Agrippa I in Josephus

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Josephus wrote two accounts of Agrippa I — an earlier one in *BJ* and a later, much more extensive one, in *AJ*. Although both accounts take a positive view of Agrippa, he does not emerge from them as a commendable character. Certain facts mentioned by Josephus indicate that he was wasteful,[1] ostentatious[2] and had no qualms about taking or giving bribes.[3] He was also capable of fraud[4] and informed against others in order to further his interests.[5] The positive tenor of the accounts may therefore be explained by the partiality of Josephus' sources,[6] and indeed various manifestations of this partiality, especially as far as the narrative of *AJ* is concerned, are easily discernible. Thus the problematic traits of Agrippa's character are seldom called by their proper names[7] and the king is never really censured for them.[8] At the same time, we find straightforward praise,[9] transfer of blame to other people,[10] and suppression of embarrassing details.[11]

Reconstruction of Agrippa's history from Josephus' accounts must therefore involve a constant vigilance for apologetic bias. Some instances of such bias have already been

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1 For a long list of passages mentioning Agrippa's squandering and banquets see D.R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I. The Last King of Judaea*, Tübingen 1990 (referred to hereafter as Schwartz), p. 45, note 31.

2 *AJ* XIX 343-346, confirmed by *Acts* 12.21-23. The state reception for the client kings in Tiberias (*AJ* XIX 338-342) may have also had to do with Agrippa's love of pomp.

3 *AJ* XVIII 145, 153-154.

4 *AJ* XVIII 157.

5 *AJ* XVIII 240-255.

6 Josephus was only seven years old when Agrippa died (44 CE), so he could hardly have had personal memories of the king. Opinions differ on whether he only used written sources, or also reproduced some stories which he might have heard from older people: H. Bloch, *Die Quellen des Flavius Josephus in seiner Archäologie*, Leipzig 1879, pp. 152-3; Schwartz, pp. 1-37; S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, Leiden 1979, p. 59.

7 *AJ* XVIII 144-145: Agrippa's 'noble spirit' is said to have caused 'lavishness in giving' (the latter meant spending money on luxuries and giving bribes to the emperor's freedmen); *AJ* XIX 352: 'but he borrowed much, for owing to his generosity, his expenditures were extravagant beyond his income, and his ambition knew no bounds of expense'; etc.

8 Schwartz, p. 157.

9 *AJ* XIX 328-331.

10 *AJ* XVIII 151-154 describes how Agrippa, then a member of the retinue of the Syrian legate Flaccus, took a bribe from the citizens of Damascus. His brother Aristobulus revealed the deal to the governor, who, after investigating the matter and finding it was true, broke off his relationship with Agrippa. Aristobulus is the only person blamed for what had happened; Schwartz, p. 49.

11 See below.

dealt with by other scholars.[12] The discussion below will concentrate on two subjects: the description of the relationship between Agrippa and the emperor Tiberius, and the story of Herod Antipas' downfall during the reign of Gaius.

The most pronounced difference between the accounts of *BJ* and *AJ* involves the relationship between Agrippa and the emperor Tiberius. The short account in *BJ* contains two pieces of information which are missing in *AJ*: the fact that Tiberius refused to countenance Agrippa's accusations against Antipas (*BJ* II 178)[13] and that the emperor, after throwing Agrippa into prison, treated him very strictly there (*BJ* II 180). Thus, according to *BJ*, the relationship between Tiberius and the future king was lukewarm. *AJ*, on the contrary, presents their relationship as particularly warm. In order to decide which version may be closer to the truth it will be necessary to examine the relevant passages of *AJ*.

