# Clarifying the Scope of Pre-5th Century C.E. Christian Interpolation in Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaica* (c. 94 C.E.).

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Thesis submitted for the degree *Doctor Philosophiae* in Greek
at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Promoter: Prof PJ Jordaan

May 2015

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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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# Clarifying the Scope of Pre-5th Century C.E. Christian Interpolation in Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaica* (c. 94 C.E.).

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## Abstract

This research project concerns itself with the three disputed passages of Christian import as preserved in extant manuscripts of the *AJ* (Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία a.k.a. *Antiquitates Judaicae*), viz.: *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 (i.e. the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum*), *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 -119 (i.e. the references to John the Baptist) and *AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 200 - 203 (i.e. the references to James the brother of Jesus). Within the context of contemporary historicity research outcomes, and employing an interpretist/constructivist episteme, a series of critical analyses was undertaken aimed at verifying to what degree the three passages in question may be deemed to be in any way authentic and/or historically reliable. The result of the investigation proves beyond reasonable doubt that no reliable extra-biblical/scriptural accounts exist to support the historical existence of, inter alia, Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just or John the Baptist. Certainly, no such accounts ever appeared in Josephus' original texts. Furthermore, and most importantly, the three passages are confirmed to be total forgeries initiated in the first four centuries of the Common Era most likely by Origen and Eusebius respectively.

### Key Words

Josephus Flavius, *Antiquitates Judaica*, Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία, interpolation, Origen, Eusebius, historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just, John the Baptist

## Acknowledgements

It would do well to initiate this thesis with a declaration of sincere humility and an all-encompassing apology for any possible oversight as regards accountable academic rigour.

In this context, nothing that is contained in the following pages would have been even remotely possible without the enormous and tireless contributions made by the huge number of variously talented individuals over many centuries, some of whom will never be correctly acknowledged for their important contributions to this important debate. In this context, this study, which at best marks a small stage in an ever-continuing process of deliberation and review, belongs to them all.

With reference to McGarry (1955: 167) one may be reminded of the celebrated confession of *Bernardus Carnotensis* better known as Bernard of Chartres (active 1115 – 1124 C.E.) who was quoted, as far back as 1159, by *Johannes Parvus* a.k.a. John of Salisbury or John the Little (c. 1120 – 1180 C.E.):

> *Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos, gigantium humeris insidentes, ut possimus plura eis et remotiora videre, non utique proprii visus acumine, aut eminentia corporis, sed quia in altum subvenimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantea.*

> Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size.

The number of individuals who played a vital role in this study are too numerous to mention without offending someone who might be inadvertently overlooked.

Thus, with great fear of oversight, I would like to draw attention to but a select few of the many, who each in their own way, contributed to the completion of this research project and have earned my most grateful appreciation:

My sincerest thanks go to my promoter, mentor and most excellent and erudite of sounding boards, Prof. Dr Pierre Johan Jordaan. In addition, I need to acknowledge the collective wisdom and insights of my friends and colleagues within the Faculty of Theology (Potchefstroom Campus) of the NWU (North-West University), including: Prof. Dr Marianne Dircksen, Dr Johan Steenkamp, Dr Jacobus de Bruyn and Dr At Lamprecht.

I am also very appreciative of Dr Tom Larney (former Director of the NWU's Ferdinand Postma Library) who helped me to enlarge and enrich the Faculty of Theology's library collection with a substantial range of more contemporary Christian scholarship. Last but not least, I am most indebted to my wife, Iris Marié Allen for her moral support, encouragement and phenomenal editorial skills.

## Declaration

I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 29 September 2014

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**Figure 1**

Marble portrait bust of a young Roman man often idealistically claimed to be the likeness of *Josephus Flavius*, First Century C.E. *Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, Copenhagen, Denmark.

# ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations will be employed for all cited Biblical/Scriptural and Classical Works. For the purposes of consistency and standardisation, all abbreviations of works and authors will follow, as closely as possible, a system originally proposed by Liddell and Scott[1].

| **Πλάτων a.k.a. Plato (c. 425 – c. 347 B.C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *R.* | *Respublica* (Πολιτεία) |
| *Lg*. | *Leges* (Νόμοι) |

| **Φίλων a.k.a. *Philo Judaeus* a.k.a. Philo of Alexandria a.k.a. Philo (c. 20 B.C.E. – c. 50 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *DVM* | *De Vita Mosis* |
| *DLG* | *De Legatione Ad Gaium* |

| ***Publius Cornelius Tacitus* a.k.a. Tacitus (c.55 - 117 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *An.* | *Annales* |

| ***Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus* a.k.a. Pliny the Younger a.k.a. Pliny (c. 62 - c.113 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Pl.Ep.* | *Epistulae* |
| *HN* | *Historia Naturalis* |

| ***Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus* a.k.a. Suetonius (c.69 - 140 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *DVC* | *De Vita Caesarum* |

[1] Cf. Liddell and Scott. 1996. *Greek-English Lexicon*.

| **Ἰουστίνου a.k.a. *Iustinus Philosophus* a.k.a. Justin Martyr (c. 100 – 163/167 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *TID* | *Tryphone Iudeo Dialogus* (Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαῖον Διάλογος) |

| ***Lucianus Samosatensis* a.k.a. Lucian of Samosata (c. 125 – after 180 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *DMP* | *De Morte Peregrini* (Περὶ τῆς Περεγρίνου Τελευτῆς) |

| **Ἅγιος Ἡγήσιππος a.k.a. Saint Hegesippus (c.110 - 180 C.E.)[2]** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Hypo.* | *Hypomnemata* (Ὑπομνήματα) |

| **חסוי וב והיתמ a.k.a. Ιώσηπος a.k.a. *Flavius Josephus a.k.a.* Josephus (37 – c. 100 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *AJ* | *Antiquitates Judaicae* (Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία) |
| *TF* | *Testimonium Flavianum* (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 - 64) |
| *JP* | *James* (*The Just*) *Passage* (*AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 200 - 203) |
| *BP* | (*John the*) *Baptist Passage* (*AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 -119) |
| *BJ* | *Bellum Judaicum* (Φλαυίου Ἰωσήπου ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους βιβλία) |
| *Ap.* | *Contra Apionem* (Φλαΐου Ἰωσήπου περὶ ἀρχαιότητος Ἰουδαίων λόγος α ανδ Φλαΐου Ἰωσήπου περὶ ἀρχαιότητος ἀντιρρητικὸς λόγος β) |
| *Vit.* | *Vita* (Ἰωσήπου βίος ) |

| **Εἰρηναῖος a.k.a. *Irenaeus* a.k.a. Irenaeus (fl. 180 – c. 202 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *CH* | *Contra Haereses* (Κατὰ αἱρέσεων) |
| *AG* | *Anthologia Graeca* |

[2] There is some evidence that Hegesippus is not the actual name of the author of the now lost *Hypomnemata* (cf. Section 4.2.1). According to Kirby (2013), he may be associated with, Josephus in Alexandria and then corrupted to the name of Hegesippus in Caesarea. Regardless, his writings are only known to us through, inter alia, *Eusebius Pamphili*. Cf. Kirby. 2013. *Chasing Hegesippus* [Online]. Available: http://peterkirby.com/chasing-hegesippus.html [28 July 2014].

| **Κέλσος a.k.a. Celsus the Platonist a.k.a. Celsus (2nd century C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *TW* | *True Word* (Λόγος Ἀληθής) |

| **Κλήμης ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεύς a.k.a. Titus Flavius Clemens a.k.a. Clement (c. 150 – c. 215 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Strom.* | *Stromata* (Στρώματα) |

| ***Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus* a.k.a. Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 225 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Apol.* | *Apologeticus* |
| *DPH* | *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* |

| **(*Claudius* or *Lucius*) *Cassius Dio Cocceianus* a.k.a. Dio (155 – 235 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *HR* | *Historia Romana* |

| **Ὠριγένης Ἀδαμάντιος a.k.a. *Origenes Adamantius* a.k.a. Origen (184/185 – 253/254 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Cels.* | *Contra Celsum* |

| ***Gaius Valerius Galerius Maximinus Daia Augustus* a.k.a. Maximinus II (270 - 313 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *Mem.* | *Memoranda* |

| ***Eusebius Pamphili* a.k.a. Eusebius of Caesarea a.k.a. Eusebius (c. 263 – c. 339 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *AH* | *Adversus Hieroclem* |
| *DE* | *Demonstratio Evangelica* |
| *HE* | *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας) |
| *PE* | *Praeparatio Evangelica* (Εὐαγγελικὴ Προπαρασκευή) |
| *Th.* | *Theophania* |
| *VC* | *Vita Constantini* |

| **Εὐσέβιος Σωφρόνιος Ἱερώνυμος a.k.a. *Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus* a.k.a. Jerome (c. 347 – 420 C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *DCP* | *Dialogus Contra Pelagianos* |
| *DVI* | *De Viris Illustribus* |
| *Jer.Ep.* | *Epistulae* (Various letters from *Jer.Ep.* I to *Jer.Ep.* CL.) |

| ***Paulus Orosius* a.k.a. Orosius (Fifth Century C.E.)** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| *HAP* | *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII* |

| **Biblical/Scriptural Works** | |
|---|---|
| Abbreviation | Title of Work |
| LXX | *Vetus Testamentum Graece Redditum* |
| MT | Masoretic Text (Hebrew Bible) |
| *Is.* | *Isaiah* |
| 1 *Ki.* | 1 *Kings* |
| *Mi.* | *Malachi* |
| *NT* | *Novum Testamentum* |
| *Ev.Jo.* | Gospel according to John |
| *Ev.Luc.* | Gospel according to Luke |
| *Ev.Marc.* | Gospel according to Mark |
| *Ev.Matt.* | Gospel according to Matthew |
| *Act.Ap.* | Acts of the Apostles |
| 1 *Ep.Cor.* | 1st Epistle to the Corinthians |
| *Ep.Gal.* | Epistle to the Galatians |
| *Ep.Jac.* | Epistle of James |
| *Ep.Philem.* | Epistle to Philemon |
| *Ev.Thom.* | Gospel according to Thomas |
| *JSB* | *The Jewish Study Bible*. 2004. Eds Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, New York: Oxford University Press. |
| *NTOG* | *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. 1881. Eds Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, New York: Harper and Brothers, Franklin Square. |
| *EJ* | *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 1982. Ed. Fern Seckbach. 17 Volumes. Jerusalem: Keterpress. |

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Problem

It is often argued (cf. Meier, 1991: 68; C.E. Price, 2008: 21; and Doherty, 2009: 533), that the most important, independent, extra-biblical /scriptural references to a possible flesh-and-blood Jesus (of Nazareth) and certain of his avowed contemporaries (i.e. James the Just and John the Baptiser/Baptist), are found solely in the writings of *Yosef ben Matityahu* a.k.a. *Josephus Flavius,* better known as Josephus.[3] Specifically, within his *AJ* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), ostensibly written in c. 94 C.E., are to be found three disputed passages, viz.:

1. *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 – 64 (better known as the *TF* [*Testimonium Flavianum*]);
2. *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 -119 (which this thesis will refer to as the *BP* [*John the Baptist Passage*]); and
3. *AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 200 – 203 (which this thesis will refer to as the *JP* [*James the Just Passage*]).

Although a few, mostly non-Christian, and very often highly sceptical scholars have questioned the legitimacy of the *TF*, *BP* and *JP* respectively, by and large, contemporary, predominantly Christocentric, scholarship (cf. Charlesworth, 1988: 93 - 4; Meier, 1991: 63; Fredriksen, 2000: 249; and C.E. Price, 2008: 22), confirm these passages as having some degree of authenticity. In this context, they tend to view these three episodes as either being completely genuine or at worst, original Josephan creations with some degree of amendment or embellishment by well-meaning, pious Christian scribes. Furthermore, based on this assumption, these often more conservative scholars are seemingly content to accept that these three items provide, inter alia, historicity of Jesus researchers with a dependable nucleus of historical

[3] Although *Publius* (or *Gaius*) *Cornelius Tacitus* possibly referred to Christians living at the time of *Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* in his *Annales* (c. 116 C.E.), i.e. *An.* XV, 44, he is at best repeating hearsay which cannot be employed as convincing evidence for an extra-biblical reference to an historical Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, realistically speaking, the account, if genuine, only refers to followers or adherents of the then new religion known today as Christianity. In this regard, no-one seriously doubts that the religious cult(s) eventually known as Christianity existed by the second century C.E. This and similar issues are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Two.

material. In short, the information that they contain corroborates their shared worldview apropos an historical Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just and John the Baptist.

This knowledge also satisfies the principle tenets of their religious belief. Additionally, many of the better arguments in support of total interpolation (i.e. complete premeditated and dishonest forgery), because they are deemed to be largely anti-Christian in nature, are generally rejected by scholars of the Christian faith. Here, the tendency seems to be an almost automatic dismissal, without having undertaken an adequate analysis of the full significance of a particular thesis. In short, all too often, their seemingly perfunctory rebuttal gives the distinct impression that their conclusions are based on unwavering devotion rather than on any degree of rigorous understanding of the issue(s) under discussion. Lastly, the tendency to defer to the majority view, whether it be sceptical or more conservative,[4] is also often seen to be justification for accepting a particular (possibly more popular), outlook rather than the specific probity and merit of an exacting argument.

According to the renowned Josephus scholar Feldman (in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1992: 990 -991) the authenticity of the *TF* passage "has been almost universally acknowledged" by scholars. Feldman also confirms that from the latter half of the twentieth century onwards, the vast majority of conservative, Christian scholars do not doubt the partial authenticity of these three passages - especially the *TF*. Indeed, between 1937 and 1980, of the 52 scholars who reviewed this topic, 39 believed that portions of the *TF* were authentic.

This is supported by Kirby (2014a) whose own review of the literature (in a scholarly online article discussing the *TF* in depth), reveals that the trend in modern scholarship has moved even more dramatically towards partial authenticity:

> In my own reading of thirteen books since 1980 that touch upon the passage, ten out of thirteen argue the Testimonium to be partly genuine, while the other three maintain it to be entirely spurious. Coincidentally, the same three books also argue that Jesus did not exist.

Kirby (2014a) goes on to state:

[4] More sceptical scholars regularly accuse the more conservative researchers like Kirby of being victims of a so-called “bandwagon” effect. Cf. Doherty, 2009. *Jesus Neither God Nor Man*: 534 and Doherty, 2008. *Challenging the Verdict*: 49.

> Though my own studies have revealed a similar trend (about 15 to 1 for partial authenticity, with the exception being a Jesus Mythologist), I do not believe that it is a coincidence that it is Jesus Mythologists who are carrying the water against the partial authenticity theory. **Even the partial validity of this one passage is enough to sink their entire argument**.
>
> Notably, the consensus for partial authenticity is held by scholars from diverse perspectives. Liberal commentators such as Robert Funk, J. Dominic Crossan, and A.N. Wilson, accept a substantial part of the *TF* as originally Josephan. So do Jewish scholars, such as Geza Vermes, Louis H. Feldman, and Paul Winter and secular scholars such as E.P. Sanders and Paula Fredrikson. Even Jeff Lowder, co-founder of the Secular Web, recognizes the merits of the partial authenticity theory. [My emphasis].

The problem here is, that apart from the fact that most serious scholars who refute the authenticity of these three passages tend to be either non-Christian or secular, by far the majority of the researchers who tend to canonise these texts are more liable to be conservative Christian scholars. The irony is that if these texts are really forgeries, they were most likely interpolated and/or amended as a result of "pious fraud" by (an) early pioneer(s) of the then evolving Christian tradition (c. first to fourth century C.E.) as a direct consequence of the then glaring lack (real or perceived) of independent, extra-biblical/scriptural support for the existence of an historical Jesus.

Based on the available literature, it would seem that (more normally), the typical liberal and sceptical scholars will initiate matters by attempting to refute one or more of the passages under review and then, purely as a reaction, the more conservative ones will attempt to counter the claim.

Again, because the more conservative scholars also have a vested interest in not having doubt cast on the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, they typically require the burden of proof to be placed on the side of the more sceptical scholars. The counterclaim is that the burden of proof is in fact being placed on the wrong side.[5]

---

[5]Zindler explains his position in a far more amusing manner:

> [I]t must be realized that the burden of proof does not rest upon the skeptic in this matter. As always is the case, the burden of proof weighs upon those who assert that some thing or some process exists. If someone claims that he never has to shave because every morning before he can get to the bathroom he is assaulted by a six-foot rabbit with extremely sharp teeth who trims his whiskers better than a razor - if someone makes such a claim, no skeptic need worry about constructing a disproof. Unless evidence for the claim is produced, the skeptic can treat the claim

Contemporary debate tends to follow this pattern and the following selected examples of argumentation as supplied by, inter alia, Doherty, Dunn, Ehrman, Charlesworth, Feldman, Fredriksen, Funk, Holding, Leidner, Kirby, Meier, Mason, Price (C.E.), Price (R.M.), Vermes, Wells, Zeitlin and Zindler etc. serve merely to highlight the types of rationale and logic employed by scholars engaged in this apparently endless dispute.

The present situation clearly seems to reflect the issue that scholars are more concerned with preserving their constructed realities than they are with dealing dispassionately with the known historical facts.[6] One indication of this is that the debate regarding interpolation and the degree of possible intercalation/redaction, has not been resolved even after nearly six hundred years of seemingly futile argument.

This thesis will make an attempt to finalise this dispute.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

To what degree may the three passages of Christian import which appear in Josephus' Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία a.k.a. *Antiquitates Judaicae* be deemed to be authentic and/or historically reliable?

---

as false. This is nothing more than sane, every-day practice.

Cf. Zindler. 1998. Did Jesus Exist?: 2.

[6] An example of how a constructed worldview affects an argument is well illustrated in a statement made by the conservative Christian scholar, Wright:

> …I have taken it for granted that Jesus of Nazareth existed. Some writers feel a need to justify this assumption at length against people who try from time to time to deny it. It would be easier, frankly, to believe that Tiberius Caesar, Jesus' contemporary, was a figment of the imagination than to believe that there never was such a person as Jesus.

Cf. Wright. 1996. *Jesus and the Victory of God, Vol II*: xvi.

## 1.3 Statement of the Sub-Problems

### 1.3.1 Statement of the First Sub-Problem

Apart from the possibilities inherent in the writings of Josephus, are there in fact any credible, extra-biblical/scriptural references to an historical Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

### 1.3.2 Statement of the Second Sub-Problem

How indebted are contemporary, leading biblical scholars (especially within the context of the interpolation debate), to their preferred worldview when it comes to engaging in supposedly impartial, constructive and meaningful academic discourse? In short, outside of their constructed worldview, are their conclusions in any way, reliable or trustworthy?

### 1.3.3 Statement of the Third Sub-Problem

Is it in any way possible that Josephus (based on an in-depth analysis of his own worldview and historical context), would have known and/or written about Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

### 1.3.4 Statement of the Fourth Sub-Problem

Is there any reliable, hard evidence that specifically ante-Nicean Christian writers in general and/or independently would have needed to invent extra-biblical references to Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

### 1.3.5 Statement of the Fifth Sub-Problem

Is it possible to determine the identity of the interpolators should this conclusion become evident? (cf. 1.3.4).

## 1.4 Definition of Terms

For the sake of greater clarity, certain terms employed in this study need to be elucidated as regards their import and interpretation within a stated context. In most cases these are employed in a more regular way and do not necessarily deviate substantially from more common use. However in certain situations a specific term may well include more nuanced significance.

### 1.4.1 Conservative Scholars

It is certainly not the intention here to lump together all Christian-based scholars into one clique identified by a singular and monolithic point of view. Rather, because, one of the central issues under critical review, is the influence of a scholar's worldview on the outcome of supposed objective reasoning it is sometimes necessary to use a collective noun when referring to those scholars who tend to walk a tightrope between faithful adherence to their personal religious convictions and intimate experiences and their academic training as dispassionate investigators.

Thus, the objective of the term "conservative scholar" is to highlight that the individual's constructed worldview not only overtly colours his/her perceptions but in fact has a deciding vote when determining the very outcome of a particular argument. Wells (1988b: 20 - 21) has perhaps a more negative understanding of this term:

> Conservative apologists still do the same . . . There is more parade of erudition and open-mindedness. But the conclusions always turn out to be in accordance with desire, in harmony with what is regarded as essential doctrine.

Thus for the purposes of this study, scholars, who as Wells intimates, tend to wear their religious convictions on their sleeve, are grouped together as "conservative". In this context, most conservative researchers would also subscribe to a confession of faith whereas a liberal scholar would most definitely not. Although aspects of fundamentalism are certainly factors here, many, if not all, of the leading Christian-based scholars who are featured in this study still claim to be open–minded and purportedly champion rational thought.

### 1.4.2 Extra-Biblical/Scriptural Sources

This term will refer to any secular primary source written between c. 1 - 300 C.E. which refers in any way to Jesus of Nazareth and/or his claimed associates. Excluded here are the books of the *NT* (*Novum Testamentum*) and all other Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha including, inter alia, proto-gnostic or gnostic gospels, Jewish-Christian gospels, infancy gospels, fragmentary or partially preserved non-canonical gospels including reconstructed gospels. For the sake of convenience this term may also include the *Talmud Bavli*, *Talmud Yerushalmi, Tosefta* and any other relevant rabbinical material.

### 1.4.3 Interpolation

In normal parlance, this term refers to the modification or distortion of a text by the introduction of additional or extraneous material. These often scribal intercalations are recognised as textual inaccuracies which can occur during the routine process of copying a manuscript by hand. It is generally accepted that the older a manuscript (and which normally existed before the advent of modern reproduction technologies), the more likely it is that textual discrepancies might occur inadvertently.

The cause of these intercalations is well known. For example, copyists, on noticing what they believed to be an error or omission from a previous period, often wrote amendments and/or missing text in the margins. As marginal inscriptions occur in almost all handwritten manuscripts, it was on occasion difficult for a subsequent copyist to ascertain with clarity which marginal inscription was a record of, inter alia, a prior omission, a note of clarity or even a personal comment left behind by a previous reader.

Their personal constructed worldviews apart, more punctilious scribes might well transcribe everything that was observed in the margins of a manuscript and interpolate this into the main text of the new copy.

These types of interpolation are well recognised but, in this study, the term will primarily apply to pre-mediated fraud. In this regard, innocent scribal errors (other than those caused by unconsciously/subconsciously projecting one's personal world-view), will be

referred to as such.

Thus, interpolation (apart from where the term is employed in a specific way by other authors), will refer to the deliberate addition of textual material by a scribe. Here interpolation includes the act of not only inserting new text, but also removing existing text, and/or amending surviving text deliberately to provide the unsuspecting reader with a new meaning and interpretation other than that which was intended by the original author.

For these reasons, the term “interpolation” is employed in this study as a generic label to indicate fraudulent and deliberate intercalation and redaction of an existing text, regardless of whether the scribe believed he was being directed by higher forces or not. Where the amendment was made by sincere oversight on the part of a particular scribe, this will be emphasised by the context of the discussion.

### 1.4.4 Interpretist/Constructivist Episteme

According to Cohen and Manion (1994: 36), an interpretist/constructivist approach to research has the intention of understanding the world of human experience better because it accepts that reality is as Mertens (2005: 12) confirms: “socially constructed". Here it is assumed that the constructed worldviews of all role-players reviewed in this research project (including that of the researcher), will impact on the research findings.

This approach also allows the researcher to make use of, where relevant and applicable, a wider range of methods which, when triangulated, may better assist in establishing greater validity of interpretation. According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006):

> The constructivist researcher is most likely to rely on qualitative data collection methods and analysis or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods). Quantitative data may be utilised in a way, which supports or expands upon qualitative data and effectively deepens the description.

It is also the contention of the researcher that the greatest stumbling block to contemporary Josephus scholars reaching consensus on the interpolation debate is almost totally a result of the dominant worldviews of the researchers involved. An

interpretist/constructivist approach, fully focussed on this issue of social constructs, will better assist in highlighting this problem and hopefully make it possible to establish a more plausible context and, as far as is possible, shared worldview, within which rational deduction may take place.

### 1.4.5 Jesus (of Nazareth)

Due to the reality that numerous individuals who lived in, inter alia, Galilee, Judea and Samaria (i.e. modern Israel) in the Tannaitic period[7], were at times known by the translated name of "Jesus" - a distinction is (on occasion), needed to identify the specific Jesus of the canonised gospels. In this regard, purely for the purposes of greater clarity, the title "of Nazareth" will be employed if there is any possibility of confusion. It should also be pointed out that the employment of the accolade "of Nazareth" in no way implies that this title is accurate or that any agreement exists as to the correct etymology of this now popular and often misused term. In this regard "of Nazareth" is merely employed as a convenience for better identification of a particular individual within the current work.

### 1.4.6 Liberal Scholars

Scholars, who are included for convenience under this epitaph, even if adhering to a particular worldview, are normally prepared to alter or modify their religious views or historical understanding when presented with hard evidence. Here, they are not subservient to confessions of faith.

### 1.4.7 Sceptical Scholars

This term is more normally employed for those scholars who are overtly anti-fundamentalist, anti-organised religion (sometimes even atheistic in outlook). Their constructed world-view, equally favours their approach although, by default, due to the fact that they have no personal attachment to the topic of their discussion they are more likely to be supremely critical and immediately accepting of any outcome that is backed by hard evidence. Many of these researchers seem to accept the import of

[7] Also known as the Mishnaic period (i.e. c. 10 – c. 220 C.E.).

embracing a provisional state of understanding and vehemently eschew any form of unsubstantiated dogma.

### 1.4.8 Worldview

For the purpose of this investigation, the insights of, inter alia, Koltko-Rivera (2000: 2) are favoured. Thus a "worldview" should be seen as a way of "describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what **ought to be**." [My emphasis]. It would also be fair to state that a worldview is intimately linked to an individual's ideology. The following statement, adapted by Koltko-Rivera (2000: 2) is pertinent in this regard:

> A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even unprovable, but these assumptions are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system.

## 1.5 Delimitations of the Research

The following delimitations will apply:

### 1.5.1 Biblical/Scriptural References to Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just and/or John the Baptiser/Baptist

This thesis is not predominantly concerned with the avowed accuracy of supposed biographical references to, inter alia, Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just or John the Baptist as found in the *NT* or any other gospel accounts (albeit non-canonised), Apocrypha or Pseudepigrapha. Its primary concern is with possible extra-biblical, non-scriptural, allegedly historical, sources, especially Josephus' *AJ.*

It is also not concerned with the relatively recent and quite outlandish claims made by Thiering (1993; 1997 and 1998), who advocates the possibility that the *NT* contains

historically accurate accounts of Jesus of Nazareth's life and work that are codified and accordingly only available to a reader knowledgeable in what she terms the "pesher technique".[8]

### 1.5.2 Interpolations in the Works of Josephus

Although there may well be other examples of interpolation in the extant works of Josephus, this research will only concern itself with the three passages of Christian import as detailed in the problems of research.

### 1.5.3 Reconstruction of Historical Contexts

It is accepted that the worldview of any scholar impinges directly on the quality of their research. This factor is greatly enhanced in the case of those scholars who also operate within a particular confession of faith. Indeed, it makes little sense for anyone to claim to be scientific or academic if they simultaneously want to uphold any doctrine that cannot be verified by rigorous scientific critique.

In this context, the most accurate reconstruction that one can produce of a believable historical perspective – one that can also serve as a benchmark against which to compare a particular scholar's case - will also depend on the worldview of the researcher concerned.

To claim that one has the best reconstruction of a particular moment in history would be arrogant and self-delusional.

### 1.5.4 Quotations in Greek and Translations

In this study, all Greek text that is reproduced will appear as found in the source document. Thus, if, for example a single word or phrase is reproduced it will be accented as it appears in the source passage. The only exception will be where a word or phrase is used in terms of its own context. In these latter cases a dictionary

[8] Cf. Thiering.1993. *Jesus the Man*; 1997. *Jesus of the Apocalypse*; and 1998. *The Book That Jesus Wrote*. Also, for a critical analysis of Thiering's sensationalist claims. Cf. Allen. 2014. A Critical Re-Appraisal of Thiering's "Pesher Technique" Thesis, in *Journal of Early Christian History*: 4 – 30.

transcript will be employed and where relevant, for verbs, the infinitive form will be employed. Nouns will be presented in nominative singular form.

Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from Greek, Hebrew or Latin into English are the author's. In the majority of cases these will be *NT*-based Greek to English translations where a NIV version/style English translation is favoured. In relevant cases, translation errors found in certain publications have been corrected by the author; and this is clearly indicated in the text.

## 1.6 Assumptions of the Research

### 1.6.1 Intellectual Integrity

This research accepts that in the final analysis truth, or what we believe to be truth, is dependent on sincere, albeit constructed, intellectual integrity. In this regard, this study assumes, as does Rand (1962: 65), that integrity "does not consist of loyalty to one's subjective whims, but of loyalty to rational principles".

Furthermore, even if we want to be as cynical as Rorty (1992: 141), who once stated that he did "not have much use for notions like 'objective truth'" and who (Rorty, 1982: xvii) scoffed that claiming a statement to be "true" was akin to giving it a "rhetorical pat on the back" we could do worse than follow the advice of Haack (1996: 57 - 58) who informs her reader that:

> The first step is to point out that the concept of truth is internally related to the concepts of belief, evidence, and inquiry. To believe that *p* is to accept *p* as true. Evidence that *p* is evidence that *p* is true, an indication of the truth of *p*. And to inquire into whether *p* is to inquire into whether *p* is true; if you aren't trying to get the truth, you aren't really inquiring.

This investigation takes it as read, that we construct our realities and that these worldviews impinge on our attempts to establish truth. In this regard this investigation fully subscribes to the perceptions of, inter alia, Koltko-Rivera (2004: 3) who states that:

> the nature of this in-sight is that human cognition and behavior are powerfully influenced by sets of beliefs and assumptions about life and reality. Applied to the individual level, this insight has implications for theories of personality, cognition, education, and intervention. Applied to

> the collective level, this insight can provide a basis for psychological theories of culture and conflict, faith and coping, war and peace. Particularly as psychologists search for ways to reintegrate the discipline after a century of tumultuous and fractious growth, it would be worthwhile for psychology and its sub disciplines to focus on a construct that is central to this aforementioned insight, a construct with a long history and broad applicability but a dearth of serious theoretical formulation. This is the construct of worldview (or "world view").

Therefore, this study also assumes that, especially in those disciplines that impinge on personal faith (with willing deference to the insights of Haack [1996: 58]):

> [B]oth pseudobelief and pseudoinquiry are commonplace. Pseudobelief includes those familiar psychological states of obstinate loyalty to a proposition that one half suspects is false, and of sentimental attachment to a proposition to which one has given no thought at all (*Sic*).

### 1.6.2 Fundamentalism

It is assumed that any form of religious fundamentalism, will make any rational scientific debate impossible. Consider for example the views of the arch-fundamentalist, Bloesch (1994: 121 and 293) who will openly deny that there is any relationship between what he would term "God's logic" and "human logic". Indeed, Bloesch (1994: 55) is happy to believe that his constructed truth, based on what he believes is the *NT*'s divine revelation, is a) true and b) beyond the "analytical methods of formal logic". It should go without saying that such attitudes will not likely result in scientifically verifiable knowledge, let alone a universal truth. Thus, for a fundamentalist, logical deductions which clash with so-called revelation are unacceptable.

### 1.6.3 Josephus as a Possible Source of Authentic Historical Data of Christian Import

This critical review, although traversing well-trampled literary terrain, is viewed as necessary to emphasize one of the key assumptions of this research, viz.: Josephus' *AJ* is the only possible extra-biblical/scriptural source for any information concerning an historical Jesus and selected associates.

Lastly, it is assumed that apart from the three suspected interpolations under review,

most if not all of Josephus' works (at the very least), reflects his original input and insights. As confirmed by Bilde, (1988: 27) we have to assume that any decryption of his life is dependent on what he wrote. To assume otherwise would undermine much of the deductive reasoning that will be under appraisal in this thesis.

## 1.7 Central Theoretical Argument

As Josephus' *AJ* at this stage, seems to be the only possible source for any extra-biblical/scriptural verification for an historical Jesus of Nazareth, a definitive, substantiated conclusion to the currently unresolved interpolation debate is desired. This finding will employ an interpretist/constructivist episteme which allows the researcher to make use of a wide range of methods which (when possible) can be triangulated to establish greater validity of interpretation would have important implications, viz.:

If any or part of the three passages under review is found to be in any way authentic and/or historically reliable, it could possibly support the notion that, irrespective of one's religious convictions and bias, one or more of the claimed individuals referred to in the three passages under review, actually existed.

Conversely a totally negative outcome, which successfully refutes the notion that Josephus recorded anything relating to either an historical Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just or John the Baptist (and by association, an historical Jesus of Nazareth), would strongly support the notion advocated by Doherty, Olson and Wells etc. In this regard, amongst other possibilities, "Jesus" as a concept may possibly not have any origins as an historical figure. Indeed, it is possible to consider, by way of example, that the evolution and development of Christianity, together with a later attempt at creating an historical and literal personage via the agency of mythical or fabricated writings, is most likely dependent on other actors and forces.

The work of Wells (1988a; 1988b; 1999; 2004; 2009) and Doherty (1999, 2001; 2005; 2008; 2009) have already shown that early "Christian" practice may not have necessarily been dependent on the recollection of an historical person called "Jesus" by his claimed followers. The possibility has been mooted that Christianity was based on, inter alia, the development of an aspect of Judaism that made use of what was at

the time readily understood metaphorical language but which became increasingly literalised as it was embraced by increasingly non-Jewish and Gentile (Greek-speaking) audiences. The anticipated research outcomes will either enhance or totally refute this line of reasoning.

## 1.8 The Importance of the Research

An enormous amount of literary support exists which exhorts the reader to accept the authenticity of the three passages under review, but which seems (on the face of it), to fail to deal directly and/or objectively with certain refutations proffered by mostly non-Christian and/or more positivistic scholars. It is believed, therefore, that elements of personal bias (whether justified or not), and the specific constructed worldviews of the scholars concerned are a major contributor to the incentive behind most of these researchers' respective approaches to the issues of authenticity, partial authenticity or total forgery in the *AJ.* Up until now, apart from the distinctly anti-Christian stance of scholars like Doherty[9], Olsen[10], Wells[11] and Zindler[12] etc. this glaring oversight has not been analytically and impassively tackled head on.

Much has been proffered to date, to supposedly prove total and/or partial forgery but certain nagging aspects still leave room for understandable doubt. To be balanced, the dearth of convincing evidence which supports authenticity (to whatever degree) all need to be unpacked, amplified and wherever possible substantiated and/or refuted in the context of corroborated historical precedence. This includes, Josephus' known political and religious stances and literary style as well as recent as yet unconsidered but critically important discoveries made in the numismatic field by Kokkinos (2010: 363 - 400).

Thus, after several centuries of seemingly pointless debate, including the huge scholarly polemic which raged for nearly two centuries in Europe between c.1600 and the late nineteenth century (cf. Bilde, 1988: 125), what is clearly needed is a conscious, albeit carefully constructed, effort to neutralise the derogatory effects of mechanical conformity to established and/or popular worldviews. In this context, this study will

[9] Cf. Doherty. 2009. *Jesus: Neither God Nor Man.*
[10] Cf. Olson. 1999. Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum: 305 - 322.
[11] Cf. Wells. 1999. *The Jesus Myth.*
[12] Cf. Zindler. 2003. *The Jesus the Jews Never Knew*.

attempt to conduct a critical review of all arguments both positive and negative that claim to accurately position these disputed passages. This will be undertaken with rigorous and indeed fearless, intellectual integrity.

## 1.9 Research Design / Methodology

### 1.9.1 General Approach

It is proposed to take a more interpretist/constructivist approach rather than a naïve positivistic one. It is acknowledged that all deliberation will be taking place within a linguistic paradigm that posits knowledge is mediated through language (thinking) and consequently it is not possible to ever objectively know what we assume to be reality. Therefore, an interpretist/constructivist epistemology is clearly favoured.

It is accepted that it will never be possible to accurately reconstruct the historical context(s) that underpin(s) the premises of the various arguments tendered by the key-role players in the contemporary interpolation debate. It is also accepted that a particular scholar's constructed reality will impinge on his/her interpretation of the best-argued evidence.

It can be safely argued that knowledge is that which is constructed by the researcher or theorist by virtue of any number of applicable methods.

Although it is certainly not refuted that information can be obtained by direct sense experience of the world (linguistic mediation), the important point is that we can never really know the source of that perception (the assumed external reality). Rather we constantly formulate (construct) an understanding of the world within which we live by thinking – a process which is always mediated linguistically. In this latter regard, certain of the views of the post-structuralist philosopher Derrida[13] are invaluable in grasping the point that language (in all its manifestations), cannot embody inviolable universal truth and is itself a flawed medium.

Unfortunately, language as "text", regardless of its form (i.e. oral, scribal, audial, olfactorial etc.), is the only medium we have - which points to meaning always being

[13] Cf. Derrida. 1997. *Of Grammatology*.

imperfectly mediated.

Again, because all interpretation can only take place within a particular "text", it is never possible to return to the "source" or the "origin" deferred/referred to by the "text". In the same way the intentions of an author or an artist are, in the final analysis, quite irrelevant when interpreting say, a particular written text or work of art, since the reader or spectator, armed with their own constructed realities, only has the written or visual text by which to arrive at a particular (albeit shifting/provisional) point of view.

This approach neither accepts the maladroit conclusion that in the final analysis "anything goes" nor does it advocate nihilism. Undeniably, the complete opposite is implied. Any judicious deconstruction of a text implies a rigorous and critical analysis with an amplified awareness of the pitfalls of naïve relativism.

### 1.9.2 Scope of Literature Review

In many ways this entire thesis is intended to be a critical literary review. An analytical reassessment will be undertaken of the various arguments for and against authenticity by the foremost contemporary scholars involved with various aspects of the three passages of Christian import that appear in Josephus' *AJ.*

A selected range of leading scholars will be diagnostically appraised. This group consists of those authorities, living or dead, who are still considered to be the most relevant in the contemporary interpolation debate. In this regard, inter alia, the insights of the following scholars will be included, viz.: Richard Bauckham, Per Bilde, Gregory Boyd, Richard Carrier, James H. Charlesworth, Shaye J.D. Cohen, Earl J. Doherty, Paul Eddy, Bart D. Ehrman, Craig A. Evans, Louis H. Feldman, Harold Leidner, Andrew Louth, John Painter, Paula Fredriksen, Gary J. Goldberg, Charles Guignebert, Peter Kirby, Steve Mason, John Paul Meier, Ken A. Olson, Shlomo Pines, Christopher E. Price, Robert M. Price, Claire Rothschild, Geza Vermes, George Albert Wells, Solomon Zeitlin and Frank R. Zindler.

### 1.9.3 Review of Other Claimants to Extra Biblical/Scriptural Authority

To confirm the status of Josephus, as the only viable extra biblical/scriptural authority

for any possible historical data apropos Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just and/or John the Baptist, a preliminary overview of the literature will be made. Specifically, the key outcomes of attempts by leading scholars will be reviewed, to establish any bona fide historical context for Jesus of Nazareth *et al* outside of the *NT* or the *AJ.* Here, the various claimed references to Jesus or his followers in the *Talmud Bavli* and *Tofseta* (c. 200 – 500 C.E.), the suspected inferences based on obscure classical authors such as *Lucian Samosata*, *Phlegon*, *Thallus* and *Papias*, as well as the pertinent writings of, inter alia, *Mara bar Serapion, Lucius Annaeus Seneca*, *Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus*, *Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus* and *Publius* (or *Gaius*) *Cornelius Tacitus* will be confirmed or refuted. In this manner, it should be possible to create an established context within which contemporary historicity scholars can ideally operate and their various arguments, both positive and negative, properly evaluated. This is vital to establishing and or confirming/refuting the underlying context(s) that inform the constructed realities of today's leading conservative and liberal scholars.

### 1.9.4 A Critical Review of the Three Suspected Interpolations

Each of three chapters will deal with the *TF*, *JP* and *BP* respectively. Each chapter will look at the debates around six major areas of contention (when applicable to the text in question). The debate between more conservative and liberal scholars will be reviewed per area of contention.

Each suspected interpolation will pass through similar, but not always identical, review processes. These are undertaken ultimately to construct the most accurate picture that we as contemporary historians have of the historical contexts within which the key role-players in the contemporary interpolation debate (e.g. Josephus, Origen, and Eusebius etc.) once existed. Here the most plausible historical context will ultimately be confirmed.

The current scholarly debates concerning the issue of authenticity of each of the three disputed passages under review, will be made, paying close attention to a scholar's constructed realty and the degree to which it impinges negatively on his/her attempt to undertake a neutral discourse. To this end, great attention will be placed on, inter alia, such factors as:

1. internal and external arguments;
2. comparative arguments;
3. textual arguments;
4. stylistic arguments;
5. historical arguments; and
6. theological variations.

In addition, recent important numismatic evidence as supplied by Kokkinos (2010: 363 - 400) will also be employed where applicable.

Primarily, only deductive arguments will be analysed in this investigation. An inductive argument will only be considered if by its employment in a process of triangulation it brings greater clarity to a particular position already well established by a valid deductive thesis. This means that after the specific premise(s) for an argument has/have been proven to be valid, then by a deductive process a conclusion must logically follow.

In those cases where it is discovered that a scholar has a potentially good argument but by dint of imperfect formulation his/her conclusions appear to be invalid, an attempt will be made to provide the missing premise(s) and improve the argument.

With the forgoing context in mind, special attention will be given to the following:

1. All valid deductive arguments, regardless of their source, that support authenticity. These in turn will be critiqued from both a partial authenticity as well as a total inauthenticity perspective and any proven discrepancies noted.

2. All valid deductive arguments, regardless of their source, that support a/ total or b/ partial interpolation. These in turn will be critiqued from the perspective that the passage under review is truly authentic and any proven discrepancies noted.

## 1.10 The Hypothesis of the Research

Based on the outcomes of this process, one or more of at least three constructed realities will emerge, viz.

1. one that supports total interpolation for one or more passages; and/or
2. one that supports partial interpolation for one or more passages; and/or
3. one that supports authenticity for one or more passages.

It is possible that each of these outcomes is mutually inclusive and further that they all share a common realty or it may transpire that the evidence is so weighted in favour of one particular reality that the other possibilities have little or no claim to serious consideration.

## 1.11 Overview of the Research

This thesis is set out in a specific order to present its arguments as clearly as possible:

Chapter One (Introduction) is the preamble wherein the parameters and intentions of research are explicated.

Chapter Two (Extra-biblical/scriptural references to an historical Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist and James the Just) will comprise an historical overview of key outcomes of attempts (by the leading scholars highlighted in the methodology), to establish any *bona fide* historical context for the three individuals under review, outside of the *NT* and the *AJ.*

Chapter Three (The *Testimonium Flavianum*) will deal exclusively with the import of *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63. All aspects of the methodology covered in 1.9.4 (*ut supra*) will be applied in order to ascertain where the burden of proof should be placed ideally in the current interpolation debate.

Chapter Four (The *James Passage*) will deal exclusively with the import of *AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 200 - 203 (The reference to James the brother of Jesus). All aspects of the methodology (cf. 1.9.4) will be applied in order to ascertain where the burden of proof should be placed optimally in the current interpolation debate.

Chapter Five (The *Baptist Passage*) will deal exclusively with the import of *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 -119 (the references to John the Baptist). Again, all aspects of the methodology (cf. 1.9.4) will be applied in order to ascertain where the burden of proof should be placed preferably in the current interpolation debate.

Chapter Six (Conclusions) is a detailed synopsis wherein the various sub-problems of research are addressed in the light of the evidence obtained and, where applicable, further research recommended.

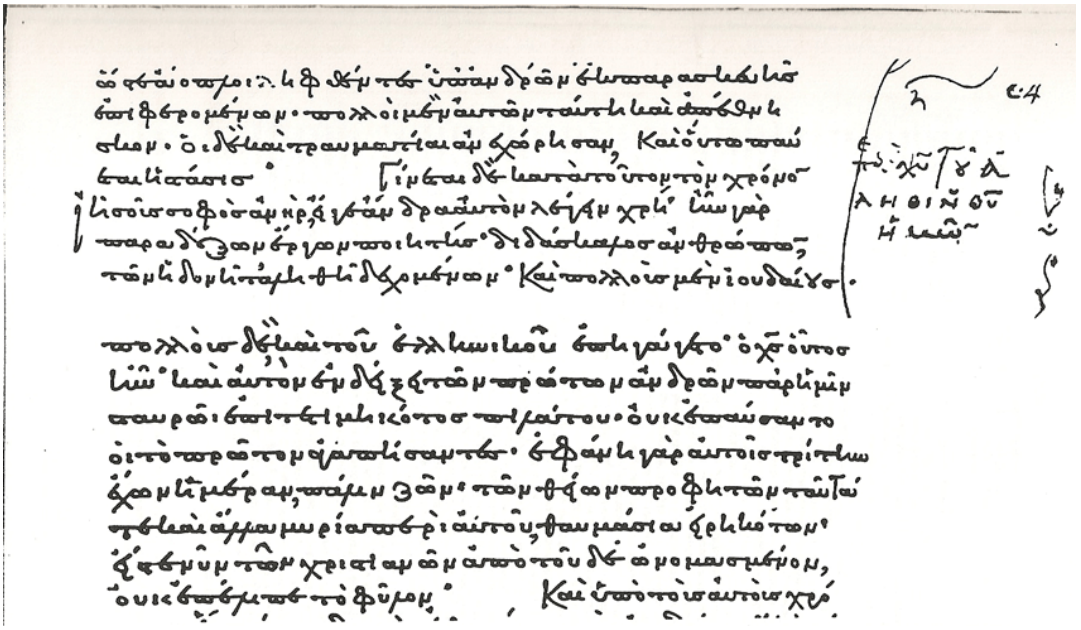


**Figure 2**

Photograph of a folio containing the *Testimonium Flavianum* from
the oldest surviving manuscript of the Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία
which includes Books XVIII, XIX and XX.
*Codex Ambrosianus* (*Mediolanensis*) 370 F. 128 superior.
Eleventh Century, *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Milan, Italy.

