

On Drama and Authenticity in Philo and Josephus*

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In this short paper I will not attempt very much. I will, first of all, offer some brief observations on the relationship of drama and history in Philo's two historical treatises. Next, I will suggest that Josephus' *Antiquities* was often less dramatic than his *Jewish War*, but usually more faithful to its sources than the latter was, not to mention that the *Antiquities* is also more faithful to its sources than Philo was to history. Finally, I will broach an explanation for this difference between Josephus' two histories.

In 1903, in the course of a monograph on Gaius Caligula, Hugo Willrich had the following to say about Philo's historical works:¹

Philo has not the slightest respect for facts. He describes everything so as to fit his momentary rhetorical or apologetic needs. That this results in self-contradictions bothered him no more than it seems to bother most modern scholars.

What elicited this comment was Philo's well-known perversion of chronology, in his *Legatio ad Gaium*, so that Gaius' antipathy to the Jews was made to precede, and explain, the riots in Alexandria in the summer of 38. Philo predated Gaius' anti-Semitism as part of this general invective against the

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1 H. Willrich, "Caligula," *Klio* 3 (1903) 402-3, n. 1 (my translation — D.R.S.).

emperor. In other words, his motive was rhetorical, as Willrich says, but also apologetic: rather than viewing the Jews' problems in Alexandria as a result of some underlying hostility between them and their neighbors, Philo preferred to tell his readers that the problems were due to the transient phenomenon of an insane emperor. Willrich's conclusions here, if not his venom, are often repeated.²

A page earlier, Willrich had attacked Philo for another perversion of the truth. This time too, apologetic reasons played a role, but also something else, which Willrich missed: not rhetoric, but rather drama. And this time, Willrich's conclusion has generally been rejected, scholars accepting Philo's report as historical truth. As we shall see, it seems best to accept Willrich's conclusion but to suggest a nicer explanation for Philo's deviation from the truth.

The case in question is the similarity of two passages in Philo's other historical tract, *In Flaccum*, one at the start of the real story and the other at the onset of the denouement. The way Philo tells the story (§§25ff.), the Jews' troubles in Alexandria in 38 C.E. were touched off by Agrippa I's visit to the city. Agrippa, according to Philo, did not want to visit the city, but was only passing through on his way to Judaea. Correspondingly, when after a trip of a few days from Rome Agrippa's ship came in sight of Pharos, the lighthouse near Alexandria, in the late afternoon, Agrippa instructed the pilot to stay out of port until nightfall, and only thereafter did the ship enter the harbor, whereupon Agrippa disembarked and sneaked off to his host's home. Thus, Agrippa hoped to slip in and out of Alexandria without arousing attention. But, the story goes, those jealous and wicked Alexandrians nevertheless learned of Agrippa's presence and used it as a pretence to begin their depredations against the Jews, with the aid and abetment of Flaccus, the Roman governor. Later on, toward the end of Philo's narrative (§§109–111),

2 This apologetic rearrangement of history has been admitted by two of the three writers we shall cite below as Philo's staunchest defenders: H. Box, *Philonis Alexandrini In Flaccum* (Oxford 1938) lvii–lix; E. M. Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden 1970²) 3, 206–7. The third, however, avoids admitting this: A. Kasher, "Historical Works", in S. Daniel-Nataf (ed.), *Philo of Alexandria: Writings*, 1 (Jerusalem 1986) 84, n. 144 (Hebrew). On the underlying causes of the riots, see, most recently, W. Bergmann and C. Hoffmann, "Kalkül oder 'Massenwahn'? — Eine soziologische Interpretation der anti jüdischen Unruhen in Alexandria 38 n. Chr.," *Antisemitismus und juedische Geschichte: Studien zu Ehren von Herbert A. Strauss* (edd. R. Erb & M. Schmidt, Berlin 1987) 15–46 (esp. 31–3, on Agrippa's visit).

we read that when Gaius Caligula learned of these events, he sent a centurion named Bassus to arrest Flaccus. Bassus made a fast sea-voyage to Alexandria and Pharos came into view in the late afternoon a few days later. Thereupon, due to his desire to surprise Flaccus, Bassus told the pilot to remain out of port until nightfall. Only thereafter did the ship enter the harbor, whereupon Bassus disembarked and sneaked off with his soldiers to arrest Flaccus and bring him back to Rome for judgement. The rest of the book consists of Philo's gloating account of Flaccus' terrible downfall.