After the description of Agrippa's upbringing in Italy, and his prodigal living there, Josephus concludes: 'So he was soon reduced to poverty, and this was an obstacle to his living in Rome' (*AJ* XVIII 146).[14] The statement about Agrippa's poverty is, of course, somewhat euphemistic since slightly later it is said that he took flight from moneylenders who demanded their due (147). This would have been sufficient reason to explain Agrippa's change of residence. However, Josephus gives us yet another explanation: 'Moreover, Tiberius forbade the friends of his deceased son to pay him visits because the sight of them stirred him to grief by recalling the memory of his son' (146). As it stands, this second reason seems entirely unconnected with the first, and not very credible in itself. Tiberius was undoubtedly shaken by the loss of his son. However, he appears to have kept his emotions to himself. Tacitus narrates that he attended the sessions of the Senate even before Drusus was buried (*Ann.* IV 8); according to Suetonius, the emperor went back to his usual business almost as soon as the funeral ended, cutting short the period of official mourning. A month or two later he was even able to joke when a Trojan delegation arrived with condolences (*Tib.* 52). The display of sentiment implied by the remark in Josephus thus reflects badly on this emperor's character. Besides, even if one assumes that Tiberius indeed reacted in the way described, it still remains to be explained why the inability to pay him visits would have been equivalent to banishment from Rome. Agrippa could have stayed and waited until the emperor recovered from this blow, together with other friends of Drusus who would presumably have been in the same situation.[15]

We are thus left with two possibilities. One is that the explanation involving Tiberius is a pure invention aimed at introducing a more noble background for the episode, since to describe Agrippa as simply running away from his creditors would have made him a

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12 Most of the existing criticisms are found in Schwartz. Note especially pp. 35-7, 87, 130-4, including note 110.

13 Schwartz (p. 53) suggests that this notice in *BJ* may be only a misplaced reflection of the clearly testified accusation of 39 CE. However, it is rather some of the accusations cited by *AJ* for 39 CE, like the one concerning Sejanus, that look as if they have been borrowed from an earlier complaint.

14 All English translations in this paper are from the Loeb Classical Library version — by L.H. Feldman (*AJ*) and H.St.J. Thackeray (*BJ*).

15 Schwartz, p. 46.

humiliated figure. The alternative scenario would involve Tiberius after all, but in a different capacity. According to Josephus, when Agrippa returned to Rome some years later (c.35-36 CE), he was welcomed by the emperor upon his arrival. However, on the following day Tiberius received a letter from Herennius Capito, the procurator of his estates in Palestine,[16] with complaints about Agrippa's unpaid debts; Agrippa was consequently ordered to discontinue his visits until he returned the money (*AJ* XVIII 161-164). This later episode is worth examining both in its own right and in conjunction with the earlier one.

The coincidence of the procurator's letter spoiling the friendly atmosphere after just one day is of certain dramatic value and, therefore, may not necessarily be historical. This is especially so because Capito's letter could normally have been expected to reach Tiberius before Agrippa's arrival in Italy. The procurator would most certainly have written and sent this letter straight after Agrippa's escape from Judaea. On the other hand, Agrippa sailed first from Anthedon to Alexandria, stayed there for some time and then traveled on a merchant ship from Egypt to Rome.[17] Unless one suggests an exceptional delay by the otherwise efficient imperial post, Capito's letter should have arrived in Rome before Agrippa reached the city. If this was the case, then Agrippa would not have been in a position to pay visits to the emperor from the moment he returned.

But even if the problem of the timing of this letter is resolved, there would remain yet another question: why did Tiberius' reaction to Agrippa's unpaid debts come so late? The money involved in the later episode is said to have been owed to the imperial treasury in Rome (*AJ* XVIII 158), and since Agrippa could hardly have gotten a loan from this source while in Palestine, it seems to have been part, if not all, of the debt that forced him to leave Rome in the first place.[18] The fact that Capito tried to extract the money from Agrippa while the latter was in Judaea appears to indicate that the procurator received an explicit request to that effect from Italy, most probably from Tiberius himself. The emperor could not have been ignorant about the reason of Agrippa's flight from Rome, whoever Agrippa's creditors might have been. That he must have known from the very beginning about Agrippa's debt to the *imperial treasury* is beyond doubt, and if so, he would not have welcomed him upon his return without first inquiring whether this debt had been repaid, and he would easily have discovered, of course, that it had not. The warm initial welcome thus cannot be true. Tiberius' ban on Agrippa's visits would have existed even without Capito's letter.