# CHAPTER TWO

## EXTRA-BIBLICAL/SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES TO JESUS OF NAZARETH AND ASSOCIATES

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to confirm that Josephus' *AJ* is the only possible source available for any valid extra-biblical/scriptural evidence relevant to the historical existence of either Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just or John the Baptist. In a certain sense, this chapter is not directly focused on the main problem of this study, but does serve an important role in substantiating one of the important assumptions of this research, viz.: Josephus' *AJ* as the *only* viable extra-biblical/scriptural source available for any information that could corroborate the existence of three very central personalities (real, imagined or created), who each in his own way is highly relevant, even pivotal, to the dogmas and entire belief structure of the Christian religion.

This chapter also serves to validate the most plausible historical context for the suspected interpolations. For example, is their evidence that due to the lack of suitable sources early Christian apologists were often forced to manufacture them? Certainly, if valid proof was freely available to Christian writers at the time (i.e. before c. 400 C.E.) there would be no need for pious fraud. If so, here would be ammunition for an argument that favoured complete authenticity of the suspected interpolations.

The chapter will also attempt to offer valuable insight into the characteristic style of reasoning employed by certain conservative scholars whose dominant worldview clearly overwhelms any chance of rational debate.

This review is also necessary because, although most sceptical scholars[14] refute any of the sources discussed in this chapter, most, if not all, fundamentalist Christian scholars will claim the complete opposite. For many, these sources are indisputable valid

[14]For example, the well-known sceptic, Wells, commenting on the reasons for the lack of extra-biblical references to Jesus of Nazareth states: "[T]here is no reason why the pagan writers of this period should have thought Christianity any more important than other enthusiastic religions of the Empire. Dio Cassius, who wrote … as late as about AD 229, makes no mention at all of Christians or Christianity, and alludes but once to its great rival, Mithraism." Cf. Wells, 1975. *Did Jesus Exist*: 15).

historical sources for Jesus of Nazareth and further, are so trustworthy that those who would even dare to question this belief will find it difficult to do so. In this context (Cf. Holding, 2008:19) J. Brown, Hannam, Harper, Holding, O'Connell, C.E. Price and Rosero all subscribe to the following statement that introduces Chapter One of their book entitled: *Shattering the Christ Myth*:

> Our examination of the Christ myth thesis begins with a look at positive evidence for the existence of Jesus as established by secular sources. **Mythicists must find ways to explain away these references and present their own arguments against their usefulness**. Our subjects will be the secular historians and authors Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, and Pliny, as well as the early church writer Papias.[15] [My emphasis].

Apart from the fact that Josephus cannot, in any way, be described as secular, since he was a priest and a practicing Jew, it will be seen that none of the authors cited by these scholars offers the serious historian anything that can be described as a valid primary source.

Consequently, this chapter will look critically at the claimed historical references to Jesus of Nazareth (and any other individual closely associated with him) which might offer the objective historian with any reliable, corroborative, extra-biblical/scriptural data, however meagre it may be. Special attention will be given to the evocative passages that ostensibly feature in the work of Pliny (the Younger)[16], Trajan[17], Suetonius[18], Tacitus[19] and Tertullian[20]. In addition, the Christian claims of extra-biblical/scriptural historical sources in the respective works of *Mara bar Serapion*, *Thallus*, *Phlegon, Papias and Lucian Samosata* will also be briefly reviewed.

Lastly, an appraisal will be made of the six well-known supposed references to Jesus of

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[15]It is important to note, that these authors do not seem to be able to distinguish between a possible historical Jesus of Nazareth and the Roman deity called Christ based on the Christological notions and dogmas as developed in the first few centuries of the Christian church's evolution. It is also patently clear, that they fervently attack any scholar who refutes the existence of an historical Jesus as though he or she were automatically guilty of trying to destroy Christianity itself. Here, they do not seem to understand the enormous difference between a "Jesus Myth" and a "Christ Myth". Indeed, these two completely disparate terms are conflated not only in the title of their work but also throughout their combined texts.

[16]*Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus* (c. 62 - c.113 C.E.).

[17]*Caesar Nerva Traianus Divi Nervae Filius Augustus* (53 - 117 C.E.).

[18]*Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus* (c.69 - 140 C.E.).

[19](*Publius* or *Gaius*) *Cornelius Tacitus* (c. 56 - 117 C.E.).

[20]*Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus* (c. 160 - 225 C.E.)

Nazareth and/or his parents or disciples, which appear in the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* and *Tosefta* respectively.

## 2.2 *Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus* a.k.a. Pliny (the Younger) (c. 62 - c.113 C.E.)

When Pliny was serving as proconsul of *Bithynia et Pontus* (c. 111 C.E.) he purportedly wrote *Pl.Ep.* (*Epistulae*), X, 96[21] to the Emperor Trajan as follows:

> *C. Plinius Traiano Imperatori:*
>
> *Sollemne est mihi, domine, omnia de quibus dubito ad te referre. Quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere vel ignorantiam instruere? Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui numquam: ideo nescio quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat aut quaeri. Nec mediocriter haesitavi, sitne aliquod discrimen aetatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustioribus differant; detur paenitentiae venia, an ei, qui omnino Christianus fuit, desisse non prosit; nomen ipsum, si flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini puniantur. Interim, <in> iis qui ad me tamquam Christiani deferebantur, hunc sum secutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani. Confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus; perseverantes duci iussi. Neque enim dubitabam, qualecumque esset quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. Fuerunt alii similis amentiae, quos, quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos.*
>
> *Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri solet, diffundente se crimine plures species inciderunt. Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens. Qui negabant esse se Christianos aut fuisse, cum praeeunte me deos appellarent et imagini tuae, quam propter hoc iusseram cum simulacris numinum afferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, praeterea male dicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur qui sunt re vera Christiani, dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati esse se Christianos dixerunt et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem sed desisse, quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos, non nemo etiam ante viginti. <Hi> quoque omnes et imaginem tuam deorumque simulacra venerati sunt et Christo male dixerunt. Affirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpae suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta ne latrocinia ne adulteria committerent, ne*

[21] Latin text according to Pliny the Younger. 2014. Letters, in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0139%3Abook%3D10%3Aletter%3D96%3Asection%3D1 [12 May 2014].
English translation according to The Project Gutenberg EBook of Letters of Pliny, by Pliny [Online]. Available: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2811/2811-h/2811-h.htm#link2H_4_0208 [12 May 2014].

*fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium; quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hetaerias esse vetueram. Quo magis necessarium credidi ex duabus ancillis, quae ministrae dicebantur, quid esset veri, et per tormenta quaerere. Nihil aliud inveni quam superstitionem pravam et immodicam.*

*Ideo dilata cognitione ad consulendum te decucurri. Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. Neque civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quae videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certe satis constat prope iam desolata templa coepisse celebrari, et sacra sollemnia diu intermissa repeti passimque venire <carnem> victimarum, cuius adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex quo facile est opinari, quae turba hominum emendari possit, si sit paenitentiae locus.*

C. Pliny to the Emperor Trajan:

It is my invariable rule, Sir, to refer to you in all matters where I feel doubtful; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? **Having never been present at any trials concerning those who profess Christianity, I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes,** or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to ages, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist **from his error**; whether the very **profession** of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only **the crimes themselves inherent in the profession** are punishable; on all these points I am in great doubt. In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians is this: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they admitted it, I repeated the question twice, and threatened them with punishment; if they persisted, I ordered them to be at once punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation, but being Roman citizens, **I directed them to be sent to Rome**. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) **while it was actually under prosecution**, several instances of the same nature occurred. An anonymous information was laid before me containing a charge against several persons, who upon examination denied they were Christians, or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and incense before your statue (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods), and even reviled the name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into any of these compliances: I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; the rest owned indeed that they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some

above three, others more, and a few above twenty years ago) renounced that error. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, uttering imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom **to separate, and then reassemble,** to eat in common a harmless meal. **From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict,** by which, according to your commands, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to officiate' in their religious rites: but **all I could discover was evidence of an absurd and extravagant superstition**. I deemed it expedient, therefore, to adjourn all further proceedings, in order to consult you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration, more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, which have already extended, and are still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. In fact, this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighbouring villages and country. Nevertheless, **it still seems possible to restrain its progress**. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; **and the sacred rites, after a long intermission, are again revived;** while there is a general demand for the victims, which till lately found very few purchasers. From all this it is easy to conjecture what numbers might be reclaimed if a general pardon were granted to those who shall repent of their error. [My emphases and UK-based English spelling convention favoured].

The Emperor Trajan (*Pl.Ep.* X, 97)[22] responded accordingly:

*Traianus Punio*

*Actum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis causis eorum, qui Christiani ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest. Conquirendi non sunt; si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt, ita tamen ut, qui negaverit se Christianum esse idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est supplicando dis nostris, quamvis suspectus in praeteritum, veniam ex paenitentia impetret. Sine auctore vero propositi libelli <in> nullo crimine locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli nec nostri saeculi est.*

[22]Latin text according to Pliny the Younger. 2014. Letters, in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0139%3Abook%3D10%3Aletter%3D97%3Asection%3D1 [12 May 2014]. English translation according to The Project Gutenberg EBook of Letters of Pliny, by Pliny [Online]. Available: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2811/2811-h/2811-h.htm#link2H_4_0208 [12 May 2014].

Trajan to Pliny:

> You have adopted the right course, my dearest Secundus, in investigating the charges against the Christians who were brought before you. It is not possible to lay down any general rule for all such cases. Do not go out of your way to look for them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime is proved, **they must be punished**; with the restriction, however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Anonymous information ought not to be received in any sort of prosecution. It is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and is quite foreign to the spirit of our age. [My emphasis].

### 2.2.1 A Review of *Epistulae*, X, 96 and 97

To obviate pointless debate, a review of the import of these two letters will commence with the naïve assumption that they are wholly genuine. This approach should be seen as fair since it will clearly favour the opinions of those scholars who would impulsively point to these documents as being *bona fide* extra-biblical/scriptural evidence for an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus, in the context of what is written in these two interrelated letters, if genuine, the following may be fairly surmised:

1. Pliny appears to be reacting to some prior, unknown directive from Trajan;
2. Pliny does not seem to be that certain as to what a Christian is;
3. Christians assembled before dawn and prayed to “Christ” as though he were a deity;
4. Christians, who had been assembled together in worship, subsequently separated and then re-assembled again before partaking of a “harmless” communal meal;
5. Christians were being tried for reasons that seem quite unclear;
6. Some former Christians admitted to being part of the cult up to some twenty years earlier (i.e. c. 91 C.E.);
7. Christianity is referred to as a “profession” with its own *inherent* crimes;
8. Christianity was also viewed as being an erroneous form of conduct; absurd and extravagant superstition;
9. Christianity is likened to an infection that is spreading fairly rapidly in both town and country;

10. Pliny seemingly contradicts his predominant claim that Christians are, inter alia, absurd, erroneous, superstitious criminals when he paradoxically informs Trajan that Christians take “a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up”;
11. The more “official” religions had recently lost nearly all of their membership as a result of the spread of Christianity and Pliny states that his proscriptions were not having any effect at curbing the dramatic spread of the Christian practices. However, later in the letter he states that his actions were having a positive effect and citizens were returning to the traditional temples;
12. Anyone who insisted on being identified with Christianity was liable to be punished;
13. It seems as though, if convicted, the death penalty was possible? Certainly, Roman citizens suspected of practicing Christianity were treated differently to slaves and freedmen and were sent all the way to Rome to face trial. If one takes modern-day Amesia (Ancient Amezia) as a mid-point for the province of *Bithynia et Pontus*, it clearly implies that Roman citizens accused of being Christians were automatically transported at least 1600 kilometres (as the crow flies) or some 2,200 kilometres if travelling by land route, to the west, merely to be tried; and
14. At the time of writing, although Pliny seems to indicate that he had personally questioned persons suspected of being Christians, yet he states quite clearly at the outset, that he had *never* attended a trial of any person who claimed to be a Christian. This ambiguity aside, he also seems to indicate that on one sole occasion, he organised a trial for two female slaves (who it was claimed “officiated’ at Christian rites). At this occasion the slaves had to be tortured in order to extract a confession of an “absurd” faith.

Trajan confirms the following:

1. People should not be prosecuted by virtue of anonymous allegations; and

2. Christians were considered to be automatically guilty of some unnamed crime. When convicted of this unstated crime they were to be punished.

### 2.2.2 Discussion

#### 2.2.2.1 Pliny's Ignorance of Christians

Even if these two letters are genuine, they clearly inform the reader that Pliny was, prior to this stated recent exposure, quite ignorant of Christians, their belief system or Christian activity in general. This in itself should be seen as most unlikely, given his previous long and distinguished legal career in various centres of the Roman Empire. In this regard, if the letter is genuine, we must also logically surmise that Christianity had *never* manifested itself overtly in the Roman Empire *before* this time (c. 111 C.E.). This observation is tempered with the claim that some former Christians had been part of the cult "above twenty years ago". Regardless, if the letter, supposedly written by Pliny himself, is incorrectly reporting Pliny's total ignorance of prior Christian activity then, logically, it must be quite fraudulent. The possibility that Pliny had never heard of Christians (regardless of their "denomination"), before 111 C.E. whilst they had secretly been active in various parts of the Roman Empire from at least the sixth decade of the common era onwards is so unlikely as to be well-nigh impossible.

#### 2.2.2.2 Trajan's Fear of Assemblies

One possible reason that is often cited for the proscription against groups of Christians meeting in the early hours of the morning concerns a possible ban by Trajan of assemblies that could lead to civil unrest. For example, in *Pl.Ep.* X, 34[23], some previous imperial proscription against the gathering of assemblies is suggested when Trajan responds negatively to Pliny's perfectly reasonable request to form a guild of fire fighters in Nicomedia in order to obviate destructive fires:

> *Quodcumque nomen ex quacumque causa dederimus iis, qui in idem contracti fuerint, hetaeriae eaeque brevi fient.*
>
> Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purposes them may be founded, they will not fail to form themselves into factious, assemblies, however short their meetings may be.

[23] Latin and English translation according to Melmoth (Tr.) 1927. *Pliny: Letters. Vol. II*: 320.

However, in *Pl.Ep.* X, 93[24] Trajan seems far more balanced when responding to Pliny's request to form a charitable society which will by default necessitate large numbers of individuals forming assemblies:

> *Traianus Plinio*
>
> *Amisenos, quorum libellum epistulae tuae iunxeras, si legibus istorum, quibus beneficio foederis utuntur, concessum est eranum habere, possumus quo minus habeant non impedire, eo facilius si tali collatione non ad turbas et ad illicitos coetus, sed ad sustinendam tenuiorum inopiam utuntur. In ceteris civitatibus, quae nostro iure obstrictae sunt, res huius modi prohibenda est.*
>
> Trajan to Pliny
>
> If the petition of the Amiseni which you have transmitted to me, concerning the establishment of a charitable society, be agreeable to their own laws, which by the articles of alliance it is stipulated they shall enjoy, I shall not oppose it; especially if these contributions are employed, not for the purpose of riot and faction, but for the support of the indigent. In other cities, however, which are subject to our laws, I would have all assemblies of this nature prohibited.

Take note that Trajan allows this assembly, not just because it involves charitable work but more importantly because Amiseni had different laws to other Roman cities! This begs the question why Trajan (*Pl.Ep.* X, 34) disallowed the fire brigade in Nicomedia. Certainly there was no proscription in Nicomedia against Romans meeting for religious purposes as Pliny himself complains of the lack of attendance at the traditional temples. In short, large groups of worshippers must have been permitted to congregate for religious purposes. Based on *Pl.Ep.* X, 96 it would seem that only Christians were targeted.

#### 2.2.2.3 Roman Attitudes Toward Foreign Religions

Although it is accepted that in the early fourth century C.E.[25] there was a period of some eight years when Christians were directly targeted for mostly political reasons, it

[24]Latin and English translation according to Melmoth (Tr.) 1927. *Pliny: Letters. Vol. II*: 396 – 397.
[25]The Roman emperor *Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus Augustus* (245 - 311 C.E.), who reigned from 284 to 305 C.E. is credited with the instigation of the Diocletianic Persecution (303 - 311 C.E.), which was aimed primarily at restoring traditional Roman religious practices within the empire. As a consequence, Christians faced possibly their most difficult period of maltreatment which only dissipated after *Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus*

is generally accepted that the Romans were more normally, fairly compliant when it came to personal and private religious practice. Green (2010: 1 - 2) confirms that "Roman attitudes to the foreigners in their midst were, unsurprisingly, complex and contradictory". Certainly much evidence exists that everyday Romans - like most people anywhere and in any period of history - disliked change and were initially xenophobic when confronted by unfamiliar social situations that appeared to threaten their Roman sensibilities and traditions.

For example, it is instructive to look at *Pl.Ep.* X, 49[26] where Pliny seeks permission from Trajan to tear down a non-Roman temple (albeit in disrepair and possible disuse). However the temple was originally consecrated. Pliny wants to know whether he can remove the building without breaking any religious taboos or laws:

> *C. Plinius Traiano Imperatori*
>
> *Ante adventum meum, domine, Nicomedenses priori foro novum adicere coeperunt, cuius in angulo est aedes vetustissima Matris Magnae aut reficienda aut transferenda, ob hoc praecipue quod est multo depressior opere eo quod cum maxime surgit. Ego cum quaererem, num esset aliqua lex dicta templo, cognovi alium hic, alium apud nos esse morem dedicationis. Dispice ergo, domine, an putes aedem, cui nulla lex dicta est, salva religione posse transferri; alioqui commodissimum est, si religio non impedit.*
>
> To the Emperor Trajan
>
> The Nicomedians, Sir, before my arrival in this province, had begun to build a new forum adjoining their former, in a corner of which stands an ancient temple dedicated to the mother of the gods. This fabric must either be repaired or removed, and for this reason chiefly, because it is a much lower building than that very lofty one which is now in process of erection. Upon enquiry whether this temple had been consecrated, I was informed that their ceremonies of dedication differ from ours. You will be pleased, therefore, Sir, to consider whether a temple which has not been consecrated according to our rites may be removed, consistently with the reverence due to religion: for, if there should be no objection from that quarter, the removal in every other respect would be extremely convenient.

Trajan's response (*Pl.Ep.* X, 50)[27] is informative. It implies that Roman law overrules the consecration rites of a foreign religion.

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a.k.a. Constantine the Great (c. 272 - 337 C.E.) and *Gaius Valerius Licinianus Licinius Augustus* a.k.a. Licinius I (c. 263 - 325 C.E.) met in *Mediolanum* to establish, inter alia, a better dispensation for Christians within the empire in February 313 C.E. (i.e. the Edict of Milan).

[26] Latin and English translation according to Melmoth (Tr.) 1927. *Pliny: Letters. Vol. II*: 338 – 339.

[27] Latin and English translation according to Melmoth (Tr.) 1927. *Pliny: Letters. Vol. II*: 340 – 341.

*Traianus Plinio*

*Potes, mi Secunde carissime, sine sollicitudine religionis, si loci positio videtur hoc desiderare, aedem Matris Deum transferre in eam quae est accommodatior; nec te moveat, quod lex dedicationis nulla reperitur, cum solum peregrinae civitatis capax non sit dedicationis, quae fit nostro iure.*

Trajan to Pliny

You may without scruple, my dearest Secundus, if the situation requires it, remove the temple of the mother of the gods, from the place where it now stands, to any other spot more convenient. You need be under no difficulty with respect to the act of dedication; for the ground of a foreign city is not capable of receiving that kind of consecration which is sanctified by our laws.[28]

One wonders whether this action would have been allowed had the religious community concerned still made use of this temple?

Nonetheless, it is necessary to determine what the more likely attitude of a typical Roman authority would have been to the perceived incursion of foreign religious sects in the second half of the first century and the early part of the second century C.E. This will be undertaken to construct a more credible historical context for, inter alia, Pliny and Trajan's letters (i.e. *Pl.Ep.* X, 96 and 97).

#### 2.2.2.4 Roman Attitudes Toward the Alexandrian and Egyptian Cults

For example, (cf. Turcan, 1996: 86 - 87; 2000: 121), it is known that on a number of occasions (e.g. c. 59, c. 58, c. 53, and c. 48 B.C.E.), the Roman senate ordered the altars and statues of Egyptian cults to be torn down. However, despite these actions, more generally, the Pharaonic mystery religions continued to remain popular with the broader Roman populace.

Within this context, it is already well-known there were primarily both political as well as religious reasons why the Egyptian cults were recurrently targeted by the senate:

1. The Egyptian cults, which emphasised the human emotions and the sensuous, were believed by the more conservatively minded, to encourage loose morals and because of their mysterious and clandestine nature, they elicited suspicion.

[28]The implication here is that different laws and concessions applied in Rome.

Thus, from a more traditional Roman perspective they lacked the decorum that the official deities surely demanded.

2. Many citizens, especially from the lower classes, associated Egyptian religions with a foreign empire that was hostile to Rome. At the time, it was assumed that adherence to a Pharaonic belief system was somehow unpatriotic and anti-Roman.

Regardless, this was not everyone's opinion; especially those from the upper classes. Undeniably, a year after the assassination of *Iulius Caesar*[29] (44 B.C.E.) due to a renewed interest in Isis (cf. Scullard, 1982: 207) the triumvirs *Marcus Antonius*[30], young *Octavian Caesar*[31] and *Marcus Lepidus*[32] even planned (cf. Turcan, 2000: 121), to erect a temple to Isis and Serapis from public funds. This was promised, ostensibly, to gain the favour of the Roman citizenry. However, this project was never realised.

Subsequently, at first as a consequence of the political tensions between *Augustus Caesar*[33], *Marcus Antonius* and Queen Cleopatra[34], (cf. Merced-Ownbey 2008: 30), Egyptian and Alexandrian cults were on occasion, distrusted right up until the reign of Tiberius[35] (i.e. 14 – 37 C.E.). Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.5), Josephus (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 4 / 65 – 80) supplies us with an account of the Roman destruction of the temple to Isis in Tiberius' time.

However historians such as Gasparini (2008) remind us that due to lack of reliable evidence, we must be careful not to imagine that we can now accurately ratiocinate the precise relationship between certain "foreign" beliefs (such as the worship of Isis) and the general Roman citizenry.

By and large, Romans surely were not adverse to alternative belief systems. For example, the huge devotion given to the cult of Isis is well known and evidenced by the construction of the enormous *Iseum Metellinum* (commenced in c. 71 B.C.E., restored

[29]*Gaius Iulius Caesar* (100 – 44 B.C.E.)
[30]*Marcus Antonius Marci Filius Marci Nepos* (83 – 30 B.C.E.).
[31]*Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus* (After 44 B.C.E) (63 B.C.E. – 14 C.E.).
[32]*Marcus Aemilius Lepidus* (69 – 30 B.C.E.).
[33]*Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus* (After 27 B.C.E.) (63 B.C.E. – 14 C.E.).
[34]*Cleopatra VII Philopator* (69 – 30 B.C.E.).
[35]*Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti Filius Augustus* (42 B.C.E. – 37 C.E.).

in the time of Augustus and again in the Flavian period), which is referred to in the *Historia Augusta.* According to Gasparini (2008), this structure is situated in Rome on the *Oppius*, (near the modern *Piazza Iside* and *Via Muratori*), and must have once boasted, inter alia, a platform measuring 58 x 76 meters delimited by a granite column *peristylium*. Along its axis was located a pool measuring seven x 37 metres. The sacred site once included a sanctuary which is preserved today for some 112 metres. Gasparini (2008) states "In the area [archaeological site] many isiaca have been brought to the light: statues, mosaics, reliefs and frescos". [My insertion].

In this context, Gasparini (2008) confirms that:

> [T]he exotic nature of the Egyptian cults clashed with the traditional paganism of the Republican Rome only for the modern mentality. In reality, even the most conservative elements of Roman society criticized sometimes only the extreme aspects of the so-called "Eastern Religions" (for instance the idolatry of zoomorphic divinities). For the rest, these cults were greeted precociously and enthusiastically. [*Sic*].

In addition, as confirmed by Merced-Ownbey (2008: 26) and already well-known to students of late Republican Roman history, most proscriptions against Alexandrian/Pharaonic belief systems, when they occurred, seem to have been predominantly focused on the city of Rome itself and not the other centres of the then emerging Roman Empire. For example, in 29 B.C.E. (immediately after the death of Antonius and Cleopatra) Augustus prohibited the cult of Isis within the sacred enclosure of the city (*pomoerium*). A few years later, in 21 B.C.E., Agrippa[36] disallowed Alexandrine cults within a kilometre and a half from the city.

However, all this was to change after Caligula[37], renowned for his more oriental tastes, came to power. Certainly, he built a great temple devoted to Isis in the *Campus Martius* (i.e. the *Iseum Campense*). In this context, Alston (1998: 313) verifies the tolerant climate that followed on from Tiberius' reign:

> Caligula rebuilt the Iseum Campense and Nero introduced Isaic festivals into the Roman calendar. Domitian once more rebuilt the Iseum Campense while the Iseum at Beneventum, where his portrait as pharaoh was exhibited, may have been constructed during his reign. Rome had three large Isea: the Campense, one in Regio III and one on the Capitol; there

[36] *Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa* (c. 64 – 12 B.C.E.).
[37] *Gaius Iulius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* (12 - 41 C.E.).

were also smaller temples on the Caelian, Esquiline and Aventine Hills.

Obviously, despite its alleged foreign and anti-Roman connotations, the Isiac cult was well favoured in Rome at least during the Julio-Claudian period. In addition, the situation in Rome before Caligula's time may not have been quite as monochromatic as often painted by certain historians. More recent research suggests that Augustus in fact *encouraged* Egyptian culture in his new empire. Broadbent (2012: 59 - 61) presents two distinct, even possibly antithetical, ways that Augustus may have employed Egyptian culture for propagandistic purposes:

1. Augustus gave credibility and legality to his authority in Rome by deliberately flaunting the muddied memory of *Cleopatra VII Philopater* and *Marcus Antonius* as foils to his own time-honoured, moral, social and political ideals. To this end, he unashamedly employed, inter alia, both artworks and architecture that iconographically compared him favourably to his former opponents. Ironically, by associating himself with the memory of Cleopatra and Antonius, both of whom were strongly tainted by their long association to non-Roman and Egyptian cultural values, Augustus sold the message that by sharp contrast, only he was a worthy, traditional Roman leader with sacrosanct and orthodox values. This message, largely accepted by the greater Roman populace, ultimately helped Augustus to legitimise his long and mostly successful reign.

2. Augustus justified his authority in Rome by, paradoxically, assimilating Egypt's most symbolic art and architecture. This action assisted him to not only beautify Rome but also intensify the image of his new empire's supremacy over once-mighty Egypt.

Of particular importance to this research Broadbent (2012: 60 - 61), sums up Augustus' more likely attitude towards Egyptian cults as follows:

> Augustus also appeased the Roman citizenry by focusing upon the rejuvenation of Rome's traditional religious practices while encouraging the integration of the Egyptian cults. His actions would gain the respect and support from both Roman traditionalists and worshippers of foreign cults. This was accomplished through the protection of Rome's religious core, the pomerium, revitalising traditional morals and values through the Julian Law and accommodations made to the Pontifex Maximus. As for the Egyptian cults, particularly that of Isis, they were welcomed and their temples

restored by Augustus. Although the cults' practices were banned in the pomerium, the preservation of their temples suggests that Augustus wished to appeal to its worshippers while portraying himself as the protector of Rome's traditional identity.

The successful integration of Egyptian cults, the Hellenistic ruler cults, and the intellectual environment of the Hellenistic period encouraged Augustus to explore the concept of becoming a religious leader in order to create a sense of unity under one ruler. Augustus also benefitted from the concept of ἰσόθεοι τιμαί or "honours equal to those given to the gods". This concept was a commonly used method by Greek cities to establish cults for living rulers who had provided protection and/or security. Traditionally, this had been reserved only for mythological or historical figures. But with the intellectual climate of the Hellenistic period, salvation was sought at the hands of rulers rather than the gods.

#### 2.2.2.5 Roman Attitudes Toward Judaism

It is generally accepted that during the Republican and Julio-Claudian periods, Romans were fairly indulgent when it came to Judaism. At one extreme, it is known that certain Romans viewed Judaism as a foreign and uncultured cult. For example, Cicero[38] describes the Jewish religion in his *Pro L. Flacco Oratio*: 67[39]:

> *huic autem **barbarae superstitioni** resistere severitatis, multitudinem Iudaeorum flagrantem non numquam in contionibus pro re publica contemnere gravitatis summae fuit.*
>
> But to resist this **barbarous superstition** were an act of dignity, to despise the multitude of Jews, which at times was most unruly in the assemblies in defence of the interests of the republic, was an act of the greatest wisdom. [My emphases].

On the other hand, as verified by Van Kooten (2007: 637 - 644), Varro[40] praised Judaism because of its great antiquity. It is also understood that certain Romans like Varro, viewed the Jewish God as equivalent to Jupiter who of course was the chief deity of the official Roman Pantheon.

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[38] *Marcus Tullius Cicero* (106 - 3 B.C.E.).

[39] Latin text and English translation according to *Cicero* 2014. *Pro Flacco*, 67 in *Perseus Under Philogic* [Online]. Available: http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=LatinAugust2012&query=Cic.%20Flac.%2067&getid=0 [1 September 2014]. Also, cf. Maselli 2000. *Cicerone, in difesa di Lucio Flacco (Pro Flacco)*.

[40] *Marcus Terentius Varro* (116 - 27 B.C.E.).

It is often mooted that perhaps the citizens of Rome would not have been able (or bothered) to differentiate between Judaism and nascent Christian practices, when the latter first appeared sometime in the second half of the first century C.E. Nonetheless, as confirmed by Rutgers (1994: 57), the Romans first developed an extensive corpus of edicts with respect to Jews at about the same time. With reference to Josephus (*AJ*, XIV, 190 - 264 and XVI, 162 - 73), Both Rutgers (1994: 57) and Green (2010: 5) support the interpretation that due largely to the initial policies of Iulius Caesar[41], as from c. 50 B.C.E. to the beginning of the Common Era, Jews were mostly guaranteed their religious freedom. In this context they were legally permitted to, inter alia, meet freely as organised members of religious associations known as *thiasoi*, observe the Sabbath and the Jewish festivals, send money to the Temple in Jerusalem, and enjoy autonomy in their communal affairs. Jews were even absolved from compulsory enrolment in the Roman army.

However, despite this protection, it is also known (as will be discussed in more detail) that Jews were conceivably expelled from Rome in the reign of Tiberius (19 C.E.). We also know from Philo (*DLG*, XXIV / 159 – 160) that under the tyranny of Sejanus[42] (Tiberius' "*Socius Laborum*" and prefect of the Praetorian Guard), Jews suffered heavy victimisation that only ended with his final downfall in 31 C.E.

There is a possibility that an expulsion occurred again during the reign of Claudius[43] (41 - 54 C.E.). Much literature exists that puts forward various inconclusive arguments for the actual cause and scale of these two occurrences. Regardless, the possibility that either dislodgment of large numbers of Jews was as a direct result of religious intolerance alone is slight. Rutgers (1994: 57) concurs, and in the case of the banishment under Tiberius (i.e. 19 C.E.) for which we have more accurate details, he states:

> [W]e do know … that the measures taken by the Roman state were confined to the Jewish community in Rome and not directed against the Jewish population in other parts of the Roman empire. As in the case of other troublemakers, the verdict was relegatio but not deportatio. Jews were banished from Rome, but it appears that their civic or religious liberty was not otherwise impeded. In fact, it is conceivable that they did not have to move very far away from the capital.

[41] *Gaius Iulius Gai filius Caesar* (100 – 44 B.C.E.).
[42] *Lucius Aelius Seianus* (20 B.C.E. - 31 C.E.)
[43] *Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* (10 B.C.E. – 54 C.E.).

### 2.2.2.6 Roman Attitudes Toward Christianity

With the aforementioned contexts in mind, it is not at all clear why, according to *Pl.Ep.* X, 96, individuals, especially Roman citizens, who specifically professed Christianity were being singled out and tried for criminal activity merely for paying homage to a foreign deity. More typically, it is largely accepted that the Romans recognised, tolerated and/or neutralised numerous deities, both official and the more non-traditional.[44] Cowley (2008: 7) with reference to Wardman (1982: 2) confirms:

> There is clear evidence that the religious atmosphere at Rome was open to innovation and adjustment at almost all periods, but also that Roman attitudes were deeply conservative and desired tradition. These two conflicting characteristics were able to exist at the same time because evaluating and accepting a new deity or cult was part of Roman tradition since Rome had always expanded to borrow, absorb, and incorporate new deities, ideas, and cults.

As has been witnessed already, the more conventional wisdom seems to be, that, by and large, the Romans were extremely superstitious and religious in outlook. Undeniably, they mostly ascribed their success at dominating the Mediterranean world due to their constant maintenance of good relations with the gods *collectively* (i.e. both traditional and foreign deities were respected).

However, the impression is given here (i.e. *EP.* X, 96 and 97), that in c. 111 C.E., in a remote province of the Roman empire, Christianity was somehow perceived as being *very different* to the other cults and religions, whether official, imported or more "*outremer*" (including Judaism), and for no immediately obvious reason, seemingly posed an enormous threat to Roman security.

In this latter regard, if one takes these two letters at face value, only two possible reasons for Roman aversion might seem to be suggested here (albeit inconclusively). Firstly, if the more traditional temples were really experiencing a mass exodus of adherents, one might assume this had, inter alia, serious financial repercussions for

[44]Despite the fact that Cowley (2008: 53 - 59) takes the claimed Roman persecution of Christianity at face value and never questions possible Christian fraud as regards certain of the accounts of Roman intolerance of that specific religion, even she, accedes that by and large, depending on the social and economic conditions then prevalent, the Romans, if not always immediately tolerant were largely accommodating of other belief systems.

certain individuals and/or religious associations. Perhaps someone's pocket was being hurt? Secondly, assuming that the account is genuine, perhaps Christians (like Jews), took explicit and public issue with some aspect of the Imperial cult originally popularised by Augustus Caesar? Undeniably, this practice ensured that emperors (living or dead) who had been granted divine status, were part and parcel of Imperial Rome's official pantheon. This view is supported by Magyar (2009: 385 - 386), who points out that the Roman emperors were worshipped as gods due to their status and not their transcendence. In this regard, they were never considered superior to other traditional deities.[45]

It is therefore, quite possible that the Imperial cult was viewed as pivotal to Rome's endurance. In this regard, with reference to the findings of Magyar (2009: 392 - 394), to undermine or neglect its practices would have been seen as both deleterious to the well-being of the state and also intimates strongly that the reason why the Christians were so aggressively persecuted was due to their perceived acts of sedition.

Therefore, if given some latitude, it is possible to conceive of a Jew or Christian, with reference to their abhorrence of graven images, overtly refusing to pay any form of homage or acknowledgment to, say, an official portrait bust of the Roman Emperor. In this regard, early Christians, like Jews, might well have viewed this practice as akin to idolatry.

Notwithstanding, based purely on the letters themselves, the best that can be ascertained is that by 111 C.E., a relatively new phenomenon called Christianity was making a noticeable impact in *Bithynia et Pontus*. Paradoxically, although becoming increasingly popular with slave, freedman and citizen alike - to the point that other long-established religions were rapidly losing membership - it was also considered to be synonymous with criminal activity by the Roman authorities. This surely does not ring true, for why would something that was so extremely popular in *Bithynia et Pontus* simultaneously be considered so objectionable? It is also peculiar that Pliny stresses that the Christian meal is "harmless" yet equates the religion to criminal activity. Also, is

[45]However, it should be pointed out that scholars such as Magyar also seem to uncritically accept the various reports of Christian persecution at face value. As such his findings are biased. Cf. Magyar. 2009. Imperial Cult and Christianity: 385 - 394. Also, cf. Dirven (2011: 141 – 156).

it not quite ironic that despite Christianity's stated criminality, the Roman authorities were apparently well aware that those individuals who identified with this cult *promised* not to partake in any unlawful activity? If this information is genuine, the Roman authorities would have surely welcomed such upright and moral, self-regulating groups who so overtly avoided felonious pursuits. Why then were they being persecuted?

As an aside, if the letters are in fact forgeries, it raises another issue. The only conceivable purpose for this specific falsehood would have been to have given the distinct impression (i.e. at the actual time of the interpolation) that Christians living in the early second century C.E. were being unfairly and cruelly persecuted by the Romans. Had the interpolator wanted *solely* to provide fraudulent proof of an extra-biblical/scriptural reference to Jesus of Nazareth, he need only have mentioned a gospel account, such as Jesus' crucifixion by the authority of Pontius Pilate. Therefore, the fact that the hypothetical fraudster does not employ a biblical/scriptural reference and does not seem to be interested in establishing any extra-biblical/scriptural record for the existence of Jesus but is only concerned with describing atrocities committed by Roman authorities against peace-loving and law-abiding Christians, should be seen as highly significant.

Moreover, according to *EP.* X, 96, there is no evidence that those who professed the Christian faith worshipped an individual/deity specifically called "Jesus", and certainly there is absolutely no reference in either of these letters to an historical personage called "Jesus", "the Nazarene" or the like. Even if this "Christ" deity was in fact believed to be identical to an individual named "Jesus" (which is not stated in either of the two letters), by the Christians mentioned in the text, they obviously cannot serve as valid, historical references to an individual called Jesus (of Nazareth) who presumably lived in Galilee some 80 years previously.

Therefore, even if genuine, both letters tell the historian absolutely nothing about this assumed deity who is clearly described as "*quasi deo*" and not a person -real or imagined. Undeniably, this supposed account by Pliny, which is at best second-hand, constitutes nothing more than hearsay (on occasion extracted under torture), and only confirms (at best), that a religion / cult / sect / superstition called Christianity, existed in *Bithynia et Pontus* by the early second century C.E.

## 2.3 *Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus* a.k.a. Suetonius (c. 69 - 140 C.E.)

In his *DVC* (*De Vita Caesarum*), *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4[46] Suetonius is claimed to have written:

> *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit.*
>
> He [Claudius] banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus. [My insertion].

In addition, Suetonius supposedly wrote of Nero's[47] mistreatment of the Christians in his *DVC*, *Divus Nero*, 16, 2[48]:

> *afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis nouae ac maleficae;*
>
> He [Nero] likewise inflicted punishments on the Christians, a sort of people who held a new and impious superstition. [My insertion].

These two short passages raise a number of interrelated issues and, again, depending on the worldview of the scholar concerned, affect the way their content is ultimately perceived.

Listed below are some of the more common points raised by researchers as regards the reference to Claudius banishing the Jews from Rome. These are grouped and polarised as regards the dominant worldview of the researchers involved:

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[46] Latin text and English translation according to Reed and Thomson (Ed.). 1989. Suetonius: The Lives of the Twelve Caesars; An English Translation, Augmented with the Biographies of Contemporary Statesmen, Orators, Poets, and Other Associates in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0132%3Alife%3Dtib. [1 September 2014].

[47] *Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* (37 – 68 C.E.).

[48] Latin text and English translation according to Reed and Thomson (Ed.). 1989. Suetonius: The Lives of the Twelve Caesars; An English Translation, Augmented with the Biographies of Contemporary Statesmen, Orators, Poets, and Other Associates in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0132%3Alife%3Dtib. [1 September 2014].

### 2.3.1 A Review of *De Vita Caesarum*: *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4

#### 2.3.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. Van Voorst (2000: 30 - 32), feels that it is unlikely that a Christian redactor would view the specific formulation “Chrestus” as a reference to Christ, let alone inferring that their lord and saviour was alive and serving as the leader of Jewish troublemakers during the reign of Claudius. Therefore, he would have us accept this as a genuine passage. However, more recent and far more critical research by Boman (2012)[49] clearly undermines some of his findings (cf. Section 2.3.1.2 *ut infra*);

2. Suetonius merely misheard the name (cf. Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles, 2009: 110), and incorrectly spelled “Chresto” (i.e. ablative of Chrestus) as “Christo”;

3. Suetonius was confused (cf. Bruce, 1962: 316; Lane, 1998: 204 - 206; Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles, 2009: 110), and erroneously believed the leader of the civic unrest to be alive in Rome at the time. Van Voorst (2000: 38 - 39) believes that Suetonius is referring to an unknown person called “Chrestus” who was still alive in Rome;

4. As supported by the insights of, inter alia, Boyarin (1998: 577 – 627), many individuals, living in the late first century and early second century of the common ra, may have themselves as believers, not formally distinguished between certain forms of Judaism and proto-Christianity. Certainly, as late as the third century of the Common Era, Boyarin substantiates that it was still possible for the Roman authorities to confuse a Jewish Rabbi with a practicing Christian. Because of this reality, some scholars, with the notable exception of Brown and Meier (2004) (cf. Section 2.4.1.1), feel that in the case of the *DVC Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 the Roman authorities may not have been able to differentiate between disruptive Jews or Christians. Therefore, because Suetonius mentions “Christus”, it is possible that he should have spoken of Christians and not Jews;

[49]Cf. Boman. 2012. Inpulsore Cherestro?: 355 – 376.

5. Suetonius is either describing a Christian disturbance in Rome sometime during the reign of Claudius or (cf. Lane, 1998: 204 - 206; Dunn, 2003: 141 - 143; Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles, 2009: 110; and Brown and Meier, 2004: 101), he is describing Jews who were publicly protesting against Hellenised Jews who, at the time, were preaching the Christian gospel and/or that Christ was the Messiah; and

6. This is a valid, unambiguous reference to Jesus (of Nazareth) (cf. Eddy and Boyd, 2007: 166).

#### 2.3.1.2.1 Neutral Observations

1. According to Lane (1998: 204), the Latin passage is ambiguous as regards its exact denotation; it could either mean that *only* those specific individuals who were rioting were expelled from Rome or *all* members of that group (i.e. irrespective of whether "*Iudaeos*" refers to Jews or Christians) were expelled from Rome;

2. As supported by, inter alia, Slingerland (1992: 128), it is difficult to apply an exact date to this apparent civil unrest because Suetonius does not place his account according to either a strict chronology or analytical method; rather he groups his writings according to subject or topic. However it is clear that this event happened sometime between 41 and 54 C.E.;

3. Boman (2012: 355 - 376) who has examined 41 manuscripts[50] featuring *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4, draws our attention to numerous spelling variations, viz.: "Cherestro" as well as "Chresto" and even "Cresto". In addition he has seen the disputed name written as "Christo", "Cristo", "χριστο" and "χρο". He specifically takes issue with Van Voorst who seems to think that a "Christo" version does not exist. He also points out that it is incorrect to believe that "Chresto" only occurs either once or only occasionally. Boman (2012: 376) concludes his critical research with the following statement:

> [T]he occasional Christ-spellings in the MSS most likely are the conjectures by Christian scribes or scholars. About 90% of the collected manuscripts use an e, and the most common, earliest and most trustworthy spelling is

[50]Cf. Boman. 2012. Inpulsore Cherestro?: 355 – 376.

indeed Chresto, which is an intelligible Latin word (the ablative of the proper name Chrestus). Chresto is also lectio difficilior compared to e.g. χρο. Accordingly, I, in agreement with the modern editions of De Vita Caesarum, conclude that the original Suetonian spelling of the word in fact was Chresto.

4. Assuming the same event is being referred to here, historians only have three alternative sources (not always reliable) for pinpointing when the claimed Claudian expulsion of the Jews from Rome most likely took place, viz.:

**a. (*Claudius or Lucius*) *Cassius Dio Cocceianus* a.k.a. Dio (155 – 235 C.E.)**

In his *Historia Romana,* LX, 6 / 6[51], Dio writes about an event that occurred early in Claudius' reign:

τούς τε Ἰουδαίους πλεονάσαντας αὖθις, ὥστε χαλεπῶς ἂν ἄνευ ταραχῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου σφῶν τῆς πόλεως εἰρχθῆναι, οὐκ ἐξήλασε μέν, τῷ δὲ δὴ πατρίῳ βίῳ χρωμένους ἐκέλευσε μὴ συναθροίζεσθαι. τάς τε ἑταιρείας ἐπαναχθείσας ὑπὸ τοῦ

In the matter of the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the City, he [Claudius] decided not to drive them out, but ordered them to follow that mode of life prescribed by their ancestral custom and not to assemble in numbers [My insertions].

