (Polybius's patron).³⁸ Titus had great courage (*JW* 3.470-503; 5.88-97, 287-288, 340-341, 486-488). Titus did not wish to destroy the city and the temple; he gave the revolutionaries many opportunities to repent (5.332-334;

36. Walbank in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique XX: Polybe*, 10, 17-18, 28-29; *Polybius*, 177-181.

37. On Polybius see Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States according to Greek Authors* (Ann Arbor, 1977), 69-76. According to both Polybius and Josephus, Roman success is due to a combination of *Tychē* and Roman virtue; see L. R. Lind, "Concept, Action, and Character: The Reasons for Rome's Greatness," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 103 (1972), 235-283, esp. 254-255, and Walbank, *Polybius*, 60-65 and 163-165. This is also the view of Plutarch in his *De Fortuna Romanorum*; see C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford, 1971), 67-70. On the combination of determinism and free will in Stoic, Platonic, and Jewish thought, see the excellent summary by David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (New York, 1979), 46-58.

38. Yavetz, "Reflections on Titus and Josephus," 420. Momigliano brings to my attention the fact that later historians knew and cared little about Polybius's personal life, which makes this suggestion somewhat improbable.

6.124-128; 6.215-216). Titus did not rejoice at the destruction of Jerusalem (7.112-113). Whether the Josephan Titus is modeled upon the Polybian Aemilianus or upon the stock description of ideal generals (which is very likely),³⁹ Josephus is doing something which Jeremiah did not do. He declares that the foreign conqueror deserves victory.⁴⁰

IV

From this partial analysis of the major themes of the *Jewish War*, I conclude that Josephus was to some extent a Jeremiah and to some extent a Polybius, with the Jeremianic element preponderant.⁴¹ The *Jewish War* describes the outbreak of the war in Polybian fashion: crazy hoodlums began a war against the invincible power of Rome. Then Josephus entered the scene with his fellow aristocrats and the Jews cleaned up their act. Heroic and noble Jews fought against heroic and noble Romans. But in a cave near Jotapata, Josephus became privy to God's plan: the Jews were to be discomfited and the Romans under Vespasian were to proceed to glory. After this point Josephus sounds like Jeremiah. The revolutionaries were sinners who polluted God's temple by their presence. The revolutionaries were impious Jews whose practices and beliefs were totally at odds with those of authentic Judaism. The Romans were God's vehicle for punishing his people and purifying his temple. Jeremiah speaks of the divine glorification of Nebuchadnezzar just as Josephus speaks of the glorification of Vespasian and Titus. There is some Polybius in all this too, notably the emphasis on the violation of the temple and the ascription of criminality to the revolutionaries during the war but not before it. From Polybius Josephus learned to justify not only the defeat of the one party but also the victory of the other. The virtues of the Romans justified their conquest in both Josephus and Polybius, although both authors also attribute some credit to *Tychē*. For Josephus this is temporary but uncondi-

39. Compare Josephus's description of his own tenure as general in Galilee; see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 91-97.

40. Similarly, the *Jewish Antiquities* emphasizes that the Maccabees, unlike the revolutionaries of 66-70, deserve victory. See Isaiah Gafni, "On the Use of I Maccabees by Josephus Flavius," *Zion* 45 (1980), 81-95 (Hebrew). I Maccabees 8 praises Roman virtue in order to justify not Roman success but Maccabean behavior: Judas may sign an alliance with the Romans because the Romans are just. See Jonathan Goldstein, *I Maccabees* (New York, 1976), 347.

41. Topics which await investigation include: Roman sources of Josephus's thought; a detailed comparison of Josephus's views with those of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, and Aelius Aristides; other Biblical typologies which might have affected Josephus's self-perception (Daube briefly discusses Daniel, Joseph, and Esther-Mordecai; Betz, 105-108, discusses Elijah); Jeremianic and Polybian themes in the *Jewish Antiquities* (the later works of Josephus do not praise the virtues of the Romans and allude only twice [*JA* 20.70 and *Vi* 18] to their *Tychē*); Josephus's views of the future of Rome and Israel.

tional divine favor, a concept perhaps derived from Jeremiah 27, while for Polybius it is an autonomous power.

Ever since Second Isaiah had hailed Cyrus the Great as the inaugurator of the redemption promised by Jeremiah, many Jews followed a Jeremianic political tradition. God will redeem the Jews in his own way at his own time. Meanwhile let the Jews support their foreign overlords and maintain the peace. This policy was followed under Persian, Ptolemaic, and Seleucid rule. After the Maccabean interlude the Jews acquiesced once again in foreign rule. Josephus and those other Jews opposed to the revolutionaries of 66-70 C.E. sought to adhere to this traditional policy. After the catastrophes of 70 C.E. and 135 C.E. (the defeat of Bar Kokheba), the wisdom of this policy became evident. The rabbis, like Josephus, denigrated the revolutionaries, regarding them as crazed and irreligious fanatics, and upheld as their hero a man who, like Josephus, "collaborated" with the Romans.⁴² Pausanias reports that he found in Arcadia a monument in honor of Polybius which bore the inscription, "Greece would not have fallen had she obeyed Polybius in everything."⁴³ The same can be said about Josephus: Judaea would not have fallen had she obeyed Josephus in everything.

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42. For a comparison of Josephus and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai see Abraham Schalit, "Die Erhebung Vespasians nach Flavius Josephus, Talmud und Midrasch," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. H. Temporini (Berlin, 1975), II,2, 208-327. In spite of the length of Schalit's essay, the relationship of the rabbinic stories about Rabban Yohanan to Josephus has not yet been clarified adequately.

43. Pausanias 8.37.2; see also 8.30.8.