One cannot but conclude from this that the emperor must already have banned Agrippa's visits before his flight to Palestine, and that consequently this ban would still have been in force when he came back.[19] This implies that the description of the earlier episode involves two distortions: the imperial treasury has been transformed into anonymous money-lenders, and Tiberius' anger at Agrippa's debts has been changed into the

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16 On the career of Herennius Capito see: P. Fraccaro, 'C. Herrenius Capito di Teate, procurator di Livia, di Tiberio e di Gaio', *Athenaeum* 18, 1940, pp. 134-44.

17 *AJ* XVIII 159-161.

18 E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, p. 189.

19 Tiberius' practice of forbidding an offender his house as a means of showing his displeasure is attested in Tacitus, *Ann.* VI 29.

emperor's grief upon the death of his son.[20] Both would have aimed at concealing the fact that Agrippa was forced to leave Rome because Tiberius had forbidden him his house. The description of the later episode would have been also distorted for the same purpose: the one-day warm welcome by Tiberius, as well as the timing of Capito's letter and its exaggerated influence on the events, were designed to present Tiberius' anger as temporary and of no serious consequence.

As a matter of fact, the picture portrayed in *AJ* would appear suspect anyway because it contradicts what we know about Tiberius from other sources. These sources make it absolutely clear that the emperor strongly disapproved of extravagant living,[21] and that he did not easily forgive past financial misdemeanors.[22] Since Tiberius must have known all along about Agrippa's squandering and his susceptibility to bribes, he would hardly have tolerated in him what he censured in others.

The next passage relevant to the present discussion concerns Agrippa's claim of having helped to bring up Tiberius' grandson (*AJ* XVIII 191). If this were true, it would show that the emperor held Agrippa in high esteem. However, the claim seems to be devoid of any substance in view of what the narrator has said just a few sentences earlier, namely that Tiberius was angry with Agrippa for ignoring Gemellus and giving his attention to Gaius instead (*AJ* XVIII 188). To this one may add that Agrippa was hardly the type of tutor that Tiberius would normally have sought for his grandson. As indicated by some other passages, the emperor wanted Agrippa to pay Tiberius Gemellus due respect (*AJ* XVIII 166, 188), which is not the same thing as entrusting him with the youth's education.

Agrippa spent the last six months of Tiberius' reign in prison. According to both *BJ* and *AJ*, this was the result of his conversation with Gaius, in which Agrippa expressed the hope that Gaius would soon replace Tiberius as a ruler. One of his domestics, named in *AJ* as Eutychus, denounced him before Tiberius. We have to accept the main points of this version if only for lack of evidence to the contrary. However, the details of Eutychus' hearing by the emperor as narrated in *AJ* (XVIII 179-191) are more than doubtful. Both parties are described as behaving in a somewhat perverse manner. Tiberius is said to have held Eutychus in prison on Capri without giving him a hearing (169, 179); at the same time, both he and Agrippa seem to have been fully aware of what Eutychus had to say (179, 183, 186). Agrippa, who knew what the charges were, insisted obsessively that Eutychus should air them before the emperor. The latter, because he knew the same,

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20 Schwartz (pp. 45-7) rejects the connection between Drusus' death and Agrippa's departure because he doubts the claim about Tiberius' grief and also because of considerations involving chronology. He ascribes the inclusion of the passage to the 'romantic nature' of the main source for *AJ*.

21 Tacitus, *Ann.* II 48; Suetonius, *Tib.* 47; Velleius Paterculus II 129.3. The reports of Tacitus (Ann. VI 1) and Suetonius (*Tib.* 42-45) about the dissolute behavior of Tiberius during his last years are rejected by most modern scholars: J.C. Tarver, *Tibère*, Paris 1934, pp. 328-30; F.B. Marsh, *The reign of Tiberius*, Cambridge 1959, p. 218; A. Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines*, London 1974, pp. 72-3, 79; etc.