Slingerland (1989a: 307 – 316), supports a date for this occurrence as early as 41 C.E. Regardless, here we have an alternative account – one where Claudius *does not* expel all the Jews from Rome. Jews are not troublemakers but are considered to be too numerous to meet in public.

[51]Greek text according to Cary, Foster and Heinemann (Eds). 1914. Dio's Roman History. *Cassius Dio Cocceianus*, London: Harvard University Press, in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0593%3Abook%3D60%3Achapter%3D6%3Asection%3D6 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to Foster (Ed.). 1905. *Dio's Rome: 6.*

**b. *Paulus Orosius* a.k.a. Orosius (Fifth Century C.E.)**

In his *HAP* (*Historiarum Adversum Paganos) Libri VII*, 6 / 15 -16[52], Orosius writes:

*Anno eiusdem nono expulsos per Claudium urbe Iudaeos Iosephus refert. sed me magis Suetonius mouet, qui ait hoc modo: Claudius Iudaeos inpulsore Christo adsidue tumultuantes Roma expulit; quod, utrum contra Christum tumultuantes Iudaeos coherceri et conprimi iusserit, an etiam Christianos simul uelut cognatae religionis homines uoluerit expelli, nequaquam discernitur.*

Josephus reports, 'In his ninth year the Jews were expelled by Claudius from the city.' But Suetonius, who speaks as follows, influences me more: 'Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews constantly rioting at the instigation of Christ [Christo, or rather *xpo*].' As far as whether he had commanded that the Jews rioting against Christ [Christum] be restrained and checked or also had wanted the Christians, as persons of a cognate religion, to be expelled, it is not at all to be discerned

Slingerland (1992: 137) also clarifies that in the original Suetonius version the name "Christus" appears as "Chrestus". However, as can be seen, Orosius clearly refers to "Christus". This does not mean that Orosius necessarily redacted the name. Other possibilities surely exist. For example, depending on the condition of the manuscript he worked from, he may have naively assumed that Suetonius had meant "Christus" and made the necessary adjustment. It should also be noted that Slingerland confirms that such conservative scholars as Von Harnack (1912: 675 - 676), Meyer (1923: III: 38) and Jewett (1979: 38) support an interpretation that exonerates Orosius and variously suggest that Orosius was an innocent recipient of misquoted information originating with *Iulius Africanus* and transmitted via, inter alia, a translated version of Jerome's *Chronicle.*

Notwithstanding, it is also well known that Josephus makes no such reference to Claudius expelling Jews in any of his known works. Attempts by scholars such as Eisler (1929: 132), who claim that an early Christian removed the passage because it was considered too offensive are, in hindsight, quite

[52]Latin text according to Zangemeister (Ed.). 1889. *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* in *Attalus.org*, [Online]. Available: http://www.attalus.org/latin/orosius7A.html [16 July 2014]. English translation according to Slingerland. 1992. Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4, Acts 18, and Paulus Orosius' Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII: 137. Also, cf. Deferrari (Tr.) 1964. *Paulus Orosius: The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans.*

confused, since the reference is not in any way provocative.[53] Had a Christian redactor removed this passage from one of Josephus' un-named works, this could only have occurred after the time (i.e. fifth century C.E.) Orosius supposedly quoted from it. This raises the pertinent question as to why no-one else quotes this text *before* Orosius' time.

Slingerland (1992:138) proposes that Eisler is probably conflating the claimed Josephan passage with the confirmed quote from Suetonius. The problem with that observation is that even if this is what in fact happened, neither passage is in any way negative – certainly neither of them is couched in such a way that it could not serve some useful purpose for an early Christian apologist. Furthermore, it is surely equally possible to consider that Orosius either deliberately invented this quotation or he simply misquoted his source.

### c. *Acts of the Apostles* 18: 1 - 3[54] (c. 85 – 115 C.E.)[55]

*Act.Ap.* 18: 1 – 3 yields:

> μετὰ ταῦτα χωρισθεὶς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦλθεν εἰς Κόρινθον καὶ εὑρών τινα Ἰουδαῖον ὀνόματι Ἀκύλαν, Ποντικὸν τῷ γένει, προσφάτως ἐληλυθότα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ Πρίσκιλλαν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον χωρίζεσθαι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς Ῥώμης, προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι ἔμενεν παρ' αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἠργάζοντο, ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῇ τέχνῃ.
>
> After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

*Act.Ap. 18:* 1 – 3 makes it quite clear that Claudius deported *all* Jews from Rome. Even Brown and Meier (2004: 102), concede that this is somewhat of an

[53] Slingerland (1992: 138) also notes that Eisler is clearly mistaken in his assumptions. Cf. Slingerland. 1992. Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4, Acts 18, and *Paulus Orosius' Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*: 127 – 144.

[54] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 289.

[55] The date for Acts is totally dependent on the ideological worldview of the authority concerned. Conservative scholars typically favour early dates (c. 60 C.E.) and try to claim evidence of eyewitness accounts. Whereas the highly critical Acts Seminar, by sharp contrast, concludes that Acts was written in c. 115 C.E. In addition they supply evidence that Acts is based on literary models like Homer for its inspiration. Indeed, they cite exact words and phrases from popular stories as evidence of its mythological base. Cf. Smith and Tyson (Eds). 2013. *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report.*

exaggeration, estimating that at least 50,000 Jews must have lived in Rome at the time.

Regardless, assuming that this banishment occurred because of civil unrest and not as a consequence of some famine as is sometimes alluded to by some sources[56]. It is clear that this action was not dependent on whether or not the Jews had been directly involved in the avowed disturbances.

Slingerland (1992:133 - 134) points out that both *Act.Ap.* 18:2 and the *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 have much in common.

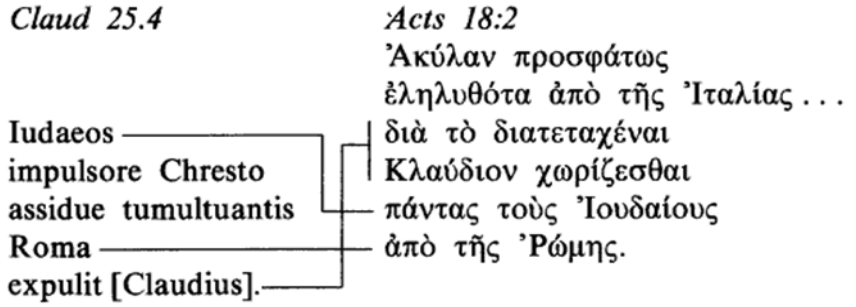



**Figure 3**

Comparison Between *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 and *Act.Ap.* 18.2.
(Diagram taken from Slingerland, 1992: 133).

Fig. 3 clearly illustrates that both passages specify that it was Claudius who expelled *all* the Jews from Rome. In short, both texts imply something that is quite hard to believe, viz.: the entire Jewish population was expelled from the city. Slingerland (1992: 133) confirms that the only difference between the two passages is that *Act.Ap.* 18: 2 mentions Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, whereas Suetonius in his *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 mentions *Chrestus*.

However, Slingerland (1992: 133) also warns his reader that, although both texts appear to be harmonious we must be careful because they lack "the kind of corroborative detail insuring the propriety of the procedure." Assuming that these texts do refer to an actual historical event, their similarity in structure is

[56]Cf. Bruce, 1962: 309 n. 3.

not sufficient, independent, uncorroborated evidence to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the historical event occurred.

In addition, the similarity of structure presents a more likely scenario (albeit unprovable). The possibility exists that these two texts may not refer to an actual historical event at all. Rather, one of the passages is simply the model for the other. If the original text was factual, then it follows that its copy (together with its elements of recontextualisation) would still be an interpolation. If the original is itself of dubious provenance then the copy is also equally invalid as a source of reliable historical data. Here, either passage could be the "original".

However, given that the *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 passage already has the hallmark of being a likely interpolation, it follows that it would more likely postdate the *NT* book of Acts. In this scenario, the hypothetical, early Christian apologist, apart from having a working knowledge of the Christian tradition, could also have referred directly to *Act.Ap.* 18:2 as a source of inspiration for his forgery in *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4.

#### 2.3.1.3 Sceptical Observations

1. As confirmed by Boman (2012: 376) and Bruce (1938: 48), *Chrestus* was a common enough slave name at the time. It means something akin to "useful" whereas the Greek name *Chrestos* meant "good".

   Much evidence exists that Chrestos was employed in respect of a number of deities including Isis, Osiris and Serapis etc. Recently, a bowl was discovered in Alexandria, which has been dated anytime from the second century C.E. to the first century C.E. It bears an inscription that reads: "δια χρηστου ο γοισταις" (no accents) which is translated as "through kindness for the magicians". [57]

   The point is that certainly, in the early years of the Common Era it is possible that Jesus might have been referred to increasingly as "Chrestus" as well as

[57] Viegas. 2012. Earliest Reference Describes Christ as "Magician" in *Science on NBC News.org.* [Online]. Available: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/26972493/#.U-iSRmNKr2Q [14 August 2014].

"Christus" because there was already a well-established tradition of referring to deities by this accolade. This does not necessarily mean that the terms were interchangeable.

It is certainly true that the ancient Greeks and Romans anointed the statues of their deities with oil and consequently these deities were also sometimes referred to as "*Christus*"[58];

2. As supported by Boman (2012: 376) *Chrestus* means "good";

3. Even Paul does not refer to his followers as "Christians" so why would the Romans have bothered to make this subtle distinction so early in their own history? The label "Christian" is thus too premature for Roman commentary in the Julio-Claudian period. The term is not even used by Christians themselves until the second century C.E. when in *Act.Ap.* 11: 26 we are told the term "began in Antioch";

4. Nowhere in any of Suetonius's other writings is "Jesus (of Nazareth)" mentioned;

5. Strangely, Josephus makes absolutely no mention of the claimed Claudian banishment of the Jews in either the *BJ* or the *AJ*. This cannot be ascribed to his apprehension at possibly offending his Roman master (i.e. Vespasian), because he happily mentions the banishment of Jews under Tiberius (cf. Slingerland, 1992:135); and

6. This is obviously a Christian forgery, ascribed to Suetonius to conveniently substantiate the fraudulent writings of *Sulpicius Severus a.k.a.* Severus (c. 363 – c. 425 C.E.), who also redacted the works of Tacitus. Specifically, it is Severus' contemptible mendacities that helped to create the false perception (which is still rampant in contemporary times), that the Romans severely persecuted the early church, including histrionic tales about Nero employing Christians as human torches etc. (cf. Slingerland, 1989b:133 -144).

[58]Cf. the comments of Sansone. 1992. *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport:* 97 – 105.

### 2.3.2 Discussion

If we accept, merely for the sake of argument, that both the *DVC*, *Divus Claudius*, 25, 4 as well as the *DVC*, *Divus Nero*, 16, 2 are *bona fide* passages written by Suetonius, all we are certain of is that, at best, he recorded second-hand accounts, at least five decades after the time of the avowed occurrences, about unwelcome Christians in Rome during the reigns of Claudius and Nero. Moreover, if we totally accept that *Chrestus* is definitely a reference to an individual called either *Christus* or *Chrestus*, we do not know whether this was a real person living in Rome during the reign of Claudius or a reference to a deity. Furthermore, if *Chrestus* was a deity, it still does not tell us anything about a Jew called Jesus (of Nazareth) living and/or working in Galilee/Judea in the first third of the Common Era.

If we contemplate the possibility of interpolation then of course the significance of these passages as historically compelling data is completely nullified. In this latter context, the only value of these passages is that their very existence, taken together with other evidence, would support the hypothesis that, inter alia, early Christian apologists felt a desperate need to manufacture such fabrications for two primary reasons:

1. They were at a loss to find any genuine extra-biblical/scriptural historical references to convince their religious opponents that their assumed religious founder had even existed;

2. For didactic purposes, they wanted to show that their religion was the only true faith by virtue of its proven ability to overcome overwhelming adversity rather than being a mere product of largely secular and political orchestration. In this sense they needed accounts of early Christians bravely and willingly suffering enormous torment and mindless persecution for the principles of their faith.

## 2.4 (*Publius* or *Gaius*) *Cornelius Tacitus* a.k.a. Tacitus (c. 56 - 117 C.E.)

In his *An.* (*Annales*), XV, 44[59], Tacitus writes:

[59]Latin text according to Fisher, (Ed.) 1906. *Annales ab excessu divi Augusti. Cornelius Tacitus,* with an English translation according to Church and Brodribb in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0077:book=15:chapter=4

*Et haec quidem humanis consiliis providebantur. mox petita dis piacula aditique Sibyllae libri, ex quibus supplicatum Vulcano et Cereri Proserpinaeque ac propitiata Iuno per matronas, primum in Capitolio, deinde apud proximum mare, unde hausta aqua templum et simulacrum deae perspersum est; et sellisternia ac pervigilia celebravere feminae quibus mariti erant. sed non ope humana, non largitionibus principis aut deum placamentis decedebat infamia quin iussum incendium crederetur. ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quaesitissimis poenis adfecit quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat; repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio rursum erumpebat, non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud proinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus adfixi aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigae permixtus plebi vel curriculo insistens. unde quamquam adversus sontis et novissima exempla meritos miseratio oriebatur, tamquam non utilitate publica sed in saevitiam unius absumerentur.*

Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the face and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination,

4 [10 July 2014].

when daylight had expired.

### 2.4.1 A Review of Annales, XV, 44

#### 2.4.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. According to, inter alia, Evans (2001: 42), Mercer Dictionary of the Bible (2001: 343), Eddy and Boyd (2007: 127) and Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles (2009:110)[60], *An.*, XV, 44 is an authentic extra-biblical/scriptural reference to Pontius Pilate's execution of Jesus (of Nazareth);

2. Crossan (1995: 145) believes that *An*. XV, 44 clearly confirms that Jesus both existed and was crucified. With specific reference to both Tacitus and Josephus, he informs his reader: "That he [Jesus] was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be" [My insertion];

3. Van Voorst (2000: 33 - 35) claims that the Latin terms for Christians and Chrestians were equally valid terms to denote the early adherents of Christianity in the second century C.E.;

4. Meier (1991:168 - 171), contends (unbelievably) that there is *no evidence* to sustain any interpolation theories;

5. In contradiction to the other Christian scholars (cf. Section 2.3.1.1) Brown and Meier (2004: 99), based on their uncritical acceptance of *Annales*, XV, 44, claim that by 64 C.E. the Romans were quite able to distinguish between Christian and Jew. A similar error, but equal claim of authority in this matter comes from Green (2010: 1).

6. Feldman (1984: 818), Portier (1994: 263) and Van Voorst (2000: 39 - 53) all concur that most scholars believe *An.*, XV, 44 to be wholly authentic; and

7. Holding (2008: 55 - 56), claims:

[60]Unbelievably, apart from claiming that the passage is far too negative to have been made by a Christian hand, Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles also claim that because all extant copies of the Annales contain this specific passage (i.e. *An*. XV, 44), it is "clearly" authentic. Cf. Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles. 2009. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* :109 - 110.

> Very few would assert that this passage is a forgery, for the evidence is strongly in favour of its genuiness. This passage is in perfect Tacitean style, and it appears in every known copy of the *Annals*, although admittedly there are very few copies of this work, and none dates earlier than the 11th century. The anti-Christian tone is so strong that no Christian could have written it.

#### 2.4.1.2 Sceptical Observations

1. According to scholars such as Zindler (1998: 13 - 14) this is an obvious forgery. Strangely, no-one, not even Clement of Alexandria who made a point of collecting such passages, cited this obviously useful passage until the fifth century C.E., when it suddenly appears, quoted verbatim by Severus (c. 363 – c. 425 C.E.), who is already well known for his fraudulent redactions and hyperbole;

2. Wells (1988a: 16 – 17), somewhat sarcastically notes that:

   > Tacitus does not name the executed man as Jesus, but uses the title Christ (Messiah) as if it were a proper name. But he could hardly have found in archives a statement such as "the Messiah was executed this morning";

3. Zindler (1998: 14) informs his reader that Tertullian[61], who quotes extensively from Tacitus, knows nothing of Nero's persecution;

4. According to Zara (2009) in an online article, strong evidence[62] exists that the original form of "*Christianos*" should have read as "*Chrestianos*". This was deliberately altered by an unknown hand in an eleventh century copy of the *Annales*[63];

5. Many scholars (e.g. Wells, 1988a: 16), state the obvious point that the prefect Pontius Pilate is incorrectly referred to as a "procurator"; and

[61] *Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus* (c. 160 - 225 C.E.)
[62] Cf. Zara. 2009. The Chrestianos Issue in Tacitus Reinvestigated in *Text Excavation* [Online]. Available: http://www.textexcavation.com/documents/zaratacituschrestianos.pdf. [28 February 2014].
[63] I.e. The M.II housed in the *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* (Library number 68.2).

6. According to Zindler (1998: 14) nowhere else in any of his voluminous works, does Tacitus mention Nero's excesses against Christians.

### 2.4.2 Discussion

If we disregard the glaring warning signs contained in this passage, including the preposterous reference to Pontius Pilate's execution of someone called *Christus,*[64] and naively accept (as does Meier and company), that this passage is authentic, it still does not supply the historian with any tangible evidence for the historical existence of Jesus (of Nazareth) in the early part of the first century C.E. As stated, and taken at face value, this information is at best a second-hand account that could be equally based upon hearsay and/or popular/traditional folklore.

If one takes a more critical view, the passage has all the signs of a deliberate attempt to paint the Romans as responsible for the indiscriminate and mindless persecution of Christians. Considering that Christians supposedly preached peace and deliberately conducted themselves in ethically upright ways hardly explains why they are described here as hating mankind.

## 2.5 Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (Second Century C.E.)[65]

Papias is credited with having written the *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord* in which he seemingly recorded information he indirectly received[66] from very early Christian leaders who were active between c. 30 C.E. and c. 70 C.E. This book, which according to Doherty (2009: 466), possibly dates from sometime between c. 110 and 140 C.E., no longer exists but (cf. Norelli, 2005), statements supposedly made by Papias are

[64]The Roman authorities are hardly likely to have kept detailed records of every crucifixion victim in the provinces. Furthermore, if Jesus of Nazareth's execution had indeed been recorded by Pontius Pilate's clerics he would not have been referred to as "Christ". Indeed, if the term "Christ" had been used in Jerusalem in c. 33 C.E. it would not have made any sense to either Jesus of Nazareth or Pontus Pilate. Similarly it would have meant very little to Tacitus in the early second century C.E. Therefore, if the latter actually wrote "*Christus*" he would have believed it to be a personal name. In this regard, it could never have been based on a Roman record but more likely hails from a Christian tradition.

[65]Depending on the authority, Papias' dates could be as early as the late first century C.E. or as late as the middle of the second century C.E. A date of c. 95 - 120 C.E. seems to be the most realistic. Cf. Norelli. 2005. *Papia di Hierapolis, Esposizione degli Oracoli del Signore: I frammenti*: 38 – 54. and Yarbrough.1983.*The Date of Papias: A Reassessment:* 181 - 191.

[66]O'Connell claims that Papias' information came via "one, or at most two, intermediaries." Cf. (O'Connell, 2008a: 73.

recorded in the writings of a number of later Christian authors, including Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome, Philip of Side, Andrew of Caesarea, Apollinarius of Laodicea, etc. Many of these can be rejected as being in any way useful because, on occasion, Papias is confused with another Christian apologist (i.e. Κοδράτος[67]) and/or the author who quotes Papias is prone to making historical errors and/or the author places Papias at an historical time that seriously conflicts with his estimated dates. In most cases the content that is being "remembered" or "quoted" by certain of these authors is quite fantastical. The following reference to Papias by Apollinaris the Younger, (cf. Cramer (Ed.). 1844. *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum:* 12 - 13)[68] Bishop of Laodicea (c. 315 - 390 C.E.) which putatively gives an eyewitness account of Judas Iscariot's demise is most informative in this regard:

> Ἀπολιναρίου· Οὐκ ἐναπέθανε τῇ ἀγχόνῃ Ἰούδας, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεβίω καθαιρεθεὶς πρὸ τοῦ ἀποπνιγῆναι. καὶ τοῦτο δηλοῦσιν αἱ τῶν Ἀποστόλων Πράξεις.
>
> "ὅτι πρηνὴς γενόμενος ἐλάκησε μέσος, καὶ ἐξεχύθη τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ."
>
> τοῦτο δὲ σαφέστερον ἱστορεῖ Παπίας ὁ Ἰωάννου μαθητὴς, λέγων οὕτως, ἐν τῷ δ΄ τῆς ἐξηγήσεως τῶν Κυριακῶν λόγων.
>
> "μέγα δὲ ἀσεβείας ὑπόδειγμα ἐν τούτῳ τῷ κόσμῳ περιεπάτησεν ὁ Ἰούδας. πρησθεὶς ἐπιτοσοῦτον τὴν σάρκα, ὥστε μὴ δὲ ὁπόθεν ἅμαξα διέρχεται ῥαδίως ἐκεῖνον δύνασθαι διελθεῖν. ἀλλὰ μὴ δὲ αὐτὸν μόνον τὸν τῆς κεφαλῆς ὄγκον αὐτοῦ. τὰ μὲν γὰρ βλέφαρα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ φασὶ τοσοῦτον ἐξοιδῆσαι, ὡς αὐτὸν μὲν καθόλου τὸ φῶς μὴ βλέπειν. τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς δὲ αὐτοῦ μὴ δὲ ὑπὸ ἰατροῦ διόπτρας ὀφθῆναι δύνασθαι· τοσοῦτον βάθος εἶχον ἀπὸ τῆς ἔξωθεν ἐπιφανείας· τὸ δὲ αἰδοῖον αὐτοῦ πάσης μὲν ἀσχημοσύνης ἀηδέστερον καὶ μεῖζον φαίνεσθαι. φέρεσθαι δὲ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ σώματος συρρέοντας ἰχώρας τε καὶ σκώληκας εἰς ὕβριν. δι᾽ αὐτῶν μόνον τῶν ἀναγκαίων. μετὰ πολλας δὲ βασάνους καὶ τιμωρίας, ἐν ἰδίῳ φασὶ χωρίῳ τελευτήσαντα. καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἔρημον καὶ ἀοίκητον τὸ χωρίον μέχρι τῆς νῦν γενέσθαι. ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον δύνασθαί τινα ἐκεῖνον τὸν τόπον παρελθεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ τὰς ῥῖνας ταῖς χερσὶν ἐπιφράξῃ. τοσαύτη διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κρίσις ἐχώρησεν." [My punctuation for greater clarity.]

[67]Based on a reading of Eusebius (cf. *EH*, IV, 3) Κοδράτος a.k.a. Quadratus of Athens was active in c. 124 C.E.

[68]English translation according to Text Excavation [Online]. Available: http://www.textexcavation.com/papias.html#apollinarius [9 July 2014]. This source explains that the text by Apollinarius of Laodicea is as reconstructed from various compiled fragments, cf. Holmes. 2007. The *Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations:* 18. Greek text according to Cramer (Ed.). 1844. *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*: 12 – 13. A similar version (cf. Migne (Ed.). 1864. *Expositiones in Acta Apostolorum* in *Patrologiae: Cursus Completus: Patrologiae Gaecae Tomus CXXV.* 522 – 523) composed by Theophylactus of Ochrid (c. 1050/60 – c. 1108 C.E.) also exists. In this latter version, Theophylact claims the first paragraph as his own and accredits Papias with paragraphs two and three. Other shorter versions also exist.

> Judas did not die by hanging, but lived on, having been cut down before he was suffocated. And the acts of the apostles show this, that falling head long he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. This fact is related more clearly by Papias, the disciple of John, and the fourth book of the Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord as follows:
>
> Judas walked about in this world a terrible example of impiety; his flesh swollen to such an extent that, where hay wagon can pass with ease, he was not able to pass, no, not even the mass of his head merely. They say that his eyelids swelled to such an extent that he could not see the light at all, while as for his eyes they were not visible even by a physician looking through an instrument, so far have they sunk from the surface.
>
> His genitals appeared entirely disfigured, nauseous and large. When he carried himself about discharge and worms flowed from his entire body through his private areas only, on account of his outrages. After many agonies and punishments, he died in his own place. And on account of this the place is desolate and uninhabited even now. And to this day no one is able to go by that place, except if they block their noses with their hands. Such judgment was spread through his body and upon the earth. [My punctuation for greater clarity].

This preposterous passage is extant in various forms. Doherty (2009: 466) also points out that one of the fragments attributed to and/or concerning Papias (listed as No. 1) is a quotation from Irenaeus dated to the late second century C.E. (i.e. *CH*, V, 33 / 3 – 4). This fragment has parallels with the content of the pseudepigraphical 2 Baruch (29: 4 – 8). Here, the passage deals with the fertility of the vineyards that will occur when the future Messiah rules on earth. However, in the Irenaeus text, Papias attributes this concept to Jesus when he forecasts his imminent but future thousand-year reign. Doherty sees this ascription of a first century C.E. Jewish passage (posing as if it was something that Jesus actually said), as evidence that Papias is unreliable as regards which traditions he borrows from in order to give Jesus a voice. Doherty (2009: 466) states:

> [I]t is a good example of the widespread phenomenon of attaching current wisdom, ethical and prophetic material – even that contained in non-Christian sources – to the figure of Jesus, as the latter progressed from myth to history.

However, to be fair to those who would still have Papias as a *bona fide* historical source, supposedly more reliable references to Papias are certainly to be found in the works of Irenaeus and Eusebius.

Although Irenaeus originally wrote in Greek, currently most of his work is only available in Latin. The following passage from his *CH,* 5.33 / 4[69] is pertinent:

> *Haec autem et Papias Iohannis auditor, Polycarpi autem contubernalis, vetus homo, per scripturam testimonium perhibit in quarto librorum suorum; sunt enim illi quinque libri conscripti. et adiecit dicens: Haec autem credibilia sunt credentibus. et Iuda, inquit, proditore non credente et interrogante: Quomodo ergo tales geniturae a domino perficientur? dixesse dominum: Videbunt qui venient in illa.*
>
> These things Papias too, who was a earwitness of John and companion of Polycarp, and an ancient man, wrote and testified in the fourth of his books. For there are five books written by him. And he adds, saying: But these things are believable by the believers. And, he says, Judas the traitor did not believe and asked: How therefore will such generations be brought to completion by the Lord? The Lord said: Those who come into those [times] will see.

In his *EH*, III, 39 / 1 – 4 one reads Eusebius' quotation, ostensibly taken from Papias' prologue to his now lost *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*[70]

> *EH*, III, 39 / 1:
>
> τοῦ δὲ Παπία συγγράμματα πέντε τὸν ἀριθμὸν φέρεται, ἃ καὶ ἐπιγέγραπται Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεως. τούτων καὶ Εἰρηναῖος ὡς μόνων αὐτῷ γραφέντων μνημονεύει, ὧδέ πως λέγων· «ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας ὁ Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἑταῖρος γεγονώς, ἀρχαῖος ἀνήρ, ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ βιβλίων. ἔστιν γὰρ αὐτῷ πέντε βιβλία συντεταγμένα.
>
> And there are extant five writings of Papias which are given the title of Exegesis of the Oracles of the Lord. Of these Irenaeus too makes mention as his only writings, thus saying as follows: These things Papias too, who was a earwitness of John and companion of Polycarp, and an ancient man, wrote and testified in the fourth of his books. For there are five books

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[69]Latin text according to the *agrapha* in Text Excavation.org [Online]. Available: http://www.textexcavation.com/agrapha.html#irenaeus [16 May 2014]. English translation according to Roberts and Rambaut. 1885. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103533.htm [16 May 2014].

[70]Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D39%3Asection%3D1 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to *Papias of Hierapolis* [Online]. Available: http://www.textexcavation.com/papias.html#fragment3. [16 May 2014]. In addition, comparative Greek text according to ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ in *Documenta Catholica Omnia* [Online]. Available: http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Historia_Ecclesiastica,_GR.pdf. [21 May 2014].

arranged by him.

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*EH*, III, 39 / 2:

καὶ ὁ μὲν Εἰρηναῖος ταῦτα· αὐτός γε μὴν ὁ Παπίας κατὰ τὸ προοίμιον τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων ἀκροατὴν μὲν καὶ αὐτόπτην οὐδαμῶς ἑαυτὸν γενέσθαι τῶν ἱερῶν ἀποστόλων ἐμφαίνει, παρειληφέναι δὲ τὰ τῆς πίστεως παρὰ τῶν ἐκείνοις γνωρίμων διδάσκει δι᾽ ὧν φησιν λέξεων.

It was Irenaeus who wrote these things. But Papias himself rather, according to the preface of his volumes, by no means reveals himself to have been either an earwitness or an eyewitness of the holy apostles, but teaches by the words that he says that he received the things of the faith from those who knew them.

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*EH*, III, 39 / 3:

οὐκ ὀκνήσω δέ σοι καὶ ὅσα ποτὲ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καλῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημόνευσα, συγκατατάξαι ταῖς ἑρμηνείαις, διαβεβαιούμενος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀλήθειαν. οὐ γὰρ τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ λέγουσιν ἔχαιρον ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοί, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τἀληθῆ διδάσκουσιν, οὐδὲ τοῖς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐντολὰς μνημονεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τὰς παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τῇ πίστει δεδομένας καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς παραγινομένας τῆς ἀληθείας.

[Papias himself writes:] But I shall not hesitate to arrange alongside my interpretations as many things as I ever learned well and remembered well from the elders, confirming the truth on their behalf. For I did not rejoice, like many, over those who spoke many things, but [rather] over those who taught the truth, nor over those who related strange commands, but over those who related those given by the Lord by faith and coming from the truth itself.

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*EH*, III, 39 / 4:

εἰ δέ που καὶ παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους, τί Ἀνδρέας ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν ἢ τί Φίλιππος ἢ τί Θωμᾶς ἢ Ἰάκωβος ἢ τί Ἰωάννης ἢ Ματθαῖος ἤ τις ἕτερος τῶν τοῦ κυρίου μαθητῶν ἅ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης, τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταὶ, λέγουσιν. οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσοῦτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.

[Papias continues:] And if anyone chanced to come along who had followed the elders, I inquired as to the words of the elders, what Andrew or what Peter had said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James or what John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord [had said], the things which both Aristion and the elder John, disciples of the Lord, were saying. **For I did not suppose that things from books would profit me as much as things from a living and remaining voice.** [My emphasis].

### 2.5.1 A Review: *Contra Haereses* 5.33 / 4 and *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 39 / 1 – 4

#### 2.5.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. O'Connell (2008a: 73 and 81) explains that Papias' work is not explicable unless Jesus (of Nazareth) actually existed[71];
2. Jones (2007: 148) claims that the testimony of Papias verifies that the type of authorial traditions that were cited by Irenaeus existed long before the mid to late second century of the Common Era. Consequently:

> Papias faithfully recorded stories that he heard, and it is possible that some of these stories were exaggerated. But the fact that Papias *may* have recorded some exaggerated stories does not negate the crucial fact that he recorded oral traditions about the Gospels that were in circulation fewer than twenty years after the last of the four New Testament Gospels was written.

3. Ehrman (2012: 98) holds up Papias as "an important source for establishing the historical existence of Jesus";

4. Bauckham (2006: 417) and O'Connell (2008a: 82) claim that because Papias' prologue mentions, inter alia, Andrew, Philip and Thomas, he must have had first-hand knowledge of John's Gospel;

5. Bauckham (2006: 417) claims that the "elder John" mentioned by Papias is none other than the author of John's gospel. He confirms:

> We may conclude that what Papias said about the origin of John's Gospel was that John the Elder, the disciple of the Lord, wrote it. He may have said that John was urged to do so by the elders, the leading Christian teachers in the province of Asia, who had known other disciples of Jesus. Papias also, very likely, said that these elders vouched for the truth of the Gospel (referring to John 21: 24). He then quoted part of 1 John 1: 1 - 4 in order to show that its author, John the Elder, was both himself an eyewitness of the

[71] A good indication of O'Connell's (2008a:79) all-pervading worldview may be gleaned by his statement that "Those who deny the existence of Jesus ('Christ-mythers') are prepared to reject a vast number of historical facts which are readily accepted by virtually every competent historian". He then (2008a :85) reveals to his reader those who he claims qualify to be "competent historians" by making the unsubstantiated claim that they number among the "thousands of individuals with credentials in ancient history or New Testament studies". Indeed, according to O'Connell (2008a: 85), only two individuals may be singled out from this vast and all-encompassing collective and who erroneously believe that Jesus never existed, viz.: Robert M. Price and Richard C. Carrier.

events of the Gospel history and himself wrote them in his Gospel. Therefore he alone, among the Gospel writers Papias discussed, wrote the logia of the Lord in order;

6. Gundry (2005: 50) as also mentioned by Wells (1997: 74) and Sim (2007: 283 – 291), claims that Papias wrote during the period 101 - 108 C.E. Thus proving that it was possible for the apostle John to have survived long enough to have met Papias personally.

#### 2.5.1.2 Neutral Observations

1. Although the text is open to interpretation and it is unclear what the exact relationship is between the various groups (i.e. disciples of Jesus, Christian elders or those who merely met with the elders), that Papias claims to have had exposure to, it is clear enough to put forward two acceptable scenarios:

    a. The seven disciples who are mentioned in the synoptic gospels, viz.: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew plus an unknown individual called Aristion and the "elder John" are *all* to be understood as being a *collective* of "elders". These in turn were subsequently known by those who met at least some of them at a later stage.

    b. The seven individuals who are mentioned in the synoptic gospels, viz.: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew are the "disciples". They were all subsequently known to a separate group called the "elders" (i.e. Aristion and the elder John). These in turn were subsequently known by those who met them at a later stage.

    These permutations are mostly supported by O'Connell (2008a: 75 - 76). In this context the following diagram (Fig. 4) which is employed variously by numerous scholars, is loosely based on his:

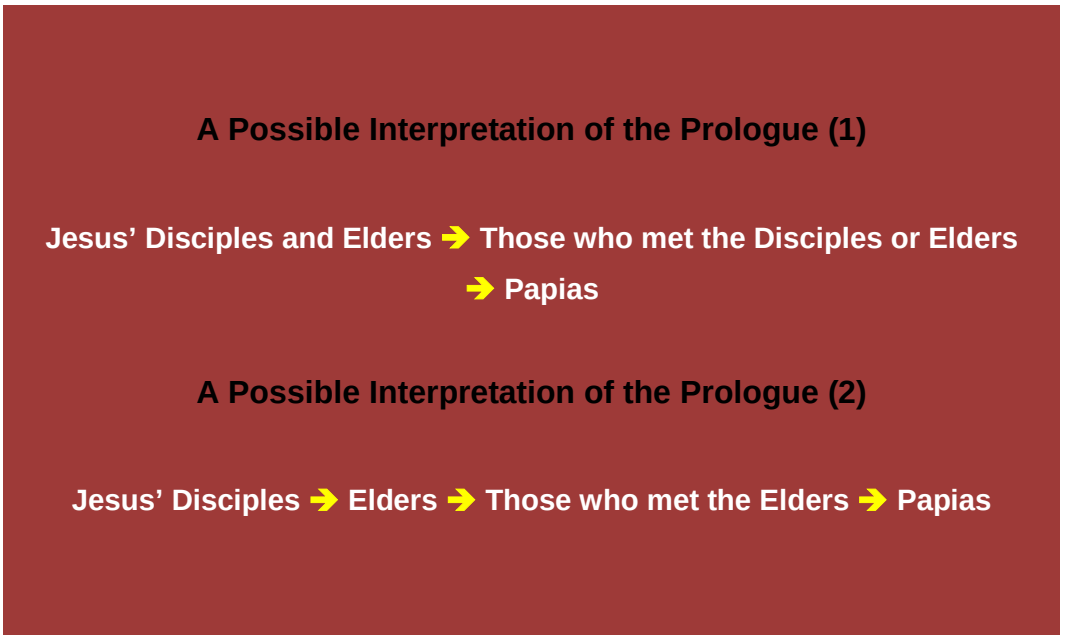



**Figure 4**

Diagram showing two possible interpretations
based on a reading of *EH*, III, 39 / 4

2. O'Connell (2008: 77) points out that Papias clearly refers to the seven disciples in the past tense whereas he gives the impression that he communicated directly with Aristion and the "elder John" in his own lifetime. Sim (2007: 292) concurs that the "use of the present tense (λἐγουσιν) suggests that John and Aristion were alive when Papias wrote". Thus O'Connell and others (e.g. Gundry 2005: 52 - 55), favour the first possibility that Papias spoke *directly* with someone who either knew a disciple of Jesus and/or an "elder/ presbyter" who personally knew a disciple of Jesus. Whereas Eusebius (*EH*, III, 39 / 5 and 6) and scholars such as Sim (2007: 292 - 293) support the interpretation of two distinct groups and thus seem to be more likely to favour the second possibility (cf. Fig. 4).

#### 2.5.1.3 Sceptical Observations

1. A number of authors, point out that Eusebius is himself somewhat critical of Papias as a reliable authority. Indeed, Eusebius states in *HE*, III, 39 / 13: "For he [Papias] appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses" [My insertion]. In addition, what often seems to happen

when Papias is presented (especially in Eusebius' *HE*, III, 39 / 1 – 4) as a reliable source for an historical Jesus of Nazareth, is that the rest of Eusebius' passages connected with Papias are often overlooked and thus the full context is lost.

In this regard, a reading of what follows on from *EH*, III, 39 / 1 – 4, (i.e. *EH*, III, 39 / 5 – 16[72]) is most informative:

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*EH*, III, 39 / 5:

ἔνθα καὶ ἐπιστῆσαι ἄξιον δὶς καταριθμοῦντι αὐτῷ τὸ Ἰωάννου ὄνομα, ὧν τὸν μὲν πρότερον Πέτρῳ καὶ Ἰακώβῳ καὶ Ματθαίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀποστόλοις συγκαταλέγει, σαφῶς δηλῶν τὸν εὐαγγελιστήν, τὸν δ᾽ ἕτερον Ἰωάννην, διαστείλας τὸν λόγον, ἑτέροις παρὰ τὸν τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀριθμὸν κατατάσσει, προτάξας αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀριστίωνα, σαφῶς τε αὐτὸν πρεσβύτερον ὀνομάζει·

It is worthwhile observing here that **the name John is twice enumerated** by him. The first one he mentions in connection with Peter and James and Matthew and the rest of the apostles, clearly meaning the evangelist; but the other John he mentions after an interval, and places him among others outside of the number of the apostles, putting Aristion before him, and he distinctly calls him a presbyter. [My correction and emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 6:

ὡς καὶ διὰ τούτων ἀποδείκνυσθαι τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀληθῆ τῶν δύο κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν ὁμωνυμίᾳ κεχρῆσθαι εἰρηκότων δύο τε ἐν Ἐφέσῳ γενέσθαι μνήματα καὶ ἑκάτερον Ἰωάννου ἔτι νῦν λέγεσθαι· οἷς καὶ ἀναγκαῖον προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν, εἰκὸς γὰρ τὸν δεύτερον, εἰ μή τις ἐθέλοι τὸν πρῶτον, τὴν ἐπ᾽ ὀνόματος φερομένην Ἰωάννου ἀποκάλυψιν ἑορακέναι.

**This shows that the statement of those is true, who say that there were two persons in Asia that bore the same name, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, each of which, even to the present day, is**

[72]Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D39%3Asection%3D5 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to *Papias of Hierapolis* [Online]. Available: http://www.textexcavation.com/papias.html#fragment3. [16 May 2014]. Comparative Greek text according to ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ in *Documenta Catholica Omnia* [Online]. Available: http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0265-0339,_Eusebius_Caesariensis,_Historia_Ecclesiastica,_GR.pdf. [21 May 2014]. English translation according to New Advent [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm. [21 May 2014].

**called John's. It is important to notice this. For it is probable that it was the second, if one is not willing to admit that it was the first that saw the Revelation, which is ascribed by name to John.** [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 7:

καὶ ὁ νῦν δὲ ἡμῖν δηλούμενος Παπίας τοὺς μὲν τῶν ἀποστόλων λόγους παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῖς παρηκολουθηκότων ὁμολογεῖ παρειληφέναι, Ἀριστίωνος δὲ καὶ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου Ἰωάννου αὐτήκοον ἑαυτόν φησι γενέσθαι· ὀνομαστὶ γοῦν πολλάκις αὐτῶν μνημονεύσας ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ συγγράμμασιν τίθησιν αὐτῶν παραδόσεις.

And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that **he received the words of the apostles from those that followed them, but says that he was himself a hearer of Aristion and the presbyter John.** At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. These things, we hope, have not been uselessly adduced by us. [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 8:

καὶ ταῦτα δ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐκ εἰς τὸ ἄχρηστον εἰρήσθω· ἄξιον δὲ ταῖς ἀποδοθείσαις τοῦ Παπία φωναῖς προσάψαι λέξεις ἑτέρας αὐτοῦ, δι᾽ ὧν παράδοξά τινα ἱστορεῖ καὶ ἄλλα ὡς ἂν ἐκ παραδόσεως εἰς αὐτὸν ἐλθόντα.

But it is fitting to subjoin to the words of Papias which have been quoted, **other passages from his works in which he relates some other wonderful events which he claims to have received from tradition.** [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 9:

τὸ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὴν Ἱεράπολιν Φίλιππον τὸν ἀπόστολον ἅμα ταῖς θυγατράσιν διατρῖψαι διὰ τῶν πρόσθεν δεδήλωται· ὡς δὲ κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ὁ Παπίας γενόμενος, διήγησιν παρειληφέναι θαυμασίαν ὑπὸ τῶν τοῦ Φιλίππου θυγατέρων μνημονεύει, τὰ νῦν σημειωτέον· νεκροῦ γὰρ ἀνάστασιν κατ᾽ αὐτὸν γεγονυῖαν ἱστορεῖ καὶ αὖ πάλιν ἕτερον παράδοξον περὶ Ἰοῦστον τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Βαρσαβᾶν γεγονός, ὡς δηλητήριον φάρμακον ἐμπιόντος καὶ μηδὲν ἀηδὲς διὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου χάριν ὑπομείναντος.

That Philip the apostle dwelt at Hierapolis with his daughters has been already stated. **But it must be noted here that Papias, their contemporary, says that he heard a wonderful tale from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that in his time one rose from the dead. And he tells another wonderful story of Justus, surnamed Barsabbas: that he drank a deadly poison, and yet, by the grace of the Lord, suffered no harm.** [My emphasis].

*EH*, III, 39 / 10:

τοῦτον δὲ τὸν Ἰοῦστον μετὰ τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἀνάληψιν τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἀποστόλους μετὰ Ματθία στῆσαί τε καὶ ἐπεύξασθαι ἀντὶ τοῦ προδότου Ἰούδα ἐπὶ τὸν κλῆρον τῆς ἀναπληρώσεως τοῦ αὐτῶν ἀριθμοῦ ἡ τῶν Πράξεων ὧδέ πως ἱστορεῖ γραφή· «καὶ ἔστησαν δύο, Ἰωσὴφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαβᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰοῦστος, καὶ Ματθίαν· καὶ προσευξάμενοι εἶπαν.

The Book of Acts records that the holy apostles after the ascension of the Saviour, put forward this Justus, together with Matthias, and prayed that one might be chosen in place of the traitor Judas, to fill up their number. The account is as follows: “And they put forward two, Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias; and they prayed and said.”

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*EH*, III, 39 / 11:

καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου εἰς αὐτὸν ἥκοντα παρατέθειται ξένας τέ τινας παραβολὰς τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ καί τινα ἄλλα μυθικώτερα.

**The same writer gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical things.** [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 12:

ἐν οἷς καὶ χιλιάδα τινά φησιν ἐτῶν ἔσεσθαι μετὰ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, σωματικῶς τῆς Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ τῆς γῆς ὑποστησομένης· ἃ καὶ ἡγοῦμαι τὰς ἀποστολικὰς παρεκδεξάμενον διηγήσεις ὑπολαβεῖν, τὰ ἐν ὑποδείγμασι πρὸς αὐτῶν μυστικῶς εἰρημένα μὴ συνεορακότα.

To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. **I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures.** [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 13:

σφόδρα γάρ τοι σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τεκμηράμενον εἰπεῖν, φαίνεται, πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ. αὐτὸν πλείστοις ὅσοις τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν τῆς ὁμοίας αὐτῷ δόξης παραίτιος γέγονεν τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τἀνδρὸς προβεβλημένοις, ὥσπερ οὖν Εἰρηναίῳ καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τὰ ὅμοια φρονῶν ἀναπέφηνεν.

**For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses.** But it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Irenæus and any one else that may have proclaimed similar views. [My emphasis].