Now, as Willrich realized, the similarity between the two arrivals in Alexandria is suspicious. Both came from Rome and sighted Pharos in the late afternoon, after fast trips, and both ordered their pilots to remain at sea until nightfall, whereafter they are said to have entered the city surreptitiously. Moreover, Willrich noted, it is not true that Agrippa hid his presence in the city. For Philo himself portrays the Alexandrians as taking umbrage at Agrippa's procession through the city with flashily dressed bodyguards (§30), and later on the Alexandrian rioters mimicked the public reception which the Jewish community of Alexandria gave Agrippa (§§36–9). Moreover, we may add that Philo's notice that Agrippa was staying in Alexandria (§103 — *epidēmēsas* — so too in *Legatio* 179) appears to refer better to an extended stay than to a stopover. Rather, Philo's purpose was to thrust upon the Alexandrians all the blame for these unfortunate events, an end best achieved by making the Jewish king's visit as unobtrusive as possible; in his ardor to do so, according to Willrich, Philo unconscionably transferred details from Bassus' arrival in the city to Agrippa's.³

Thirty-five years after Willrich, Herbert Box published a very useful edition of *In Flaccum*, along with translation and commentary, and, in a long footnote, he took up the cudgels on Philo's behalf.⁴ According to Box, we must assume that Agrippa really did arrive in Alexandria the way Philo reported, and this confidence comes precisely from the similarity with the report of Bassus' arrival:

... the very similarities of the passage describing Agrippa's landing with that describing Bassus' are in favor of both being true rather than of one being transferred from the other. The two accounts are separated by but

3 See Willrich (n. 1 above) 401–2, n. 3. As he notes, similar observations may already be found in U. Wilcken, "Alexandrinische Gesandtschaften vor Kaiser Claudius," *Hermes* 30 (1895) 491, n. 1.

4 H. Box (n. 2 above) xli–xlii, n. 1.

a few pages. Did Philo so greatly despise the intelligence of a critical reader as to suppose that he would not notice the similarities? If one were borrowed from the other, the borrowing would invite detection. And the stories of the landings could be checked by inquiries at the harbour.

In other words, Box, as Willrich, assumes that Philo must either be telling the truth or lying, but Box assumes that Philo would not have been so stupid as to lie about something which could so easily be noticed and checked. Therefore, however surprising the coincidence is, it is nevertheless to be accepted as true.

Now, what shall we say of this argument? It seems to me to be obvious, in all due humility, that both scholars are wrong, although Willrich was the closer to the truth. Namely, on the one hand, it is plain that Agrippa did not arrive the way Philo says he did. Philo gives no reason why Agrippa should have done so, and, at any rate, the continuation of the story, about the flashy bodyguards and enthusiastic reception, and the references to the king's stay in Alexandria, make it clear that his visit was ostentatious enough to cause a ruckus. But, on the other hand, this is not a reason to condemn Philo for having no respect for the facts, as Willrich did, or to infer that he must have despised his readers' intelligence, as Box assumed we must. Rather, Philo is writing here as a didactic, religious, novelist. The point of his whole booklet, as Box noted,⁵ was to demonstrate the workings of divine providence on behalf of the Jews, and such a point is best made if the circumstances of the Jews' original trials are made to repeat themselves for the Jews' salvation. Just as Philo rather heavy-handedly points out, a little later (§115), that it was fitting that Flaccus be arrested at his hearth, for he had made so many innocent men hearthless, just as at the end of the story Flaccus is made to realize that all of his sufferings only parallel those he had inflicted upon others (§§170–5), just as even the number of wounds Flaccus finally incurred was equal to the number of Jews killed in the riots (§189), so too here, in a more subtle way, the same point is being made. Anyone looking for parallels in Jewish historiography need only think of such stories as Haman building gallows for Mordechai and himself being hung upon them at the story's happy end, or of Pharaoh attempting to drown all Jewish males at the nasty

5 *Ibid.*, p. xxxviii. See also H. Leisegang, "Philon," *RE* 39 (1941) col. 42, where this leitmotiv is demonstrated, and where it is also noted that one class of manuscripts gives *In Flaccum* the additional title *On Providence (peri pronoias)*.

start of the story of Egyptian persecution and Pharaoh's army drowning at its happy end, or of the abandonment of a little brother at the nasty outset of the Joseph story and the protection of a little brother at its happy ending, or the way a pair of dreams got Joseph into trouble and another pair of dreams got him out of trouble, etc. But none of this is history; it is all a combination of theology and novelistic writing.⁶ After all, it was Gilbert and Sullivan, not Thucydides or Polybius, who made "make the punishment fit the crime" the theme of a narrative.

Let us take another example, from Philo's other historiographical work, the *hegatio ad Gaium*. Willrich, in that same essay in 1903, correctly pointed out the impossibility of Philo's report in §261ff., according to which Agrippa fainted when he heard of Gaius' plan to erect a statue in the Temple of Jerusalem, and, immediately after reviving from his two-day long loss of consciousness, wrote a 50-paragraph letter to Gaius, documenting the many precedents for Roman respect for the Temple. Moreover, as Willrich noted, it is indeed improbable that Agrippa fainted, because it is nigh impossible to believe that at the time of his audience with Caligula he did not know what all the Jews of Palestine knew. Therefore, in Willrich's usual quotable style, Philo is here said to have built upon his reader's gullibility more audaciously than any writer has ever done.⁷

But when we open up the standard modern edition of the *Legatio*, by E. Mary Smallwood, we find that — just as she, as Box, accepted Philo's account

6 For a detailed analysis of the operation of *talio* in *In Flaccum*, see A. Kasher, "Notes and Illuminations Concerning Philo's Historiographical Character," in *Studies in Historiography: Collected Essays* (edd. J. Salmon, M. Stern and M. Zimmermann, Jerusalem 1987) 34–8 (Hebrew). In his n. 47 (p. 35), Kasher cites numerous examples of this in another work of Hellenistic Jewish historiography, II Maccabees. Or, for another case involving Agrippa I (as did Philo's), why did an angel have to "strike" Peter in order to awaken him (Acts 12:7)? Was the condemned and chained apostle really sleeping so soundly that nothing gentler would do? Or was it not, really, to parallel how an angel is said, at the happy end of the same story, to have "stricken" the persecutor and killed him (vs. 23)? — For the classification of *In Flaccum* along with Hellenistic novels, such as Chariton's, see K. H. Gerschmann, in *Philon von Alexandria: Die Werke*, 7 (Berlin, 1964) 125–6.