22 There is a story in Suetonius about Gaius, the elder brother of the emperor Galba, who left Rome owing to financial embarrassment, and later committed suicide because Tiberius crossed him off the list of proconsuls when he became due to take over a province (*Galba* 3).

repeatedly refused to give the hearing for Agrippa's sake; however, it was enough for him to hear about Agrippa's conversation with Gaius from Eutychus himself to recognize immediately that he was telling the truth and to order Agrippa's arrest. The story thus can hardly be more than yet another fiction[23] with apologetic intent, written to remind the reader to what extent the old emperor had liked Agrippa. The description of Macro's embarrassment when ordered to arrest Agrippa must have fulfilled a similar function (189-190).

When it comes to Agrippa's conditions in jail, the evidence of *BJ* and *AJ* differs. *BJ* II 180 says that he was treated very strictly there; *AJ* XVIII 203-204, in contrast, enumerates at great length the privileges that Agrippa had in prison due to Antonia's intervention with Macro. The style of living described in *AJ* would indeed look fairly dignified if not for one detail, mentioned a number of times and therefore apparently true, namely that Agrippa was constantly chained to the soldier guarding him.[24] Thus, even Antonia and Macro together were unable to free Agrippa from this most humiliating feature. It is also worthy of notice that Tiberius is nowhere said to have condoned the actions of Antonia and Macro, which would appear to indicate that the two acted without his knowledge. Therefore, even if the somewhat over-detailed description of Agrippa's exceptionally good conditions in jail were true,[25] it would not constitute evidence that Tiberius was inclined to treat him mildly.

It appears, then, that none of the passages of *AJ* that touch upon the relationship between Tiberius and Agrippa is above suspicion, and therefore real proof that this relationship was warm is still lacking. At the same time, certain leads in the first two episodes allow for the reconstruction of a contrary picture, which is more in keeping with Tiberius' attitudes as they are known from other sources. This is probably not accidental. The impression created by the account of *BJ* thus appears to be closer to the truth.[26] The source of *AJ* may have presented things differently for a variety of reasons. He may simply have wanted to avoid showing Agrippa in humiliating circumstances, or he may have thought that friendship with an emperor, whatever the emperor's personality, enhances the importance of the person in question. It is also possible that he tried to obscure in this way the somewhat embarrassing fact of Agrippa's close friendship with Gaius — the emperor who, from the Jewish point of view, was the worst of the three Roman rulers of Agrippa's time.[27] A combination of all these considerations is, of course, also fairly likely.

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23 Schwartz (pp. 36-7) notes that the author seems to have inserted the name of Piso, the *praefectus urbi* (*AJ* XVIII 169, 235), in an anachronistic way simply in order 'to fill out his story'. The name Eutychus may have had a similar origin, since another charioteer, a famous favourite of Gaius, was also called Eutychus (*AJ* XIX 257; Suetonius, *Calig.* 55).

24 *AJ* XVIII 203, 233, 237; XIX 294-295.

25 The abundance of circumstantial details is no guarantee that the description is truthful (see the closing remarks of this paper); Schwartz, p. 34, cf. p. 54, note 64.

26 Schwartz (pp. 51-5) follows *AJ* in describing the relationship between Tiberius and Agrippa. He suggests that the emperor considered Agrippa a potential monarch.

27 The account of Agrippa's life in *AJ* is much more sympathetic to Gaius than any other ancient source: S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 1990, pp. 152-3; Schwartz, pp. 18, 20.