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*EH*, III, 39 / 14:

καὶ ἄλλας δὲ τῇ ἰδίᾳ γραφῇ παραδίδωσιν Ἀριστίωνος τοῦ πρόσθεν δεδηλωμένου τῶν τοῦ κυρίου λόγων διηγήσεις καὶ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου Ἰωάννου παραδόσεις· ἐφ᾽ ἃς τοὺς φιλομαθεῖς ἀναπέμψαντες, ἀναγκαίως νῦν προσθήσομεν ταῖς προεκτεθείσαις αὐτοῦ φωναῖς παράδοσιν ἣν περὶ Μάρκου τοῦ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον γεγραφότος ἐκτέθειται διὰ τούτων.

Papias gives also in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord on the authority of Aristion who was mentioned above, and traditions as handed down by the presbyter John; to which we refer those who are fond of learning. But now we must add to the words of his which we have already quoted the tradition which he gives in regard to Mark, the author of the Gospel.

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*EH*, III, 39 / 15:

καὶ τοῦθ᾽ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἔλεγεν· Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, οὐ μέντοι τάξει τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα. οὔτε γὰρ ἤκουσεν τοῦ κυρίου οὔτε παρηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ, ὕστερον δὲ, ὡς ἔφην, Πέτρῳ· ὃς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὥσπερ σύνταξιν τῶν κυριακῶν ποιούμενος λογίων, ὥστε οὐδὲν ἥμαρτεν Μάρκος οὕτως ἔνια γράψας ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν. ἑνὸς γὰρ ἐποιήσατο πρόνοιαν, τοῦ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσεν παραλιπεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαί τι ἐν αὐτοῖς». ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἱστόρηται τῷ Παπίᾳ περὶ τοῦ Μάρκου.

**“This also the presbyter said: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely.”** These things are related by Papias concerning Mark.

*EH*, III, 39 / 16:

περὶ δὲ τοῦ Ματθαίου ταῦτ᾽ εἴρηται·«Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο, ἡρμήνευσεν δ᾽ αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος». κέχρηται δ᾽ ὁ αὐτὸς μαρτυρίαις ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου προτέρας ἐπιστολῆς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Πέτρου ὁμοίως, ἐκτέθειται δὲ καὶ ἄλλην ἱστορίαν περὶ γυναικὸς ἐπὶ πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις διαβληθείσης ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου, ἣν τὸ καθ᾽ Ἑβραίους εὐαγγέλιον περιέχει. καὶ ταῦτα δ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀναγκαίως πρὸς τοῖς ἐκτεθεῖσιν ἐπιτετηρήσθω.

But concerning Matthew he writes as follows: **"So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able."** And the same writer uses testimonies from the first Epistle of John and from that of Peter likewise. And he relates another story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. These things we have thought it necessary to observe in addition to what has been already stated. [My emphasis].

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2. Sim (2007: 292) points out that there is no record of someone called Aristion being a disciple of Jesus;

3. Sim (2007: 292) questions why Papias refers to the second John as an "elder" but neglects to give Aristion a similar designation;

4. Doherty (2009: 467), in reference to *EH*, III, 39 / 15 and 16, confirms that Papias, by his own admission, had not personally seen the "Lord's discourses". Further, as regards "Mark" Papias received his information from the "presbyter". It is also ambiguous whether or not this situation applies to Matthew's "oracles". However, given that Papias claims that the oral recollection is greater than a written text seems to prove that he did not have access to any written documents. In this context, in *EH*, III, 39 / 4, Papias is recorded as having stated "For I did not suppose that things from books would profit me as much as things from a living and remaining voice". Thus, all this information came to Papias second-hand and was based on memory. This confirms Papias' reliance on memory and not actual documents;

5. Doherty (2009:468) points out that in *EH*, III, 39 / 16, Papias could not have been referring to the gospel of Matthew when he refers to the "oracles in the

Hebrew language" as the gospel of Matthew was originally composed in Greek. Also, *EH*, III, 39 / 15, Papias cannot be referring to the gospel of Mark as he states that he is talking about Peter's recollections of "things said or done by Christ" which are "not in order". This lack of arrangement rules out the gospel of Mark; and

6. Wells (1997: 74) confirms and explains that thanks to Irenaeus, the traditions of the early Christian church accepted that the apostle John managed to live right up until the reign of Trajan (i.e. 98 – 117 C.E.).

   This tradition allows John to have lived long enough to have been personally known to Papias – even at the time when Papias wrote his books if their date can be shifted from ca. A.D. 140 to the very beginning of the second century. Of course this means that Gundry (2005: 50) has no substantial evidence to justify an early second century date for Papias' works and therefore cannot justify the first century C.E. apostle John actually meeting Papias personally (cf. Section 2.5.1.1 *ut supra*).

7. Ehrman (2006: 8) confirms that there are difficulties with taking Papias' statements at face value. We cannot simply assume that in *Ev.Marc.* we possess an historically accurate account concerning the accomplishments of Peter. Indeed, certain aspects of Papias' supposed testimonial are not at all believable. Ehrman (2006: 8) gives the example of the claim that Mark wrote down "everything" that Peter recalled about Jesus' words and deeds. If Mark really wanted to record everything that Peter related to him over several years, it would surely have required somewhat more than the 20 pages that constitute the present *Ev.Marc.*

   Ehrman (2006: 8) also questions whether Papias is even referring to the *Ev.Marc*. This is also an assumption since we know that originally this manuscript had no title and did not record the name of the actual author. It was later Christian scribes who assumed that this was the work of Mark. Similarly with the *Ev.Matt*. Papias claims a document that contained the sayings of Jesus in Hebrew. In fact the current *Ev.Matt* was originally written in Greek and contains far more than the sayings of Jesus.

On this issue, Ehrman (2006: 9) states:

> Papias appears to be thinking of some book other than our Gospel of Matthew. When he refers to Mark, then, is he referring to our Mark? Since he never quotes any of the passages of the Gospel, it is hard to say. There's an even bigger problem with taking Papias at his word when he indicates that Mark's Gospel is based on an eyewitness report of Peter: virtually everything else that Papias says is widely, and rightly, discounted by scholars as pious imagination rather than historical fact.

### 2.5.2 Discussion

Ignoring all the evidence that clearly highlights the total unreliability of Papias as a primary source, a naïve person might want to assume all of the following to be correct:

1. Papias has been correctly quoted by Eusebius;

2. Papias did speak with either the followers of the elders or directly with the elders;

3. The elders (i.e. Aristion and elder John, regardless of who they might be in reality) had actually met with an Andrew, a Peter, a Philip, a Thomas, a James, a John and a Matthew; and

4. Each of these specific individuals, i.e. Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew were the same "disciples" as described in the gospels.

Then it follows (ignoring for a moment that Eusebius himself tells his reader that Papias "received the words of the apostles from those that followed them" and thus also intimates that Aristion and the presbyter John were not themselves apostles), that at least *some* of the individuals described in the gospels were recorded as having met with Jesus of Nazareth. This does not mean that they did so in actual fact and certainly Papias did not meet with them personally – at best he met persons who had met other persons *claiming* to be apostles.

The only additional problem here is that despite the claims of, inter alia, Bauckham (2006), we have no real way of knowing if Papias had read any of the gospels we know

today, let alone *Ev.Jo.*

> The Gospels were written within living memory of the events they recount. Mark's Gospel was written well within the lifetime of many of the eyewitnesses, while the other three canonical Gospels were written in the period when living eyewitnesses were becoming scarce, exactly at the point in time when their testimony would perish with them were it not put in writing.

The upshot of this is that even if we are naïve enough to believe that a reference to a reference of something that might or might not be true is proof that someone met with persons who claimed to be the apostles of Jesus of Nazareth we still have no hard evidence or useful biographical detail concerning an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

## 2.6 *Mara bar Serapion* (fl. 73 C.E.)

*Mara bar Serapion*, who was supposedly a Stoic philosopher, possibly a monotheist but certainly not a Jew or Christian (Cf. Brock, 1998: 709; Merz and Tielman. 2008: 107 – 134), hailing from the Roman province of Syria (i.e. sometime between c. 73 C.E. and the third century C.E.)[73] wrote a letter to his small son (also called *Serapion*) whilst in Roman captivity. The original letter was composed in Syriac and the manuscript that contains a copy of it (variously dated between the sixth and seventh centuries C.E.) is currently housed in the British Library (*BL Add.* 14658)[74]**:**

> A Letter of Mara, Son of Serapion.
>
> Mara, son of Serapion, to Serapion, my son: peace.
>
> When thy master and guardian wrote me a letter, and informed me that thou wast very diligent in study, though so young in years, I blessed God that thou, a little boy, and without a guide to direct thee, hadst begun in good earnest; and to myself also this was a comfort—that I heard of thee, little boy as thou art, as displaying such greatness of mind and conscientiousness: a character which, in the case of many who have begun well, has shown no eagerness to continue.
>
> On this account, lo, I have written for thee this record, touching that which I have by careful observation discovered in the world. For the kind of life

[73]Brock dates the letter from "soon after" 70 C.E. up to c. 260 C.E. Cf. Brock. 1998. Syriac Culture: 709.

[74]Original English translation from the Syriac according to Bar-Serapion. 2014. A Letter of Mara, Son of Serapion in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://earlychristianwritings.com/text/mara.html. [13 May 2014].

men lead has been carefully observed by me. I tread the path of learning, and from the study of Greek philosophy have I found out all these things, although they suffered shipwreck when the birth of life took place.

Be diligent, then, my son, in attention to those things which are becoming for the free, so as to devote thyself to learning, and to follow after wisdom; and endeavour thus to become confirmed in those habits with which thou hast begun. Call to mind also my precepts, as a quiet person who is fond of the pursuit of learning. And, even though such a life should seem to thee very irksome, yet when thou hast made experience of it for a little while, it will become very pleasant to thee: for to me also it so happened. When, moreover, a person has left his home, and is able still to preserve his previous character, and properly does that which it behoves him to do, he is that chosen man who is called "the blessing of God," and one who does not find aught else to compare with his freedom. For, as for those persons who are called to the pursuit of learning, they are seeking to extricate themselves from the turmoils of time; and those who take hold upon wisdom, they are clinging to the hope of righteousness; and those who take their stand on truth, they are displaying the banner of their virtue; and those who cultivate philosophy, they are looking to escape from the vexations of the world. And do thou too, my son, thus wisely behave thyself in regard to these things, as a wise person who seeks to spend a pure life; and beware lest the gain which many hunger after enervate thee, and thy mind turn to covet riches, which have no stability. For, when they are acquired by fraud, they do not continue; nor, even when justly obtained, do they last; and all those things which are seen by thee in the world, as belonging to that which is only for a little time, are destined to depart like a dream: for they are but as the risings and settings of the seasons.

About the objects of that vainglory, too, of which the life of men is full, be not thou solicitous: seeing that from those things which give us joy there quickly comes to us harm. Most especially is this the case with the birth of beloved children. For in two respects it plainly brings us harm: in the case of the virtuous, our very affection for them torments us, and from their very excellence of character we suffer torture; and, in the case of the vicious, we are worried with their correction, and afflicted with their misconduct.

Thou hast heard, moreover, concerning our companions, that, when they were leaving Samosata, they were distressed about it, and, as if complaining of the time in which their lot was cast, said thus: "We are now far removed from our home, and we cannot return again to our city, or behold our people, or offer to our gods the greeting of praise." Meet was it that that day should be called a day of lamentation, because one heavy grief possessed them all alike. For they wept as they remembered their fathers, and they thought of their mothers with sobs, and they were distressed for their brethren, and grieved for their betrothed whom they had left behind. And, although we had heard that their former companions were proceeding to Seleucia, we clandestinely set out, and proceeded on the way towards them, and united our own misery with theirs. Then was our grief exceedingly violent, and fitly did our weeping abound, by reason of our desperate plight, and our wailing gathered itself into a dense cloud, and our misery grew vaster than a mountain: for not one of us had the power to ward off the disasters that assailed him. For affection for the living was

intense, as well as sorrow for the dead, and our miseries were driving us on without any way of escape. For we saw our brethren and our children captives, and we remembered our deceased companions, who were laid to rest in a foreign land. Each one of us, too, was anxious for himself, lest he should have disaster added to disaster, or lest another calamity should overtake that which went before it. What enjoyment could men have that were prisoners, and who experienced things like these?

But as for thee, my beloved, be not distressed because in thy loneliness thou hast been driven from place to place. For to these things men are born, since they are destined to meet with the accidents of time. But rather let thy thought be this, that to wise men every place is alike, and that in every city the good have many fathers and mothers. Else, if thou doubt it, take thee a proof from what thou hast seen thyself. How many people who know thee not love thee as one of their own children; and what a host of women receive thee as they would their own beloved ones! Verily, as a stranger thou hast been fortunate; verily, for thy small love many people have conceived an ardent affection for thee.

What, again, are we to say concerning the delusion which has taken up its abode in the world? Both by reason of toil painful is the journey through it, and by its agitations are we, like a reed by the force of the wind, bent now in this direction, now in that. For I have been amazed at many who cast away their children, and I have been astonished at others who bring up those that are not theirs. There are persons who acquire riches in the world, and I have also been astonished at others who inherit that which is not of their own acquisition. Thus mayest thou understand and see that we are walking under the guidance of delusion.

Begin and tell us, O wisest of men, on which of his possessions a man can place reliance, or concerning what things he can say that they are such as abide. Wilt thou say so of abundance of riches? they are snatched away. Of fortresses? they are spoiled. Of cities? they are laid waste. Of greatness? it is brought down. Of magnificence? it is overthrown. Of beauty? it withers. Or of laws? they pass away. Or of poverty? it is despised. Or of children? they die. Or of friends? they prove false. Or of the praises of men? jealousy goes before them.

Let a man, therefore, rejoice in his empire, like Darius; or in his good fortune, like Polycrates; or in his bravery, like Achilles; or in his wife, like Agamemnon; or in his offspring, like Priam; or in his skill, like Archimedes; or in his wisdom, like Socrates; or in his learning, like Pythagoras; or in his ingenuity, like Palamedes;—the life of men, my son, departs from the world, but their praises and their virtues abide for ever.

Do thou, then, my little son, choose thee that which fadeth not away. For those who occupy themselves with these things are called modest, and are beloved, and lovers of a good name.

When, moreover, anything untoward befalls thee, do not lay the blame on man, nor be angry against God, nor fulminate against the time thou livest in.

If thou shalt continue in this mind, thy gift is not small which thou hast received from God, which has no need of riches, and is never reduced to poverty. For without fear shalt thou pass thy life, and with rejoicing. For fear and apologies for one's nature belong not to the wise, but to such as walk contrary to law. For no man has even been deprived of his wisdom, as of his property.

Follow diligently learning rather than riches. For the greater are one's possessions, the greater is the evil attendant upon them. For I have myself observed that, where a man's goods are many, so also are the tribulations which happen to him; and, where luxuries are accumulated, there also do sorrows congregate; and, where riches are abundant, there is stored up the bitterness of many a year.

If, therefore, thou shalt behave with understanding, and shalt diligently watch over thy conduct, God will not refrain from helping thee, nor men from loving thee.

Let that which thou art able to acquire suffice thee; and if, moreover, thou art able to do without property, thou shalt be called blessed, and no man whatsoever shall be jealous of thee.

And remember also this, that nothing will disturb thy life very greatly, except it be the love of gain; and that no man after his death is called an owner of property: because it is by the desire of this that weak men are led captive, and they know not that a man dwells among his possessions only in the manner of a chance-comer, and they are haunted with fear because these possessions are not secured to them: for they abandoned that which is their own, and seek that which is not theirs.

What are we to say, when the wise are dragged by force by the hands of tyrants, and their wisdom is deprived of its freedom by slander, and they are plundered for their superior intelligence, without the opportunity of making a defence? They are not wholly to be pitied. For what benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death, seeing that they received as retribution for it famine and pestilence? **Or the people of Samos by the burning of Pythagoras**, seeing that in one hour the whole of their country was covered with sand? **Or the Jews by the murder of their Wise King, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away from them?** For with justice did God grant a recompense to the wisdom of all three of them. For the Athenians died by famine; and the people of Samos were covered by the sea without remedy; **and the Jews, brought to desolation and expelled from their kingdom, are driven away into every land**. Nay, Socrates did "not" die, because of Plato; nor yet Pythagoras, because of the statue of Hera; **nor yet the Wise King, because of the new laws which he enacted.**

Moreover I, my son, have attentively observed mankind, in what a dismal state of ruin they are. And I have been amazed that they are not utterly prostrated by the calamities which surround them, and that even their wars are not enough for them, nor the pains they endure, nor the diseases, nor the death, nor the poverty; but that, like savage beasts, they must needs rush upon one another in their enmity, trying which of them shall inflict the

greater mischief on his fellow. For they have broken away from the bounds of truth, and transgress all honest laws, because they are bent on fulfilling their selfish desires; for, whensoever a man is eagerly set on obtaining that which he desires, how is it possible that he should fitly do that which it behoves him to do? and they acknowledge no restraint, and but seldom stretch out their hands towards truth and goodness, but in their manner of life behave like the deaf and the blind. Moreover, the wicked rejoice, and the righteous are disquieted. He that has, denies that he has; and he that has not, struggles to acquire. The poor seek help, and the rich hide their wealth, and every man laughs at his fellow. Those that are drunken are stupefied, and those that have recovered themselves are ashamed. Some weep, and some sing; and some laugh, and others are a prey to care. They rejoice in things evil, and a man that speaks the truth they despise.

Should a man, then, be surprised when the world is seeking to wither him with its scorn, seeing that they and he have not one and the same manner of life? "These" are the things for which they care. One of them is looking forward to the time when in battle he shah obtain the renown of victory; yet the valiant perceive not by how many foolish objects of desire a man is led captive in the world. But would that for a little while self-repentance visited them! For, while victorious by their bravery, they are overcome by the power of covetousness. For I have made trial of men, and with this result: that the one thing on which they are intent, is abundance of riches. Therefore also it is that they have no settled purpose; but, through the instability of their minds, a man is of a sudden cast down from his elation of spirit to be swallowed up with sadness. They look not at the vast wealth of eternity, nor consider that every visitation of trouble is conducting us all alike to the same final period. For they are devoted to the majesty of the belly, that huge blot on the character of the vicious.

Moreover, as regards this letter which it has come into my mind to write to thee, it is not enough to read it, but the best thing is that it be put in practice. For I know for myself, that when thou shalt have made experiment of this mode of life, it will be very pleasant to thee, and thou wilt be free from sore vexation; because it is only on account of children that we tolerate riches.

Put, therefore, sadness away from thee, O most beloved of mankind,—a thing which never in anywise benefits a man; and drive care away from thee, which brings with it no advantage whatsoever. For we have no resource or skill that can avail us—nothing but a great mind able to cope with the disasters and to endure the tribulations which we are always receiving at the hands of the times. For at these things does it behove us to look, and not only at those which are fraught with rejoicing and good repute.

Devote thyself to wisdom, the fount of all things good, the treasure that faileth not. There shalt thou lay thy head, and be at ease. For this shall be to thee father and mother, and a good companion for thy life.

Enter into closest intimacy with fortitude and patience, those virtues which are able successfully to encounter the tribulations that befall feeble men. For so great is their strength, that they are adequate to sustain hunger, and

can endure thirst, and mitigate every trouble. With toil, moreover, yea even with dissolution, they make right merry.

To these things give diligent attention, and thou shalt lead an untroubled life, and I also shall have comfort, and thou shalt be called "the delight of his parents."

For in that time of yore, when our city was standing in her greatness, thou mayest be aware that against many persons among us abominable words were uttered; but for ourselves, we acknowledged long ago that we received love, no less than honour, to the fullest extent from the multitude of her people: it was the state of the times only that forbade our completing those things which we had resolved on doing. And here also in the prison-house we give thanks to God that we have received the love of many: for we are striving to our utmost to maintain a life of sobriety and cheerfulness; and, if anyone drive us by force, he will but be bearing public testimony against himself, that he is estranged from all things good, and he will receive disgrace and shame from the foul mark of shame that is upon him. For we have shown our truth—that truth which in our now ruined kingdom we possessed not. But, if the Romans shall permit us to go back to our own country, as called upon by justice and righteousness to do, they will be acting like humane men, and will earn the name of good and righteous, and at the same time will have a peaceful country in which to dwell: for they will exhibit their greatness when they shall leave us free men, and we shall be obedient to the sovereign power which the time has allotted to us. But let them not like tyrants, drive us as though we were slaves. Yet, if it has been already determined what shall be done, we shall receive nothing more dreadful than the peaceful death which is in store for us.

But thou, my little son, if thou resolve diligently to acquaint thyself with these things, first of all put a check on appetite, and set limits to that in which thou art indulging. Seek the power to refrain from being angry; and, instead of yielding to outbursts of passion, listen to the promptings of kindness.

For myself, what I am henceforth solicitous about is this—that, so far as I have recollections of the past, I may leave behind me a book containing them, and with a prudent mind finish the journey which I am appointed to take, and depart without suffering out of the sad afflictions of the world. For my prayer is, that I may receive my dismissal; and by what kind of death concerns me not. But, if any one should be troubled or anxious about this, I have no counsel to give him: for yonder, in the dwelling-place of all the world, will he find us before him.

One of his friends asked Mara, son of Serapion, when in bonds at his side: "Nay, by thy life, Mara, tell me what cause of laughter thou hast seen, that thou laughest." "I am laughing," said Mara, "at Time: inasmuch as, although he has not borrowed any evil from me, he is paying me back."

Here endeth the letter of Mara, son of Serapion. [My emphases].

### 2.6.1 A Review of the Letter of *Mara bar Serapion*

#### 2.6.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. More typically, conservative scholars see this letter as an obvious reference to Jesus of Nazareth. In this regard, Christian scholars such as Van Voorst (2000: 53 - 55); Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles (2009: 110) acknowledge that this letter refers to the death of Jesus (of Nazareth);

2. Habermas (1996: 217) feels that this reference may well support the occurrence of a widespread darkness in the land that coincided with Christ's crucifixion; and

3. However, other conservative researchers, such as Evans (2001: 41) are slightly more cautious, admitting that the references are somewhat ambiguous.

#### 2.6.1.2 Sceptical Observations

1. More balanced Christian scholars[75] are understandably concerned by the letter's implications that the "Wise King" is to be remembered *solely* by virtue of his renowned life and the laws that he left behind rather than for his qualities as a deity who continues to live on after his death and resurrection;

2. The highly sceptical Till (1995), brings another very important nuance to the debate. He strongly infers that it would behove the more critically-minded thinker to first verify the reliability of *Mara bar Separion*, as regards his knowledge of other historical events, before blindly accepting his comments regarding the "Wise King" as conclusive and unquestionable.

   By way of example, he refers to *Mara bar Separion's* reference in the letter to the "men of Samos" burning Pythagoras. Till (1995), with reference to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1994, Vol. 23: 45, states: "In reality, Pythagoras left the island of Samos in 530 B.C. and emigrated to the Greek colony of Croton in

[75]Cf. Chilton and Evans (Eds). 1998. *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*: 455 - 457.

Southern Italy. He later died in Metapontum, which is now Metaponto, Italy"; and

3. Lowder (2000) states "*Mara Bar-Serapion is worthless as a witness to the historicity of Jesus* … Bar-Serapion does not provide independent confirmation of the historicity of Jesus".

### 2.6.2 Discussion

In reality, Scholars like Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles (2009: 110), go so far as to unashamedly mislead their readers. Certainly, they unabashedly state that *Mara bar Serapion* wrote a letter "that compared Socrates, Pythagoras, and Jesus". In fact, no-one called "Jesus" is mentioned anywhere in the letter. They also erroneously state that the "letter describes the execution of Jesus at the instigation of the Jews some time not long before the fall of Jerusalem." In fact, neither "Jesus" nor the fall of Jerusalem nor an execution nor errant Jews are mentioned in the letter. These "researchers" do not even bother to say something like "based on what is written in the letter it might be conceivable to believe that the 'Wise King' refers to someone like Jesus (of Nazareth)". Instead, they deliberately inveigle their unwary reader into thinking that this letter (which they do not reproduce in its entirety) directly refers to "Jesus" by name. In addition they deliberately misrepresent the meaning of the written text. For example, nowhere in the letter are the Jews directly or overtly blamed for the death of their "Wise King". In addition, no mention is made of the fall of Jerusalem or the destruction of the Temple.

The letter simply states that as a consequence of the murder of the "Wise King" the Jews "were driven away into every land". Whether the Jews committed the actual murder is not clear and there are a number of other more reliable historical instances[76] when Jews were driven from their homeland that seem to have been conveniently overlooked.

[76]The MT supplies the well-known accounts of, inter alia, three forced deportations of Jews to Babylon: firstly, in c. 597 B.C.E. which involved king יְהוֹיָכִין (*Jehoiachin*); secondly, in c. 587 B.C.E. which involved king צִדְקִיָּהוּ (*Zedekiah*); and thirdly, (possibly an equally likely event for *Mara bar Serapion*), that occurred in 582 B.C.E. which involved the murder of גְּדַלְיָה (*Gedaliah*) by *Ishmael* (who granted, was a Jew).

It should be obvious to anyone, that even if these scholars were, by some chance, correct in their romantic assumptions and this episode did really refer to the destruction of the second Temple (c. 68 – 70 C.E.), they still have overlooked the fact that their avowed founder of Christianity was:

1. not a king in the secular sense; and
2. "murdered" (by their own reckoning) at least three decades *before* this event (i.e. traditionally, the crucifixion of Christ took place in c. 30 - 33 C.E. whereas the Temple was destroyed in c. 68 – 70 C.E.). The letter clearly states that the Jews were removed from their land the very moment their "Wise King" was murdered (i.e. "from that very time").

Lastly, no-one is in any position to ratiocinate what was in the mind of the original author (i.e. *Mara bar Serapion*). We do not know what levels of knowledge he had concerning Jewish and/or Christian history/culture. Accordingly, *bar Serapion's* "Wise King" tale could have been a reference to any potted account relating to literally anyone including not only Jesus of Nazareth but even *Aristobulus* II (c. 100 – 49 B.C.E.).[77] The latter individual, incidentally, was both High Priest and King during the closing years of the Hasmonean Dynasty.

Clearly, *Mara bar Serapion's* grasp of historical fact is also proven to be highly questionable. Yet conservative and fundamentalist scholars are seemingly quite eager to employ his ambiguities as substitutes for hard evidence for an historical record of Jesus of Nazareth's existence.

Nonetheless, even assuming that *Mara bar Serapion* was really referring to some capricious notion he had concerning Jesus of Nazareth; "King of the Jews" ; and/or the recounted religious beliefs of Christians who might even have been his contemporaries, *bar Serapion* might well have gleaned his knowledge from unsolicited opinions passed on to him from any number of unreliable sources.

It is quite safe to state here that, as a consequence of Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles' dominant worldview, they (and many like them) have simply jumped to the

[77]Cf. Aristobulus II in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* [Online]. Available: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1769-aristobulus-ii [13 May 2014].

conclusion that this letter refers specifically to the events leading up to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews from Judea by the Roman oppressors in the latter half of the first century C.E.

Regardless, even if it transpires that *Mara bar Serapion* had intimate knowledge of the Christian faith (which is dubious), given that he lived at least 35 years (possibly even centuries) after the purported time of Jesus of Nazareth, his letter still offers the historian absolutely nothing that can substantiate the gospel accounts.

## 2.7 *Thallos* (Θαλλός) a.k.a.Thallus (unknown dates)

Great doubt exists as regards the time in which Thallus lived.[78] Certainly, it is quite possible that a number of individuals by this name might have existed and accordingly it is not always clear which one is being specifically mentioned. In addition, the claimed references to the one who is supposed to have had reliable knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth is, more than likely, early Christian invention. Irrespective, purely for the sake of complete accuracy and transparency, the claims that Thallus is a reliable extra-biblical/scriptural authority will be dealt with (albeit) briefly.

What is of importance to this debate concerns George Syncellus[79], the well-known ninth-century Byzantine chronicler and ecclesiastic, who composed a chronicle of world history[80], in which he quoted directly from a number of earlier chroniclers. Here, Syncellus (Εκλογή Χρονογραφίας, chapter 391) refers to Africanus' reference to both Thallus and Phlegon (the latter will be dealt with in Section 2.8) in the context of Jesus' passion and resurrection as described in *Ev.Marc.* 15: 33[81]:

> "Καὶ γενομένης ὥρας ἕκτης σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης".
>
> "At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour".

[78]Carrier already gives a highly detailed account concerning the unreliability of employing Thallus as a valid historical source. Cf. Carrier.1999. Thallus: An Analysis, in *The Secular Web*. [Online]. Available: http://infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/thallus.html. [13 May 2014].
[79]Γεώργιος Σύγκελλος a.k.a. George Syncellus (*Constantinopolitanus*) (d. after c. 810 C.E.).
[80]i.e. the Εκλογή Χρονογραφίας or *Ekloge Chronographias.*
[81]Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 111.

In this context, Syncellus[82] states the following:

> καθ᾽ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου σκότος ἐπήγετο φοβερώτατον, σεισμῷ τε αἱ πέτραι διερρήγνυντο καί τὰ πολλὰ Ἰουδαίας καί τῆς λοιπῆς γῆς κατερρίφθη. τούτο τὸ σκότος ἔκλειψιν τοῦ ἡλίου Θάλλος ἀποκαλεῖ ἐν τρίτη τῶν ἱστοριῶν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, ἀλόγως.
>
> Ἑβραῖοι γὰρ ἄγουσι τὸ πάσχα κατὰ σελήνην ιδ΄, πρὸ δὲ μιᾶς τοῦ πάσχα τὰ περὶ τὸν σωτῆρα συμβαίνει. ἔκλειψις δὲ ἡλίου σελήνης ὑπελθούσης τὸν ἥλιον γίνεται· ἀδύνατον δὲ ἐν ἄλλῳ χρόνῳ, πλὴν ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ μιᾶς καί τῆς πρὸ αὐτῆς κατὰ τὴν σύνοδον αὐτὴν ἀποβῆναι. πῶς οὖν ἔκλειψις νομισθείη κατὰ διάμετρον σχεδὸν ὑπαρχούσης τῆς σελήνης ἡλίῳ; ἔστω δὴ, συναρπαζέτω τοὺς πολλοὺς τὸ γεγενημένον καί τὸ κοσμικὸν τέρας ἡλίου ἔκλειψις ὑπονοείσθω ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν. Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν πανσελήνῳ ἔκλειψιν ἡλίου γεγονέναι τελείαν ἀπὸ ὥρας ἕκτης μέχρις ἐνάτης, δηλῶν ὡς ταύτην. τίς δ᾽ ἡ κοινωνία σεισμῷ καί ἐκλείψει, πέτραις ῥηγνυμέναις, καί ἀναστάσει νεκρῶν τοσαύτῃ τε κινήσει κοσμικῇ;

A most terrible darkness fell over all the world, the rocks were torn apart by an earthquake, and many places both in Judaea and the rest of the world were thrown down. In the third book of his *Histories,* Thallos dismisses this darkness as a solar eclipse. In my opinion, this is nonsense.

For the Hebrews celebrate the Passover on Luna 14, and what happened to the Saviour occurred one day before the Passover. But an eclipse of the sun takes place when the moon passes under the sun. The only time when this can happen is in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last day of the old moon, when they are in conjunction. How then could one believe an eclipse took place when the moon was almost in opposition to the sun? So be it. Let what had happened beguile the masses, and let this wonderful sign to the world be considered a solar eclipse through an optical (illusion). Phlegon records that during the reign of Tiberius Caesar there was a complete solar eclipse at full moon from the sixth to the ninth hour; it is clear that this is the one. But what have eclipses to do with an earthquake, rocks breaking apart, resurrection of the dead, and a universal disturbance of this nature?

[82]Greek text according to Niebuhr (Ed.). 1829. *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae: Georgius Syncellus et Nicephorus*: 609 - 610. and Jacoby (Ed. and Tr.). 1923 – 1958. *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*: 1157 and 1165. English translation according to Adler and Tuffin (Eds). 2002. *The Chronography of George Synkellos,* and Mosshammer (Ed.). 1984. *Georgius Syncellus, Ecloga Chronographica*, in *George Syncellus: Excerpts from "The Chronography"* in *The Tertullian Project*. [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/syncellus/#E1 [25 June 2014].

### 2.7.1 A Review of the References to *Thallos*

#### 2.7.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. Bruce (1959) and Miller (1996) both date Thallus' work to 52 C.E. and claim that he produced a chronicle, tracing the history of Greece from the Trojan War up to his own time. Both scholars seem to base their mid-first century C.E. dating to a reference by Josephus (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 6, 4 / 167), concerning one of Emperor Tiberius' freedmen who they both naively assume was called "Thallus". However, Miller (1969) goes somewhat further than Bruce when he, inter alia, backs up this early date with two references to Africanus[83]. Africanus is quoted by Eusebius (*PE,* X,10 / 4) [84] as follows:

> μετὰ δὲ τὰ ὁ τῆσ αἰχμαλωσίασ ἔτη Κῦροσ Περσῶν ἐβασίλευσεν, ᾧ ἔτει Ὀλυμπιὰσ ἤχθη υέ, ὡσ ἐκ τῶν Βιβλιοθηκῶν Διοδώρον καὶ τῶν Θαλλοῦ καὶ Κάστοροσ ἱστοριῶν, ἔτι δὲ Πολυβίου καὶ Φλέγουτοσ ἔστιν εὑρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑτέρων, οἷσ ἐμέλησεν Ὀλυμπιάδων.
>
> After the seventy years of the Captivity Cyrus became king of Persia, in the year in which the fifty-fifth Olympic festival was held, as one may learn from the Bibliotheca of Diodorus, and the histories of Thallus and Castor, also from Polybius and Phlegon, and from others too who were careful about Olympiads: for the time agreed in all of them.

Later, in the same chapter (i.e. *PE,* X, 10 / 8) **[85]** Africanus is quoted as follows:

> Ταῦτα γὰρ οἱ τὰ Αθηναιων ἱστοροῦντεσ, Ἑλλάνικόσ τε καὶ Φιλόχοροσ ὁ τάσ Ατθίδασ, ὁι τε τὰ Σύρια Κάστωρ καὶ Θαλλοσ, καὶ ὁ τὰ πάντων Διόδωροσ ὁ τὰσ Βιβλιοθήκασ, Ἀλεξανδρόσ τε ὁ Πολυΐστωρ, οἵτινεσ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶσ ἀκριβέστερον ἐμνήσθησαν καὶ τῶν Ἀττιχῶν ἁπάντων.
>
> For both the historians of Athens, Hellanicus and Philochorus who wrote The Attic Histories, and the writers on Syrian history, Castor

[83] *Sextus Iulius Africanus* a.k.a. Africanus (c.160 – c. 240 C.E.).
[84] Greek text according to *Dindorfius, Guilielimus (*Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X. Lipsiae: In Aedibus B.G. Teubneri*: 565. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.) 1903. Eusebius of Caesarea: *Praeparatio Evangelica* (Preparation for the Gospel), in *Tertullian.org.* [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_pe_10_book10.htm [11 August 2014].
[85] Greek text according to *Dindorfius, Guilielimus (*Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X. Lipsiae: In Aedibus B.G. Teubneri*: 566. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.) 1903. Eusebius of Caesarea: *Praeparatio Evangelica* (Preparation for the Gospel), in *Tertullian.org.* [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_pe_10_book10.htm [11 August 2014].

> and Thallus, and the writer on universal history, Diodorus the author of the Bibliotheca, and Alexander Polyhistor, and some of our own historians recorded these events more accurately even than all the Attic writers.

In this regard, Miller (1996) claims that Thallus must have been active a generation before Africanus. Furthermore, merely because Africanus quotes him, Miller believes that Thallus must have been an important historian of a very high calibre.

2. Craig (2014), who presents himself as a rational Christian, states:

> The dating of his work is uncertain, but most scholars date Thallus' *History* to the mid-first century, that is, sometime around AD 50, just 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion in AD 30. By contrast most scholars date Mark's Gospel to around AD 66 - 70. If this right, then either Thallus provides independent, extra-biblical attestation of the darkness at noon, thereby increasing the probability of its historicity, or else Thallus is responding to the passion story which was being told by Christians at his time, thereby attesting to the earliness of that tradition. In either case, Thallus is doubtless reacting to a Christian interpretation of the event, since he is trying to provide an alternative explanation of the event. One could argue that, given his familiarity with Near Eastern affairs, Thallus would have just denied that the event occurred had he no knowledge of its happening. He thereby confirms the historicity of the darkness at noon.

Thus Craig (2014) admits that Thallus' dates are ambiguous yet seems quite happy to accept the majority consensus view as regards the date of Syncellus' third-hand, paraphrased utterance. He also, as is to be expected, favours an early date for Mark's gospel; and

3. Habermas (1996a: 243 - 250) goes to great lengths to demonstrate that this reference (and others) proves that either "the Christian gospel or at least an account of the crucifixion, was known in the Mediterranean region" by the mid first-century C.E.

### 2.7.1.2 Sceptical Observations

1. According to Carrier (1999) Thallus is first recorded by Theophilus of Antioch in c. 180 C.E. In addition, George Syncellus[86] (previously mentioned in 2.7) quotes directly from a number of earlier chroniclers, one of who (as has already been discussed) was none other than Africanus (c.160 – c. 240 C.E.). It is also well known, that Africanus had a strong influence on Eusebius[87].

   If one is generous and blindly accepts this ambiguous reference to something that an individual called Thallus might have written at an earlier date (i.e. sometime prior to the third century C.E.), we still have the problem that Africanus correctly finds fault in Thallus' reasoning when he naively allows for an antithetical situation where simultaneously a Full Moon and solar eclipse were visible.

   Carrier (1999) expertly sums up most of the sceptical camp's concerns when he states:

   > Such a story has obvious mythic overtones and can easily be doubted. That a solar eclipse should mark the death of a king was common lore among Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples (Herodotus 7.37, Plutarch Pelopidas 31.3 and Aemilius Paulus 17.7-11, Dio Cassius 55.29.3, John Lydus De Ostentis 70.a), and that such events corresponded with earthquakes was also a scientific superstition (Aristotle Meteorology 367.b.2, Pliny Natural History 2.195, Virgil Georgics 2.47.478-80). It was also typical to assimilate eclipses to major historic events, even when they did not originally correspond, or to invent eclipses for this purpose (Préaux claims to have counted 200 examples in extant literature; Boeuffle and Newton have also remarked on this tendency). The gospel stories also make a solar eclipse impossible: the crucifixion passover happened during a full moon, and the darkness supposedly lasted three hours (indeed, Julius Africanus claimed it covered the whole world). Such an impossible event would not fail to be recorded in the works of Seneca, Pliny, Josephus or other historians, yet it is not mentioned anywhere else outside of Christian rhetoric, so we can probably dismiss the idea of this being a real event.

   Apart from the fact that we have no way of confirming this as a *bona fide* eyewitness report, and given the far-fetched nature of this account, only

[86] Γεώργιος Σύγκελλος a.k.a.George Syncellus (*Constantinopolitanus*) (d. after c. 810 C.E.).
[87] Cf. Carrier, 2012c: 185 - 191.

someone who gullibly believed in the occurrence of both unnecessary as well as unnatural geological and cosmic events could claim this as being an extra-biblical/scriptural reference to Jesus of Nazareth;

2. Carrier (2012a: 188) confirms that historians do not know when Thallus wrote. Conservative Christian claims that this occurred in c. 52 C.E. are based solely on a conjectural emendation of a corrupted text. It should be emphasised that the source of this claim is *AJ*, XVIII, 6, 4 / 167 which reads: "καὶ γὰρ ἦν **ἄλλος** Σαμαρεὺς γένος Καίσαρος δὲ ἀπελεύθερος" [my emphasis], which is seemingly translated by Whiston as "Now there was one Thallus, a freed-man of Caesar". This is extraordinary, because no mention is made of a *Thallos* in the Greek text, yet the most common English translations repeatedly yield this enigmatic name. The reason, it transpires, is due to a deliberate alteration made by Hudson[88] in his posthumous translation of 1720 (Oxford University publication in two volumes), wherein he felt that the term ἄλλος made no sense and based purely on a personal speculation changed it to Θαλλός.[89]

   On this issue, Carrier (1999) explains:

   > The addition of the letter theta (TH) was conjectured by a scholar named Hudson in 1720, on the argument that ALLOS didn't make sense, and that Thallus was the attested name of an imperial freedman of Tiberius in inscriptions: in his own words, "I put 'Thallos' in place of 'allos' by conjecture, as he is attested to have been among boerewors the freedmen of Tiberius, going by the inscriptions of Gruter" (p. 810, translated from Hudson's Latin).

3. Carrier (2012a:188) also draws our attention to an Armenian translation of Eusebius' Παντοδαπὴ ἱστορία (*Pantodape historia)* a.k.a. the *Chronicle,* in which Eusebius says he employed three volumes from Thallus covering the period from the sack of Troy (c.1200 B.C.E.) to the 167th Olympiad (i.e. c.109 B.C.E.). Carrier confirms that, if authentic, this would mean that Thallus wrote about events ending in c. 109 B.C.E. and accordingly far too early to coincide with a mid-first century C.E. event;

[88] I.e. the English classical scholar: John Hudson (1662 - 1719).
[89] Cf. Carrier, 1999. Thallus: An Analysis in *The Secular Web*. [Online]. Available: http://infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/thallus.html. [13 May 2014].

4. Lee (2014) reminds his reader that due to damage to the Syncellus manuscript, Thallus' true name is not known;

5. Lee (2014) points out that "third-hand hearsay is not compelling proof of a worldwide darkness that *everyone* should have noticed";

6. Lowder (2000) states: "Since we don't possess any extant copies of the Thallus material, there is simply no way to know if Thallus was a witness to Jesus. Likewise, we don't know what Thallus's sources were";

7. Wells (1988a: 18) with reference to Bruce (1952: 30) claims: "To use him [Thallus] as evidence that a Christian Passion narrative existed as early as AD 52 is fantastic" [My insertion]; and

8. If we assume that someone like a Thallus or a Phlegon (discussed in Section 2.8 *ut infra*), had in fact referred to an actual eclipse, it is most informative to involve a scientific and purely factual perspective. The information supplied below is not meant to be the last word on eclipses but merely serves to show the realities of the situation and the more likely historical context that is often overlooked by many biblical scholars (such as Habermas *et al*) even in more contemporary times.

   We have to assume that the claimed eclipse (*a la* Eusebius, Africanus, Thallus and Phlegon etc.) was visible in Jerusalem within a few years of the hypothetical date of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth (i.e. c. 33 C.E.).

   Further, we must assume that this purely natural and astronomical event was a total eclipse of the Sun by the Moon and not merely some partial or annular eclipse. Indeed, if we allow for annular eclipses, due to the distance of the Moon from the Earth, the lunar diameter appears smaller from Earth, and accordingly the Sun is not totally occluded. In short, we need ideally a period of measurable/noticeable time when there was a complete masking of the Sun and the sky went totally dark, preferably on or around noon.

As should be well known and as is confirmed by NASA[90] an eclipse of the Sun can only occur during a New Moon. This is as a result of the Sun and the Moon being in almost perfect conjunction as seen from Earth. This alignment of the three astronomical bodies is referred to by astronomers as syzygy.

According to NASA[91] and based on a 5000 year period of solar eclipses, there are a minimum of two (i.e. 72.5% of the time) and a maximum of five (i.e. 0.5 % of the time) solar eclipses in any one calendar year. Given that in the first century C.E. of the 248 solar eclipses that occurred, only 58 (i.e. 23.7%) were total eclipses. Of the 248 eclipses, only a small portion (2.6%) were central and non-central[92] (one limit) events whereas 97.3% were central (two-limit) events.

Therefore, as the eclipse is synonymous with the Moon's shadow (umbra) as it traces a line across the Earth's surface, it is totally impossible for a total eclipse over the entire planet let alone three solid hours in one spot. Certainly, an occasion for total darkness of the sky is extremely rare for even a small percentage of the earth's surface. When it does occur, although the entire process may last up to two hours as viewed from one location, the longest period possible for a total event (i.e. complete darkness) is some 7.4 minutes. More normally this event lasts anywhere between 2 – 5 minutes.

Reproduced below is a NASA table (Figure 5) which details the shortest and longest solar eclipses of the first century C.E. This encompasses all types of solar eclipses, regardless of whether they were total, partial, annular or hybrid:

[90]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE0001-0100.html [17 July 2014].
[91]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE0001-0100.html [17 July 2014].
[92]According to NASA, a central solar eclipse occurs when the central axis of the Moon's shadow strikes the Earth's surface. A partial or penumbral eclipse occurs when the axis of the Moon's shadow misses the Earth. Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcatmax/SE4001-5000MaxH.html [17 July 2014].

| Extrema Type | Year | Date | Duration |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Longest Annular Solar Eclipse** | 96 | 04 November | 11m18s |
| **Shortest Annular Solar Eclipse** | 40 | 24 October | 00m08s |
| **Longest Total Solar Eclipse** | 96 | 10 May | 06m47s |
| **Shortest Total Solar Eclipse** | 31 | 03 November | 01m04s |
| **Longest Hybrid Solar Eclipse** | 41 | 19 April | 01m24s |
| **Shortest Hybrid Solar Eclipse** | 86 | 31 May | 00m08s |
| **Largest Partial Solar Eclipse** | 68 | 19 May | - |
| **Smallest Partial Solar Eclipse** | 94 | 01 July | - |

**Figure 5**

Extreme Durations and Magnitudes of Solar Eclipses in the First Century C.E.
(Based on a table from NASA Eclipse Website (2014)[93]

According to the NASA data found in Fig. 5, the nearest solar eclipse (albeit the shortest total eclipse of the first century C.E.) to have occurred relative to c. 33 C.E. was a total solar eclipse in 31 C.E. that lasted all of 1 minute and 4 seconds. Below is a NASA reconstruction of that event (cf. Fig. 6) which clearly shows that this event did not occur anywhere near Jerusalem.