7 Willrich (n. 1 above) 417, n. 1. I am pleased to see that Kasher (n. 6 above, 14) now comes close to agreeing: "Adoption of artistic *motifs* from tragedy allowed him (*sc.* Philo) not only to paraphrase (*sic!*) various events whose actual occurrence is doubtful, but also to reveal through them the historiosophic truth which is present within them. This (which? — D.R.S.) is the way, for example, we should relate to the matter of Agrippa I's fainting ..." (my translation — D.R.S.)

of Agrippa's surreptitious visit to Alexandria — Philo's account of Agrippa's collapse is taken at face value.⁸ She treated it as a clinical report, and showed it to two professors of medicine, who were good enough to suggest a diagnosis: it seems, they told her, that Agrippa suffered a stroke caused by cerebral haemorrhage. And, as for the question as to whether Agrippa indeed knew prior to the interview of the plan to erect the statue, she not only believes Philo but also rejects various chronological data from Josephus and Cassius Dio, in order to make it more plausible that Agrippa was still in the dark.⁹

Here too, it seems clear that Willrich was closer to the truth than his British successor.¹⁰ It is next to impossible that Agrippa didn't know in the autumn of 40 C.E. what everyone else knew for months, almost

- 8 See Smallwood (n. 2 above) 17 (on Agrippa's arrival in Alexandria), 289 (on his collapse). But it is a positive sign that, in her most recent treatment of the question, Smallwood simply calls Agrippa's visit to Alexandria "ostentatious" and silently passes over Philo's claim to the contrary: "Philo and Josephus as Historians of the Same Events", *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (edd. L. H. Feldman and G. Hata, Detroit 1987) 118.
- 9 Namely, she rejects Josephus' statement that Petronius took his troops into winter quarters after receiving the order to erect the statue and before the first demonstrations (*Ant.* 18.262), *i.e.*, that the order to erect the statue was given before the onset of winter 39/40, a year before Agrippa's interview with Gaius. She also assumes that Cassius Dio's notice (59.24.1) that Agrippa was together with Gaius in the winter of 39/40 is out of place and, as Josephus' notice, in fact pertains to the winter of 40/41. See her edition of the *Legatio* (n. 2 above) 286–8. Kasher (n. 2 above, 126, n. 386) follows Smallwood with regard to Cassius Dio but not with regard to Josephus, concluding that Gaius had given the order to erect the statue in autumn 39 but Agrippa was out of touch with events until September 40; cf. his chronological table, pp. 17–8. Smallwood, p. 288, specifically rejected the possibility that so long had gone by, and preferred to leave Agrippa at sea, and out of the picture, for only about three months, in the summer of 40; so too in her essay (n. 8 above) 123. However, she admits that even this is "surprisingly slow" for a summer voyage. Cf. below, n. 11.
- 10 It is noteworthy that Box, Smallwood and Kasher all edited or translated Philo; perhaps it is human that those who spend a lot of time with an author will tend to evaluate him positively. For another case, note that A. Schalit wrote terrible things about Josephus before he began to translate him, and began to appreciate and even praise him after translating the *Antiquities*. See D. R. Schwartz, "On Abraham Schalit, Herod, Josephus, the Holocaust, Horst R. Moehring and the Study of Ancient Jewish History", *Jewish History* 2/2 (Fall 1987) 9–28.

a year.¹¹ It is, therefore, also unreasonable that Agrippa fainted over the matter at that time. But should we take umbrage at Philo's presuming upon our gullibility? What do we in fact feel when we read Philo's account of Agrippa's reaction when Gaius informed him of his plan to erect the statue (*Legatio* 266–7, trans. Smallwood)?

Before Gaius had time to add more, Philo's anguish of mind made him change colour in every possible way; in one moment he became flushed, pale, and livid. He was already shivering from head to foot. Trembling and shuddering convulsed every limb and part of his body. His sinews became limp and slack, and he staggered and finally collapsed and would have fallen, had not some of the bystanders caught him ...

Now, it is highly unlikely that this is anything like a clinical report. No one can be flushed and pale and livid all at once. But this is no reason to feel put upon. For my part, at least, I enjoy reading and hearing such passages; they're fun. I'd like to hear it again. I've read it to numerous classes and it doesn't bore me yet. It's just like the Book of Esther which Jews hear and read every year, where, for a similar case to ours, the claim is made that Queen Esther didn't know what all the Jews of Shushan knew, namely, that Haman, with royal approval, has decreed the destruction of the Jews (Esther 3:15 and 4:5). That claim is totally improbable, but makes the story better. So too, Philo's fainting is a great scene, but it is contingent upon his not having known about the plan to erect the statue.