The passages discussed above show consistency in the pursuit of a certain objective, as well as similarity in the methods used in order to achieve it. This implies an author with a distinctive attitude and taste, thus lending support to the suggestion advocated by D.R. Schwartz that Josephus had a major written source for his account of Agrippa I in *AJ*.[28] Schwartz calls this source 'romantic',[29] meaning that the author loved drama and used it to spice many parts of his narrative. That most of the passages discussed above have a dramatic flavour is undeniable, and Josephus could have reproduced them precisely for this reason.[30] What should be emphasized, however, is that all these dramatic additions also serve apologetic needs. Thus, the apologetics may well have been the primary reason for their appearance, with the drama being a means, rather than an end in itself.

The second point to be addressed is the story of Herod Antipas' exile. Josephus narrates the episode briefly in *BJ* and at length in *AJ*. In *BJ* he says that the arrival of Agrippa in his kingdom (38 CE) aroused the ambition of Herod the tetrarch, and especially of his wife Herodias, Agrippa's sister. The main point was the difference of status, since Agrippa was a king and Herod Antipas a mere tetrarch. Herodias insisted on going to Rome in order to ask Gaius to make her husband king too. Antipas yielded to his wife's solicitations and 'presented himself to Gaius, who punished him for his cupidity by banishing him to Spain. For an accuser followed him in the person of Agrippa, to whose kingdom Gaius annexed his rival's tetrarchy. Herod died in Spain, whither his wife had accompanied him into exile' (*BJ* II 181-183).

The story in *AJ* (XVIII 240-255) repeats the main themes of *BJ* but expands on Herodias' speeches meant to persuade her husband, and on the procedures in Rome. A few minor discrepancies between the two accounts do not concern us here.[31] The relevant point is that in both compositions we have two reasons for Antipas' punishment — Agrippa's accusations and the tetrarch's request to be made a king. Since the two have little internal connection, we must ask which is to be accepted as the true one. Josephus does not dwell on Agrippa's motives, but the fact that the king received the tetrarch's territory and property, as well as the property of his wife, speaks for itself. Thus, it sounds as though Agrippa's accusations were a reason for Antipas' punishment. In contrast, the second reason appears somewhat odd. Appeals to the emperor, including requests for favours, and the emperor's responses were at the basis of the relationship between the Roman ruler and his subjects.[32] The emperor received dozens of such requests daily, either oral or written. Had it been normal for him to react in the manner suggested by the story in Josephus, a sizable proportion of the inhabitants of the empire would have found themselves in exile with their property confiscated just because they

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28 Pp. 1-38. Schwartz tentatively calls this source Agrippa's 'Vita'; he characterizes this composition as heavily biased in favour of the king and expresses serious doubts about its historical worth.

29 Schwartz, pp. 46, 53, 55, 91, etc.

30 D.R. Schwartz, 'On drama and autenticity in Philo and Josephus', *SCI* 10, 1989/90, p. 124. Josephus apparently found no fault with this account of Agrippa although he was able to discern bias in Nicolaus of Damascus' account of Herod (*AJ* XIV 9; XVI 183-186).

31 For the discussion of these differences see Schwartz, pp. 4-5.

32 F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)*, 1977, 240-52.

had asked an emperor for a favour. The worst possible outcome of Antipas' request could thus have been a refusal, but it is hardly likely that such a request would have by itself caused his downfall. In fact, according to *AJ* XVIII 250-252 Gaius exiled Antipas after he was convinced that Agrippa's accusations were true; if so, Antipas would have been doomed with or without making a request.

But if the tetrarch was exiled due to Agrippa's accusations, what could have been the function of the parallel reason given in Josephus? On the face of it, the inclusion of the Herodias story can be ascribed to literary considerations alone.[33] However, apologetics could have been the main aim here, too. Antipas' request is explicitly pointed out in both *BJ* and *AJ* as *the* reason for what happened to him and his wife. In *BJ* the tetrarch is said to have been punished by Gaius for his cupidity, in *AJ* it is God himself who 'visited punishment on Herodias for her envy of her brother and on Herod for listening to a woman's frivolous chatter' (255). The placing of these remarks at the conclusion of the story (in both compositions) seems to indicate that it was deemed important to emphasize the point. Furthermore, there is a passage within the *AJ* version of this episode that can be best explained as belonging to apologetics rather than to pure drama.