[93]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE0001-0100.html [17 July 2014].

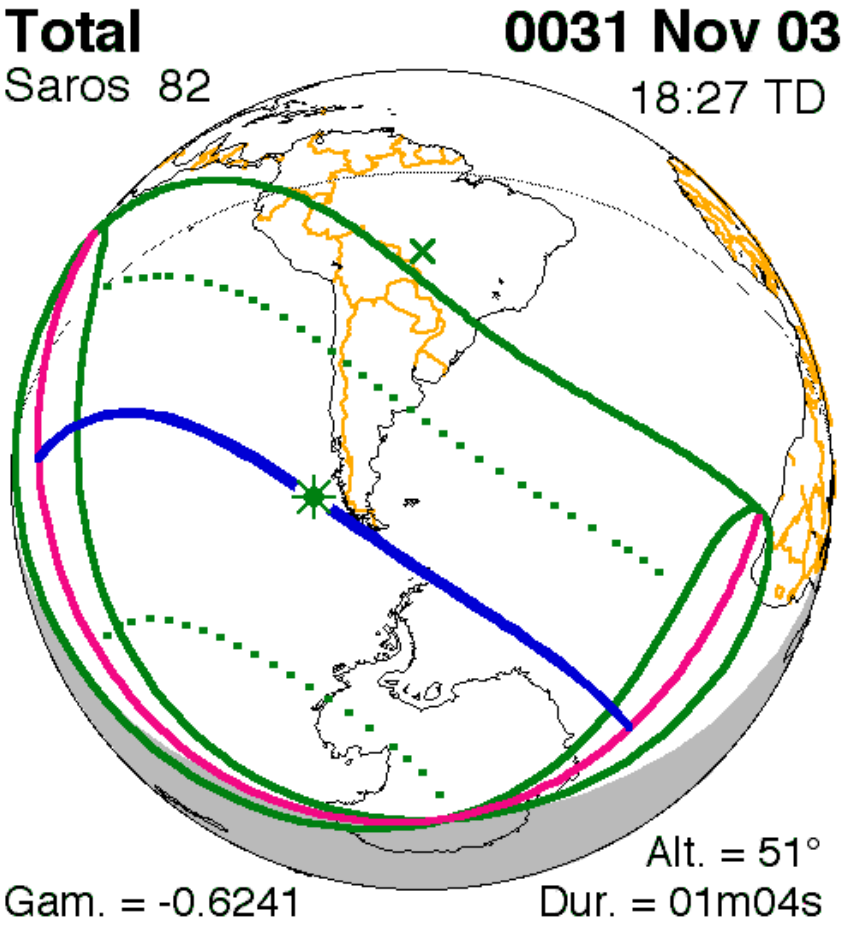



**Figure 6**

Diagram showing path of Moon's central axis shadow
on 3rd November 31 C.E.

(Diagram taken from NASA Eclipse Website [2014])[94]

Based on the NASA data found in Fig. 5 it is also possible to surmise that the longest time any total solar eclipse lasted in the first century C.E. was 6 minutes and 47 seconds. Fig. 7 shows the path of the Moon's central axis shadow for that event on 10th May 96 C.E.:

[94]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCSEmap/0001-0100/31-11-03.gif [17 July 2014].

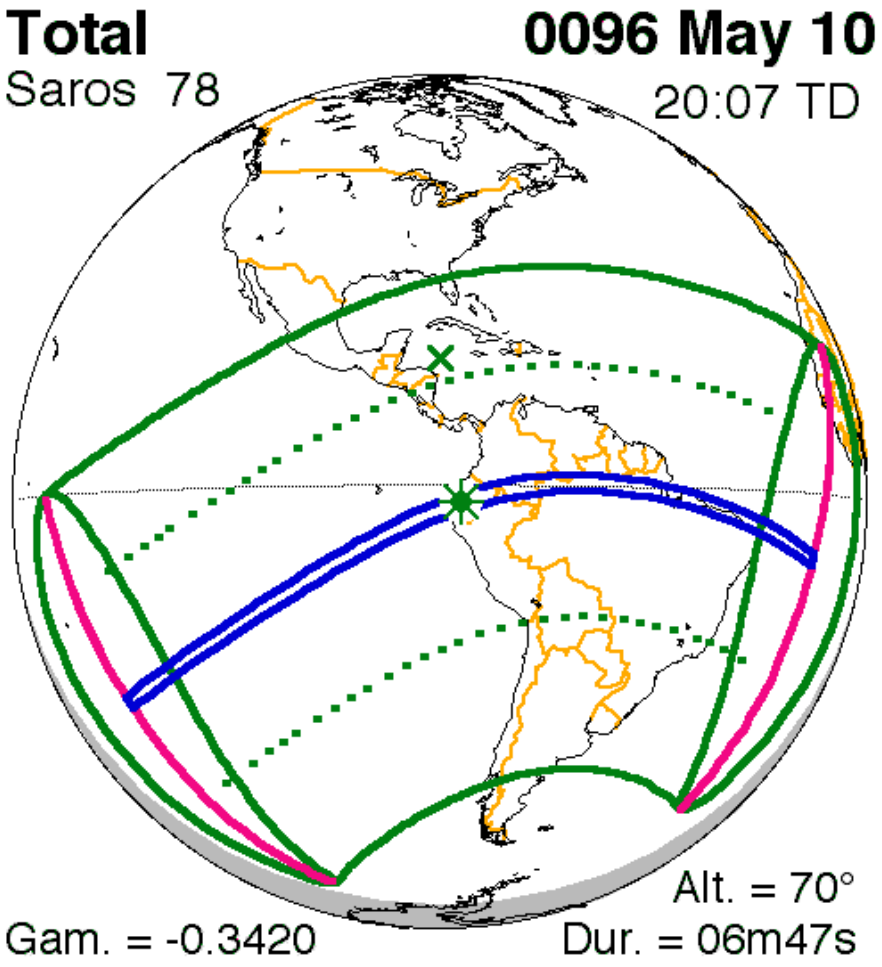



**Figure 7**

Diagram showing path of Moon's central axis shadow
on 10th May 96 C.E.

(Diagram taken from NASA Eclipse Website [2014])[95]

Again, this occurred nowhere near the Middle East.

Other eclipses (i.e. both annular and total) which at a stretch of the imagination scholars might want to be considered as candidates for Thallus and Phlegon's total darkness at noon and which occurred between 25 and 45 C.E. as calculated by NASA (2014) are presented below (cf. Fig. 8):

[95]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCSEmap/0001-0100/96-05-10.gif [17 July 2014].

| Year C.E. | Date | Time of Greatest Eclipse | Type of Eclipse | Central Duration | Closest Location of Greatest Eclipse to Jerusalem |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **23** | 03 October | 16:31 | Annular | 05m 07s | Zimbabwe |
| **24** | 28 March | 13:52 | Total | 04m24s | Madagascar |
| **24** | 21 September | 17:57 | Annular | 08m05s | Libya |
| **26** | 06 February | 10:26 | Annular | 01m12s | Border of Egypt and Sudan |
| **26** | 01 August | 12:55 | Total | 02m53s | Botswana |
| **27** | 26 January | 16:02 | Annular | 07m34s | Somalia |
| **27** | 22 July | 04:29 | Total | 06m31s | Bay of Bengal |
| **28** | 15 January | 15:44 | Annular | 07m01s | Southern Indian Ocean |
| **28** | 10 July | 21:28 | Total | 03m30s | France |
| **29** | 24 November | 12:15 | Total | 01m59s | Qatar |
| **30** | 21 May | 04:10 | Annular | 06m09s | Australia |
| **30** | 14 November | 03:37 | Total | 04m08s | Southern China |
| **31** | 10 May | 04:46 | Annular | 04m26s | East of Sri Lanka |
| **31** | 03 November | 18:26 | Total | 01m04s | Tierra del Fuego |
| **33** | 19 March | 13:40 | Total | 04m06s | Indian Ocean |
| **33** | 12 September | 12:47 | Annular | 06m09s | Northern Kazakhistan |
| **34** | 09 March | 06:20 | Total | 04m56s | Indian Ocean |
| **34** | 01 September | 13:52 | Annular | 04m20s | Chad |
| **35** | 26 February | 20:29 | Hybrid | 00m31s | New Mexico, USA |
| **35** | 21 August | 21:43 | Hybrid | 01m13s | South Pacific Ocean |
| **37** | 05 January | 10:17 | Annular | 06m40s | Antarctica |
| **37** | 01 July | 21:23 | Total | 03m54s | Ontario, Canada |
| **37** | 25 December | 12:47 | Annular | 04m15s | South Africa |
| **38** | 21 June | 09:34 | Hybrid | 03m54s | India |
| **38** | 14 December | 22:33 | Hybrid | 01m19s | West of Mexico |
| **40** | 24 October | 16:37 | Annular | 00m08s | East of Tierra del Fuego |
| **41** | 19 April | 07:54 | Hybrid | 01m24s | Thailand |
| **41** | 14 October | 00:26 | Annular | 05m47s | South Pacific Ocean |
| **42** | 08 April | 21:32 | Total | 05m05s | South America, centred west of Peru |
| **42** | 03 October | 01:27 | Annular | 08m56s | North Pacific Ocean |

**Figure 8**

Table Showing All Annular, Hybrid and Total Eclipses
That Occurred Between 25 and 45 C.E.
(Information based on various tables supplied by NASA 2014)[96]

It is clearly evident that the nearest total eclipse to have occurred in or around

[96]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE0001-0100.html [17 July 2014].

Jerusalem in a twenty-year window would have to have been 24 November 29 C.E. Here a total solar eclipse, centred on Qatar for a maximum of 1 minute and 59 seconds was also briefly visible along a line which crossed, inter alia, Romania, Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia and India. This event reached its peak at 12:15 in Qatar. Reproduced below is a diagram showing the course of the Moon's shadow on that day (cf. Fig, 9):




**Figure 9**

Path of the Moon's shadow on 24th November 29 C.E. (General View).

(Image taken from NASA Eclipse Website, 2014)[97]

Eclipse map courtesy of Fred Espenak - NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center.
For more information on solar and lunar eclipses, see Fred Espenak's Eclipse Web Site:

http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html

Fig. 10 shows a detail of how close the Moon's umbra passed by Jerusalem on 24th November 29 C.E. This NASA map shows the path of the solar eclipse as it traverses the surface of the earth. The northern and southern path limits are

[97]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=00291124 [17 July 2014].

indicated in purple whilst the central line (path of total eclipse) is coloured in red.




**Figure 10**

Path of the Moon's shadow on 24th November 29 C.E. (Detailed View).

(Image taken from NASA Eclipse Website, 2014)[98]

Eclipse map courtesy of Fred Espenak - NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center.
For more information on solar and lunar eclipses, see Fred Espenak's Eclipse Web Site:

http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html

As a result, anyone standing in Jerusalem on that day would have only seen the

[98]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=00291124 [17 July 2014].

Moon's penumbra and accordingly, they may have witnessed a partial eclipse, where at its peak (i.e. 08:44) the Sun would have been occluded by 90.55% for a few seconds. Fig. 11 (*ut infra*) gives the exact details of this event based on the NASA calculation:

| **Jerusalem: 24th November 29 C.E.** | **Partial Solar Eclipse Magnitude: 0.921 Obscuration: 90.55%** |
|---|---|
| **Event** | Time |
| **Start of partial eclipse:** | 07:22:14.4 |
| **Maximum partial eclipse:** | 08:44:11.7 |
| **End of partial eclipse:** | 10:12:04.4 |

**Figure 11**

Details of a Partial Solar Eclipse Observed in Jerusalem on 24th November 29 C.E. (Table adapted from NASA Eclipse Website, 2014)[99]

Considering that the synodic period of the Moon's orbit (i.e. as viewed from Earth) is exactly 29.5305882 days, a solar eclipse can only happen some two weeks before or after the beginning of Passover. In addition, Passover always occurs in the spring period in Israel (i.e. April/May). Therefore, if the gospel accounts of an apparent total solar eclipse are accurate, then any crucifixion (including that claimed for Jesus of Nazareth) could not possibly have occurred at Passover.

For the sake of argument, one might also want to hypothesise the following, viz.:

1. The partial eclipse that occurred on the early morning of 24 November 29 C.E. somehow served as an inspiration for subsequent exaggerated accounts of total darkness for three hours in the afternoon; and
2. There was an actual crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth that occurred on that day.

[99]Cf. NASA Eclipse Website [Online]. Available: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=00291124 [17 July 2014].

However if the above premises are both true then it follows that:

1. If Jesus of Nazareth was crucified at noon and taken down three hours later, no darkness ever occurred during the process.
2. If there was ever a brief darkening of the sky there was neither a crucifixion on a Passover festival nor at noon.
3. If the crucifixion happened at the Passover there was no darkness.

Therefore, if the crucifixion at Passover account in the *NT* is accurate then no solar eclipse occurred. Finally, if one (purely for the sake of interest) attempts to find an eclipse, as calculated by NASA, which occurred in the months of April or May in the Middle East sometime between 23 and 43 C.E. we see that the closest possible factual event was an annular eclipse centred near Sri Lanka on 10 May 31 C.E. The latter could not possibly have caused a total eclipse in Jerusalem. Neither could the event in 29 C.E. which occurred some six months after Passover and which could not possibly have caused total darkness for the observers in Jerusalem.

We are left with the only conclusion possible, namely any account of a total solar eclipse at *any* time during *any* activity in or around Jerusalem between 23 and 43 C.E. including Roman crucifixions and the like, would have to be entirely and undeniably fictitious.

### 2.7.2 Discussion

As with most of these claimed extra-biblical/scriptural accounts, even if one impetuously accepts on pure faith that the account is somehow true, it tells the historian nothing that can confirm the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

## 2.8 *Phlegon* (Φλέγων) a.k.a. Phlegon of Tralles (fl. c. 80 C.E.)

Hansen (1996: xvi and 215), confirms that Phlegon of Tralles is perhaps best known for having written the *Olympiads* presumably sometime in the early second century C.E. Regardless, this work is now only partially preserved via the writings of, inter alia, Origen and Eusebius. In this context, Origen makes a reference to Phlegon in his *Cels.*

II, 14[100], where he is quoted as follows:

> Φλέγων μέντοι ἐν τρισκαιδεκάτῳ ἢ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ οἶμαι τῶν Χρονικῶν καὶ τὴν περί τινων μελλόντων πρόγνωσιν ἔδωκε τῷ Χριστῷ, συγχυθεὶς ἐν τοῖς περὶ Πέτρου ὡς περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι κατὰ τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ λεγόμενα ἀπήντησε. Πλὴν κἀκεῖνος καὶ διὰ τῶν κατὰ τὴν πρόγνωσιν ἄκων ὡσπερεὶ οὐ κενὸν θειοτέρας δυνάμεως ἀπεφήνατο εἶναι τὸν ἐν τοῖς πατράσι τῶν δογμάτων λόγον.
>
> Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although falling into confusion about some things which refer to Peter, as if they referred to Jesus), but also testified that the result corresponded to His predictions. So that he also, by these very admissions regarding foreknowledge, as if against his will, expressed his opinion that the doctrines taught by the fathers of our system were not devoid of divine power.

Origen makes another reference to Phlegon in his *Cels.* II, 33 and 59[101]:

> Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, οὗ βασιλεύοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσταυρῶσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέγων ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ ἢ τῷ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ οἶμαι τῶν Χρο νικῶν…Οἴεται δὲ τερατείαν εἶναι καὶ τὸν σεισμὸν καὶ τὸν σκότον· περὶ ὧν κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω ἀπελογη σάμεθα, παραθέμενοι τὸν Φλέγοντα ἱστορήσαντα κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τοῦ πάθους τοῦ σωτῆρος τοιαῦτα ἀπηντηκέναι,
>
> And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Cæsar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon too, I think, has written in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his Chronicles…He [Celsus] imagines also that both the earthquake and the darkness were an invention; but regarding these, we have in the preceding pages, made our defence, according to our ability, adducing the testimony of *Phlegon*, who relates that these events took place at the time when our Saviour suffered. [My insertion].

Jerome wrote in his Chronicle: 202nd Olympiad: 18 and 19[102]:

> *Flego, qui olympiadarum egregius supputator est, in XIII libro ita dicens: Quarto autem anno CCII olympiadis magna et excellens inter omnes quae ante eam acciderant defectio solis facta; dies hora sexta ita in tenebrosam noctem versus ut stellae in caelo visae sint terraeque motus in Bithynia Nicae[n]ae urbis multas aedes subverterit.*

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[100] Greek text and English translation according to The Works of Origen [Online]. Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [1 June 2014].

[101] Greek text according to The Works of Origen [Online]. Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm (1June 2014). English translation according to Origen: Contra Celsus, Book II in *New Advent: Church Fathers* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04162.htm (1June 2014).

[102] Latin text from Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*: 1165, Phlegon history 16a; English translation based on the online edition at the Tertullian Project): http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_03_part2.htm

> Phlegon, who is an excellent calculator of Olympiads, also writes about these things, writing thus in his thirteenth book: In the fourth year, however, of Olympiad 202, an eclipse of the sun happened, greater and more excellent than any that had happened before it; at the sixth hour, day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea. These things [are according to] the aforementioned man.

In addition, as has already been ascertained (*ut supra*) we also have Syncellus' reference (Εκλογή Χρονογραφίας, chapter 391) to Africanus' reference to both Thallus and Phlegon (the former dealt with in Section 2.7.1.2) where we are told, in the context of the passion and resurrection of the Christ, that "Phlegon records that during the reign of Tiberius Caesar there was a complete solar eclipse at full moon from the sixth to the ninth hour…".

### 2.8.1 A Review of the References to Phlegon

#### 2.8.1.1 Conservative Observations

1. According to Habermas (1996a: 217), Phlegon was a secular historian who was born c. 80 C.E. and who lived during the second century C.E.; and

2. McDowell (1979: 84) takes it for granted that Phlegon is a reliable source for the historicity of Jesus.

#### 2.8.1.2 Sceptical Observations

1. Carrier (1999) supports the assertion that Phlegon could only have written in the decade c. 140 – 149 C.E. and is already well known for relating fanciful stories. In this connection he concludes that it would not be out of the ordinary for Phlegon to borrow such a tale from Christian literature;

2. Carrier (1999) refers to the well-known classical scholar, Routh[103] who questions why Africanus, having just criticised Thallus goes on to view Phlegon in a more positive light when both authors state the self-same concept. Routh also noticed grammatical evidence that would seem to indicate interpolation of

[103]Martin Joseph Routh (1755 – 1854). Cf. Routh. 1846. *Reliquiae Sacrae*, 2nd ed. Vol. II.

the Phlegon reference in Africanus' text. The upshot of this is that the testimonial to Phlegon appears to be both grammatically and logically out of place;

3. Wells (1988a: 4) feels that Phlegon was merely reporting on an eclipse that most likely occurred on 24 November 29 C.E. and that it was Africanus who linked this astronomical reference to the claimed supernatural events at Christ's passion;

4. Lee (2014) emphasises that like Thallus, Phlegon's major works, the *Chronicles* and the *Olympiads*, have been lost. At best we only have unsubstantiated references made by early Christian apologists like Origen, Eusebius and Iulius Africanus. Here again the latter writer is himself referenced by a ninth century apologist (i.e. George Syncellus); and

5. Lee (2014) reminds his reader that Phlegon lived at least a century after the events he claims personally to have witnessed (i.e. as cited by later writers).

### 2.8.2 Discussion

Taken at face value, it would appear that Phlegon is at best confirming the traditional Christian crucifixion date of 33 C.E. with a flawed reference to the ancient Olympiad dating system[104]. In addition, assuming that he was a non-Christian, non-partisan commentator, he either said or is *made* to say, that he verifies the accuracy of certain unspecified and unrecorded predictions made by Jesus. It is also clear that Origen's primary purpose for employing this reference is to prove that Christianity is based on divine authority, proven by fulfilment of prophecy.

His secondary reason for quoting Phlegon is to confirm that Jesus' death was a major, if not global, event of supernatural proportions. It is less likely that Origen sees this account as important evidence for Jesus' historical existence. Eusebius, on the other hand seems to be more concerned with the latter issue, viz.: the need for historical

[104] Based on the assumption that the first Olympiad dates from 776 – 772 B.C.E. it follows that the 202nd Olympiad commenced in 32 C.E. and thus, the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad was in 35 C.E. Strictly speaking *Phlegon* should have been quoted as stating that the solar eclipse and associated earthquake occurred in the first year of the 202nd Olympiad.

validation for Jesus' existence. It should also be seen as significant that, on two separate occasions, Origen cannot quite remember where he had seen the information that he happily paraphrases for posterity, whereas Eusebius knows exactly where the information resides and quotes Phlegon verbatim.

As with Thallus (cf. 2.7), even if one rashly accepts on pure faith that the reference to Phlegon is accurate, it still tells the historian very little that can authenticate the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

## 2.9 *Lucianus Samosatensis* a.k.a. Lucian of Samosata (*c.* 125 - after 180 C.E.)

Lucian of Somasata is well known as a non-Christian, possibly Greco-Syrian rhetorician and satirist who produced scores of books covering a wide range of topics. In his largely fictional and certainly satirical *DMP* (*De Morte Peregrini)* his chief character (a parody on the Cynic philosopher *Peregrinus Proteus*) dissolutely exploits Christian kindness and charity. In this overtly sardonic context, Lucian of Somasata (*DMP*, 11 - 13) [105] writes:

> ὅτεπερ καὶ τὴν θαυμαστὴν σοφίαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐξέμαθεν, περὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν καὶ γραμματεῦσιν αὐτῶν ξυγγενόμενος. καὶ τί γάρ; ἐν βραχεῖ παῖδας αὐτοὺς ἀπέφηνε, προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεὺς καὶ πάντα μόνος αὐτὸς ὤν, καὶ τῶν βίβλων τὰς μὲν ἐξηγεῖτο καὶ διεσάφει, πολλὰς δὲ αὐτὸς καὶ συνέγραφεν, καὶ ὡς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνοι ἠδοῦντο καὶ νομοθέτῃ ἐχρῶντο καὶ προστάτην ἐπεγράφοντο, μετὰ γοῦν ἐκεῖνον ὃν ἔτι σέβουσι, τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ ἀνασκολοπισθέντα, ὅτι καινὴν ταύτην τελετὴν εἰσῆγεν ἐς τὸν βίον. τότε δὴ καὶ συλληφθεὶς ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὁ Πρωτεὺς ἐνέπεσεν εἰς τὸ δεσμωτήριον, ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μικρὸν αὐτῷ ἀξίωμα περιεποίησεν πρὸς τὸν ἑξῆς βίον καὶ τὴν τερατείαν καὶ δοξοκοπίαν ὧν ἐρῶν ἐτύγχανεν. ἐπεὶ δ᾽ οὖν ἐδέδετο, οἱ Χριστιανοὶ συμφορὰν ποιούμενοι τὸ πρᾶγμα πάντα ἐκίνουν ἐξαρπάσαι πειρώμενοι αὐτόν. εἶτ᾽, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο ἦν ἀδύνατον, ἥ γε ἄλλη θεραπεία πᾶσα οὐ παρέργως ἀλλὰ σὺν σπουδῇ ἐγίγνετο· καὶ ἕωθεν μὲν εὐθὺς ἦν ὁρᾶν παρὰ τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ περιμένοντα γράδια χήρας τινὰς καὶ παιδία ὀρφανά, οἱ δὲ ἐν τέλει αὐτῶν καὶ συνεκάθευδον ἔνδον μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ διαφθείραντες τοὺς δεσμοφύλακας. εἶτα δεῖπνα ποικίλα εἰσεκομίζετο καὶ λόγοι ἱεροὶ αὐτῶν ἐλέγοντο, καὶ ὁ βέλτιστος Περεγρῖνος - ἔτι γὰρ τοῦτο ἐκαλεῖτο - καινὸς Σωκράτης ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ὠνομάζετο.

[105] Greek text according to Harmon (Ed.). 1936. Lucian. Works, with an English Translation by A.M. Harmon in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0461%3Asection%3D11 [30 May 2014]. English translation according to Fowler and Fowler (Trs).1949. *The Works of Lucian of Samosata,* Vol. IV. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 82.

> It was now that he [i.e. *Peregrinus Proteus*] came across the priests and scribes of the Christians, in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. I can tell you, he pretty soon convinced them of his superiority; prophet, elder, ruler of the Synagogue - he was everything at once; expounded their books, commented on them, wrote books himself. They took him for a God, accepted his laws, and declared him their president. The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day, - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. Well, the end of it was that Proteus was arrested and thrown into prison. This was the very thing to lend an air to his favourite arts of clap-trap and wonder-working; he was now a made man. The Christians took it all very seriously: he was no sooner in prison, than they began trying every means to get him out again, - but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in; their sacred writings were read; and our old friend Peregrine (as he was still called in those days) became for them "the modern Socrates." [My insertion].

### 2.9.1 Conservative Observations

1. Holding (2008: 69) states that the reference to Lucian is underrated;

2. Holding (2008: 70) states that there is no doubt that Lucian is referring to Jesus because Christians never worshipped anyone else. On this issue, Habermas (2008) confirms that the reader is told that “Jesus was worshiped by Christians” and further, that they believed themselves to be immortal;

3. Habermas (1996c) tells his reader that Lucian’s text “also related that Jesus introduced new teachings”, that Jesus’ followers had sacred texts and lived according to his laws, and that Jesus was crucified as a result of these teachings;

4. Holding (2008: 70) corroborates that we must accept Lucian’s credibility because he also wrote a treatise entitled: *The Way to Write History* in which he expressed the ideal that history abhors falsehood and that the historian’s task is to tell the truth. Holding concludes that “Lucian … clearly held historical accuracy in high esteem”;

5. Holding (2008: 71) informs his reader that because Lucian moved in the most

educated of circles and possibly communicated with the leading figures of his time, he was in a good position to know whether or not Jesus was an historical figure; and

6. Habermas (1996c) states “Lucian refers to Jesus as a ‘sage,’ which, especially in a Greek context, would be to compare him to the Greek philosophers and wise men”.

### 2.9.2 Sceptical Observations

1. According to Lee (2014) Lucian was not an historian but a satirist. He was critical of Christianity and was deriding what he perceived to be Christian credulity. Referring to the stereotypical actions of Christians in the second century C.E. is not the same as witnessing an historical Jesus of Nazareth in the first century C.E. In this context he states:

> Taken at face value, Lucian’s testimony would seem to support the idea that such a person as Jesus Christ actually existed. However …when did he write? Given that this passage was not written until the mid-second century at the earliest, it cannot possibly provide any direct evidence for the historicity of Jesus – Lucian must be getting his facts second-hand, from other sources. But what sources did he use? Since he does not say, we cannot know for certain, but the most likely scenario is that he is simply repeating stories he heard from contemporary Christians. Without any citation of his source for this knowledge, all we can say is that Lucian’s writing provides no independent confirmation for Jesus’ existence.

2. Lowder (2000) states: “*Lucian is not an independent witness to Jesus* … given that Lucian's statement was written near the end of the second century, it seems rather unlikely that he had *independent* sources of information concerning the historicity of Jesus”.

### 2.9.3 Discussion

Even if Lucian was highly educated, erudite and trustworthy, he tells the historian very little that can authenticate the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. At best he describes the behaviour of select Christian groups that he may have witnessed at first-hand in the late second century C.E.

## 2.10 *Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus* a.k.a.Tertullian (c. 160 – 225 C.E.)

Tertullian is better known for his rigorous efforts to see Christianity given the same tolerance that other sects enjoyed in the Roman Empire, during the periods of discrimination by certain non-Christian groups in the late second century C.E. In this latter regard, his most famous book is *Apol.* (*Apologeticus* or *Apologeticum)*, often translated as *The Apology of Tertullian for the Christians*. In *Apol.* V[106] Tertullian writes:

> *Nisi homini deus placuerit, deus non erit; homo iam deo propitious esse debebit.Tiberius ergo, cuius tempore nomen Christianum in saeculum introivit, annuntiatum sibi ex Syria Palaestina, quod illic veritatem illius divinitatis revelaverat, detulit ad senatum cum praerogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit, Caesar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum. Consulte commentarios vestros; illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse.* [My corrections to spelling (underlined)].
>
> Unless a god shall have been acceptable to man, he shall not be a god: man must now be propitious to a god. Accordingly Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name first made its appearance in the world, laid before the senate tidings from Syria Palaestina which had revealed to him the truth of the divinity there manifested, and supported the motion by his own vote to begin with. The senate rejected it because it had not itself given its approval. Caesar held to his own opinion and threatened danger to the accusers of the Christians. Consult your records: you will there find that Nero was the first emperor who wreaked his fury on the blood of Christians, when our religion was just springing up in Rome.

### 2.10.1 Conservative Observations

1 Eusebius refers to Tertullian and this incident in his *EH*; and

2 A number of letters from Pontius Pilate to Tiberius and vice versa are recorded which support the claims of Tertullian;[107]

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[106] Latin text according to Woodham (Ed.) 1850. *Q.S.F. Tertulliani Liber Apologeticus:* 18. . English translation according to Mayor and Souter (Eds) 1917. *Q. Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Apologeticus.* Tr. Alexander Souter: xx; 496 in *Tertullian.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/articles/mayor_apologeticum/mayor_apologeticum_07translation.htm [3 September 2014].

[107] Cf. Elliott, 2005. The *Apocryphal New Testament: 206 - 208.*

### 2.10.2 Sceptical Observations

1. Tertullian repeats popular Christian legends as though they are historical fact. Thus he is a very unreliable witness. Consider his comments on the Apostle John being boiled in oil and surviving in his *DPH* (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*), XXXVI[108]:

> *Ista quam felix ecclesia cui totam doctrinam apostoli cum sanguine suo profuderunt, ubi Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur, ubi Paulus Ioannis exitu coronatur, ubi apostolus Ioannes posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur.*
>
> What a happy Church is that whereon the Apostles poured out their whole Doctrine together with their blood; where Peter suffers a passion like his Lord's, where Paul is crowned with the death of John [the Baptist], whence John the Apostle, after being immersed in boiling oil and taking no hurt, is banished to an island [i.e. Patmos]. [My insertions].

2. Fraudulent letters[109] supposedly written by, inter alia, Pilate to Tiberius and *vice versa* were not always accepted by early Christians themselves. Consider Eusebius' remarks in his *HE* (IX, 5 / 1) [110] where he refers to the deceitful acts that the emperor Maximinus and his cronies (e.g. Theotecnus) undertook to discredit the Christians, including writing false accounts about Pontius Pilate and Jesus (of Nazareth). Specifically he states:

> Πλασάμενοι δῆτα Πιλάτου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα πάσης ἔμπλεα κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βλασφημίας, γνώμῃ τοῦ μείζονος ἐπὶ πᾶσαν διαπέμπονται τὴν ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀρχὴν διὰ προγραμμάτων

[108] Latin text according to *Tertulliani Liber De Praescriptione Haereticorum* in *Tertullian.Org.* [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/latin/de_praescriptione_haereticorum.htm [10 July 2014]. English translation according to Greenslade. 1956. *Early Latin Theology: Selections from Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome*, Library of Christian Classics V: 19 - 64.

[109] Quasten informs his reader that "[t]he oldest piece of Christian Pilate literature seems to be 'The Report of Pilate to the Emperor Claudius', which is inserted in Greek into the late *Acts of Peter and Paul* and is given in Latin translation as an appendix of the *Evangelium Nicodemi*. It is probable that this report is identical with that mentioned by Tertullian. If that is true, it must have been composed before the year 197 A.D., the time of Tertullian's *Apologeticum*." Cf. *Patrology*, Vol. 1: 116.

[110] Greek text according to ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ (*Eusebius Caesariensis Historia Ecclesiastica)* [Online]. Available: http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/history/eysebios_ecclesia_historia.htm [7 July 2014]. English translation according to Church History (Book IX) in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250109.htm [7 July 2014].

παρακελευόμενοι κατὰ πάντα τόπον, ἀγρούς τε καὶ πόλεις, ἐν ἐκφανεῖ ταῦτα τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐκθεῖναι τοῖς τε παισὶ τοὺς γραμματοδιδασκάλους ἀντὶ μαθημάτων ταῦτα μελετᾶν καὶ διὰ μνήμης κατέχειν παραδιδόναι

> Having therefore forged Acts of Pilate and our Saviour full of every kind of blasphemy against Christ, they sent them with the emperor's approval to the whole of the empire subject to him, with written commands that they should be openly posted to the view of all in every place, both in country and city, and that the schoolmasters should give them to their scholars, instead of their customary lessons, to be studied and learned by heart.

One excellent example of a supposed correspondence between Pilate and Claudius Caesar is to be found in the *Acts of Peter and Paul* - an apocryphal book dated to the fourth century C.E.[111]

> Pontius Pilate to Claudius, greeting. There has lately happened an event which I myself was concerned in. For the Jews through envy have inflicted on themselves, and those coming after them, dreadful judgments. Their fathers had promises that their God would send them his holy one from heaven, who according to reason should be called their king, and he had promised to send him to the earth by means of a virgin. He, then, when I was procurator, came into Judæa. And they saw him enlightening the blind, cleansing lepers, healing paralytics, expelling demons from men, raising the dead, subduing the winds, walking upon the waves of the sea, and doing many other wonders, and all the people of the Jews calling him Son of God. Then the chief priests, moved with envy against him, seized him, and delivered him to me; and telling one lie after another, they said that he was a wizard, and did contrary to their law. And I, having believed that these things were so, gave him up, after scourging him, to their will; and they crucified him, and after he was buried set guards over him. But he, while my soldiers were guarding him, rose on the third day. And to such a degree was the wickedness of the Jews inflamed against him, that they gave money to the soldiers, saying, Say his disciples have stolen his body. But they, having taken the money, were not able to keep silence as to what had happened; for they have testified that they have seen him (after he was) risen, and that they have received money from the Jews. These things, therefore, have I reported, that no one should falsely speak otherwise, and that you should not suppose that the falsehoods of the Jews are to be believed.

[111] English translation according to Walker (Tr.). 1886. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VIII. Eds Roberts, Donaldson and Coxe. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0815.htm).

### 2.10.3 Discussion

The extant letters written by Pontius Pilate to either Tiberius or Claudius and vice versa are obvious forgeries. All of these accounts are well known as fraudulent and worthless as historical sources.

## 2.11 The *Talmud and Tosefta*

### 2.11.1 The *Talmud* and *Tosefta* as reliable historical documents

Due no doubt to the possible contemporaneousness of specific information contained within their numerous volumes, apropos the presumed historical existence of Jesus (of Nazareth), both Christian believers and their detractors alike, have for many centuries, seen the *Tosefta* (תוספתה) and the *Talmud* (תלמוד) as important arbiters of truth. For the Christian believer they seem at first glance, to offer promising extra-biblical/scriptural evidence that Jesus actually existed and for the more sceptically minded individual, the lack of evidence (if proven) confirms what history has already shown (i.e. no eye witness accounts exist outside of the pseudepigraphical gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)[112].

The *Talmud* (i.e. both the *Talmud Bavli* as well as the *Talmud Yerushalmi*) and kindred

[112] Ehrman (2009: 14 -15), confirms that, inter alia, the canonical gospels should be considered to be as equally apocryphal as those writings that were not sanctified in 325 C.E. at the Council of Nicaea:

> One of the most amazing and perplexing features of mainstream Christianity is that seminarians who learn the historical-critical method in their Bible classes appear to forget all about it when it comes time for them to be pastors. They are taught critical approaches to Scripture, they learn about the discrepancies and contradictions, they discover all sorts of historical errors and mistakes, they come to realize that it is difficult to know whether Moses existed or what Jesus actually said and did, they find that there are other books that were at one time considered canonical but that ultimately did not become part of Scripture (for example, other Gospels and Apocalypses), they come to recognize that a good number of the books of the Bible are pseudonymous (for example, written in the name of an apostle by someone else), that in fact we don't have the original copies of any of the biblical books but only copies made centuries later, all of which have been altered. They learn all of this, and yet when they enter church ministry they appear to put it back on the shelf. For reasons I will explore in the conclusion, pastors are, as a rule, reluctant to teach what they learned about the Bible in seminary.

Cf. Ehrman. 2009. *Jesus, Interrupted* and Gutierrez. 2009. *The Bible Dilemma*.

texts (i.e. the *Tosefta*) speak, inter alia, of events that are believed to have occurred in the latter years of the first century B.C.E. as well as the first decades of the first century C.E. Accordingly, it is often considered that it might be possible that information referring to an historical personage, whose life gave rise to the later Christian concept of Jesus, might be gleaned by a careful examination of its contents.

However, for the sake of complete accuracy, before reviewing these kinds of notions it is necessary for the sake of precision and clarity to carefully and methodically consider the status of the *Talmud* as regards any claim that it is a reliable, primary source and/or witness to particular events that may have occurred before, during or even after the time in question. It will also be necessary to determine to what degree the *Talmud* may in any way be considered to be an objective or accurate record of history. In this regard, the very development of the *Talmud* itself offers us insight into its unlikely value as a reliable witness to historical fact.

### 2.11.2 The *Torah*

It is accepted (cf. *JSB*, 2004: 1 and *EJ* 1982: 1235), that the *Torah* (תורה), which is interpreted variously as “teaching”, “instruction” or “law”, was originally recounted as part of an oral tradition that may stretch as far back as c.1200 B.C.E.. Originally, much of the information it now contains was most likely handed down orally, generation after generation, and in due course, with the advent of writing, it written down for posterity and ultimately edited and composed into its present unity - notwithstanding the fact that it is arranged into five books, viz.:

- Genesis: *Sefer bereishit* (ספר בראשית);
- Exodus: *Sefer ve'eleh shemot* (ספרועלעה שמות);
- Leviticus: *Sefer vayikra* (ספר ויקרא) or *Torat kohanim* (תורת כוהנים);
- Numbers: *Sefer bemidbar* (ספר במדבר); and
- Deuteronomy: *Sefer devarim* (ספר דברים).

Here (cf. *JSB*, 2004: 3), it can be clearly shown that the final compilation of its written form or *Torah she-bi-khtav* (בתכבש הרות) with its often contradictory reiterations, was redacted from at least four distinctive sources, each of which is identifiable on the grounds of such aspects as literary style, theological stance and employed vocabulary.

Respected authorities, like Brettler (*JSB*, 2004: 6) and Rosenberg (1984: 36 - 37), confirm that scholarly research supports the notion that this process of amalgamation did not happen overnight; most probably occurring in several stages over an extended period of time. The definitive outcome of this redaction, which also must have witnessed the removal and loss of substantial material, is claimed to have occurred during or shortly after the time of the Babylonian exile (586 - 538 B.C.E.). Regardless, this herculean labour resulted in arguably the longest piece of literature to have ever emanated from the ancient Near East, not only in terms of its sheer volume but also in terms of its historical scope and range of incorporated literary genres.

In this regard, (cf. Rosenberg, 1984: 34), the *Torah* is replete with, inter alia, epigrams, folk tales, poetry, prophecies, quasi-historical narratives, remnants of myths, satires, songs, and even wisdom literature. However, what was considered far more important, especially from a more traditional Jewish perspective, is that the *Torah* was an embodiment of either divine or divinely inspired law.

#### 2.11.2.1 The *Torah she'b'al peh*

Even so, *Torah she-bi-khtav* was quite inadequate as a comprehensive legal code and an oral tradition continued (even after the written *Torah* was finalised), that dealt with such issues as the specific application of the divine law within the context of the reality of everyday Jewish life abounding as it still does with countless possibilities. As confirmed by the *EJ*. (1982: 1236) this originally, oral tradition is known as *Torah she'b'al peh* (תורה שבלפה) and may be translated as “oral instruction” or “oral law”. Steinsaltz (1976: 11) explains that the fundamental role of the oral law was to both preserve and communicate the meaning of words found in the *Torah she-bi-khtav* that may have changed over the course of time.

The actual role of transmitting the oral law increasingly became the responsibility of the *kohanim* (priestly tribe), the levites and other, better educated members of Jewish society. Certainly by the sixth century B.C.E. well-read persons who were considered to be learned in matters pertaining to the *Torah* and known as the *tofsei ha-Torah* (תורה תפס) were already in existence. These learned individuals specialized in the study of *Torah* and the interpretation of the written law.

It is also known that during the period of Persian rule in Israel and Judea (c. 539 - 332 B.C.E.) – a time when it is quite possible much of the final redaction and canonization

of biblical/scriptural texts may have occurred; an eminent council came into existence known as the *Knesset gedolah* (כנסת גדולה) or "Great Assembly". The names of the scribes (*sofrim*) who operated within this institution remain unknown and accordingly biblical scholars often refer to this period as the "age of the anonymous scribes" (cf. Steinsaltz, 1976: 14).

#### 2.11.2.2 The *Halakhot*

As ratified by the *EJ* (1982: 758 – 759) and Stern in the *JSB* (2004: 1863 – 1875) these *sofrim* also started the process of studying and reorganizing the written material that had been generated by the oral tradition. In this regard they developed what was to be termed *midrash halakhah* or halakhic exegesis or interpretation. Following the destruction of the Temple in c.70 C.E.[113], the rabbis gathered and transmitted the laws learned from earlier sages.

An unwieldy assortment of written material was increasingly generated over the centuries as the oral law was transmitted from master to student through oral instruction. It soon became apparent that the sheer volume of information could not be easily committed to memory.

Originally the *Torah she'b'al peh* had adhered closely to the *Torah she-khtav* and in this context the latter often served as a mnemonic aid which assisted the scholar in recalling a particular *halakhah*.

### 2.11.3 The *Mishnah*

As confirmed by Elman in *JSB* (2004: 1844 – 1863) during the first two centuries of the common era (also known as the Tannaitic period), it is widely accepted that educated rabbis (the successors of the Pharisees), mindful of the precarious situation that Judaism now found itself with the loss of both the Temple in Jerusalem and the *Sanhedrin*, started working towards finding more lasting means by which they could convey and cultivate new laws through an established convention for interpretation.

Conventional wisdom asserts that between c. 20 - 200 C.E. (with heightened activity towards the concluding years of the second century C.E.), the various rabbis (i.e. *tannaim*) working on this issue, had reached a point where the collective of these

[113] According to Jewish chronology, this watershed event more likely took place in c. 68 C.E.

various writings could be evaluated and ultimately redacted into a single work. This task was spearheaded by Rabbi *Yehudah haNasi*, who worked in consultation with the various *Yeshivot* (academies) from c. 200 - 220 C.E. The result of this initiative was the publication of a study book of rabbinic law called the *Mishnah* (משנה) which can be translated as "repeating" or "teaching". Even here, it was the original intention that this written publication should be employed for the purposes of instruction and ultimate memorization in order that the threatened oral tradition might recover and ultimately continue.

Here the content of the *Mishnah* is divided into six *Sedarim* (orders) and *masekhot* (tractates) wherein various statements made by different rabbis are compared against (albeit in seeming conversation with), the learned opinions of other rabbis. Certainly, it has been pointed out by certain scholars that from the *Mishnah* onward, the *Torah She'b'al peh* ("oral Torah") evolves into what could be better termed "conversational Torah".

### 2.11.4 The *Tosefta*

According to, inter alia, the *EJ* (1982: 1283 -1285) during the same period, a possibly parallel attempt at producing a compilation of oral law was also underway. This process resulted in the *Tosefta* (תוספתה) which was edited in the third century C.E. by Rabbis *Hiyya* (a.k.a. Hiyya the Great) and *Oshaiah* (a.k.a. Oshaiah [or Hoshaia] the Great). Here the standard opinion is that most of the *Tosefta* was written shortly after the *Mishnah* was redacted. However, recent scholarship (i.e. since 1989), by Hauptman (2005: 109 - 132), reveals that the *Tosefta* draws on source material earlier than the later material in the *Mishnah* and it may well be that parts of the *Tosefta* predate the *Mishnah*.[114]

Nonetheless, it is a Halakhic work which corresponds in structure almost exactly to the *Mishnah*, with the same divisions for *Sedarim* (orders) and *masekhot* (tractates). It is mainly written in Mishnahic Hebrew, with some Aramaic.