In other words, Philo's histories are frequently quite enjoyably read or heard read, but this enjoyment sometimes results from a willingness to depart from the facts in order to make the story more dramatic. This, apparently, did not bother Philo, because he was out to write enjoyable and didactic historical novels, and would have been very surprised or even amused, I suspect, if someone would have taken him at his word so seriously as to go, for example, to the docks of Alexandria to check the details of his story about Agrippa, or to some emergency room in Rome to check if the

11 Cf. n. 9 above. On the chronology of the affair, see D. R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Jerusalem 1987), 91–2, 209–212 (Hebrew; English version forthcoming, [Tuebingen 1990]). I would agree with Kasher (n. 9 above) and many others that the order was given in the summer or fall of 39, about a year before Agrippa's intervention, but not try to defend Philo's claim about the king's ignorance, any more than his above-mentioned claim about Agrippa's unobtrusiveness in Alexandria or his claim that there was nothing obnoxious about Pilate's shields (*Leg.* 299 — see below, end of n. 12). The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Jewish king had really passed out for two days as he claims. Similarly, apologetic aims frequently interfere with Philo's historiography, as we have argued elsewhere, following in the footsteps of Willrich and some of his German predecessors and colleagues.¹² There is nothing remarkable about this general conclusion about Philo's reliability as an historian, except the fact that it runs counter to most modern studies of the subject, especially the ones which deal with the relative reliability of Josephus and Philo in those several episodes in which their narratives overlap.¹³ So let us now turn to Josephus.

Regarding Josephus' historical works, the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*,

- 12 In addition to Willrich and Wilcken (n. 3 above), see especially H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 6 (Goettingen 1868³) 323–4, n. 2. For a much more recent skeptic regarding Philo's reliability, see P. Bilde, "The Roman Emperor Gaius (Caligula)'s Attempt to Erect his Statue in the Temple of Jerusalem," *Studia Theologica* 32 (1978) 67–93. For the way Philo's apologetic needs skewed his account of an event in the days of Pontius Pilate, along with considerable bibliography regarding those who disbelieved Philo and those who accepted his version, see D. R. Schwartz, "Josephus and Philo on Pontius Pilate," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 3 (1983) 26–45.
- 13 It seems that it is mostly a pair of *a priori* assumptions which led scholars to implicitly trust Philo. First, it was assumed that someone writing within a very few years of the events described must have been truthful, both because he knew the facts first-hand and because any deviation from the truth could easily be discovered and there were plenty of anti-Semites around who would have loved to do just that. So, for example, Box's comment about checking the port records in Alexandria (above); so too Kasher (n. 7 above) 9–10. However, such considerations are beside the point if Philo was writing for Jews, who would have liked the stories and had no reason to quibble about the details; indeed, they would have liked the story better if, now and then, it made their own role better and their enemies' — worse. In fact, moreover, it seems clear from the religious message of Philo's historiographical books that they were intended for a Jewish audience. The other assumption is that philosophers don't lie; so Kasher, *loc. cit.* and in his translation (n. 2 above) 16. However, philosophers are concerned with major truths, and it could well be that the transient details of this or that event might not interest them so much, especially if reworking them somewhat could make the main point clearer. Thus, for example, if Philo firmly held that the Alexandrians were guilty in the riots of summer 38, he may have held it didactically legitimate to play down Agrippa's role, so as to leave that major truth clearer. Or if it was clear to Philo that Flaccus' downfall was divine retribution for his persecution of the Jews, would he necessarily consider it untruthful to so tell the story as to make this tit-for-tat clearer? In any case, questions like these are not to be decided on the basis of prior expectations about Philo, but rather on the basis of an analysis of his narratives.

it seems that not enough attention has been paid to a frequently striking difference in the dramatic quality of these two books in those sections where they cover the same material. Much attention has been given, especially in the nineteenth century, to the question of Josephus' sources, a question which is particularly well studied on the basis of parallel narratives, for one may frequently use both narratives as witnesses to a common source. But in 1920 a book by Richard Laqueur sidetracked the discussion, because it included a lengthy and detailed comparison of *Antiquities* XIV to the parallel sections of *War* I, claiming that the differences reflect not different sources, nor different uses of the same sources, but rather Josephus' own desire to rewrite history in line with the development of his values and ideas during the fifteen or twenty years between the two books. For the most part, Laqueur's thesis was that, in the nineties of the first century, Josephus expressed in the *Antiquities* an anti-Herodian attitude which he did not hold, or did not dare express, when he wrote the *War* in the seventies.¹⁴

Laqueur's book somewhat sidetracked the discussion, as noted, because it made scholars focus on one particular aspect of the comparison of the two works. Generally, moreover, it may be said that Laqueur's theory has not been accepted¹⁵ — but due to its central place in the discussion this rejection seems to have caused a general abandonment of detailed comparison of the two parallel narratives. Thus, for example, in S. J. D. Cohen's detailed survey of the relationship of the various books of *Antiquities* to their parallels in *War*, the section comparing *Antiquities* XIV to *War* I is very short and has no significant conclusions, as Cohen admits, apart from the general similarity of the two narratives.¹⁶ However, it seems that just this sort of detailed comparison will reveal significant results with regard to our theme, namely, the relationship of drama and historical truth in a narrative. To illustrate

14 R. Laqueur, *Der juedische Historiker Flavius Josephus: Ein biographischer Versuch auf neuer quellenkritischer Grundlage* (Giessen 1920) 128–221.