After stating that Gaius exiled Antipas to Gaul, Josephus adds: 'When Gaius learned that Herodias was a sister of Agrippa, he offered to allow her to keep all her personal property and told her to regard her brother as the bulwark who had protected her from sharing her husband's fate'. To this Herodias gave a noble reply, the essence of which was that she could not abandon her husband in his present circumstances. Gaius was offended by her proud mood and 'exiled her also, together with Herod, and presented her possessions to Agrippa' (*AJ* XVIII 253-255). That Gaius must have had prior knowledge about Herodias being Agrippa's sister is a minor detail. More significant is that Herodias, shown up to this moment in a negative light, suddenly emerges as a courageous and decent person. Since the immediately following closing remarks seem to indicate that the narrator underwent no change of heart as regards the tetrarch's wife, some other factor would appear to be at work here. The most tempting conjecture would be that the fact that Agrippa destroyed not only the life of Antipas, but also that of his own sister, may have caused a certain unease to Josephus' source or, alternatively, was perceived as capable of causing such unease to the reader. As a remedy, the episode implying that Herodias was herself responsible for both her exile and the loss of her property was therefore added.

The same logic may well have been behind the inclusion of the Herodias story as a whole. Even if one assumes that there was substance in Agrippa's accusations (which may not necessarily have been the case),[34] the fact that he not only denounced his relatives who had once helped him in a difficult moment[35] but also profited greatly by this would not have presented the king in a particularly good light. In order to help Agrippa out, embarrassing facts had to be hushed up and the blame had to be apportioned elsewhere. The story of Herodias does both.

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33 Schwartz (p. 56): 'it is difficult to know where to draw the line between history and novel here'.

34 Schwartz, pp. 58-9, 139, 144.

35 *AJ* XVIII 148-149.

D.R. Schwartz suggests that this story, in both the *BJ* and *AJ* versions, derives from a different source, and not from the main 'romantic' source of *AJ*.[36] However, those passages of *AJ* which involve Herodias' speeches to Antipas and the scene with Gaius would rather point to their belonging to this same source. The love for drama in these passages is most evident, with the narrator at times going overboard. Thus, in one of her remarks about Agrippa, Herodias disparagingly calls him 'the son of that Aristobulus who had been condemned to death by his father' (*AJ* XVIII 242), somehow forgetting that Aristobulus was her father too. The letters of Agrippa which arrive precisely at the moment of Antipas' audience with Gaius (250) are reminiscent of the timing of Capito's letter in the passage discussed earlier. One may also note that the story of Agrippa's harsh treatment of Silas (which according to Schwartz belongs to the 'romantic' source) similarly blames the victim for missing the opportunity to improve his lot.[37]

Whether the description in *BJ* could simply have been an abbreviated version of that in *AJ* is difficult to say.[38] Schwartz suggests that the 'romantic' source was written after Josephus had already published *BJ*.[39] If this was the case, then it is possible that the basic elements of the Herodias story belonged to a widely known tale, probably already circulating in Agrippa's lifetime, and Josephus could have reproduced it in *BJ* from his own memory.[40] It may have been born as a folk story among the common people sympathetic to Agrippa,[41] although the possibility that the king's court had a hand in its dissemination cannot be entirely ruled out. Whatever the case, the inventor of the story apparently counted on the eternal appeal of the *cherchez la femme* motif, and also on the widespread contemporary dislike of Herodias, who had transgressed Jewish law in

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36 Schwartz (pp. 5-8), suggests that this written source dealt with the life of Antipas.