In many ways the *Tosefta* acts as a supplement to the *Mishnah* and *Tosefta* means "supplement" or "addition". The text of most of the *Tosefta* agrees nearly verbatim with

[114] Cf. Hauptman, Judith. 2005. The Tosefta as a Commentary on an Early Mishnah in *Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal* 4: 109 - 132.

the *Mishnah*, with only slight variances. For example, the *Tosefta* offers authors' names for laws that remain anonymous in the *Mishnah*; it also enhances the *Mishnah* with further commentaries and debates. The *Tosefta* as we have it today functions like a commentary on unquoted Mishnahic material; It offers both additional haggadic as well as midrashic material, and it sometimes contradicts the *Mishnah* in deciding *Halakha* or in declaring in whose name a law was given. Rashi[115] tells us that the *Tosefta* was considered to be less authoritative than the *Mishnah* in his commentary on *Talmud Sanhedrin* 33a.[116]

During the three or four centuries following the *Mishnah*'s publication, the rabbinic sages whose work was eventually compiled in the documents which were to become known as the *Talmud*, analysed each *halakhah* in the *Mishnah*. They compared the various statements of numerous rabbis to determine how these different positions could be seen as parts of a consistent legal theory. They harmonized the opinions in the *Mishnah* to other early opinions that were not included in the *Mishnah*. They tried to show the relationship between the various opinions in the *Mishnah* to their presumed derivations from the *Torah*.

### 2.11.5 The *Gemara*

Ben-Sasson (1976: 351) confirms that on the completion of the *Mishnah*, certain rabbis in *yeshivot* situated in both Babylonia (as well as in and around what had once been known as the Roman province of *Iudeae*)[117] continued to analyse and comment on its contents. By employing the *Mishnah* as the focal point, the rabbis produced the *Gemara* (גמרא), which (cf. *EJ* (1982: 368 – 369) taken together with the *Mishnah* resulted in the *Talmud* proper. Thus the *Gemara* (a term which stems from *gamar* (רמג) and which means "to finish" or "to complete"), comments on the *Mishnah* and thus finalizes the *Talmud*.

The rabbis of the *Gemara* are known as *Amoraim* (singular: *Amora*). As is well known,

[115] המלש יקחצי (*Shlomo Yitzchaki*) (1040 – 1105 C.E.).
[116] Cf. Shachter (Ed.) s.a. Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin, Folio 33a, Tr. Freedman and Epstein, in *Come and Hear* [Online]. Available: http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_33.html. [13 May 2014].
[117] This territory was sardonically renamed *Syria Palaestina* by the Roman emperor Hadrian after *Bar Kokhba*'s revolt of 135 C.E. (Cf. Ben-Sasson, 1976. *A History of the Jewish People*: 351)

two *Talmuds* were produced, viz.: the *Talmud Bavli* and the *Talmud Yerushalmi*. The latter was produced in a relatively short period of time in Galilee in the province of *Iudeae* under Roman oppression and political turmoil including the Great Jewish Revolt (66 - 70 C.E.) the *Kitos* War (115 - 117 C.E.), and *Bar Kokhba*'s revolt (132 - 135 C.E.), whereas the *Talmud Bavli* was developed over a far longer period in Babylonia in a relatively calm and stable environment.

Thus, there are two sets of commentaries (*gemarot*) (cf. *EJ*, 1982: 368 – 369) based on the same *Mishnah*. Firstly, there is the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (which is often referred to simply as the *Yerushalmi*). Secondly, there is the *Talmud Bavli* (which is sometimes called the Palestinian Talmud or the *Bavli*). The *Gemara* of the *Talmud Yerushalmi* is composed in Western Aramaic whereas the *Gemara* of the *Talmud Bavli is* written in Eastern Aramaic.

The *Gemara*, as redacted in the *Talmud*, serves as a verification of the detailed examination of the *Mishnah*. This critique is designed to yield a meticulous appreciation of the complete significance of the *Mishnah*. In the *Talmud*, the examination is effectively undertaken by means of a progression of questions and suppositions. In the *Gemara* each and every facet of the text contained in the *Mishnah* is handled as a topic of painstaking analysis as regards use of language, logic and legality.

The *Gemara* is not only limited to an analysis of the text found in the *Mishnah* itself. It also brings in sources from the Mishnahic era, which were not included in the *Mishnah* compendium, which are called *Tosefta* (additions); the Talmud refers to these as *beraitot*, ("outside"). The *Gemara* also supplements the *Mishnah* with haggadic (or aggadic) materials and biblical expositions, and is a source for both history and legend. Everywhere and throughout the *Talmud*, the rabbis worked with several basic assumptions. Given a controversy between two early sages, the goal was not to determine according to whom was the practical law; the goal was to make sense of each opinion. This underlying assumption that opinions are not simply fickle choices but the rational decisions of sages confronting differing ways of describing legal reality is the hallmark of the Talmudic process. In this regard its employment solely as a reliable reference to actual historical events is severely limited – a point seemingly lost on most contemporary Christian scholars. The rabbis expressed this primary concept of presenting a legal reality in Jewish society succinctly: "both these and those are the

words of the living God" or, as it may also be translated, "both these and those are the living words of God." [118]

### 2.11.6 Possible references to Jesus (of Nazareth) in the *Talmud Bavli* and *Tosefta* (c. 200 – 500 C.E.)

#### 2.11.6.1 Historical Reliability

Talmudic literature has long been considered a potential source for reliable proof that Jesus of Nazareth is mentioned outside the synoptic gospel accounts. However, given the detailed preamble (*ut supra*), it should be quite self-evident that this view needs to be seriously reconsidered. Thus, although it might contain a *modicum* of historical information that may (or may not) be contemporary with the purported life and times of Jesus of Nazareth, it will be recalled that the *primary* purpose of the *Talmud* Bavli*, Talmud Yerushalmi* and *Tosefta* was the recording of the basic principles of the Oral Law. In this latter regard, it would be a grave mistake to try to see either the *Talmud* or the *Tosefta* as some kind of reliable, chronological history of events.

Because of the great volume of commentaries that were generated in its evolution, in its final form, although still an enormous collection of writings, it is in fact a highly condensed version of the information that must have once existed to create it in the first place. In order to save space and reduce its bulk, only the most important (albeit précised) aspects of the various commentaries have survived.

#### 2.11.6.2 Christian and Jewish Censorship

Related to this is the reality that at various times in its development it was also subject to censorship, both from within the Jewish community as well as from Christian authorities (cf. *EJ*, 1982: 767 – 771). For example, by medieval times, many Jewish texts were placed on the *Index of Forbidden Texts* and in 1264 C.E. certain passages considered to be offensive to the Christian Church were expurgated. Again, in 1559 C.E., the entire *Talmud Bavli* was placed on the *Index* by Pope Paul IV.

[118] Cf. *Talmud Eruvin* 13b. [Online]. Available: http://halakhah.com/pdf/moed/Eiruvin.pdf [15 July 2014].

This means that it is quite possible that some references to an individual (or individuals) who (albeit even unconsciously), may have served as a catalyst in the development of either the foundation and/or appellation of the subsequent Christian concept of Jesus have long been removed and are now quite lost to history.

Furthermore, where references to Jesus (of Nazareth) are believed to exist, they are rarely flattering to the ears of a Christian believer. As a consequence, Christian authorities (especially in the early part of the common era), convinced that certain Talmudic passages referred directly to their particular notion of Jesus, have often made the claim that they were generated *deliberately* as part of the negative Jewish response to the rapid spread of Christianity. In this context, it is often argued, that these particular accounts were altered by a politically biased insertion or redaction, solicited solely by the Jews' perceived threat of encroaching Christianity between c. 200 C.E. and c. 500 C.E.

#### 2.11.6.3 The Written Evidence (*Talmud Bavli* and the *Tosefta*)

This section is heavily indebted to the insights of Student (2000) who should be regarded as one of the pioneers when it comes to critically examining the *Talmud* and associated sources for information about an historical Jesus (of Nazareth).[119] It is also beholden to the immense biographical work undertaken by Hyman (1964).[120]

Although concerned and even infuriated Christians have managed to find any number of (at best) indirect and even symbolic or metaphoric references to, inter alia, Jesus (of Nazareth) and Mary his mother in the *Talmud*, these cannot be taken seriously. Indeed, more rational scholars would surely tend to dismiss such nonsensical claims as nothing more than the wild imaginings of tedious provocateurs.

Centuries ago, the Tosafist, Yechiel ben Joseph of Paris a.k.a. Sir Vives (d. c. 1286) [121] and other Jewish apologists, such as השמ והכה (Moses ha-Kohen de Tordesillas) (fl. 1370s) tried in vain to convince medieval Christians that there were two historical personages called "Jesus", viz.: one of the *NT* and another of the *Talmud*. It should

[119] Cf. Student, Gil. 2000. The Jesus Narrative in The Talmud in *Talmud: The Real Truth About The Talmud* http://talmud.faithweb.com/articles/jesusnarr.html
[120] Cf. Hyman 1964. *Toldoth Tannaim Ve'Amoraim*, Vol. I – III.
[121] Jehiel Ben Joseph of Paris cf. JewishEncyclopedia.com. [Online]. Available: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8553-jehiel-ben-joseph-of-paris [15 July 2014].

also be noted that, at least as far back as the fourteenth century, in the light of the constant Christian attempts to ban and/or discredit the *Talmud*, the Jewish sage אשר בן יחיאל, (Asher ben Jehiel) a.k.a. *Asher ben Yechiel* a.k.a. Asheri (1250/9 – 1327)[122] declared that no mention of Jesus (of Nazareth) was to be found in the *Talmud*.

With reference to Maccoby (1982: 35 - 55) and Seidman ( 2006: 137), it is no surprise that such famous medieval Jewish converts to Christianity, as Pablo Christiani (Barcelona) and Nicholas Donin (Paris) publicly claimed that the *Talmud* made blasphemous references to Jesus of Nazareth.

Today most informed scholars (Student, 2000), agree it is somewhat challenging to see any direct connection between these cited passages and the Jesus described in the synoptic gospels. Certainly, many historians and Talmudists alike, have already ascertained that it is unlikely in the final analysis for any of these passages to refer to the personage Christians call Jesus (of Nazareth).

Despite this well publicised knowledge, mostly conservative scholars are still intent on pedalling the well-worn notion that the uncensored *Talmud* and *Tosefta* contain direct references to Jesus of Nazareth, his family members and disciples. Certainly, it is quite possible that both Jews and Christians in the early middle ages assumed then, that certain passages which contained suggestive keywords were really historical references to Jesus *et al*. And undeniably, because of these passages' often defamatory content, when taken together with their assumed association to Jesus of Nazareth, his parents or disciples, they became obvious candidates for expurgation by self-censoring Jews as well as the occasional medieval pope. It is also very likely that at least some of these texts were elaborated upon by later Jewish writers who were engaged with distinctly anti-Christian polemics. However, this does not make the passages, even the deliberately orchestrated ones, reliable, extra-biblical references to an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

Regardless of these well-known issues, one can still find scholarly articles being published (e.g. Instone-Brewer, 2011: 269 – 294) which go to great lengths to show that the *Talmud* and *Tosefta* have real value as primary historical evidence (not to

[122] Asher Ben Jehiel cf. JewishEncyclopedia.com. [Online]. Available: http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1930-asher-ben-jehiel [15 July 2014].

mention derogatory comments), about Jesus, Mary and disciples etc. These learned papers will even attempt to show which parts of a potentially evocative passage (originally composed anytime between c.100 B.C.E. and c. 100 C.E.), is "original" and which parts were adulterated by later Jewish scribes. They will then claim to have ultimately revealed the "authentic" statements relevant to an historical Jesus of Nazareth, his teaching and his execution.

A good example of this approach is reflected in the work of Instone-Brewer (2011: 272), who in discussing both Jewish and Christian censorship of the *Talmud* and *Tosefta* in, inter alia, the fifteenth century and later, constantly assumes that an historical Jesus of Nazareth is always being referred to by some means, metaphoric or symbolic, even when the common name "Yeshua" is absent from the text:

> The name of Jesus does not always occur in censored passages. Some refer to "Ben Stada" (וב אדטס) or "Ben Pandira" (וב אירידנפ), but there is good evidence that these are pseudonyms for Jesus in such passages. In b.San.67a both these names are used for the same person who is described as "hung on the Eve of Passover" - the same phrase which is used of Yeshu ha-Notzri in b.San.43a. Also, Tosephta refers to "Yeshu ben Pandira" (וב ושי אירידנפ ), and it has a story about a follower of him, Jacob of Kephar Sekhania who met Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (late First or early Second Century) in Sepphoris near Nazareth (t. Hull. 2:23). Tosephta's version of this story says that he taught Eliezer a saying of the minim—a term which refers to heretics, including Christians. The saying itself is found at b.AZ.17a, where the Munich Talmud attributes it to 'Yeshu ha-Notzri' (ירצונה ושי).

As will be soon realised, these musings are nothing more than wishful thinking. From a purely factual stance and as confirmed by Student (2000), both the *Talmud Bavli* and the *Tosefta* (taken together), contain exactly six passages that have at various times been identified as making *direct* references to either an historical Jesus and/or his parents and/or his disciples. Therefore, these alleged references need to be subjected to a critical review and objective appraisal to see if any new light can be shed on these claims.

For example, Student (2000) warns his reader that the *Talmud* often contains references to many individuals who all have the same name. This can cause confusion

for the unwary. He cites Hyman (1964)[123] who ascertained in his extensive studies, some 61 references to the name *Eleazar;* 14 references to the name *Hillel* and 71 references to persons with the appellation *Huna*. Student also cites Meier (1991: 206), who correctly points out that of the twenty or so references to persons called variously "Joshua" or "Jesus" in the works of Josephus, at least ten were living at the same time that Christians claim Jesus was engaged in his ministry. As will be elaborated upon in more detail later (cf. 3.3.2.4), based on Leidner's (2000: 19 – 20) observations, all four works of Josephus make reference to a grand total of 21 individuals, each of whom is named "Jesus".

Lastly, some authorities (cf. Mead, 1903)[124] have also suggested that the Talmudic passages in question may refer to an individual or individuals whose life experiences served in some small way as a catalyst for later more theologically motivated interpretations concerning Jesus. In this latter regard, they are seen by some as references to what may be termed a "proto-Jesus".

Forearmed with these important considerations, the following passages (as originally supplied by Student (2000)[125] are pertinent to the present investigation:

#### 2.11.6.4 Passage 1 (*Talmud Shabbat* 104b, *Sanhedrin* 67a)

According to Student (2000), this passage from the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* may be translated as follows:

> It is taught: *Rabbi Eliezar* told the sages: Did not *Ben Stada* bring witchcraft with him from Egypt in a cut that was on his skin? They said to him: He was a fool and you cannot bring proof from a fool.
>
> *Ben Stada* is *Ben Pandira*.
>
> *Rabbi Chisda* said: The husband was *Stada* and the lover was *Pandira*.

[123] Hyman.1964. *Toldoth Tannaim Ve'Amoraim,* Vol. I – III.

[124] Mead, (1903) first theorised the existence of an individual in history who possibly inspired the later gospel narratives. Cf. Mead. 1903. *Did Jesus live 100 B.C.?:* Available [Online]: http://gnosis.org/library/grs-mead/jesus_live_100/ [14 August 2014].

[125] Student (2000) cites the following sources: The *Chisronot Hashas* (originally printed in Koenigsberg in 1860 and reprinted in Tel Aviv in 1989). The text of the *Tosefta* was taken from the standard Vilna edition with slight modifications based on the *Tosefet Rishonim* by Saul Lieberman.

[No,] the husband was *Pappos ben Yehudah* and the mother was *Stada*.

[No,] the mother was *Miriam* the women's hairdresser [and was called *Stada*]. As we say in *Pumbedita*: She has turned away "*stat da"* [סטת דא] from her husband.

An alternative translation of the uncensored text as supplied by the DTorah digital *Talmud* [126] yields:

R`Eliezer said to the Sages: But did not Ben Stada bring forth witchcraft from Egypt by means of scratches [in the form of charms] upon his flesh?

He was a fool, answered they. And proof cannot be adduced from fools. Was he then the son of Stada: surely he was the son of Pandira?

Said R. Hisda: The husband was Stada, the paramour was Pandira. But the husband was Pappos b. Judah?

His mother was Stada. But his mother was Miriam the hairdresser? - It is as we say in Pumbeditha: This one has been unfaithful to (lit., 'turned away from' - satath da) her husband. [My amended transliteration].

Finally, the Come-and-Hear digital *Talmud* website[127] prefers the following:

Ben Stada was Ben Padira.
R. Hisda said: "The husband was Stada, the paramour Pandira".
But was not the husband Pappos b. Judah?

His mother's name was Stada. But his mother was Miriam, a dresser of woman's hair? (I.e. *megadla nashaia*).

As they say in Pumbaditha, This woman has turned away from her husband, (i.e., committed adultery). [My amended transliteration].

**Overview and analysis**

If taken literally, this passage admits to being based upon hearsay supplied collectively by possibly as many as four rabbis. We do not know the exact time period covered by these commentaries. The primary account seems to have formed part of a teaching originally generated by one Rabbi Eliezar. It would seem that the most important issue,

[126] English translation according to Babylonian Talmud: Tractate *Shabbath* 104b in *DTorah.com*. [Online]. Available: http://dtorah.com/otzar/shas_soncino.php?ms=Shabbath&df=104b [4 August 2014].
[127] Babylonian Talmud: Tractate *Sanhedrin*, Folio 67a in Come-And-Hear.com. [Online]. Available: http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_67.html [18 July 2014].

viz.: the unnamed son of a man called *Stada* practiced illicit Egyptian-based magic and was a fool, not to be trusted.

There is obvious confusion in this passage because none of the commentators agrees with the exact details pertaining to *Ben Stada*.

Rabbi Eliezar seems to be saying that *Stada* (i.e. the father of the foolish man), was also known as *Pandira*. According to Student (2000), Talmudic scholars have pointed out that the name *Panthera* (which in both Aramaic and Hebrew is comparable to *Pandira*) was a common name.

Rabbi Chisda or Hisda seems to indicate that this foolish man may have had a father by the name of *Stada* whereas his biological father was someone called *Pandira*. The implications are that the mother had an extramarital affair with *Pandira* which resulted in the birth of an illegitimate son (i.e. the fool).

Another voice refutes this, pointing out that it was the foolish man's mother who was called *Stada* and furthermore, she was married to someone called *Pappos ben Yehudah*.

Finally, yet another voice claims that the mother's name was in fact *Miriam* but that she was known as "*Stada*" because she had turned away (*stat da*), from her husband.

If one ignores the confusion of names, all we know for certain is that there once was a foolish man who was the illegitimate son of a married woman. At least one of his biological parents (i.e. either his mother or his father), was known as "*Stada*".

**Possible links to Jesus**

It is possible to conflate two unrelated pieces of information, viz.:

1. The synoptic gospels record Jesus of Nazareth's mother as Μαρία (*Maria*) and
2. The *Talmud* states that the fool's mother might have been called מִרְיָם (*Miriam*).

The unwary might want to jump to the unjustifiable conclusion that the "fool" and Jesus

of Nazareth are identical. Student (2000) makes the additional observation (with reference to R. Meir Halevi Abulafia, *Yad Rama*, Sanhedrin) that this particular "Miriam" is called a "women's hairdresser" which is the translation of *megadla nashaia*. It is possible that this could be phonetically confused with the *NT* persona of Mary Magdalene.

Student (2000) informs his reader that the name *Pappos ben Yehudah* also appears in the *Mechilta Beshalach* (*Vayehi* ch. 6) where he is shown to be discussing the *Torah* with the well-known Rabbi Akiva.[128] This notion is supported by another mention of him in *Talmud Berachot* 61b when he and Rabbi Akiva are captured and both executed by the Romans. It is accepted that Rabbi Akiva (who was martyred in c. 137 C.E.), obviously lived during the second half of the first century C.E. and the first decades of the second century C.E. Therefore, if this is really the same *Pappos ben Yehudah* who is mentioned specifically in *Talmud Shabbat* 104b, *Sanhedrin* 67a, he could not possibly be the biological father of Jesus of Nazareth (i.e. a man who is assumed by Christians to have died in c. 33 C.E.).

**Conclusion**

Apart from the fact that it is unlikely that either Mary Magdalene or Jesus' mother were hair-dressers and, in addition, the Magdalene was not Jesus' mother, *Ben Stada* could not be synonymous with the Jesus of the synoptic gospels. It is feasible (but certainly not provable), that this *Ben Stada* may have contributed in some small way to the later theologically motivated portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus this *Ben Stada* may (at best), be temporarily considered to be a possible candidate for a "proto-Jesus" but certainly offers the historian nothing that can prove the existence of an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

### 2.11.6.5 Passage 2 (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 107b, *Sotah* 47a)

According to Student (2000), this passage from the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* may be translated as follows:

> What of *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah?*

[128] אביקע וב חסוי (Akiva ben Yohsef) (c. 40 - c. 137 C.E.).

When *John* [*Hyrcanus*] the king killed the rabbis, *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah* [and *Yeshu*] went to Alexandria of Egypt. When there was peace, *Shimon ben Shetach sent* to him

"From me [Jerusalem] the holy city to you Alexandria of Egypt. My husband remains in your midst and I sit forsaken."

[*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah]* left and arrived at a particular inn and they showed him great respect. He said: "How beautiful is this inn [i.e. *achsania* (אכסניא ) which has the same meaning as "innkeeper"]."

[*Yeshu*] said: "*Rabbi*, she has narrow eyes."

[*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah]* said to him: "Wicked one, this is how you engage yourself?"

[*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah]* sent out four hundred trumpets and excommunicated him.

[*Yeshu*] came before [*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah*] many times and said: "Accept me." But [*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah*] paid him no attention.

One day [*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah*] was reciting [the] *Shema*. [*Yeshu*] came before him. He was going to accept [*Yeshu*] and signalled to [*Yeshu*] with his hand. [*Yeshu*] thought that [his master] was repelling him. He went, hung a brick, and bowed down to it.

[*Yeshu*] said to [*Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah*]: "You taught me that anyone who sins and causes others to sin is not given the opportunity to repent."

And the master said: "*Yeshu* [the *Notzri*] practiced magic and deceived and led Israel astray."

An alternative translation of the uncensored text as originally supplied by the *Come-and- Hear* digital *Talmud* website[129] yields the following:

What of R. Joshua b. Perahjah?

When King Jannai [i.e. John Hyrcanus] slew our Rabbis, R. Joshua b. Perahjah (and Jesus) fled to Alexandria of Egypt.

[129] Babylonian Talmud: Tractate *Sanhedrin*, Folio 67a in *Come-And-Hear.com*. [Online]. Available: http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_67.html [18 July 2014].

> On the resumption of peace, Simeon b. Shetach sent to him: “From me, (Jerusalem) the holy city, to thee, Alexandria of Egypt (my sister). My husband dwelleth within thee and I am desolate.”
>
> He arose, went, and found himself in a certain inn, where great honour was shewn him. “How beautiful is this Acsania!” (The word denotes both inn and innkeeper. R. Joshua used it in the first sense; the answer assumes the second to be meant.)
>
> Thereupon (Jesus) observed, “Rabbi, her eyes are narrow.”
>
> “Wretch,” he rebuked him, “dost thou thus engage thyself.” He sounded four hundred trumpets and excommunicated him.
>
> He (Jesus) came before him many times pleading, “Receive me!” But he would pay no heed to him.
>
> One day he (R. Joshua) was reciting the Shema, when Jesus came before him. He intended to receive him and made a sign to him. He (Jesus) thinking that it was to repel him, went, put up a brick, and worshipped it.
>
> “Repent," said he (R. Joshua) to him. He replied, “I have thus learned from thee: He who sins and causes others to sin is not afforded the means of repentance.”
>
> And a Master has said, “Jesus the Nazarene [i.e. the Notzri] practised magic and led Israel astray.” [My insertions].

Finally, the *DTorah* digital *Talmud* [130]yields:

> What was the incident with R`Joshua B`Perahiah?
>
> When King Jannaeus [i.e. John Hyrcanus] put the Rabbis to death, Simeon B`Shetah was hid by his sister, whilst R`Joshua B`perahiah fled to

[130] English translation according to Babylonian Talmud: Tractate *Sotah 47a* in *DTorah.com*. [Online]. Available:http://dtorah.com/otzar/shas_soncino.php?ms=Sotah&df=47a [4 August 2014].

Alexandria in Egypt.

When there was peace, Simeon B`Shetah sent [this message to him]: "From me, Jerusalem, the Holy city, to thee Alexandria in Egypt. O my sister, my husband dwelleth in thy midst and I abide desolate".

[R`Joshua] arose and came back and found himself in a certain inn where they paid him great respect.

He said: "How beautiful is this 'aksania'!" One of his disciples said to him, "My master, her eyes are narrow!" He replied to him, "Wicked person! Is it with such thoughts that thou occupiest thyself!" He sent forth four hundred horns and excommunicated him.

[The disciple] came before him on many occasions, saying "Receive me"; but he refused to notice him.

One day while [R`Joshua] was reciting the Shema, he came before him.

His intention was to receive him and he made a sign to him with his hand, but the disciple thought he was repelling him.

So he went and set up a brick and worshipped it.

[R`Joshua] said to him, "Repent"; but he answered him, "Thus have I received from thee that whoever sinned and caused others to sin is deprived of the power of doing penitence".

A Master has said: The disciple practised magic and led Israel astray.

[My insertion and minor amendments to incorrect punctuation].

**Overview and Analysis**

Student (2000) points out that both historians and Talmudists disagree on exactly when this account took place but personally favours a later date.

Student (2000) with repeated reference to Hyman (1964) informs his reader that the "John" referred to in this passage is normally believed to be the pro-Sadducee king John Hyrcanus who is well known for his attempts to exterminate all Pharisaic rabbis sometime in or after 93 B.C.E.[131] At this time, a Jerusalem-based Pharisee, *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah* and his student *Yeshu haNotzri* (ישו הנצרי) fled to Alexandria to protect themselves.[132] Another Pharisee, one *Shimon ben Shetach,* remained behind in Jerusalem but was secretly given refuge by his sister, *Salome Alexandra*,

[131] Cf. Hyman. 1964. *Toldoth Tannaim Ve'Amoraim*, Vol. II: 691 - 692 and 766.
[132] Ibid. Vol. II: 647 and 692.

who was coincidentally John Hyrcanus' daughter-in-law.[133] However, the political situation suddenly altered in 91 B.C.E. with the death of John Hyrcanus and two of his sons, viz. *Antigonus* and *Aristobulos*. Another son of Hyrcanus (i.e. *Alexander Janneus*), then became king. This new king, despite still being pro-Sadducee, was coerced by his wife into appointing the Pharisee *Shimon ben Shetach to* the *Sanhedrin*, which at this time was largely controlled by the Sadducee faction.

By virtue of his political acumen *Shimon ben Shetach eventually* managed to appoint a number of his own Pharisaic students to the *Sanhedrin.*[134] Eventually (c. 80 B.C.E.), it became safe enough for the exiled Pharisaic rabbis to risk returning to Jerusalem. In this regard, *Shimon ben Shetach* sent a coded message to his former mentor (i.e. *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah*), exhorting him to return[135]

On the journey home, *Yeshu* misinterpreted his master's innocent comment about the inn and unfortunately demonstrated (by virtue of his inappropriate response), that he had (from a Pharisaic perspective), somewhat lax sexual morals. His master's rather hasty reaction was to have his student injudiciously excommunicated.

*Yeshu* then attempted to redeem himself in his former master's eyes and subsequently *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah* resolved to forgive his former student whilst he was reciting the *Shema.* Because he was not allowed to speak at the time, *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah,* whilst still praying, motioned with his hand for *Yeshu* to come to him. *Yeshu*, believing that his former master was angry with him for interrupting his prayers, misinterpreted the hand signal as a clear indication that he must depart from *ben Perachiah*'s presence. Disillusioned, *Yeshu* left *ben Perachiah* and created his own Jewish sect and ultimately led others away from the mainstream faith.

It should also be pointed out that the Talmudic scholar, Maier (1978: 268 - 275) considers, inter alia, Sanhedrin 107b, to be a later revision of an earlier version.

[133] Ibid. Vol. II: 647, 692 and 766; Vol. III: 1212 - 1213.
[134] Cf. Hyman. 1964. *Toldoth Tannaim Ve'Amoraim*, Vol. II: 766 - 767; Vol. III: 1213 - 1214.
[135] Ibid. Vol. II: 647 - 648; Vol. III: 1213 - 1214.

**Possible links to Jesus**

Some Christian historians in the past (no doubt desperate to find some extra-biblical/scriptural reference to an historical Jesus), assumed naively that *Yeshu* (the *Notzri*) and Jesus of Nazareth, were the same individual. Seemingly disregarding the fact that *Yeshu* is a very common Jewish name, they felt emboldened in their presumption by the cursory similarities between the actions of the Jesus of the synoptic gospels and the recorded conduct of the Talmudic *Yeshu* who broke away from the old faith and created a new religion.

This view was strengthened by the fact that this particular *Yeshu* is also referred to as *Yeshu ha-Notzri*. By virtue of a possible misunderstanding of the significance of the biblical term "*Notzri*" (which means "watchmen" or "guardians" [Jeremiah 4:16]), Medieval Christians subsequently equated *Yeshu ha'Notzri* with "Jesus the Nazarene". Although it is certain that later Jewish writers used the terms *Notzrim* and *Netzarim* to refer to Christians this was certainly not possible during the inter-testamental period.

**Conclusion**

Regardless of the possible machinations of either Christian or Jewish interpolation in the medieval period and later, the facts are that the *Yeshu* referred to in this passage had been dead for at least a century before the period it is normally assumed that Jesus of Nazareth was involved in his ministry. Therefore if this *Yeshu* was known as *ha'Notzri* at this early stage (i.e. before the establishment of even a nascent form of Christianity) it stands to reason that in this context at least "*haNotzri*" is unlikely to mean "Nazarene" and is certainly not a Jewish term for a Christian.

Finally, this is a good example of an actual historical personage (e.g. *Yeshu ha'Notzri*) whose real life actions may have inadvertently played a part (albeit very minor), in the later evolution of a more theologically motivated account of Jesus of Nazareth's life.

### 2.11.6.6 Passage 3 (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 67a)

According to Student (2000), this passage from the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* may be translated as follows:

> It is taught: For all others liable for the death penalty [except for the enticer to idolatry] we do not hide witnesses. How do they deal with [the enticer]? They light a lamp for him in the inner chamber and place witnesses in the outer chamber so that they can see and hear him while he cannot see or hear them. One says to him "Tell me again what you said to me in private" and he tells him. He says "How can we forsake our G-d in heaven and worship idolatry?" If he repents, good. If he says "This is our obligation and what we must do" the witnesses who hear him from outside bring him to the court and stone him. And so they did to *Ben Stada* in *Lud* and hung him on *Erev Pesach* [Eve of Passover].

The *Come-and-Hear* digital *Talmud* website[136] translates the last sentence as: "And this they did to Ben Stada in Lydda, and they hung him on the eve of Passover."

**Overview and Analysis**

This passage also refers to the same *Ben Stada* mentioned in Passage 1 (*ut supra*), which informed us that he also practiced witchcraft. Now it is disclosed that this individual was also suspected of being an idolater as well as inciting others to do the same.

This passage supplies the reader with a technique that was employed by the judges to ensure that at least two witnesses could confirm a suspect's guilt. In this particular case, it would appear that it was successfully employed to convict and stone *Ben Stada* on *Erev Pesach* (Eve of Passover) in a town called *Lud*.[137]

**Possible links to Jesus**

It had already been assumed by the more credulous, that the *Ben Stada* mentioned in *Talmud Shabbat* 104b, *Sanhedrin* 67a (Passage 1), was indistinguishable from Jesus because his mother was also known as *Miriam*. Now *Talmud Sanhedrin* 67a (Passage 3), seemed to provide yet further proof of this claim because this "*Ben Stada*", like Jesus, was executed on the eve of Passover (cf. *Ev.Jo.*, 19: 14). However, as it is already known that this *Ben Stada* was a contemporary of *Pappos ben Yehudah* who is

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[136] Babylonian Talmud: Tractate *Sanhedrin*, Folio 67a in *Come-And-Hear.com.* [Online]. Available: http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_67.html [18 July 2014].

[137] Presumably modern-day לוֹד (Lod) or Lydda, situated some 15 kilometres southeast of Tel Aviv (i.e. situated on the Plain of Sharon).

mentioned specifically in Passage 1; he must have lived about a century *after* the purported time of Jesus of Nazareth.

In addition, this *Ben Stada* was stoned by Jewish law on the eve of Passover in *Lud* whereas according to the synoptic gospels (i.e. *Ev. Matt.* 26: 18 - 20; *Ev.Marc.* 14: 16 - 18; and *Ev.Luc.* 22: 13 - 15), Jesus was crucified by the Romans in Jerusalem on Passover itself.

**Conclusion**

This *Ben Stada* could not be synonymous with the Jesus of the synoptic gospels. It is however, possible (but certainly not yet proven), that this *Ben Stada* may have contributed in some small way to the later theologically motivated portrait of Jesus. Thus this *Ben Stada* remains a possible candidate for a “proto-Jesus”.

### 2.11.6.7 Passage 4 (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 43a)

According to Student (2000), this passage from the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* may be translated as follows:

> It is taught: On *Erev Pesach* [Eve of Passover] they hung *Yeshu* and the crier went forth for forty days beforehand declaring that "[*Yeshu*] is going to be stoned for practicing witchcraft, for enticing and leading Israel astray. Anyone who knows something to clear him should come forth and exonerate him." But no one had anything exonerating for him and they hung him on *Erev Pesach* [Eve of Passover].
>
> Ulla said: Would one think that we should look for exonerating evidence for him? He was an enticer and G-d said (Deuteronomy 13: 9) "Show him no pity or compassion, and do not shield him."
>
> *Yeshu* was different because he was close to the government.

**Overview and Analysis**

This passage refers to the same *Yeshu* previously mentioned in Passage 2 except here an account is given concerning the circumstances of his execution. Like the *Ben Stada* previously mentioned in Passage 1, he is apparently also executed on the eve of Passover. It has already been pointed out in the overview for Passage 2 that this particular *Yeshu* (awaiting his execution), was a contemporary of king *Alexander Janneus*. At the time the Jewish law court was predominantly Pharisaic. *Yeshu seems* to have been on good terms with *Alexander Janneus* who is known to have been pro-Sadducee. This might explain why an attempt was made by the Pharisees to find some mitigating evidence that might exonerate him and thus obviate upsetting king *Alexander Janneus*. As is the case for Sanhedrin 107b, Maier (1978: 268 - 275) also considers Sanhedrin 43a to be a later redaction of an earlier version.

**Possible links to Jesus**

This *Yeshu*, like the Jesus described in *Ev.Jo.* (19: 14) was executed on the eve of Passover. However, as was the case for the *Ben Stada* mentioned in Passage 3, the synoptic gospels[138] contradict this notion by reporting that Jesus was crucified by the Romans on Passover itself. In addition, they give the clear message that the Jews were unable to carry out a death sentence whilst under Roman occupation.

In this connection, *Ev.Jo.* 18: 31[139] states:

> εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλᾶτος, “Λάβετε αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς, καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑμῶν κρίνατε αὐτόν·” εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, ἡμῖν “οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα·”
>
> Then Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law”. The Jews [Jewish leadership] said to him “It is not lawful for us to put any one to death.” [My insertion].

However, in his *AJ,* Josephus (XX, 9, 1 / 200). tells his reader that during the interregnum of Festus[140] and Albinius[141] (c. 59 – 62 C.E.) Ananus condemned

[138] Cf. *Ev.Matt.* 26: 18 - 20; *Ev.Marc*. 14: 16 - 18; and *Ev.Luc*. 22: 13 - 15.
[139] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 232.
[140] *Porcius Festus,* Procurator of Judea (c. 57/58 – c. 62 C.E.).
[141] *Lucceius Albinus* (fl. 60 – 70 C.E.). Procurator of Judea (c. 62 - c. 64 C.E.).

individuals to be stoned. This seems to indicate that the Jews still retained the right to execute their own people for criminal activity and clearly contradicts the gospel storyline.

Lastly, nowhere in the *NT* is there any mention of Jesus of Nazareth having connections to the government of the day. As this is the same *Yeshu* mentioned in Passage 2 (*ut supra*), the same reasons apply for discounting this as a valid reference to an historical Jesus (of Nazareth).

**Conclusion**

As has already been determined, the *Yeshu* referred to in this passage had been dead for at least a century before the assumed time of Jesus of Nazareth but it remains a good example of a possible historical personage (e.g. *Yeshu ha'Notzri*) whose recorded history may have subsequently made a small contribution to the later, more theologically motivated account of Jesus of Nazareth's life and ministry.

#### 2.11.6.8 Passage 5 (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 43a)

According to Student (2000), this passage from the uncensored *Talmud Bavli* may be translated as follows:

> It is taught: *Yeshu* had five disciples - *Matai, Nekai, Netzer, Buni*, and *Todah*.
>
> They brought *Matai* [before the judges]. He said to them: Will *Matai* be killed? It is written (Psalm 42: 2) "When [*Matai*] shall (I) come and appear before G-d."
>
> They said to him: Yes, *Matai* will be killed as it is written (Psalm 41: 5) "When [*Matai*] shall (he) die and his name perish."
>
> They brought *Nekai*. He said to them: Will *Nekai* be killed? It is written (Exodus 23: 7) "The innocent [*Naki*] and the righteous you shall not slay." They said to him: Yes, *Nekai* will be killed as it is written (Psalm 10: 8) "In secret places he slays the innocent [*Naki*]."

They brought *Netzer*. He said to them: Will *Netzer* be killed? It is written (*Is.* 11: 1) "A branch [*Netzer*] shall spring up from his roots."
They said to him: Yes, *Netzer* will be killed as it is written (*Is.* 14: 19) "You are cast forth out of your grave like an abominable branch [*Netzer*]."

They brought *Buni*. He said to them: Will *Buni* be killed? It is written (Exodus 4: 22) "My son [*Beni*], my firstborn, Israel."
They said to him: Yes, *Buni* will be killed as it is written (Exodus 4: 23) "Behold, I slay your son [*Bincha*] your firstborn."

They brought *Todah*. He said to them: Will *Todah* be killed? It is written (Psalm 100: 1) "A Psalm for thanksgiving [*Todah*]."
They said to him: Yes, *Todah* will be killed as it is written (Psalm 50: 23) "Whoever sacrifices thanksgiving [*Todah*] honours me."

**Overview and Analysis**

This passage deals with the trial of *Yeshu*'s five disciples who have been accused of idolatry.

Each disciple, in his turn, eruditely employs a droll interpretation of an appropriate text taken from the *Tanach* in order to exonerate himself. However, the court (equally knowledgeable and quite determined to see each of these men receive the death penalty), rapidly responds with equal sharpness of wit. As is the case for Sanhedrin 107b, Maier (1978: 268 - 275) also considers Sanhedrin 43a to be a later redaction of an earlier version. In fact he confirms the notion that there are no authentic Tannaitic passages which can be linked to an historical Jesus of Nazareth. In addition, all of the Amoraic passages are not original – they are nothing more than post-Talmudic reworkings (interpolations).

**Possible links to Jesus**

Wishful thinkers believe that *Yeshu* might refer to Jesus and this claim is then strengthened by the prospect that *Matai* (possibly the Aramaic form of *Matityahu*) may also refer to Matthew, a disciple of Jesus in the gospel accounts. However, this tenuous link is immediately severed when the remaining four disciples are described. If by some stretch of the imagination (as suggested by Student, 2000), the name *Todah*

could be equated to *Thaddeus* (another disciple of Jesus of Nazareth), *Nekai*, *Netzer* and *Buni* certainly cannot. The passage clearly indicates that this *Yeshu* only had five adherents whereas the gospels clearly tell us that Jesus of Nazareth had twelve disciples. The gospels do not mention any of Jesus' disciples being executed by Jewish authorities and even if they were, it was not possible during the time in question for this to have occurred. Finally, *Yeshu*, *Matityahu* and *Matai* are not uncommon Jewish names.

**Conclusion**

There simply is not enough evidence to positively link the individuals mentioned in this passage to the Jesus mentioned in the gospels. Also, nothing in this passage could significantly contribute to a "proto-Jesus" scenario except that he had followers.

### 2.11.6.9 Passage 6 (*Tosefta Chullin* 2:23)[142]

According to Student (2000), this passage from the *Tosefta Chullin* may be translated as follows:

> It once happened that *Rabbi Eliazar ben Damah* was bitten by a snake and *Ya'akov* of the village *Sechania* came to heal him in the name of *Yeshu ben Pandira*, but *Rabbi Yishmael* did not allow him.

**Possible links to Jesus**

In this passage, there are no real links to Jesus per se. However, what is interesting is that this is the only Talmudic passage (albeit from the *Tosefta*) that makes a connection between the name "*Yeshu*" and "*Ben Pandira*" (previously mentioned in Passage 1).

### 2.11.6.10 Rabbinic Interpretation

It is noteworthy that the accepted rabbinic interpretation of the import of these six passages is in perfect accord with the present review:

[142]The text of the *Tosefta Chulin* was taken from the standard Vilna edition and slightly modified based on Saul Lieberman's *Tosefet Rishonim*.

Firstly, far from these references being to one individual (let alone the Jesus of the gospel accounts) it is far more plausible that they refer to two distinct personalities, viz.: *Yeshu ben Pandira* and *Ben Stada* respectively. The only connections between the two are their fathers' names, that they were executed on the day before Passover, and that they both spent time in Egypt. The first is probably a mere coincidence because, as has already been determined, *Panthera* (which in Hebrew and Aramaic is equivalent of *Pandira*) was a common name.

| | ***Yeshu ben Pandira*** **c. 80 B.C.E.** | | ***Ben Stada*** **c. 100 C.E.** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Passage 2** | Student of *Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah* | **Passage 1** | Known as *Ben Pandira* and also *Ben Stada*, possibly to distinguish him from *Yeshu ben Pandira* |
| | Fled to Egypt to escape from *John Hyrcanus*. Became an idolater. | | He brought witchcraft from Egypt |
| **Passage 4** | Executed on the eve of Passover in Jerusalem. | | His mother was מִרְיָם (*Miriam*) the hairdresser, also known as *Stada* |
| | Had ties with the government (i.e. the king?) | | His father was *Pandira* |
| **Passage 5** | Had five disciples who were executed. | | His step-father was *Pappos ben Yehudah* |
| **Passage 6** | His legacy remained for centuries, even until the time of Rabbi Yishmael (d. 133 C.E.) | **Passage 3** | He was executed on the eve of Passover in *Lud* for idolatry by stoning. |

**Figure 12**

Biographical Details of *Yeshu ben Pandira* and *Ben Stada.*

Fig. 12 is a table, based on a similar format as proffered by Student (2000).[143] This clearly shows which biographical details refer to each person in question.

### 2.11.7 Discussion

It should be seen as highly indicative of the power of the dominant worldview of most Christian scholars that they will insist that either some or all of the passages reviewed in this section, to be undisputed, authentic references to Jesus of Nazareth and/or one of his associates or family members.

This is despite the fact that, apart from the obvious misalignment of dates, none of the accounts mirrors in any way the specifics of the various *NT* accounts concerning Jesus of Nazareth and/or his associates. Certainly, at best the various passages from the *Talmud* and *Tosefta* reviewed in this section have been forced to yield meaning that was never present to begin with.

## 2.12 Habermas' Proof: A Case Study

With all the previous alleged extra-biblical sources having been reviewed and refuted, it is most enlightening to review the insights of a leading conservative Christian scholar, viz.: Dr Gary Habermas. This appraisal of Habermas' stance clearly reflects the dominance of his worldview and total rejection of any attempt to critically review these professed references to an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

Below is reproduced in précis form, key aspects of Habermas' stance on a wide range of issues directly related to claimed extra-biblical sources, including Josephus' *TF* which will be dealt with in far more detail in Chapter Three. In this context, it is informative to witness how his total commitment to his religious belief makes it possible for Habermas (1996a: 219 – 224) to view all alleged extra-biblical sources as having some degree of validity. In this regard, he makes a wide range of assertions, fuelled largely by wishful thinking and based on the predicated sources already reviewed in

[143] Cf. Student, Gil. 2000. The Jesus Narrative in The Talmud in *Talmud: The Real Truth about The Talmud* [Online]. Available: http://talmud.faithweb.com/articles/jesusnarr.html [15 July 2014].