15 See especially R. Helm's review in *Philologische Wochenschrift* 41 (1921), cols. 481–93, 505–516 (esp. 507–13); also Fr. Muenzer, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 24 (1921), cols. 213–6, and O. Michel's Nachwort to the 1970 reprint of Laqueur's volume, 281–3. For the equally complete rejection of the other major thesis of Laqueur's book, regarding the relationship of Josephus' *War* and his *Life*, see also E. Migliario, "Per l'interpretazione dell'autobiografia di Flavio Giuseppe," *Athenaeum* n.s. 59 (1981) 100–101.

16 S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden 1979) 50–51.

this, I will give a few examples from the same narratives that Laqueur studied, which deal with an early part of Herod's career. More particularly, I will focus on the comparison of *War* 1.225–73 with *Antiquities* 14.280–369, a section which takes us from 43 B.C.E. to 40 B.C.E., from the death of Herod's father Antipater to that of his brother Phasaël. In this section, Laqueur admits that he found little of interest for his theme.¹⁷ Let us see if we can do better for ours.

In general, it should be recalled, the narrative in *War* is shorter than that in *Antiquities*, which is to be expected since this part of the former is only part of a summary introduction: the book itself focuses on the rebellion which began in 66 C.E. Therefore, anything extra in the *War* narrative is particularly interesting. And, indeed, we find *inter alia* the following statements in the *War* without parallel in *Antiquities*: *War* 1.226 says Cassius gave Herod power and expectations; §232 notes that Malichus was forced by desperation to conceive great dreams; §238 comments that nothing could avail one of Herod's enemies against his might; §246 mentions the "fury" of Herod's enemies; §252 mentions Herod's own rage; §§261 and 268 refer to Herod's suspicions; and §269 refers to the Parthians' *hybris*. Many other comments of this sort appear, but there is nothing like them in the parallel sections of *Antiquities*, which simply tell what happened. That is, the story in *Antiquities* is the same, but the *War* narrative invested it with much more excitement. These additional comments in the *War* narrative give it life and guide the reader along, as it were.

In other cases, the same content is given in both sources, but the *War*'s language is much more vivid. Thus:

War 1.228 Herod "then celebrated with splendid pomp the obsequies of his father;" *Ant.* 14.284 "he then arranged for the burial of his father."

War 1.230 "Herod, scarce able to restrain his wrath, dissembled in his turn;" *Ant.* 14.287 "But Herod and his friends still thought it best not to unmask his pretence; on the contrary, they, in turn, treated Malichus with friendliness in order to avoid suspicion."

War 1.251 fierce battle; *Ant.* 14.335 battle

17 Laqueur (n. 14 above) 188–93. Moreover, this section includes one of the toughest and most frequently noted objections to Laqueur's thesis: Josephus' eulogy for Herod's father is even more laudatory in *Antiquities* (14.283) than in *War* (1.226).

War 1.260 perjury and perfidy; *Ant.* 14.348 perfidy

War 1.264 killed large numbers; *Ant.* 14.358 was victorious

Moreover, this type of rhetorical difference also works out into factual differences. Thus, for example, in *War* 1.253 we read that Herod, with a small force, killed many of his enemy and routed the others, but in *Antiquities* 14.339 we read only of those he routed, and learn that Phasael assisted Herod. Here, Laqueur's explanation (an anti-Herodian twist in *Antiquities*) works,¹⁸ but we should also note that the account in *Antiquities* is much less dramatic. Or, for a whole batch of examples, one may refer to the very end of the sections we have chosen. According to *War* 1.269–73, among other things, the Parthians captured Hyrcanus and Phasael and sent them to be tortured; Hyrcanus threw himself at Antigonus' feet, whereupon the latter lacerated Hyrcanus' ear with his own teeth; and the Parthians were disappointed at the loss of the most coveted prize, the women they had hoped to capture. In the corresponding section of *Antiquities* (14.363–9), we hear nothing of torture, nothing of anyone throwing himself at anyone's feet, and only indirectly of the women (§365) and nothing of their having been coveted. As for the mutilation of Hyrcanus' ears, it is apparently taken to have been done mundanely, with a knife.

What all this means, is that Josephus, in the *Antiquities*, passed up numerous opportunities to make his narrative livelier and more dramatic. There is, as Cohen noted, only one exception in the long section we studied: *Antiquities* 14.354–8a give a stock tearjerking account of the suffering of Herod and his family, especially the pathetic women and children, during their flight to Massada.¹⁹ However, this is an exception which proves the rule, for it is without parallel in the *War* and, as Laqueur noted, contradicts its own context in the *Antiquities*, which context does parallel the account in *War*.²⁰ In other words, this single dramatic section in the section of *Antiquities* we've been examining was not based upon the common source of *War* and *Antiquities* here, but rather upon one of *Antiquities*' additional sources — which seems to have been more dramatic than the common source was. In

18 And it is strange that he didn't discuss this passage.

19 See Cohen (n. 16 above) 51. As Cohen notes, such scenes are commonplace in tragic historiography, even cited by Polybius (2.56.7) as paradigmatic of this genre.