37 *AJ* XIX 317-326. Silas is said to have been loyal to the king 'through every vicissitude of fortune'. After becoming king, Agrippa appointed him as the commander of his army; later, however, he threw him into prison and apparently took back the gifts which he had given Silas earlier. The stated reason was Silas' constantly talking about his former services to Agrippa, which implied unpleasant reminders of 'inglorious episodes'. Whether Silas was indeed punished for just speaking his mind or for some other reason is impossible to establish for certain (Schwartz, p. 71). It is clear, however, that whatever his guilt, Silas' imprisonment by Agrippa may have looked to some like an act of ingratitude, and if reported in an unadorned manner could have left an unfavourable impression. So some exonerating details have been provided. Agrippa is said to have acted 'more in passion than by calculation' when he imprisoned his former friend. Sometime later, after the king 'submitted his judgement on the man to dispassionate reflection, taking into consideration all the hardships that the man had borne for his sake', he invited Silas to share his table during the celebrations of his birthday. Silas declined the invitation in a passionate speech in which he enumerated all the injustices done to him by Agrippa and also swore that he would continue to speak about the king openly as before. The king then decided to leave his former friend in prison.

38 Schwartz (pp. 4-5) analyses the similarities and differences of the two accounts and concludes that the similarities are strong and the discrepancies are easily explainable.

39 Schwartz, p. 36.

40 S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 1990, p. 129.

41 Ibid, note 73.

marrying Antipas. The author of the main source for *AJ* may thus only have been responsible for further elaboration of the story in accordance with his aims and taste.[42]

A general observation on this source may now be added. There are a few fully developed stories in *AJ* that clearly belong to fiction, such as, for instance, the story of the banquet to which Agrippa invited Gaius in order to dissuade him from putting his statue in the Temple (*AJ* XVIII 289-301),[43] or the long address of a German prisoner (through an interpreter!) to Agrippa on the day he was imprisoned by Tiberius (*AJ* XVIII 195-202).[44] Doubts have been expressed about the truthfulness of another major story, that of Antonia's involvement in Sejanus' downfall.[45] It should not be surprising, then, to find further fictions on a smaller scale elsewhere in the narrative. The author of the main source for *AJ* seems to have been aware that concrete details of all kinds, including proper names of both places and persons, make his stories look both more vivid and more credible. Therefore, he often supplies such details in large doses.[46] Some of them may be true, but many must be fictitious and are consequently bound to mislead. Thus, Schwartz is correct in rejecting the mention of Drusus' death because of chronological calculations regarding Agrippa's movements.[47] He is also most likely to be right in suggesting that the name of Piso, the *praefectus urbi* in the story of Eutychus, was inserted anachronistically simply in order to 'fill out' the story.[48] Among further potentially misleading details, the indication of Baiae as the place of Antipas' audience with Gaius (*AJ* XVIII 248-249) deserves a special mention. This indication is often used for calculating the date of Antipas' death and has been considered as pointing to the summer of 39 CE as the date for the event.[49] However, since this detail comes from a story which is likely to be fictitious, its historical worth may be less than is commonly believed.

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42 The same would be true with regard to the story of Eutychus: *BJ* II 179-180; *AJ* XVIII 179-191.

43 On the similarity of this tale to the story of Esther: Schwartz, pp. 34-5.

44 Schwartz, p. 34.

45 J. Nicols, 'Antonia and Sejanus', *Historia* 24, 1975, pp. 48-58.

46 The story of Eutychus' hearing begins with a detailed description of what each personage was doing at the moment: Tiberius was reclining in a litter; Gaius and Agrippa were in front, having just had lunch; Antonia was walking beside the litter. All this has no bearing on what follows but, while helping the reader to visualize the scene, it also presents the narrator as knowing every minute detail and thus as worthy of general trust.

47 Schwartz, pp. 45-7.

48 Schwartz, pp. 36-7.

49 E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish people in the Age of Jesus Christ* (revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black) I, Edinburgh 1973, pp. 352-53, note 42; H.W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, Cambridge 1972, pp. 262-3, note 4.