Sections 2.2 to 2.11. Habermas, who speciously states that “these beliefs on the part of certain persons are a matter of historical record”, makes, inter alia, the following spurious deductions:

1. According to Josephus and *Mara ben Serapion*, Jesus was really a “wise, virtuous and ethical man”;
2. According to the Acts of Pilate, Jesus performed miracles;
3. Based on the *TF* and certain passages in the *Talmud*, Jesus “had many disciples, from both the Jews and the Gentiles”;
4. Based on Pliny and Tacitus, Jesus was worshipped as a deity and further, because of the *TF* we know that Jesus was also believed by some to be the Messiah;
5. Because of *Mara ben Serapion* we know that Jesus was called “King”;
6. Due to Lucian, *Mara ben Serapion* and the Gospel of Thomas we know that there was a “tendency” among some ancient writers to “view Jesus as a philosopher with some distinctive teachings”.
7. Pliny’s comments on Christians who took oaths not to commit “unrighteousness” are probably as a consequence of Jesus’ proscriptions against sin.
8. The *Talmud Sanhedrin* 43a refers specifically to Jesus of Nazareth;
9. Both Tacitus and Josephus confirm Jesus’ death at the hands of Pontius Pilate.
10. Phlegon, the *Talmud*, Josephus and the Acts of Pilate supply specific details of Jesus’ crucifixion, including his nailing to the cross, the gambling for his garments and the three-hour darkness;
11. *Mara Bar Serapion*’*s* letter is evidence that Jesus was “executed unjustly and that the Jews were judged accordingly by God”;
12. Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny and *Mara Bar Serapion* supply evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. We know this because the latter writer stated “Jesus’ teachings lived on in his disciples”;
13. Phlegon’s references support the notion of Jesus appearing after his death and displaying his *stigmata*;
14. The *Toledoth Jesu’* contents are factual;
15. Pliny’s comments about Christians worshipping before dawn may be a reference to Sunday;
16. Pliny confirms that Christians worshipped Christ as a deity;

17. Thallus' comments are evidence that early sceptics were seeking logical explanations to explain away assertions of Christ's divinity as soon as twenty years after his death.
18. According to Tacitus, Christians were present at the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.; and
19. Pliny and Trajan confirm Roman brutality towards Christians in the second century C.E.

Habermas (1996a: 224) sums up his credulous stance quite succinctly with the following statement:

> [A]ncient extra biblical sources do present a surprisingly large amount of detail concerning both the life of Jesus and the nature of early Christianity. While many of these facts are quite well known, we must remember that they have been documented here apart from the usage of the New Testament. When viewed in that light, we should realize that it is quite extraordinary that we could provide a broad outline of most of the major facts of Jesus' life from "secular" history alone. Such is surely significant.

## 2.13 Chapter Two Summary

Despite a highly educated, internationally respected conservative Christian's claim to the contrary (cf. Section 2.11), clearly, no tangible, substantiated extra-biblical/scriptural evidence exists to place an historical Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee/Judea in the first third of the first century C.E. In addition, no mention is made of any individual that could be associated with either James the Just or John the Baptist.

Habermas' (1996b and 1996c) claims are self-serving to say the least and in at least two instances, so convinced of his assumption that he goes so far as to lie to his reader. For example, *Mara Bar Serapion*'*s* letter *does not* mention anyone called Jesus. Based on an assumption that someone referred to as a "wise king" and/or "virtuous" and "ethical" can only be Jesus of Nazareth, Habermas literally puts words into *Mara Bar Serapion*'*s* mouth*.* Again, he has Pliny and Tacitus, serve as substantiation that "Jesus" was worshipped as a deity. In neither individual's writings is the name "Jesus" even mentioned and Pliny infers that Christians worshipped a "quasi-deity" called Christus (Cf. Section 2.2.2.6). Habermas' deduction that Christians who

took oaths not to commit “unrighteousness” did so because they were probably aware of Jesus’ injunctions against sin is pure conjecture.

Lastly, the fact that Habermas gives credence to any of the overtly fictitious and fantastical letters claimed to be sent from Pilate to Tiberius or vice versa is nothing less than flabbergasting.

Possibly, the nearest that one obtains to any vestige of authenticity is in the *An.*, XV, 44 (albeit with the very suspicious reference to Pontius Pilate). In addition, far more evidence exists that shows deliberate falsification of information for the explicit purpose of painting a picture of brutal Roman persecution of the nascent Christian sect than an attempt at trying to supply extra-biblical proof of an historical Jesus of Nazareth.

It is therefore, safe to state, that none of the passages investigated (*ut supra*), even if authentic, offers any extra-biblical/scriptural information regarding Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just or John the Baptist.

We can safely assume, at this stage, that only Josephus offers the historian with any other possible sources.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE *TESTIMONIUM FLAVIANUM*

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals primarily with the so-called *TF* (*Testimonium Flavianum*) (i.e. *AJ* [ *Antiquitates Judaicae*], XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 – 64). By way of introduction, and for the purposes of referencing, it is presented below in the original Greek followed by a modern English translation (i.e. according to William Whiston). As explained in Chapter One (Introduction), for a general translation, the Whiston version is favoured, primarily because it seems to be the most popular rendering employed by those scholars involved in the contemporary debates pertaining to its status and avowed import.

#### 3.1.1 Passage from the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 – 64.

The most common Greek version of the *TF* [144]reads as follows:

> Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these

[144] Original Greek and English Translation according to Whiston. 1999. *Josephus*: *The New Complete Works of Josephus:* 662, (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 - 64). Cf. Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0145%3Abook%3D18%3Awhiston+chapter%3D3%3Awhiston+section%3D3 [30 May 2012].

and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

## 3.2 Brief Historical Background

The first recorded person to cite the *TF* (cf. 3.1.1) was *Eusebius Pamphili* a.k.a. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263 – c. 339 C.E.) who will be referred to in this thesis as Eusebius. In this regard, the *TF* passage appears variously in his *DE* (*Demonstratio Evangelica*), 3.5. (c.312 – c. 318 C.E.), his *HE* (*Historia Ecclesiastica*), 1.11. (c. 311 – c. 323 C.E.) and his *Th.* (*Theophania*) 5.44, (which although originally composed in Greek as Περὶ θεοφάνεια, has largely come down to us via a Syriac translation).[145]

In addition, it should be noted, that in his *DE,* Eusebius quotes the *TF* in essentially the same form as that presented above (c.f. 3.1.1), except that he cites "πολλους των Ιουδαιων" instead of "πολλους μὲν Ιουδαιους" and places the word "απο" before "του Ελληνικου". Lastly, "πρώτων ἀνδρῶν" appears as "αρξηοντōν."

In addition, the *TF* has also been preserved as a separate piece of text when cited by various Christian writers in many other manuscripts.

## 3.3 Arguments For and Against Authenticity

### 3.3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to stress a number of diverse issues simultaneously, viz.:

1. The tenor of the current debate apropos the *TF*;

2. An illustrative exposé as regards those more essential arguments proffered by the more critical and liberal scholars who tend to predominantly see the *TF* as

[145] It is not known when the *Th.* was written. Only fragments are preserved in the original Greek (i.e. Περὶ θεοφάνεια). However, a complete Syriac translation survives in an early 5th century manuscript. In many respects it is similar to the *DE*. The well-known editor and translator of the Syriac version, Lee (1843: xxi - xxii), believed that the original Greek version post-dated Constantine's restoration of peace (i.e. c. 306 C.E. onwards), to the early church and thus predates the *DE*. Cf. Lee. 1843. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea *On the Theophania, or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

an unmitigated interpolation by a Christian apologist who lived well after the time of Josephus;

3. An illustrative exposé as regards those (normally) counter-arguments propounded by the typically more conservative scholars, who at the very least want to have the core features of the *TF* considered as authentic, independent, extra-biblical/scriptural proof for the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth; and

4. A more plausible historical context for Josephus.

This is undertaken in order to highlight what can only be described as a very obvious pattern of scholarship, which seems to be almost totally dependent on the shared world-view of a particular grouping of scholars rather than on the logical ratiocination of the known facts.

An attempt has also been made, wherever possible, to systematise the various issues under dispute. These are heavily dependent on the previous insights of many scholars, and in particular individuals such as Doherty (2009), Mason (2003), Zindler (2003) and Wells (1989) etc. Also, due largely to the fact that many of the topics covered are (more often than not), closely interrelated with each other, there will, on occasion, be a certain amount of necessary and unavoidable repetition or overlap of themes.

Moreover, it must be understood that this debate and most of the issues under review have been, in some cases, extant for several centuries.[146] Undeniably, it has had the input of numerous, often highly reputable scholars. This investigation attempts to understand better why after many decades of debate, finality still cannot be achieved as regards what one would have thought would be an open and shut case. In short, given the known facts, all rational thinkers should surely accept the result of a coherent argument.

Finally, for the purpose of this exercise, the various inputs will be limited to a select group of mostly contemporary thinkers who are still active and/or relevant in the current

[146] The *TF* has been disputed from at least the 16th century. Cf. Mason. 2003. *Josephus and the New Testament*: 227.

interpolation debate. This selection of individuals represents hopefully the best that each worldview or constructed reality/belief system has to offer.

### 3.3.2 Towards Establishing a Trustworthy Historical Context for the *Testimonium Flavianum*

#### 3.3.2.1 Extant Religious Cults (c. 50 C.E.)

We need not dwell too long here on events mentioned in the *NT* which are not mentioned by Josephus, because we have no real proof of their historical veracity and thus these kinds of comparisons are not that useful.

This section will concentrate only on those issues purported to be recorded by Josephus and which also appear in, inter alia, the *NT* and pertinent texts produced by both Christian and non-Christian writers of the first few centuries of the Common Era.

The debates that follow and any claims to have arrived at a substantiated outcome are also made within a very specific context – one where it has to be assumed by the reader that, irrespective of his many purported character flaws (Cf. 1.3.4), Josephus is being forthright and sincere when he reminds us that he is first and foremost a Jew. Undeniably, few would dare to deny that in his works, he invariably expresses his pride in his aristocratic, priestly, Jewish ancestry, his strict Jewish upbringing and rabbinic education and training, his committed observance of Jewish principles and his abhorrence of anyone who seeks to undermine these principles.

In addition, possible hypocrisy aside, Josephus rarely speaks well of anyone, unless they uphold similar values to the ones he claims for himself. Certainly, what cannot be denied is that apart from the three suspected interpolations under examination in this thesis, Josephus is perfectly clear on his views when it comes to Jewish religious parvenus. He takes issue with the chaos they created in what were for him and the Jewish nation as a whole, very troubled and desperate times. These and similar observations are well confirmed in his *Ap.* (*Contra Apionem*) (c. 93 C.E.), where Josephus repudiates, inter alia, the Egyptian sophist Apion's vindictive anti-Jewish vilifications whilst championing the Torah and Jewish principles.

In the light of this context, when assertions are made that the *TF*, regardless of its claimed variants throughout history, was originally composed by Josephus, a very obvious inconsistency becomes manifest: Specifically, Josephus must have lived at exactly the same time (i.e. c. 50 C.E.), when the *NT* claims increasingly large numbers of Jews and Gentiles alike were being converted to a new Jesus-focused cult. This claimed groundswell was supposedly created by such apostles as Judas (Barnabas), Mark, Paul and Silas. Certainly, if one is to take the apostle Paul at his word, then this was not exactly a new phenomenon, since his epistles imply that, even as late as the early 40s C.E., this ostensibly Jesus-focused sect, whether it was still a form of Judaism or something perhaps more removed, was well established, enjoyed a popular following and already boasted what could be safely termed "denominations". This is in sharp contra-distinction to the more conventionally accepted claim that its spiritual founder had only died as recently as c. 33 C.E. and that the foundation of the very first Christian communities, which literally mushroomed overnight, somehow post-date that occurrence.

It is quite bewildering how many conservative and fundamentalist scholars naively believe that Christianity managed to spread from total insignificance into such a huge, Mediterranean-wide phenomenon so rapidly, by virtue of the sole efforts of a handful of missionaries. Consider the very informative statement by Bruce, 1962: 321 – 322:

> When Claudius became emperor in A.D. 41 **Christianity was just beginning to spread into the Gentile world**. It was taking root among the Gentiles of Syrian Antioch, and it may well have found its way already into the Jewish communities of Rome and Alexandria. When Claudius died, **thirteen years later**, the situation had changed very greatly. **The southern cities of Galatia had been evangelized; so had the principal cities of Macedonia and Achaia, thanks largely to the activity of Paul. In most of these cities there were Christian churches whose membership was more Gentile than Jewish.** And by the time of Claudius's death (October, A.D. 54) **Paul had been hard at work for two years, with a number of colleagues, evangelizing Ephesus and the other cities of Asia, to such good effect that for centuries that province was one of the strongest citadels of Christianity in the world.** Little more than **two years after Claudius's death Paul could tell the Roman Christians that his work in the Aegean world was finished**, and he proposed to set out for Spain to repeat in the western Mediterranean area the programme which he had lately brought to a conclusion in the east, "from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum". For all the interest that Claudius may have taken in Christianity, he can hardly have realized how firm a hold it was taking of the Mediterranean world during his reign. [My emphases].

Regardless, to be more realistic, this religious movement, its proto-types and possible variants included, had presumably been gaining ground for quite some time. After several decades the phenomenon grew (possibly slowly at first) throughout such regions as Cilicia, Greece, Syria and Macedonia (most notably in major centres including, inter alia, Amphipolis, Antioch , Corinth, Phillipi, Neapolis, Thessalonica and Thyatira). Certainly, if we are to believe all these *NT* accounts[147], Christianity should have reached such a level that no-one could fail to take notice of its reality – certainly not after the last three decades of the first century C.E.

Yet, Josephus, the Jewish Historian who supposedly had written that Jesus was the Christ and had myriads of followers by the end of the first century C.E. makes no mention of this asserted phenomenon in any of his extant writings.

Therefore, either the *NT* accounts are exaggerated and Christianity was relatively unknown in the first century and/or Josephus did not mention the Christian movement for one of two reasons:

1. He disapproved of it; or
2. He had not even heard of it.

This issue becomes even more problematic when one considers the fact that in his *BJ*, II, 8, 2 / 119[148] (c. 75 C.E.), Josephus states the following:

> Τρία γὰρ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις εἴδη φιλοσοφεῖται, καὶ τοῦ μὲν αἱρετισταὶ Φαρισαῖοι, τοῦ δὲ Σαδδουκαῖοι, τρίτον δέ, ὃ δὴ καὶ δοκεῖ σεμνότητα ἀσκεῖν, Ἐσσηνοὶ καλοῦνται, Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γένος ὄντες, φιλάλληλοι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πλέον.
>
> For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first of which are the Pharisees; of the second, the Sadducees; and the third sect, which pretends to a severer discipline, are called Essenes.

[147] Cf. *Ep.Gal.*1: 21; 2: 11; *Act.Ap.* 9: 31-10: 48; 11: 25; 11: 19-30; 13: 4-14: 28; 15: 40 - 18: 23a; 18: 23b - 20: 3a; 20: 3b -12 - 21: 15; 27: 12 - 28: 31 etc.

[148] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=2&chapter=8&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=2&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=14&go.y=6 [24 June 2014].

And, some 24 years later (c. 94 - 99 C.E.) in his autobiographical *Vit.* I, 1, 2 / 10[149] Josephus again confirms this information:

> περὶ δὲ ἑκκαίδεκα ἔτη γενόμενος ἐβουλήθην τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν αἱρέσεων ἐμπειρίαν λαβεῖν· τρεῖς δ᾽ εἰσὶν αὗται, Φαρισαίων μὲν ἡ πρώτη, καὶ Σαδδουκαίων ἡ δευτέρα, τρίτη δ᾽ Ἐσσηνῶν, καθὼς πολλάκις εἴπομεν· οὕτως γὰρ ᾤμην αἱρήσεσθαι τὴν ἀρίστην, εἰ πάσας καταμάθοιμι.
>
> When I was about sixteen years old, I chose to gain expertise in the philosophical schools among us. There are three of these: the first, Pharisees; the second, Sadducees; and the third, Essenes, **as we have often said**. In this way I intended to choose the best [school] - if I might examine them all. [My emphasis].

Josephus pointedly informs his reader that by c. 53 C.E. there were *only three* Jewish religious sects in existence, excluding a sect of "Jewish Philosophy" as initiated by one Judas the Galilean as mentioned in his AJ, XVIII, 1, 6 / 23 – 25.[150]

> Τῇ δὲ τετάρτῃ τῶν φιλοσοφιῶν ὁ Γαλιλαῖος Ἰούδας ἡγεμὼν κατέστη, τὰ μὲν λοιπὰ πάντα γνώμῃ τῶν Φαρισαίων ὁμολογούσῃ, δυσνίκητος δὲ τοῦ ἐλευθέρου ἔρως ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς μόνον ἡγεμόνα καὶ δεσπότην τὸν θεὸν ὑπειληφόσιν. θανάτων τε ἰδέας ὑπομένειν παρηλλαγμένας ἐν ὀλίγῳ τίθενται καὶ συγγενῶν τιμωρίας καὶ φίλων ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηδένα ἄνθρωπον προσαγορεύειν δεσπότην. ἑωρακόσιν δὲ τοῖς πολλοῖς τὸ ἀμετάλλακτον αὐτῶν τῆς ἐπὶ τοιούτοις ὑποστάσεως περαιτέρω διελθεῖν παρέλιπον· οὐ γὰρ δέδοικα μὴ εἰς ἀπιστίαν ὑποληφθῇ τι τῶν λεγομένων ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς, τοὐναντίον δὲ μὴ ἐλασσόνως τοῦ ἐκείνων καταφρονήματος δεχομένου τὴν ταλαιπωρίαν τῆς ἀλγηδόνος ὁ λόγος ἀφηγῆται. ἀνοίᾳ τε τῇ ἐντεῦθεν ἤρξατο νοσεῖν τὸ ἔθνος Γεσσίου Φλώρου, ὃς ἡγεμὼν ἦν, τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ ὑβρίζειν ἀπονοήσαντος αὐτοὺς ἀποστῆναι Ῥωμαίων. καὶ φιλοσοφεῖται μὲν Ἰουδαίοις τοσάδε.
>
> But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord. And since this immovable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no further

[149] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Life of Josephus in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=1&chapter=1&textChunk=nieseSection&chunkId=1&up.x=10&up.y=5&text=vita&version=&direction=up&tab=&layout=split [24 June 2014].

[150] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean Antiquities in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=18&chapter=1&text Chunk=whistonSection&chunkId=6&text=anti&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=20&go.y=12 [24 July 2014].

about that matter; nor am I afraid that anything I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear, that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain. And it was in Gessius Florus's time that the nation began to grow mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans. And these are the sects of Jewish philosophy. [My correction].

On this issue, Josephus confirms this fourth sect with substantial members in his *AJ*, XVIII, 1, 1 / 9 - 10[151]:

εἴ γε καὶ Ἰούδας καὶ Σάδδωκος τετάρτην φιλοσοφίαν ἐπείσακτον ἡμῖν ἐγείραντες καὶ ταύτης ἐραστῶν εὐπορηθέντες πρός τε τὸ παρὸν θορύβων τὴν πολιτείαν ἐνέπλησαν καὶ τῶν αὖθις κακῶν κατειληφότων ῥίζας ἐφυτεύσαντο τῷ ἀσυνήθει πρότερον φιλοσοφίας τοιᾶσδε· περὶ ἧς ὀλίγα βούλομαι διελθεῖν, ἄλλως τε ἐπεὶ καὶ τῷ κατ᾽ αὐτῶν σπουδασθέντι τοῖς νεωτέροις ὁ φθόρος τοῖς πράγμασι συνέτυχε.

for Judas and Sadduc, who excited a fourth philosophic sect among us, and had a great many followers therein, filled our civil government with tumults at present, and laid the foundations of our future miseries, by this system of philosophy, which we were before unacquainted withal, concerning which I will discourse a little, and this the rather because the infection which spread thence among the younger sort, who were zealous for it, brought the public to destruction.

Here there can be no doubt that this fourth religious sect is but a branch of Judaism and cannot be confused with anything resembling a Jesus-based cult and further no mention is made of such a cult outside of the *TF*.

Therefore, if Josephus did know about Christianity but he felt compelled to lie to his readers and disclaim that it ever existed why would he then want to write so favourably about Jesus and his followers in the *TF*?

Clearly, either way one looks at the issue something is illogical. Either the *NT* is incorrect or Josephus is incorrect. If the *NT* is incorrect then Josephus is justified for not mentioning Christians in the first century C.E. and this proves that the *TF* is a

[151]Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean Antiquities in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=18&chapter=1&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=1&text=anti&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=23&go.y=3 [24 July 2014].

forgery. However, if the *NT* is even partway accurate and Josephus is lying, then he also would not have written the *TF*. Either way it makes no sense for him to have composed this passage.

So if Josephus is to be trusted (and less critical scholars certainly do accept all suspected interpolations in his *AJ* to be largely authentic, surely implying their acknowledgement of his total veracity), then conversely parts of the *NT* (which more conservative Christian scholars equally valorise), must surely be historically unreliable? No conservative scholar ever seems to take cognizance of this obvious paradox whilst in the process of attempting to retain the *TF* as an authentic independent, extra-biblical/scriptural source.

Nonetheless, what seems to bother the more sceptical researchers most about the *TF* (i.e. *AJ,* XVIII, 3. 3 / 63 - 64) is the fact that if Josephus is really the author, then he has also:

1. contradicted his clear and explicit statements about extant first century C.E. religious sects of Jewish origin in his *BJ* and *Vit.*; and
2. perplexingly neglected to mention Jesus (of Nazareth), his religious movement/mission, his followers/following or anything about the supposedly large and thriving Christian communities situated in, inter alia, Cilicia, Greece, Syria and Macedonia (not to mention supposed Christian activity in Rome[152]) in any of his writings other than his *AJ*.

With the aforementioned passage from *AJ,* XVIII, 3. 3 / 63 - 64 in mind, if the references to, inter alia, "Ἰησοῦς", "ὁ χριστὸς" and "Χριστιανῶν" etc. were genuinely made by Josephus' hand, why did he not concur with what must have been (according to the *NT*), well-known at the time, viz.: the existence of at least one additional, and very visible, religious cult/denomination of Jewish origin by c. 53 C.E.?

Furthermore, why does Josephus not mention (apart from the previously cited *TF*), anything about Jesus' ministry (either positive or negative), whereas he goes to great

[152] If we are to trust Tacitus' oft-quoted reference to Christians causing unrest in Rome in c. 64 C.E. (i.e. during the reign of Nero), then it is even more surprising that Josephus, who was in the service of *Titus Flavius Caesar Vespasianus Augustus* and his son *Titus Flavius Vespasianus* by 67 C.E. and who became a Roman citizen by 69 C.E. makes no mention of the sect. Cf. *Publius* (*Gaius*) *Cornelius Tacitus*: *Annales*, XV, 44. (c. 116 C.E.).

lengths to denigrate the lesser-known activities of individuals such as Judas the Galilean?[153]

The more sceptical researchers and commentators have previously picked up on these kinds of issues which undermine the claimed authenticity of the *TF* and by implication the mention of "ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ" ("…the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ"), in the *JP* (*AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 201). Collectively, they make the following kinds of observations:

From an historically accurate perspective, how could Josephus, as a self-proclaimed mainstream observant Jew, living at the end of the first century of the Common Era, confidently claim that Jesus was and/or claimed to be the "Christ"? Furthermore, even if we want to allow for the highly unlikely possibility that Josephus was a "closet Christian"[154] at the time of writing (c. 97 C.E.), why did he not say something more about this specific Jesus other than the two passages in question, one of which is haphazardly placed in the middle of his biography on Pontius Pilate? (Cf. *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 1 / 55 - 59 and 2 / 60 - 62).

If Josephus was really looking for an opportunity to reveal his secret, proto-Christian faith, replete with quite advanced Christological notions concerning Jesus' divinity which would not be commonplace until at least the second century C.E., why choose to mention Jesus only briefly on two occasions and seemingly out of context?

After all, he had had many other opportunities to introduce the topic of Jesus (had he in fact known about him). For example, Josephus was born in Jerusalem (c. 37 C.E.) only some four years after the alleged time of Jesus of Nazareth's' crucifixion and death (c. 33 C.E.). He also claimed to be the governor of Galilee (c. 67 C.E.) and briefly lived in Cana (all localities having very strong associations with the canonical gospel accounts of Jesus).

#### 3.3.2.2 Alternative Messianic Claimants (c. 4 BC.E. – 73 C.E.)

Apart from his possible reference to Jesus of Nazareth, Josephus could be interpreted

[153] Cf. (*BJ*, II, 8, 1 / 117 - 118; *AJ*, XVIII, 1, 1 / 4 - 10 and 1, 6 / 23 - 25).
[154] Cf. Whealey, 2003. *Josephus on Jesus*: 86 - 89.

to have made prophetic statements about Vespasian[155] when he seemingly panders to the emperor's allusions to acquire divine status. Supposedly based on some ambiguous oracle Josephus makes the following statement in his *BJ*, VI, 5, 4 / 310 - 315[156]:

> Ταῦτά τις ἐννοῶν εὑρήσει τὸν μὲν θεὸν ἀνθρώπων κηδόμενον καὶ παντοίως προσημαίνοντα τῷ σφετέρῳ γένει τὰ σωτήρια, τοὺς δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνοίας καὶ κακῶν αὐθαιρέτων ἀπολλυμένους, ὅπου γε Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν μετὰ τὴν καθαίρεσιν τῆς Ἀντωνίας τετράγωνον ἐποίησαν, ἀναγεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς λογίοις ἔχοντες ἁλώσεσθαι τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν ναόν, ἐπειδὰν τὸ ἱερὸν γένηται τετράγωνον. τὸ δ᾽ ἐπᾶραν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἦν χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν, ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας αὐτῶν τις ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης. τοῦθ᾽ οἱ μὲν ὡς οἰκεῖον ἐξέλαβον καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν περὶ τὴν κρίσιν, ἐδήλου δ᾽ ἄρα τὴν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν ἀποδειχθέντος ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αὐτοκράτορος. ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώποις τὸ χρεὼν διαφυγεῖν οὐδὲ προορωμένοις. οἱ δὲ καὶ τῶν σημείων ἃ μὲν ἔκριναν πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἃ δὲ ἐξουθένησαν, μέχρις οὗ τῇ τε ἁλώσει τῆς πατρίδος καὶ τῷ σφῶν αὐτῶν ὀλέθρῳ διηλέγχθησαν τὴν ἄνοιαν.
>
> Now if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation; but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves; for the Jews, by demolishing the tower of Antonia, had made their temple four-square, while at the same time they had it written in their sacred oracles, "That then should their city be taken, as well as their holy house, when once their temple should become four-square." But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how," about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of their city and their own destruction.

However, in his *BJ*, III, 8, 9 / 399 - 408[157], Josephus seems more certain when he

[155] *Titus Flavius Caesar Vespasianus Augustus* (9 - 79 C.E.).

[156] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=6&chapter=5&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=4&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=22&go.y=13 [24 July 2014].

[157] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=3&chapter=8&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=9&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=24&go.y=8 [24

writes:

> Τοῦτο ἀκούσας ὁ Ἰώσηπος μόνῳ τι διαλεχθῆναι θέλειν ἔλεγεν αὐτῷ. μεταστησαμένου δ᾽ ἐκείνου πλὴν τοῦ παιδὸς Τίτου καὶ δυοῖν φίλων τοὺς ἄλλους ἅπαντας "σὺ μέν, ἔφη, Οὐεσπασιανέ, νομίζεις αἰχμάλωτον αὐτὸ μόνον εἰληφέναι Ἰώσηπον, ἐγὼ δὲ ἄγγελος ἥκω σοι μειζόνων. μὴ γὰρ ὑπὸ θεοῦ προπεμπόμενος ᾔδειν τὸν Ἰουδαίων νόμον, καὶ πῶς στρατηγοῖς ἀποθνήσκειν πρέπει. Νέρωνί με πέμπεις· τί γάρ; οἱ μετὰ Νέρωνα μέχρι σοῦ διάδοχοι μενοῦσιν. σὺ Καῖσαρ, Οὐεσπασιανέ, καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ, σὺ καὶ παῖς ὁ σὸς οὗτος. δέσμει δέ με νῦν ἀσφαλέστερον, καὶ τήρει σεαυτῷ· δεσπότης μὲν γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἐμοῦ σὺ Καῖσαρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης καὶ παντὸς ἀνθρώπων γένους, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ τιμωρίαν δέομαι φρουρᾶς μείζονος, εἰ κατασχεδιάζω καὶ θεοῦ". ταῦτ᾽ εἰπόντος παραχρῆμα μὲν Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἀπιστεῖν ἐδόκει καὶ τὸν Ἰώσηπον ὑπελάμβανεν ταῦτα περὶ σωτηρίας πανουργεῖν, κατὰ μικρὸν δὲ εἰς πίστιν ὑπήγετο τοῦ θεοῦ διεγείροντος αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἤδη καὶ τὰ σκῆπτρα δι᾽ ἑτέρων σημείων προδεικνύντος. ἀτρεκῆ δὲ τὸν Ἰώσηπον καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις κατελάμβανεν· τῶν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπορρήτοις παρατυχόντων φίλων ὁ ἕτερος θαυμάζειν ἔφη πῶς οὔτε τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν Ἰωταπάτων περὶ ἁλώσεως, οὔθ᾽ ἑαυτῷ προμαντεύσαιτο αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰ μὴ ταῦτα λῆρος εἴη διακρουομένου τὰς ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν ὀργάς. ὁ δὲ Ἰώσηπος καὶ τοῖς Ἰωταπατηνοῖς ὅτι μετὰ τεσσαρακοστὴν ἑβδόμην ἡμέραν ἁλώσονται προειπεῖν ἔφη, καὶ ὅτι πρὸς Ῥωμαίων αὐτὸς ζωγρηθήσεται. ταῦτα παρὰ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων κατ᾽ ἰδίαν ὁ Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐκπυθόμενος ὡς εὕρισκεν ἀληθῆ, οὕτω πιστεύειν περὶ τῶν κατ᾽ αὐτὸν ἦρκτο. φρουρᾶς μὲν οὖν καὶ δεσμῶν οὐκ ἀνίει τὸν Ἰώσηπον, ἐδωρεῖτο δ᾽ ἐσθῆτι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις κειμηλίοις φιλοφρονούμενός τε καὶ περιέπων διετέλει τὰ πολλὰ Τίτου τῇ τιμῇ συνεργοῦντος.
>
> When Josephus heard him give those orders, he said that he had somewhat in his mind that he would willingly say to himself alone. When therefore they were all ordered to withdraw, excepting Titus and two of their friends, he said, "Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent by God to thee, I knew what was the law of the Jews in this case? and how it becomes generals to die. Dost thou send me to Nero? For why? Are Nero's successors till they come to thee still alive? Thou, O Vespasian, art Caesar and emperor, thou, and this thy son. Bind me now still faster, and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Caesar, are not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind; and certainly I deserve to be kept in closer custody than I now am in, in order to be punished, if I rashly affirm anything of God." When he had said this, Vespasian at present did not believe him, but supposed that Josephus said this as a cunning trick, in order to his own preservation; but in a little time he was convinced, and believed what he said to be true, God himself erecting his expectations, so as to think of obtaining the empire, and by other signs fore-showing his advancement. He also found Josephus to have spoken truth on other occasions; for one of those friends that were present at that secret conference said to Josephus, "I cannot but wonder how thou couldst not foretell to the people of Jotapata that they should be taken, nor couldst foretell this captivity which hath happened to thyself, unless what thou now sayest be a vain thing, in order to avoid the rage that

> is risen against thyself." To which Josephus replied, "I did foretell to the people of Jotapata that they would be taken on the forty-seventh day, and that I should be caught alive by the Romans." Now when Vespasian had inquired of the captives privately about these predictions, he found them to be true, and then he began to believe those that concerned himself. Yet did he not set Josephus at liberty from his hands, but bestowed on him suits of clothes, and other precious gifts; he treated him also in a very obliging manner, and continued so to do, Titus still joining his interest till the honours that were done him. [My correction].

Much has been said about Josephus' mention of other supposedly messianic figures (i.e. other than Jesus of Nazareth and Vespasian). Various researchers and commentators have pointed out that in two of Josephus' works (i.e. *BJ* [c. 75 C.E.] and *AJ* [c. 93-4 C.E.]), he refers to the following possible "messianic contenders", viz.:

1. Judas the son of Hezekias or Ezekias (the arch-robber/zealot) (4 BC.E.) (*BJ*, II, 4, 1 / 55 - 56); *AJ*, XVII, 10, 5 / 271 - 272);
2. Simon of Peraea or Perea (4 BC.E.) (*BJ*, II, 4, 2 / 57 - 59; *AJ*, XVII, 10, 6 / 273 - 277);
3. Athronges the shepherd (4 BC.E.) (*AJ*, XVII, 10, 7 / 278 - 284);
4. Judas the Galilean[158] (6 or 7 C.E.) (*BJ*, II, 8, 1 / 117 - 118; *AJ*, XVIII, 1, 1 / 4 -10 and 1, 6 / 23 - 25);
5. Sadduc the Pharisee (Mentioned together with Judas the Galilean) (6 or 7 C.E.) (*AJ*, XVIII, 1, 1 / 4 -10);
6. John the Baptist[159] (c.28 C.E.) (*AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 - 119);
7. Unnamed wicked teacher of Mosaic law and his three partners (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 5 / 81 - 84);
8. Unnamed Samaritan liar (36 C.E.) (*AJ*, XVIII, 4, 1 / 85 - 87);
9. Herod Agrippa (44 C.E.) (*AJ*, XIX, 8, 2 / 343 - 361;

[158] The Jewish Encyclopedia mentions that it is quite likely that Judas the Galilean is identical to Judas the son of Hezekias (Grätz, 1853 – 1875: iii, 251, 260, 364; Schürer, 1886: 420 and 486). Unfortunately, here both Grätz and Schürer seem to conflate the identity of Judas the Galilean with Judas, son of Hezekias. A closer inspection reveals that this is not likely to be the case. Judas the son of Hezikias or Hezekiah, whilst hailing from Galilee, was based at Sepphoris (confirmed twice by Josephus [*AJ*, XVII, 10, 5 / 271 - 272; *BJ*, II, 4, 1 / 56]). This was sometime either during the prefecture of *Cuspius Fadus* (c. 44 - 46 C.E.) or *Tiberias Iulius Alexander* (c. 46 - 48 C.E.). Judas the Galilean was based at Gamala (confirmed twice by Josephus [*BJ*, II, 8, 1 / 117 - 118; *Ap.*, XVIII, 1, 1 / 4 - 10]) during the procuratorship of *Coponius* (c. 6 - 9 C.E.).

[159] Obviously, the reference to John the Baptist is also a suspected interpolation but is included here solely for sake of clarity, neutrality and comprehensiveness. It will also be noticed that John the Baptist is not referred to in derogatory terms by Josephus and accordingly does not fit the normal pattern.

10. Theudas the charlatan (45 C.E.) (*AJ*, XX, 5, 1 / 97 - 99);
11. The Egypto-Jewish charlatan (52 - 58 C.E.) (*BJ*, II, 13, 5 / 261 - 263; *AJ*, XX, 8, 6 / 169 - 171);
12. An anonymous Zealot charlatan (59 C.E.) (*AJ*, XX, 8, 10 / 188);
13. Manahem the son of Judas the Galilean (66 C.E.) (*BJ*, II, 17, 8 / 433 - 440; 9 / 441 - 448);
14. John son of Levi (a.k.a. John of Gischala or Gishala) (c. 67 - 70 C.E.) (*BJ*, II, 21, 1 / 585 - 589; IV, 2, 1; 9, 10 / 559 - 565; 11 / 566 - 574; V, 3, 1 / 98 - 105; 6, 1 / 254; VI, 1, 7 / 72; VII, 8, 1 / 263 - 264);
15. Simon the son of Giora (69 - 70 C.E.); (*BJ*, II, 19, 2 / 521; 22, 2 / 652 - 654; IV, 9, 8 / 538 - 544; 10 / 556 - 565; 11 / 573 - 574; V, 3, 1 / 105; 6, 1 / 248 - 253; 3 / 266 - 274; 4 / 278 - 279; 13, 1 / 527- 533; VI, 1, 7 / 72; VII, 2, 1 / 25; 2 / 26 - 36; 8, 1 / 265 - 267) and
16. Jonathan the weaver (73 C.E.) (*BJ*, VII, 11, 1 / 437 - 442).

Researchers often point out that Josephus mentions these individuals almost solely in the context of their claims to be messianic. However, a closer reading reveals no such intention on Josephus' part. If anything, he is speaking disparagingly about individuals who he has little or no respect for and whom he believes are working against the established mores of the *bona fide* Jewish tradition.

Josephus is concerned about the state of affairs in his homeland. As confirmed by authorities such as Bilde, (1988: 18 – 22), Josephus lived at a time of great upheaval and crisis for the Jewish nation. He was primarily concerned with its survival and he had no time for anyone who would hasten the destruction of that which he cherished above all else. He also had nothing but disdain for those who would misuse religion to mislead the masses.

For example, during the procuratorship of Festus[160], Josephus (*BJ*, II, 13, 4 / 259[161]) informs his reader that:

[160] *Porcius Festus* (c. 59 - 62 C.E.).
[161] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=2&chapter=13&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=4&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=18&go.y=3 [24 July 2014].

> πλάνοι γὰρ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀπατεῶνες προσχήματι θειασμοῦ νεωτερισμοὺς καὶ μεταβολὰς πραγματευόμενοι δαιμονᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ἔπειθον καὶ προῆγον εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν ὡς ἐκεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ δείξοντος αὐτοῖς σημεῖα ἐλευθερίας.
>
> These were such men who deceived and deluded the people under pretense of Divine inspiration, but were in fact for procuring innovations and changes of the government. These men prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty.

Josephus even largely blames the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on the contemptible activities of those who would even try to claim divine inspiration and/or who try to establish a following. Clearly, he is very specific about his obdurate stance on anyone who would try to use religion in misleading the general populace – especially a society that was under unbearable stress due to the Roman oppression - and warns that God himself punishes those who do so. In his *BJ*, VI, 5, 2 / 285-287[162] Josephus confirms that:

> τούτοις αἴτιος τῆς ἀπωλείας ψευδοπροφήτης τις κατέστη κατ᾽ ἐκείνην κηρύξας τὴν ἡμέραν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως, ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀναβῆναι κελεύει δεξομένους τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας. πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἦσαν ἐγκάθετοι παρὰ τῶν τυράννων τότε πρὸς τὸν δῆμον προφῆται προσμένειν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ βοήθειαν καταγγέλλοντες, ὡς ἧττον αὐτομολοῖεν καὶ τοὺς ἐπάνω δέους καὶ φυλακῆς γενομένους ἐλπὶς παρακροτοίη. πείθεται δὲ ταχέως ἄνθρωπος ἐν συμφοραῖς, ὅταν δ᾽ ἤδη καὶ τῶν κατεχόντων δεινῶν ἀπαλλαγὴν ὁ ἐξαπατῶν ὑπογράφῃ, τόθ᾽ ὁ πάσχων ὅλος γίνεται τῆς ἐλπίδος. Τὸν γοῦν ἄθλιον δῆμον οἱ μὲν ἀπατεῶνες καὶ καταψευδόμενοι τοῦ θεοῦ τηνικαῦτα παρέπειθον, τοῖς δ᾽ ἐναργέσι καὶ προσημαίνουσι τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐρημίαν τέρασιν οὔτε προσεῖχον οὔτ᾽ ἐπίστευον, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐμβεβροντημένοι καὶ μήτε ὄμματα μήτε ψυχὴν ἔχοντες τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ κηρυγμάτων παρήκουσαν,
>
> A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such his deliverance. Thus were the

[162] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=6&chapter=5&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=2&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=22&go.y=8 [24 July 2014].

> miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

These kinds of accounts, directed against political zealotry and which, at the very best, only obliquely alludes to the individual in question claiming to be divinely sanctioned (let alone claiming to be a prophesied מָשִׁיחַ [*Mashiaḥ*]), is often used as the weakest of evidence to support the claims that Josephus is speaking about messianic claimants. However, apart from such terms as "ὁ χριστὸς" and "Χριστοῦ" etc. which are specifically reserved for his purported two references to Jesus in his *AJ*, Josephus never uses any Greek derivative of the Hebrew term "מָשִׁיחַ" when referring to these political and/or religious upstarts in any of his extant works. In fact, the nearest he comes to indicating more direct divine aspirations on behalf of the offending individuals, is when he uses the terms "προφήτης" ("prophet") and "ψευδοπροφήτης" ("false prophet").

The following parallel accounts, concerning the activities of an unnamed Egyptian Jew in c. 52 - 58 C.E. well confirm Josephus' normal infuriated and disdainful approach when discussing the activities of individual zealots and political parvenus within the Jewish community. For example, Josephus (*BJ*, II, 13, 5 / 261- 263[163]) writes:

> Μείζονι δὲ τούτου πληγῇ Ἰουδαίους ἐκάκωσεν ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ψευδοπροφήτης· παραγενόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν χώραν ἄνθρωπος γόης καὶ προφήτου πίστιν ἐπιθεὶς ἑαυτῷ περὶ τρισμυρίους μὲν ἀθροίζει τῶν ἠπατημένων, περιαγαγὼν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς ἐρημίας εἰς τὸ ἐλαιῶν καλούμενον ὄρος ἐκεῖθεν οἷός τε ἦν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρελθεῖν βιάζεσθαι καὶ κρατήσας τῆς τε Ῥωμαϊκῆς φρουρᾶς καὶ τοῦ δήμου τυραννεῖν χρώμενος τοῖς συνεισπεσοῦσιν δορυφόροις. φθάνει δ' αὐτοῦ τὴν ὁρμὴν Φῆλιξ ὑπαντήσας μετὰ τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὁπλιτῶν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ δῆμος συνεφήψατο τῆς ἀμύνης, ὥστε συμβολῆς γενομένης τὸν μὲν Αἰγύπτιον φυγεῖν μετ' ὀλίγων, διαφθαρῆναι δὲ καὶ ζωγρηθῆναι πλείστους τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν πλῆθος σκεδασθὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστον διαλαθεῖν.
>
> But there was an Egyptian false prophet [ψευδοπροφήτης] that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat [γόης], and pretended to be a prophet [προφήτης] also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into

[163] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean War in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=2&chapter=13&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=5&text=wars&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=18&go.y=14 [24 July 2014].

> Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him. But Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his attack upon them, insomuch that when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, while the greatest part of those that were with him were either destroyed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed every one to their own homes, and there concealed themselves. [My insertions].

In addition, Josephus (*AJ*, XX, 8, 6 / 169 - 172[164]) gives the following account:

> ἀφικνεῖται δέ τις ἐξ Αἰγύπτου κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα προφήτης εἶναι λέγων καὶ συμβουλεύων τῷ δημοτικῷ πλήθει σὺν αὐτῷ πρὸς ὄρος τὸ προσαγορευόμενον ἐλαιῶν, ὃ τῆς πόλεως ἄντικρυς κείμενον ἀπέχει στάδια πέντε· θέλειν γὰρ ἔφασκεν αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖθεν ἐπιδεῖξαι, ὡς κελεύσαντος αὐτοῦ πίπτοι τὰ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν τείχη, δι᾽ ὧν καὶ τὴν εἴσοδον αὐτοῖς παρέξειν ἐπηγγέλλετο. Φῆλιξ δ᾽ ὡς ἐπύθετο ταῦτα, κελεύει τοὺς στρατιώτας ἀναλαβεῖν τὰ ὅπλα καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν ἱππέων τε καὶ πεζῶν ὁρμήσας ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων προσβάλλει τοῖς περὶ τὸν Αἰγύπτιον, καὶ τετρακοσίους μὲν αὐτῶν ἀνεῖλεν, διακοσίους δὲ ζῶντας ἔλαβεν. ὁ δ᾽ Αἰγύπτιος αὐτὸς διαδρὰς ἐκ τῆς μάχης ἀφανὴς ἐγένετο. πάλιν δ᾽ οἱ λῃσταὶ τὸν δῆμον εἰς τὸν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἠρέθιζον μηδὲν ὑπακούειν αὐτοῖς λέγοντες, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀπειθούντων κώμας ἐμπιπράντες διήρπαζον.

> Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem one that said he was a prophet [προφήτης], and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. He said further, that he would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when any persons would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages, and plundered them. [My insertion].

In these two passages, written some 22 years apart, Josephus describes exactly the same incident whilst specifically using the terms "ψευδοπροφήτης" ("false prophet") and

[164] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean Antiquities in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=20&chapter=8&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=6&text=anti&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split [24 July 2014].

“προφήτης” (“prophet” or more correctly “one who speaks for God and interprets His divine will”) to describe the object of his undisguised vehemence. He pointedly refers to the Egyptian as “γόης” which could be translated as either “magician”, “wizard”, “sorcerer”, “charlatan” or “cheat”.