20 Namely, the context assumes Herod is fighting successfully away from his fleeing family, while this passage has him sharing his family's plight and on the verge of suicide due to his despair. See Laqueur (n. 14 above) 192–3.

those sections in which both books give basically the same information, the narrative in the *Jewish War* here is much more dramatic than that in *Antiquities*.

How may this be explained? Given the basic and all-encompassing similarity between these two parallel narratives, which, all agree, are ultimately or directly dependent upon Nicolaus of Damascus' lost history,²¹ but also given the much more dramatic nature of the *War* account, basically two potential explanations suggest themselves. Either *Antiquities* was written on the basis of *War*, Josephus' own earlier version based upon Nicolaus — in which case we should have to explain why Josephus would tone down his earlier narrative; or else *Antiquities* was written on the basis of Nicolaus. In the latter event, in turn, we should have to adopt one of the following alternatives: either Nicolaus' account was somewhat pedestrian and Josephus spiced it up in *War* but reproduced it more faithfully in *Antiquities*, or else Nicolaus' account was dramatic and Josephus more or less reproduced it in *War* but toned it down in *Antiquities*.

The question, whether Josephus wrote this part of *Antiquities* directly on the basis of Nicolaus or rather on the basis of his own previous narrative in *War* has been frequently debated.²² However, it is fair to say that the relative drama of the two narratives has hardly been drawn into the debate. Introducing it may be useful. For my part, I can see no reason why Josephus would tone down his source, whether it was his own composition or Nicolaus': he likes good dramatic stories, and frequently brings them when his sources provide them. On the other hand, it is easy to imagine Josephus' Greek assistants, who helped him with the *War* narrative, as he acknowledges, adding various dramatic elements to the narrative.²³ So all we have to

21 For reviews of the different opinions, see B. Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley — Los Angeles 1962) 58–64; H. Lindner, *Die Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus im Bellum Judaicum, gleichzeitig ein Beitrag zur Quellenfrage* (Leiden 1972) 3–8.

22 There is, of course, also the intermediate possibility, that he referred back to Nicolaus and to his own previous narrative in *War*; this position was especially urged by H. Druener, *Untersuchungen ueber Josephus* (Marburg 1896) 51–6. For the literature, see our preceding note.

23 On Josephus' assistants for the Greek of *War*, see *Ag. Ap.* 1.50. This is perhaps the place to note, on the other hand, that the theory, especially developed by H. St. J. Thackeray, that Josephus had Greek assistants in various books of *Antiquities* as well — which he does not mention — is today in disrepute. See the reviews of scholarship in L. H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)* (Berlin — New York

suppose, to understand what is going on here, is that in this part of the narrative Josephus' Greek assistants in the *War* spiced up Nicolaus' narrative, whereas in the *Antiquities* Josephus himself, writing without helpers (now after twenty years in the Greek-speaking world), reproduced Nicolaus more or less faithfully in those sections where he used him.²⁴ I might add, in support of this conclusion, the fact that while a seminal article on the *Antiquities* by B. Niese himself, in 1876, portrays Josephus as a mere compiler, twenty years later he retracted and agreed, on the basis of the *War*, that Josephus should in fact be viewed as an author and historian.²⁵

1984) 827–30 and P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, his Works, and their Importance* (Sheffield 1988) 132–4, also T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London 1983) 233–6.

24 Which careful phrasing is meant not to exclude the obvious possibility, and occasionally obvious reality, that Josephus added his own comments to what he found in Nicolaus, or said less on a subject than Nicolaus did, or even corrected him, as he does explicitly in *Ant.* 14.9 and 16.183–7. Two desiderata are, of course, more knowledge regarding Nicolaus' own style in his lost *Histories* and more comparison of Josephus' parallel narratives than we have offered here; for the present, we will only point to some supportive evidence. For the argument that Nicolaus did not tend to write dramatically, except when his sources were such, see D. A. W. Biltcliffe, "P. Ox. No. 2330 and its Importance for the Study of Nicolaus of Damascus," *RhM* n.F. 112 (1969) 85–93. His concluding remark, that the length of Nicolaus' compilation may have prevented him from serious rewriting of his sources, may hold for Josephus' *Antiquities* as well. (But cf. *APh* 47 [1976] 101, nr. 1256, for an article which may relativize some of Biltcliffe's evidence [*non vidi*]). As for additional cases of *Antiquities* being more pedestrian than the *War*, note H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York 1929) 65–6: "In the *War* the poignant narrative of the domestic dissensions [in Herod's court] leading up to the successive murders [*War* 1.431ff.] is told with all the pathos and the technical terminology of a Greek drama ... [examples] ... In the *Antiquities* this tragic element is wanting ... The main source for both accounts ... is undoubtedly the History of Nicolas of Damascus ..." Wacholder (n. 21 above, 124, n. 54) points to "BJ, I, 197–198 = AJ, XIV, 141–142" as evidence for Nicolaus' dramatic style, but the scene in question — Antipater stripping off his clothes to display his wounds — is not to be found in the account in *Antiquities*. And the speech which follows in *Antiquities*, as Marcus notes in the Loeb edition *ad locum* (p. 523, n. c) is much less dramatic than the one in the *War*. (Wacholder did not cite the parallel in *Ant.* 15.187 for his other example of such dramatization, *War* 1.387 — and rightly so.)

25 See B. Niese, "Der juedische Historiker Flavius Josephus," *HZ* 76 (1896), esp. 218–220, where he revises the picture he had previously drawn in "Bemerkungen ueber die Urkunden bei Josephus Archaeol. B. XIII. XIV. XVI.," *Hermes* 11 (1876) 466–8.

This conclusion, which makes Josephus' assistants largely responsible for dramatic departures from their sources and Josephus himself a more faithful compiler when his sources are publishable as is,²⁶ dovetails nicely with a few other points. First of all, the *Jewish War* is generally recognized to have been one of the finest works of Hellenistic historiography, from an artistic and stylistic point of view²⁷ — and as one who has tried to learn a few languages apart from his native one, I suspect very much that Josephus was not capable of producing such a work himself. In other words, it makes sense to attribute much of the *War's* style to Josephus' assistants. Already Niese emphasized that Josephus, a "Neuling", must have owed quite a bit of *War's* beauty to his assistants.²⁸ Secondly, Josephus frequently states, in the *Antiquities*, his commitment not to add or to subtract to that which he found in his sources. The fact that he nevertheless did so, at times, need not controvert this basic position.²⁹ Similarly, in the third place, he even tells us at times that he is not committing himself to the truth of what he is reporting;³⁰ his job, as he says a

- 26 I insert this proviso to account for the well-known fact that Josephus in fact did much serious rewriting and editing with the biblical narrative and that part of his history based upon I Maccabees. See, for example, H. W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula, Montana 1976). Among recent scholars, L. H. Feldman has devoted much work to Hellenizations in Josephus' rendition of biblical history. See, for example, his "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The 'Aqedah'", *JQR* 75 (1984/85) 212–52, along with the references in his notes 12, 32, 33, 36, 50, 67, 88. On Josephus' rewriting of I Maccabees, for Hellenizing and other purposes, see I. Gafni, "On the Use of I Maccabees by Josephus", *Zion* 45 (1979/80) 81–95 (Hebrew; English version in L. H. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, the Bible, and History* [Detroit 1989] 116–131). These Hebraic books could not simply be translated and presented to the Greek readers; cf. A. Momigliano's comments on the way the Septuagint repelled Greeks, and the consequent need for a new, Hellenistic, retelling of biblical history: *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge 1975) 92–3.
- 27 See, for example, Thackeray (n. 24 above) 104; M. Stern, "Josephus' *Jewish War* and the Parallel Sources," *Judaea and Rome: The Jewish Revolts* (ed. U. Rappaport; Jerusalem 1982/83) 94–5 (Hebrew).
- 28 Niese (n. 25 above, — 1896) 207–9. For similar comments, see Thackeray (n. 24 above) 104–5.
- 29 For Josephus' claim, see, *inter alia*, *Ant.* 1.5, 17; 4.196–7; 10.218; 14.1; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 1.42. On this theme and its background, see W. C. van Unnik, *Flavius Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg 1978) 26–40; also D. Goldenberg, "Josephus Flavius or Joseph ben Mattithiah," *JQR* 70 (1979/80) 178–181.
- 30 *Ant.* 1.108; 2.348; 3.81, etc. On this type of disclaimer and its parallels see Thackeray (n. 27 above) 56–8, also Attridge (n. 26 above) 44, n. 1.

few times, is simply to collect, properly organize, and present for the Greek reader the materials which deal with the history of the Jews (*Ant.* 14.1–3). Indeed, he occasionally refers to his *Antiquities* as if it were nothing but a translation, like the Septuagint (*Ant.* 1.5, 9–13; *Ag. Ap.* 1.54; cf. *Ant.* 20.261).

This approach to the *Antiquities* may also contribute to solving a problem which has bothered me for a long time. Josephus frequently reproduces sources with which he does not agree. Thus, for some examples, Josephus, a Pharisee, criticizes the Pharisees bitterly; Josephus, a proud descendant of the Hasmoneans, applauds Pompey for freeing Syrian cities from the rule of Jews, referred to in the third person, and then goes on, in the first person, to mourn the very same thing; Josephus, a proud priest and admirer of Agrippa II, tells terrible stories about corrupt priests and an impious Agrippa II; etc.³¹ Does this mean he was sloppy and inattentive, as many have assumed?³² Or does this mean he was a conscientious compiler? Obviously, as all of us, Josephus was sometimes sloppy and inattentive. But, in light of what we have seen about his style when he is doing the writing himself, in the *Antiquities*, it now seems to me that his basic position was that he should not change his sources, whether with regard to point of view or style.³³ But this means that Josephus' narrative in *Antiquities* may basically be considered to be a good reflection of his sources; it is just as reliable as they were, providing that Josephus has not confused the matter by improperly locating and juxtaposing them, as sometimes happens. And Josephus' narrative, in *Antiquities*, may also be just as dramatic or undramatic as his sources were. Since Josephus used a variety of sources, this precludes generalizing regarding the truth of

31 On such passages as *Ant.* 13.288 and 17.41–42, see D. R. Schwartz, "Josephus and Nicolaus on the Pharisees", *JSJ* 14 (1983) 157–171; on *Ant.* 14.74–8 (re Pompey) see *ibid.*, 159–160; and on such passages as *Ant.* 20.141–7, 179–81, 189–96, 211–4 (contrast 19.335–7!) and 216–8, see *idem*, "KATA TOYTON TON KAIPON: Josephus' Source on Agrippa II," *JQR* 72 (1981/82) 241–68. Many similar cases could be cited.

32 Thus, for example, J. Wellhausen had the following to say about one of the passages mentioned in the preceding note: "Josephus folgt *Ant.* 17, 41 ss. einer Quelle, die seiner eigenen Anschauung voellig widerspricht; es sind ihm auf diese Weise oeffter Kukkuks-eier in sein Nest geraten" (*Israelitische und juedische Geschichte* [Berlin, 1914⁷] 323, n. 1). Josephus' "sloppiness" is one of the favorite themes of Cohen's dissertation (n. 16 above).

33 On p. 170 of the first article mentioned in n. 31, above, I left open the question as to whether it was Josephus' conscience or his carelessness that led him to copy sources with which he disagreed, but I tended to the latter. The present study redresses the balance.

his narrative — and that is why the title of this paper refers to authenticity, not to truth. It appears, for example, to mention just one phenomenon connected with Josephus' material which parallels Philo's, that the appearance of a few dramatic — Jones and Smallwood would say “folkloristic” elements — in one part of Josephus' narrative need not imply that all of his narrative is of that nature, or that this is Josephus' own approach to historiography. In fact, as I have argued in my book on Agrippa, it seems likely that some of Josephus' liveliest material comes from the lost end of Philo's own *Legatio*.³⁴

One final point: *Why* would Josephus make such a compilation of material? Why would he collect such a lot of material and then abstain from working it into an organic work of his own? Indeed, the *Antiquities* very frequently reads as if its a collection of notes which Josephus simply arranged according to a chronological outline and published seriatim.³⁵ It may be that Josephus planned to do more, and decided to publish the work in this form when he found himself getting old or otherwise busy. But it could also be that he considered the book simply something of a dossier of materials in support of his claim concerning the antiquity of the Jews. The way he refers to *Antiquities* at the outset of his shorter and polemic work dedicated to proving the antiquity of the Jews, his *Against Apion*, points directly in this direction.³⁶

- 34 See Schwartz (n. 11 above) 22–32, 45–6. For Josephus' narrative containing “fairytale” elements, see Smallwood (n. 8 above) 120; cf. *eadem* (n. 2 above) 287 for an offhand rejection of Josephus' “picturesque” report of Gaius' order to Petronius and the latter's escape due to the emperor's death. On her concomitant characterization of Philo's narrative as “prosaic” (and hence to be preferred), cf. Bilde (n. 12 above) 84, n. 34.
- 35 For an outline of Josephus' organization of the Persian period according to the terms of high priests, see pp. 252–4 of the second article cited in n. 31 above. And for an analysis and outline of *Ant.* 18–20 showing how Josephus' organized and interfiled his material according to the successive terms of the Roman governors of Judaea (and Agrippa I), see D. R. Schwartz, “Pontius Pilate's Appointment to Office and the Chronology of Josephus' *Antiquities*, Books 18–20”, *Zion* 48 (1982/83), esp. 332–8 (Hebrew; English version forthcoming in *idem*, *Studies on the Jewish Background of Christianity* [Tuebingen 1991 (?)]).
- 36 See *Ag. Ap.* 1.1. It has been claimed that Josephus' account of his projected words, at the end of *Ant.* 20, does not hint at *Against Apion*, so this must have been conceived later, due to some new threatening circumstance (Domitianic persecution?); see L. Troiani, *Commento storico al “Contro Apione” di Giuseppe* (Pisa 1977) 27. However, Josephus clearly explains at the outset of *Against Apion* that it was intended to achieve the *Antiquities'* purpose.

In other words, Josephus published, in the mid-nineties of the first century, a carefully composed booklet dedicated to proving the antiquity of the Jews, and also another, much longer work. The latter, the *Antiquities*, is something like a reader, from his notes, backing up that claim to antiquity; while it gives special attention to presenting the biblical narrative in Hellenistic fashion, the materials he found ready to go he seems to have usually let go as is. This book is frequently boring, and even more frequently jumps around without any of the unities which make drama interesting, not to mention the contradictions between one section and the next. But, on the other hand, for this very reason we can be fairly confident that when we read the *Antiquities* we have before us remnants of many other pieces of lost sources. When we read Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio*, we read Philo alone.³⁷

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37 For a proof (as if one were needed) that Agrippa's letter to Gaius (*Leg.* 276–329), the only serious document “quoted” in Philo's two works, was in fact created by him, see Schwartz (n. 11 above) 194–5, 212–4.