Another account that is informative is Josephus’ reference to an individual called Theudas. In *AJ*, XX, 5, 1 / 97 - 99[165], it is written:

> Φάδου δὲ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπιτροπεύοντος γόης τις ἀνὴρ Θευδᾶς ὀνόματι πείθει τὸν πλεῖστον ὄχλον ἀναλαβόντα τὰς κτήσεις ἔπεσθαι πρὸς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν αὐτῷ· προφήτης γὰρ ἔλεγεν εἶναι, καὶ προστάγματι τὸν ποταμὸν σχίσας δίοδον ἔχειν ἔφη παρέξειν αὐτοῖς ῥᾳδίαν. καὶ ταῦτα λέγων πολλοὺς ἠπάτησεν. οὐ μὴν εἴασεν αὐτοὺς τῆς ἀφροσύνης ὄνασθαι Φᾶδος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξέπεμψεν ἴλην ἱππέων ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς, ἥτις ἀπροσδόκητος ἐπιπεσοῦσα πολλοὺς μὲν ἀνεῖλεν, πολλοὺς δὲ ζῶντας ἔλαβεν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Θευδᾶν ζωγρήσαντες ἀποτέμνουσι τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ κομίζουσιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. τὰ μὲν οὖν συμβάντα τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατὰ τοὺς Κουσπίου Φάδου τῆς ἐπιτροπῆς χρόνους ταῦτ᾽ ἐγένετο.
>
> Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician [γόης], whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet [προφήτης], and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem. This was what befell the Jews in the time of Cuspius Fadus's government. [My Insertions].

Josephus is careful to disavow his reader of any valid spiritual/divine currency on the part of Theudas. Josephus also refers to the object of his disdain as “γόης” which is perhaps better translated as “charlatan” than “magician”. He also specifically tells his reader that Theudas only *claimed* to be a prophet and clearly insinuates that he made ridiculous/false declarations about his ability to perform supernatural actions which it can be safely assumed were modelled on the biblical accounts of Moses dividing the Red (Reed) Sea. In short, even if Theudas claimed to be a “prophet” he clearly was not

[165] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) s.a. Flavius Josephus: The Judean Antiquities in *Project on Ancient Cultural Engagement* [Online]. Available: http://pace-ancient.mcmaster.ca/york/york/showText?book=20&chapter=5&textChunk=whistonSection&chunkId=1&text=anti&version=whiston&direction=&tab=&layout=split&go.x=32&go.y=6 [24 July 2014].

one, and furthermore Josephus certainly never claimed him to be either a messiah or someone who claimed messianic status.

Apart from the *TF*, in each and every account concerning a political/religious arriviste, Josephus speaks contemptuously, employing negative epitaphs. For example he refers to the unnamed Samaritan man (*AJ*, XVIII, 4, 1 / 85) as a "liar" ("ψεῦδος"). He refers to John son of Levi (*BJ*, II, 21, 1 / 586) as a "ready liar" ("ἕτοιμος μὲν ψεύσασθαι") and an anonymous zealot (*AJ*, XX, 8, 10 / 188) as a "charlatan", "sorcerer" or "imposter" ("γόητος"). Finally, Josephus refers to the charlatan, Jonathan the weaver (*BJ*, VII, 11, 1 / 437) as "πονηρότατος ἄνθρωπος" ("a vile person") - literally a "man oppressed by toils".

In addition to his disapproving appellations, Josephus also mostly gives very detailed pejorative accounts of the despicable actions of these individuals that scholars would seem to be happy to claim as "messianic". For example (cf. *BJ*, IV, 9, 8 / 538 - 544), where there is nothing spiritual, fair handed or divine in the way Simon the son of Giora deals with the issue of reclaiming his kidnapped wife from the zealots. Undeniably, Simon takes out his understandable anger and acrimony on both the innocent and guilty alike, committing the most despicable and inhumane of actions.

How can an individual like Simon the son of Giora in any way be viewed as a candidate for messianic status, whether posing as a kingly or priestly manifestation? Certainly, Josephus (*BJ*, VII, 8, 1 / 265)[166], makes it very clear what he thinks of Simon when he states:

> πάλιν τοίνυν ὁ Γιώρα Σίμων τί κακὸν οὐκ ἔδρασεν; ἢ ποίας ὕβρεως ἐλευθέρων ἀπέσχοντο σωμάτων οἳ τοῦτον ἀνέδειξαν τύραννον…
>
> Again, therefore, what mischief was there which Simon the son of Giora did not do? or what kind of abuses did he abstain from as to those very free-men who had set him up for a tyrant?

Again, in (*BJ*, VII, 8, 1 / 267)[167], Josephus sums up his feelings regarding the distinctly

[166] Original Greek and English Translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus*. in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D7%3Awhiston+chapter%3D8%3Awhiston+section%3D1 [6 August 2014].

[167] Ibid.

anti-Jewish, non-spiritual and wicked character of all the leaders and their followers involved in the political struggle at the time when he states:

> παρημιλλήσατο δὲ καὶ τὴν τούτων ἀπόνοιαν ἡ τῶν Ἰδουμαίων μανία· ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ οἱ μιαρώτατοι τοὺς ἀρχιερέας κατασφάξαντες, ὅπως μηδὲ μέρος τι τῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείας διαφυλάττηται, πᾶν ὅσον ἦν λείψανον ἔτι πολιτικοῦ σχήματος ἐξέκοψαν,
>
> The Idumeans also strove with these men who should be guilty of the greatest madness! for they [all], vile wretches as they were, cut the throats of the high priests, that so no part of a religious regard to God. might be preserved

Even if allusions to these various individuals' claims to messianic status were to be found in some reliable source external to Josephus' writings[168] it is quite clear that (apart from his two alleged references to Jesus of Nazareth as the "Christ"), he personally, at no time, considers any of these individuals to be either messianic and/or superhuman and/or divine in nature or to have even claimed specific messianic status for themselves.

Furthermore, it should be noted that most scholars involved in this debate since at least the sixteenth century[169] tend to refer to certain of these so-called "messianic claimants" as "prophets". Hence, most scholars will make references to, inter alia, the "Samaritan prophet" (36 C.E.), the "prophet Theudas" (45 C.E.), the "Egyptian Jewish prophet" (52-58 C.E.) and the "anonymous prophet" (59 C.E.). On closer inspection it is clear that apart from Theudas and the unknown individual from Egypt none of these characters are even referred to as being "prophets" or even "false prophets" in Josephus' text, let alone being "messiahs" and/or claimants to messiahship.

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[168] A good example here is the recent discovery (c. 2000 C.E.) of the so-called Gabriel Stone or Jeselsohn Stone – a metre tall stone tablet claimed to have been found on the banks of the Dead Sea and which comprises 87 lines of prophetic text dated by some as early as the late second or early first century B.C.E. In this regard, Knohl has suggested that a messianic individual mentioned on the stone might well be Josephus' Simon of Peraea and further he possibly served as a role model for a later Jesus of Nazareth. However, given that Simon of Peraea died in 4 B.C.E. and the inscription is far more likely to refer to someone who lived up to a century and a half earlier, these undeveloped and sensationalistic claims have little basis to be taken seriously unless more critical scholarship and reliable data becomes available. Cf. Knohl, Israel. 2011. The First Jesus in *National Geographic* [Online]. Available: http://roshpinaproject.com/2011/05/31/israel-knohl-on-national-geographic/ and http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/national-geographic-channel/all-videos/av-8757-9215/ngc-the-first-jesus.html [15 July 2014].

[169] Cf. Mason. 2003. *Josephus and the New Testament*: 227.

Furthermore, even in the case of the Egyptian, cited above (*BJ,* II, 13, 5 / 261 - 263; *AJ,* XX, 8, 6 / 169 - 171) and Theudas (*AJ*, XX, 5, 1 / 97-99), Josephus does not actually refer to either charlatan as a "prophet". He calls the Egyptian "false prophet" and/or he states that the individual concerned only claimed to be a "prophet" thus making it perfectly clear by the context that neither claimant was really a "prophet".

It is significant that most scholars seem to have ignored their sources and merely assume without question that these specific Josephan characters were all messianic and in addition, were even in some cases called "prophets" - even employing this specific nomenclature when describing them in their own commentaries.

Lastly, is it not peculiar that many more eminent Jews than the ones cited above – who were clearly lauded by the general Jewish population in Jerusalem and were even given quite favourable reviews by Josephus - are not considered to be messianic claimants by the various commentators? For example, why is Matthias, the son of Boethus (cf. *BJ*, V, 13, 1 / 527) (who was clearly a popular spiritual leader in his day and who suffered torture and death at the hands of Simon the son of Giora), passed over for this epitaph? What about Josephus' (*BJ*, I, 3, 5 / 78 - 80), account of Judas the Essene's seemingly miraculous abilities, who, according to him," had never failed or deceived men in his predictions"? Surely, here is a better candidate for "prophet" since, according to Josephus; he actually delivered on his forecasts. Josephus (*AJ*, XIV, 9, 4 / 172 -176), also speaks fairly well of Samaias - a member of the Sanhedrim - who he describes as a "righteous man" who was "above all fear" and who alone had the nerve and resolve to stand up to Herod.

Given this amplified background, Josephus' *deliberate* emphasis of actual messianic status for Jesus (of Nazareth) and the fact that he *does not* refer to Jesus as being or claiming to be "προφήτης" or even "γόης" (as he would normally do when speaking about a Jewish political/religious upstart), has to be seen as either extremely significant and/or completely out of character/alien. This fact emphasizes the more mainstream (albeit conventional) wisdom, that Josephus was always a confirmed, practicing Jew and never a clandestine Christian and thus could never have composed the *TF*.

### 3.3.2.3 Josephus' Knowledge Apropos the Messiah/Christ

Regardless of whether there was an earlier form of the *TF* or not, or whether or not the text (interpolated or otherwise) contained the wording "he was the Messiah" or "he was believed to be the Messiah", the very employment of the term "Messiah" both as concept and as a translation of "ὁ χριστὸς" is highly problematic. Indeed, much of the primary debate over the *TF* is concerned with the very employment and valid interpretation of the term "ὁ χριστὸς".

Doherty (2009: 541), as a confirmed sceptic and advocate of a mythical Jesus has no hesitation in confirming that Josephus could not and would not have made use of the term "ὁ χριστὸς": "Its appearance in the phrase 'he was the Messiah' is part of a sentiment which, as it stands, cannot be by Josephus".

Doherty also points out (2009: 541 - 542) that its modified rendition, viz.: "he was *believed to be* the Messiah" is highly reminiscent of the wording employed by Jerome in his Latin translation of the *TF* in his *DVI* (*De Viris Illustribus*) 13, written as late as the fourth century C.E.

Also, as has been alluded to already (*ut supra*), apart from the *TF* and the *JP* (i.e. *AJ*, XX, 9, 1), Josephus does not employ this term in any of his extant works. If, as certain Christian scholars claim, this was a well-known term in Josephus' time, then it should be seen as significant that he consistently appears to be totally unaware of it in normal parlance except the two instances when he purportedly refers to Jesus (of Nazareth).

In point of fact, as confirmed by Doherty (2008: 51 - 52; 2009: 545 - 547), and as is still largely the case today, there was no constant understanding of this concept in the first century C.E., within Jewish circles let alone amongst most Greeks or Romans. If one refers to Qumran literature it would seem that there may even have been at least two different types of messiah expected by certain Jewish communities in the so-called intertestamental period, viz.: an anointed priest and an anointed king (cf. Vermes, 1997: 60n – 61 and 353; Hurst, 1999: 157 - 180).

The point is that even today, with a wealth of scholarship directed at this pertinent

issue, argument still rages concerning the specific Jewish understanding of this term and its possible evolution as a concept throughout recorded history. Thus even if a first-century C.E. Gentile reader, fully immersed in Jewish politics and culture, read the term "ὁ χριστὸς", there is absolutely no way he or she could possibly have understood this expression in, say, a modern literalist Christian context (i.e. an incarnation in human form of the principal Jewish Deity and the enormous – even blasphemous - ramifications of such a non-Jewish dogma).

This obvious point is amplified by Mason (2003: 227 - 228) who authoritatively informs his reader that:

> Most problematic of all is the terse sentence concerning Jesus: "This man was Christ." This affirmation is difficult for several reasons. First, the word "Christ" (Greek Christos) would have special meaning only for a Jewish audience. In Greek it means simply "wetted" or "anointed." Within the Jewish world, this was an extremely significant term because anointing was the means by which the kings and high priests of Israel had been installed. The pouring of oil over their heads represented their assumption of God-given authority (Exod 29: 9; 1 Sam 10: 1). The Hebrew word for "anointed" was mashiach, which we know usually as the noun Messiah, "the anointed [one]." Although used in the OT of reigning kings and high priests, many Jews of Jesus' day looked forward to an end-time prophet, priest, king, or someone else who would be duly anointed. But for someone who did not know Jewish tradition or Christian preaching, the rather deliberate statement that this Jesus was "the wetted" or perhaps "the greased" would sound most peculiar.

Here it is sometimes claimed that the absence of this term in his writings indicates that perhaps Josephus was merely being "sensitive" to Roman feelings since he was by then in the employ of the Flavian dynasty. As has already been demonstrated, it is also true that Josephus (*BJ*, VI, 5, 4 / 312 - 13) seems to claim that Vespasian fulfils Jewish prophecy but certainly not in the context of say a Jewish "מָשִׁיחַ" or "anointed one" and certainly, he never employs the actual term "Messiah":

Lastly, if one considers the highly improbably theory that Josephus was secretly a Christian believer – an issue that has been touched on previously – then one must ask why the apologist Origen (cf. *COM,* X.17 / 5268 - 5269; *Cels*, I, 47), was able to confirm that Josephus *did not accept* Jesus as the "Christ" (i.e. as understood in third-century C.E. Christian parlance)?

### 3.3.2.4 Josephus' Treatment of other individuals named "Jesus"

Closely related to the previously discussed "ὁ χριστὸς" issue, is the obvious concern over how Josephus (as the presumed author of the *TF*), refers to Jesus (of Nazareth) when compared to many of the other individuals mentioned in his works, each of which share the same name.

Leidner (2000: 19 - 28), who has devoted some careful thought to this very issue, points out that in the well-known Loeb edition of Josephus' works, "Jesus" turns out to be one of the most common names referred to by Josephus in his four books. In this context, Leidner (2000: 19 - 20), refers to the name "Jesus" appearing 21 times in the Loeb index. For the sake of clarity these references (some of which are possibly duplications of a particular individual) are reproduced below, almost exactly as Leidner presents them:

1. Jesus son of Naue
2. Jesus son of Saul
3. Jesus, high priest, son of Phineas
4. Jesus son of the high priest Jozadak
5. Jesus son of Joiada
6. Jesus, high priest, son of Simon
7. Jesus, high priest, son of Phabes
8. Jesus, high priest, son of Seë
9. **Jesus the Christ**
10. Jesus son of Damnaeus, became high priest
11. Jesus son of Gamliel, became high priest
12. Jesus son of Sapphas
13. **Jesus, chief priest**, probably to be identified with 10 or 11
14. Jesus son of Gamalas, high priest
15. **Jesus, brigand chief** on borderland of Ptolemais

16. Jesus son of Sapphias

17. Jesus brother of Chares

18. **Jesus a Galilean**, perhaps to be identified with 15

19. **Jesus in ambuscade**, perhaps to be identified with 16

20. Jesus, priest, son of Thebuthi

21. Jesus son of Ananias, rude peasant, prophesies the fall of Jerusalem

[My emphases].

It is a very well-known Jewish custom that men are normally referred to as "son of" (וב) "so and so". Based purely on the Loeb list, Josephus clearly conforms to this age-old tradition but seemingly breaks with it on five distinct occasions; four of which refer to individuals caught up in some minor event; and one which refers to Jesus the Christ.

Leidner (2000: 20) commenting on the traditional employment of "son of" in a Jewish individual's name confirms that:

> [Josephus] does this throughout his writings, in literally hundreds of cases, and does so here in the undisputed twenty cases [i.e. all, excluding Jesus the Christ], except for several minor figures involved in the turbulent events in Galilee during the war with Rome. [My insertions].

Leidner (2000: 19 - 21) correctly stresses the fact that Josephus consistently makes a point of designating familial relationships for all the Jewish men called "Jesus" except for number nine and 15 on the Loeb list. The latter exception, referring to "Jesus, brigand chief" can be understood because of the qualified context. In this context, Leidner (2000: 20) emphasises that even in the four cases of individuals involved in minor events and also called "Jesus", the reader is always aware of certain qualifying factors such as an indication of time and place and other important pieces of historical information which tell us that we are dealing with real, authentic people. However, it goes without saying that the cursory *TF* does not offer the reader much in the way of context or other instructive features.

In addition, as Leidner (2000: 19 - 21) carefully substantiates, we know from Josephus'

many writings that he was overtly proud of his priestly ancestry and high status within the community. Moreover, especially in the case of other Jews he comments on, he is particularly concerned with their respective ranks, status and bearing within the Jewish community. Undeniably, Josephus is characteristically very quick to label or identify any other Jew according to his status and claimed lineal descent.
As evidence of this tendency, Leidner (2000: 20) highlights the fact that ten of the names in the Loeb list each refer to Jewish men who have priestly credentials. In each and every case, Josephus is careful to specify their ancestry.

In the *TF*, Josephus tells his reader nothing about Jesus (of Nazareth) in terms of his lineal descent, his status in the community, his background or (if we ignore the possible import of the *JP* (*James Passage*) discussed later) his familial connections.

Within this established context, Leidner (2000: 21) finds it most unusual that Jesus the Christ is not recorded as being say "Jesus son of Joseph" and subsequently comes to the following conclusion:

> Could Josephus, Temple priest and historian, have written this way? The plain inference is that this line was written by a Christian for Christian readers, for whom only one Jesus existed in all history, and that one without human paternity. The simple pronouncement of the word "Jesus" would immediately summon up the majesty of Christ to the Christian reader, and with no mention of a father, since these Christian readers knew that Jesus was the Son of God…But of course Josephus never thought in those terms, hence he never wrote the opening line. And if he didn't, then it would be difficult to salvage the rest of the passage [i.e. the *TF*]. It could not exist without that line. [My insertion].

Lastly, Leidner (2000: 23 - 27) makes a very important point concerning Josephus' apparent silence as regards an historical context for his supposed reference to Jesus the Christ in the *TF*. Certainly, amongst the many individuals called "Jesus", three stand out in particular because they each in their own way have parallels to the gospel accounts of Jesus of Nazareth. The deaths of these three individuals, each named "Jesus", are recorded by Josephus as having been the cause of some disaster affecting Jerusalem brought about by divine retribution. Leidner (2000: 24) sees this as a "basic motif" with Josephus, especially since he had in fact deserted from the Jewish cause and ultimately allied himself to the Romans. In this latter regard, Josephus needed to justify his

desertion, both to his fellow Jews as well as possibly to himself. Leidner (2000: 24) goes on to explain:

> The rationalization that he arrived at was that the Jewish cause had come under divine condemnation for its sins, and that in surrendering to the Romans he was really accepting the divine will. For that reason he eagerly searches out and cites all material pointing to divine punishment upon Jerusalem, elaborating and inventing if need be to bolster his argument.

Leidner refers specifically to Josephus' account of Jesus son of Joiada (*AJ*, XI, 7, 1 / 298 - 300), Jesus, son of Gamalas (*BJ*, IV, 5, 2 / 323) and Jesus son of Ananias (*BJ*, VI, 5, 3 / 300 – 309). Each of these Jews was slain in some dramatic way in Jerusalem and at a time very close to the one in which Josephus lived. Indeed, Jesus son of Ananias died during the destruction of the Temple. Based on his writings, Josephus may actually have witnessed the destruction first-hand. The following typical example (cf. BJ, V, 9, 3 / 362)[170] is pertinent:

> Οὗτος περιὼν τὸ τεῖχος καὶ πειρώμενος ἔξω τε βέλους εἶναι καὶ ἐν ἐπηκόῳ, πολλὰ κατηντιβόλει φείσασθαι μὲν αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ δήμου, φείσασθαι δὲ τῆς πατρίδος καὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ μηδὲ γενέσθαι πρὸς ταῦτα τῶν ἀλλοφύλων ἀπαθεστέρους.
>
> So Josephus went round about the [Temple] wall, and tried to find a place that was out of the reach of their darts, and yet within their hearing, and besought them, in many words, to spare themselves, to spare their country and their temple, and not to be more obdurate in these cases than foreigners themselves; [My insertion].

Certainly he was present during Vespasian's triumph in Rome soon after the event. Furthermore, many scholars have seen this specific account as a possible model for certain gospel narratives concerning, inter alia, aspects of Jesus of Nazareth's ministry, trial, crucifixion and prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple.

Leidner (2000: 35), for one, feels that if Josephus did actually compose the *TF* he must have been fully aware of the Christian tradition that Jerusalem was destroyed in divine retribution for the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Given his specific treatment of the other

[170] Original Greek and English Translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: Http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D5%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D9%3Awhiston%20section%3D3 [11 August 2014].

three holy men named “Jesus” coupled with his positive appreciation of Jesus the Christ in the *TF* plus the huge similarity of material informing the four separate accounts, strongly suggests that the *TF* is an anomaly.

### 3.3.3 Gospel Characteristics of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

#### 3.3.3.1 The Emmaus Narrative

Before looking at the arguments which support either of these disputed passages from *AJ* having any degree of authenticity, it would do well to briefly consider the more recent findings of Goldberg (1995: 59 - 77). According to him, what has previously been overlooked is that the *TF* reveals what he (Goldberg, 1995: 59) terms “a number of surprising coincidences” when compared with a cluster of specific verses (i.e. *Ev.Luc.*, 24: 19 – 21; 25 - 27) (c. 60 - c. 100 C.E.).

A transcript of these verses, which Goldberg refers to as the *Emmaus Narrative* from *Ev.Luc.* 24: 19 – 21 and 25 – 27) [171] is as follows:

> καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ποῖα; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ, ὃς ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ προφήτης δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, ὅπως τε παρέδωκαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἡμῶν εἰς κρίμα θανάτου καὶ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ· ἀλλά γε καὶ σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν ἄγει ἀφ᾽ οὗ ταῦτα ἐγένετο.
>
> What things?" he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place…
>
> καὶ αὐτὸς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς ὦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται· οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωυσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν διερμήνευσεν αὐτοῖς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ.
>
> Then he said unto them, “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. [My amended punctuation].

[171] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 184 - 185.

Goldberg (1995: 59 - 77), specifically compares such aspects as the structure and word usage of these passages with the extant version of the *TF*, which for convenience is again reproduced in Greek and English below:

> Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή: ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο: ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες: ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.
>
> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.[172]

Goldberg believes that in the original Greek, the *Emmaus Narrative* from *Ev.Luc.* and the *TF* demonstrate significant similarities in structure and form. Of particular interest is his claim (1995: 68-69), that the precise grammatical form of "τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν" ("the third day") occurs nowhere else except in *Ev.Luc.* 24: 21 and the *TF.* Goldberg (1995: 64 - 65), also claims that he has found some nineteen areas of correspondence (as well as areas of non-correspondence) but points out that when a number of spot checks are made to find other comparable biblical texts which deal with largely the same content as the *TF,* at the very best they tend to yield about half the degree of correspondence as found in the *Emmaus Narrative* from *Ev.Luc.*.

Goldberg (1995: 66) emphasizes that the *Emmaus Narrative* "more closely resembles the *TF* in its phrase-by-phrase outline of content and order than any other known text of comparable age," and argues that the author of *Ev.Luc.* probably borrowed the *Emmaus Narrative* from "an existing tradition". This source, he maintains, was most

[172] Original Greek and English Translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0145 [30 May 2012].

likely the same one that Josephus (or a later pseudo-Josephus) drew upon. This important issue will need to be returned to at a later stage as, depending on a particular scholar's worldview, it can serve as decisive evidence for either total interpolation or even complete authenticity.

His findings also shed some additional light on two of the utterances from the *TF* which are most often considered to be obvious interpolations, viz.: "if it be lawful to call him a man" and "He was the Christ" because (Goldberg, 1995: 64), they "do not have parallels in the Emmaus passage at analogous locations".

Hence, based on his findings, Goldberg (1995: 66) puts forward two similar hypotheses within the context of Josephus being the *actual* author of the *TF*:

1. Josephus created his own description of Jesus from information he had collected. The description is dominated by his selection of facts, as determined by his opinions and reactions to stories about Jesus.

2. Josephus rigidly adhered to a pre-existing text that described Jesus, making alterations only to suit his written style. His text is dominated by a historian's motivation to record faithfully a primary source that had come to his attention.

The coincidences with the *Emmaus Narrative* tend to support the second possibility. Also, in terms of the main argument of this thesis, it is important to note that Goldberg clearly favours the second hypothesis.

We could allow for the possibility that the author of *Ev.Luc.* (and by association, *Act.Ap.*) may have even used the writings of Josephus for source material (an interesting idea put forward by Mason (2003). If so, surely it is more likely, given the very high probability that Josephus *did not* write the *TF* and that it was the work of a later Christian apologist that it was based on that latter individual's in-depth knowledge of Christian literature and Christology? Obviously, this *includes* such passages as the *Emmaus Narrative* in *Ev.Luc.*

Even Goldberg takes note of such a possibility, which, oddly, he does not seem to feel is very likely. Regardless, after explaining why he personally believes it is more

probable that Josephus firmly followed a pre-existent text that portrayed Jesus, Goldberg (1995: 66), makes the following important observation:

> If not due to a common source, these coincidences can have only two other explanations. Either they are due to chance; or the Testimonium is not, in fact, authentic, that it is the composition of a later Christian writer, and that this writer was in part influenced, directly or indirectly, by the excerpt from Luke.

Surely, given the known facts, it is far more likely that someone who was well-versed in the canonical gospel accounts as well as cognizant of quite evolved Christian and certainly non-Jewish concepts, including the avowed divinity of Jesus, wrote this passage sometime well after the second century C.E. and not a Jewish historian living in the first century C.E.? Here again is an example of the author's worldview seemingly disallowing him to see the equally obvious conclusion that the *TF* might be based solely on the *NT* and not vice versa.

Goldberg (1995: 73), due seemingly to his constructed worldview, and despite having even contemplated such an obvious solution to his quandary, stating that a "Christian interpolator" may have altered or even "forged it entire, under the influence of the Emmaus narrative," still goes on to dismiss the entire idea by naively and feebly concluding:

> This proposal has the weakness of supposing that a writer capable of imitating Josephus' style and daring enough to alter his manuscript would at the same time employ non-Josephan expressions and adhere rather closely to a New Testament text. A forger of the required skill should have been able to shake free of such influences.

This is a very fragile argument, possibly dictated to by Goldberg's religious beliefs. Surely, apart from the ridiculous notion that it is somehow very difficult to forge Josephus' style of writing, given the known historical context, one must also equally consider the relationships between the *TF* and *other* Christian beliefs, not only the similarities between the *TF* and the *Emmaus narrative*.

When one undertakes this critical exercise it becomes immediately obvious, given the wealth of information contained in the remarkably short *TF*, that far more similarity exists between the *TF* and Christian beliefs in general than just the *Emmaus Narrative*. For example the reader is informed in a mere 89 words the following very concise

information:

1. Jesus (of Nazareth) actually existed and still exists;
2. Jesus was wise;
3. Jesus was and still is something superior/apart from mortal humans;
4. Jesus was a genuine miracle worker;
5. Jesus was a teacher of the truth;
6. Jesus attracted and ministered to both Jew and Greek;
7. Jesus was the Messiah;
8. Jesus was condemned by the Jewish leadership;
9. Jesus was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate;
10. Jesus died on a cross;
11. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day;
12. Jesus appeared to his loved ones after his death;
13. Jesus had and still has devoted disciples/followers;
14. Jesus fulfils divine prophecy;
15. There are “ten thousand” divine proofs concerning his status; and
16. Jesus (and/or his message) continues to have a successful legacy.

Olson (2013a: 99) takes note that it was exactly this obvious format as a profession of the Christian faith that first alerted academics in the sixteenth century to its possible fraudulent nature. He confirms:

> [S]ome Christian scholars began to reject the text on the grounds that it seemed to be a Christian confession of faith greatly at odds with what the non-Christian Jew Josephus says elsewhere in his works.

#### 3.3.3.2 Gospel Flavour

Now, claims are sometimes made by advocates of partial interpolation that the residual and “authentic” Josephan text, after the removal of the obvious Christian layers, may be recognized by its lack of what has been termed “gospel flavour”

Typical of this stance are the contentions that apart from Josephus clearly appearing to be non-Christian, the *TF* would have the nature miracles of Jesus reduced to mere sleight of hand. In addition, there would be no overt anti-Semitism and most importantly of all, the Greeks (Gentiles) would still be described as being “drawn” to Jesus. This

latter point is most important because, as will be dealt with shortly, it does not agree (on the face of it) with the canonical gospel portrayal of certain events.

Thus the typically conservative scholar will point out that once the overt Christian sentiments have been excised from the *TF*, what is left will serve as good evidence that the *TF* was *not* written by a Christian hand and therefore is more likely to reflect Josephus' world view and context. Now, as will be seen, even after the removal of blatant Christian content, the expurgated *TF* is still overtly Christian. Also, even if what remained was not explicitly Christian, it should be seen as an inept exercise to take what is obviously Christian propaganda and hope that by the mere removal of some of the key words in the text it can somehow then be *proven* to not be Christian proselytization. Despite this obvious fact, the majority of conservative scholars (e.g. Meier 1991: 56 – 68[173]; Dunn, 2003: 141) still seem to set great store by this eccentric approach.

The historian and critical sceptic[174], Olson (2013) also takes issue with this senseless procedure when he states that:

> The same argument applies to those scholars who edit out the most obviously Christian parts of the Testimonium and find the remainder "too restrained" to be the work of a Christian. The fact that a Christian uses the language to describe Christ elsewhere shows that it's not "too restrained" for a Christian to use to describe Christ.

Olson's specific problem here is that Meier (1991) mentions that within those portions of the *TF* that he considers to be Christian interpolations, in some instances, the word usage seems to be more akin to Josephus than, say, the *NT*. As a consequence, Meier (1991: 83 n 42) argues, in the case of the three suspected interpolations (i.e. *TF*, *JP* and *BP*), it is their content alone that makes them suspect. Olson in Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations (2013a: 100), specifically sums up Meier's methodology as follows: "This approach is seriously flawed. The text does not divide easily into Christian and non-Christian sections on the basis of either language or

[173] To be fair to Meier, although firmly convinced of his point of view, he does have the good grace to warn his reader that it is possible for some equivocality of meaning in sections of the passage that he considers to be genuine.

[174] Olson confirms his critical stance when he states: "…I'll try to make clear why I am skeptical toward common scholarly claims about what an early Christian writer would or would not have written in a brief passage about Jesus." Olson. 2013b. The Testimonium Flavianum, Eusebius, and Consensus (Guest Post) http://historicaljesusresearch.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-testimonium-flavianum-eusebius-and.html.

content". Olson is understandably sceptical of Meier's opinion that the language of the *NT* can in any way provide the historian with a reliable indication of the specific word usage of, say, early Christians. Olson in Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations (2013a: 100 n. 13) also confirms that while "Christian writers were undoubtedly influenced by the language of the New Testament, they were by no means limited to it".

The *TF* also pointedly refers to Jesus' appeal to both Jew and Greek Gentile alike and in the light of our present knowledge concerning, inter alia, *Ev.Matt.* (c. 80 - c. 110 C.E.) seems to indicate a contemporaneous instance of religious anti-Semitism, when it states that "the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross". In the latter regard, one cannot help but draw the inference that these "principal men" are none other than the Jewish priests mentioned in the canonical gospels. Finally, the text highlights the religious dogma of the resurrection ("for he appeared to them alive again on the third day") and underscores Jesus' possible divinity by reference to the "divine prophets" who had prophesied his "wonderful works".

### 3.3.4 Issues Relating to the Substantiated Provenance of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

Another telling point, is that if, Josephus was really the author of the *TF*, regardless of its original format, why did no active Christian scholar or apologist (i.e. apart from Eusebius) make reference to it before the fifth century C.E.?

The following fifteen pre-fifth century Christian apologists were quite familiar with the works of Josephus, yet they make no mention of the *TF*:

1. Justin Martyr (c.100 / 103 -165 C.E.);
2. Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180 C.E.);
3. *Theophilus Antiochenus* a.k.a. Theophilus of Antioch (d. c. 183 / 185 C.E.);
4. *Irenaeus* (Bishop of Lugdunum) (c. 115 / 142 - c. 202 C.E.);
5. *Titus Flavius Clemens* a.k.a. Clement of Alexandria (c. 157 – 211 / 216 C.E.);
6. *Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus* a.k.a. Tertullian (c. 160 - c. 220 C.E.);
7. Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 / 236 C.E.);
8. *Sextus Iulius Africanus* a.k.a. Africanus (c. 160 - c. 240 C.E.);

9. *Origen Adamantius* a.k.a. Origen (184 / 185 - 253 / 254 C.E.);
10. *Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus* a.k.a. Cyprian (d. 258 C.E.);
11. *Marcus Minucius Felix* (fl. c. 150? – c. 270? C.E.);
12. Methodius of Olympus (d. c. 311 C.E.);
13. *Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius* (c. 240 – c. 320 C.E.);
14. Arnobius of Sicca (d. c. 330 C.E.); and
15. Pseudo-Justin (fl. fourth century C.E.).

This is an especially pertinent question, given the fact that an apologist of the calibre of Origen wrote the equivalent of 257 A4 pages of tightly packed printed text[175] challenging Celsus' critical anti-Christian views. This on-going debate, which lasted at least three decades, necessitated Origen having to justify, inter alia, his claim that the Christian dogma, far from being some religious myth was an historical fact. In this regard, he relies heavily on Josephus but makes no reference[176] to what has now become known as the *TF*.

Indeed, many illustrative examples exist that highlight where Origen should have found the *TF* most useful in his rebuttal of Celsus' claims, yet for some reason never bothered to do so. To highlight but two of these occasions: Origen (*Cels.* [*Contra Celsum*]), I, 6)[177] states:

> Μετὰ ταῦτα οὐκ οἶδα πόθεν κινούμενος ὁ Κέλσος φησὶ δαιμόνων τινῶν ὀνόμασι καὶ κατακλήσεσι δοκεῖν ἰσχύειν Χριστιανούς, ὡς οἶμαι αἰνισσόμενος τὰ περὶ τῶν κατεπᾳ δόντων τοὺς δαίμονας καὶ ἐξελαυνόντων. Ἔοικε δὲ σαφῶς συκοφαντεῖν

[175] Without headings, the Greek version of *Contra Celsum* is well over 165,000 words in length.
[176] Many illustrative examples exist that highlight where Origen should have found the *TF* most useful in his rebuttal of Celsus' claims, yet for some reason never bothered to do so. To highlight but two of these occasions: Origen (*Cels* [*Contra Celsum*]), I, 6) states: "'Many shall say to Me in that day, In Thy name we have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works.' Whether Celsus omitted this from intentional malignity, or from ignorance, I do not know …". Again, Origen (*Cels*, I, 67) quotes Celsus' assertion that Jesus was not capable of performing wonderful works: "The old mythological fables, which attributed a divine origin to Perseus, and Amphion, and Aeacus, and Minos, were not believed by us [i.e. Celsus and his followers]. Nevertheless, that they might not appear unworthy of credit, they represented the deeds of these personages as great and wonderful, and truly beyond the power of man; but what hast thou [i.e. Jesus of Nazareth] done that is noble or wonderful either in deed or in word?" [My insertions].
[177] Greek text according to Selwyn (Tr.). 1876. *Origenes*: *Contra Celsum, Libri* I, II, III *et* IV: 4 – 5. English translation according to Crombie (Tr.). 1885. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV. in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04161.htm [20 July 2014].

τὸν λόγον. Οὐ γὰρ κατακλήσεσιν ἰσχύειν δοκοῦσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ μετὰ τῆς ἀπαγγελίας τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἱστοριῶν. Ταῦτα γὰρ λεγόμενα πολλάκις τοὺς δαίμονας πεποίηκεν ἀνθρώπων χωρισθῆναι, καὶ μάλισθ᾽ ὅταν οἱ λέγοντες ἀπὸ διαθέσεως ὑγιοῦς καὶ πεπιστευκυίας γνησίως αὐτὰ λέγωσι. Τοσοῦτον μέντοι γε δύναται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατὰ τῶν δαιμόνων, ὡς ἔσθ᾽ ὅτε καὶ ὑπὸ φαύλων ὀνομαζόμενον ἀνύειν· ὅπερ διδάσκων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγε τό· **Πολλοὶ ἐροῦσί μοι ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ· Τῷ ὀνόματί σου δαιμόνια ἐξεβάλομεν καὶ δυνάμεις ἐποιήσαμεν. Τοῦτο δ᾽ οὐκ οἶδα πότερον ἑκὼν παρεῖδε καὶ κακουργεῖ ὁ Κέλσος ἢ μὴ ἐπιστάμενος.** Κατηγορεῖ δ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἑξῆς καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος, ὡς γοητείᾳ δυνηθέντος ἃ ἔδοξε παράδοξα πεποιηκέναι καὶ προϊδόντος ὅτι μέλλουσι καὶ ἄλλοι τὰ αὐτὰ μαθήματα ἐγνωκότες ποιεῖν τὸ αὐτό, σεμνυ νόμενοι τῷ θεοῦ δυνάμει ποιεῖν· οὕστινας ἀπελαύνει τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πολιτείας ὁ Ἰησοῦς. Καὶ κατηγορεῖ αὐτοῦ ὅτι, εἰ δικαίως ἀπελαύνει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔνοχος ὢν τοῖς αὐτοῖς φαῦλός ἐστιν· εἰ δ᾽ αὐτὸς οὐ φαῦλος ταῦτα ποιήσας, οὐδ᾽ οἱ ὁμοίως αὐτῷ πράττοντες. Ἄντικρυς δέ, κἂν δοκῇ ἀνέλεγ κτον εἶναι τὸ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, πῶς ταῦτα ἐποίησε, σαφὲς ὅτι Χριστιανοὶ οὐδεμιᾷ μελέτῃ ἐπῳδῶν χρώμενοι τυγχά νουσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μετ᾽ ἄλλων λόγων πεπιστευμένων κατὰ τὴν θείαν γραφήν. [My emphasis].

After this, through the influence of some motive which is unknown to me, Celsus asserts that it is by the names of certain demons, and by the use of incantations, that the Christians appear to be possessed of (miraculous) power; hinting, I suppose, at the practices of those who expel evil spirits by incantations. And here he manifestly appears to malign the Gospel. For it is not by incantations that Christians seem to prevail (over evil spirits), but by the name of Jesus, accompanied by the announcement of the narratives which relate to Him; for the repetition of these has frequently been the means of driving demons out of men, especially when those who repeated them did so in a sound and genuinely believing spirit. Such power, indeed, does the name of Jesus possess over evil spirits, that there have been instances where it was effectual, when it was pronounced even by bad men, which Jesus Himself taught (would be the case), when He said: **Many shall say to Me in that day, In Your name we have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works. Whether Celsus omitted this from intentional malignity, or from ignorance, I do not know. And he next proceeds to bring a charge against the Saviour Himself, alleging that it was by means of sorcery that He was able to accomplish the wonders which He performed**; and that foreseeing that others would attain the same knowledge, and do the same things, making a boast of doing them by help of the power of God, He excludes such from His kingdom. And his accusation is, that if they are justly excluded, while He Himself is guilty of the same practices, He is a wicked man; but if He is not guilty of wickedness in doing such things, neither are they who do the same as He. But even if it be impossible to show by what power Jesus wrought these miracles, it is clear that Christians employ no spells or incantations, but the simple name of Jesus, and certain other words in which they repose faith, according to the holy Scriptures. [My emphasis].

Again, Origen (*Cels*, I, 67)[178] quotes Celsus' assertion that Jesus was not capable of

[178] Greek text according to Selwyn (Tr.). 1876. *Origenes*: *Contra Celsum, Libri* I, II, III *et* IV: 67. English translation according to Crombie (Tr.). 1885. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV. in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04161.htm [20 July 2014].

performing wonderful works:

> Μετὰ ταῦτά φησιν ὁ παρὰ τῷ Κέλσῳ Ἰουδαῖος ὡς φιλομαθής τις Ἕλλην καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων πεπαιδευμένος ὅτι οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ μῦθοι Περσεῖ καὶ Ἀμφίονι καὶ Αἰακῷ καὶ Μίνωϊ θείαν σποράν νείμαντες–οὐδ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐπιστεύσαμεν– ὅμως ἐπέδειξαν αὐτῶν ἔργα μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἀληθῶς τε ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον, ἵνα μὴ ἀπίθανοι δοκῶσι· σὺ δὲ δή, τί καλὸν ἢ θαυμάσιον ἔργῳ ἢ λόγῳ πεποίηκας;
>
> After the above, this Jew of Celsus, as if he were a Greek who loved learning, and were well instructed in Greek literature, continues: "The old mythological fables, which attributed a divine origin to Perseus, and Amphion, and Æacus, and Minos, were not believed by us. Nevertheless, that they might not appear unworthy of credit, they represented the deeds of these personages as great and wonderful, and truly beyond the power of man; **but what have you** [i.e. Jesus of Nazareth] **done that is noble or wonderful either in deed or in word?**" [My insertions].

More critical scholars repeatedly point out that, had the *TF* existed, in any guise, by say the early third century C.E., it would surely have been Origen's *only* verifiable historical proof (outside the *NT*), that Jesus of Nazareth had truly existed. Furthermore, it would have assisted him in proving that Jesus did not resort to sorcery (cf. Sections 2.10.2; 3.3.7.1; 5.7.1 and Footnote 201), to perform his "wonderful works". Instead, he conventionally portrays Josephus as someone who *did not believe* that Jesus was the "Christ" (assuming Josephus even knew what a "Christ" was). This information contradicts the present form of the *TF* and possibly even the *James Passage*. Certainly if the *TF* is in any way authentic, it very clearly shows that Josephus both considered Jesus to be the "Christ" and also, quite precociously, possibly *knew* what it meant to be called the "Christ".

It is enlightening, at this point, to consider Origen's own words. For example, in c. 246 - 248 C.E., Origen wrote in his *Commentary on Matthew* X.17 / 5268 - 5269[179]:

> Ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον δὲ διέλαμψεν οὗτος ὁ Ἰάκωβος ἐν τῷ λαῷ ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνῃ ὡς Φλάβιον Ἰώσηπον ἀναγράψαντα ἐν εἴκοσι βιβλίοις τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν, τὴν αἰτίαν παραστῆσαι βουλόμενον τοῦ τὰ τοσαῦτα πεπονθέναι τὸν λαὸν ὡς καὶ τὸν ναὸν κατασκαφῆναι, εἰρηκέναι κατὰ μῆνιν θεοῦ ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ἀπηντηκέναι διὰ τὰ εἰς Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν τετολμημένα. Καὶ «τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν» ὅτι, τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἡμῶν οὐ καταδεξάμενος εἶναι Χριστόν, οὐδὲν ἧττον Ἰακώβῳ δικαιοσύνην ἐμαρτύρησε τοσαύτην. Λέγει δὲ

[179] Greek text according to Migne, 1862a. Οριγενους Τα Ευρισκόμενα Πάντα: 877 – 878. English translation according to Patrick (Tr.) 1896. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IX, in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/101610.htm [20 July 2014].

ὅτι καὶ ὁ λαὸς ταῦτα ἐνόμιζε διὰ τὸν Ἰάκωβον πεπονθέναι.

> And to so great a reputation among the people for righteousness did this James rise, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the "Antiquities of the Jews" in twenty books, when wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the temple was razed to the ground, said, that these things happened to them in accordance with the wrath of God in consequence of the things which they had dared to do against James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ. And the wonderful thing is, that, **though he did not accept Jesus as Christ**, he yet gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great; and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James. [My emphasis].

Again, Origen (*Cels*, I, 47)[180], confirms his stance:

Ὁ δ᾽ αὐτός, καίτοι γε ἀπιστῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς Χριστῷ, ζητῶν τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πτώσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ ναοῦ καθαιρέσεως, δέον αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἡ κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιβουλὴ τούτων αἰτία γέγονε τῷ λαῷ, ἐπεὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὸν προφητευόμενον Χριστόν·

> Now this writer [i.e. Josephus], **although not believing in Jesus as the Christ**, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, whereas he ought to have said that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, … [My insertion and emphasis].

It is quite clear, had the *TF* existed in Origen's version of the *AJ*, where Josephus plainly calls Jesus "the Christ", Origen could not easily have made these two statements. What is also telling (an issue that will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Four), is that Origen seems to have had the same version of the *JP* (i.e. *AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 201) that we read today. He even quotes almost the same strange formulation, viz.: "James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ" and not say "James the son of Joseph" which is the proper form of address. If so, Eusebius could not possibly have forged this specific passage.

Here the arch-critic, Doherty, puts forward the argument that, as most of these writers were primarily concerned with defending the new Christian faith from non-Christian criticism, they would have benefited greatly from quoting the *TF*, regardless of the

[180] Greek text according to Selwyn (Tr.). 1876. *Origenes*: *Contra Celsum, Libri* I, II, III *et* IV: 43**;** English translation according to Crombie (Tr.). 1885. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV. in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04161.htm [20 July 2014].

claimed “authentic” and “neutral” form it might have taken originally.

In this regard, Doherty (2009: 38), states:

> If a figure of the stature of Josephus had said the things contained in the alleged “authentic” *Testimonium*, can one really believe that every Christian commentator for over two centuries would regard nothing in it as worthy of mention? Defenders of an original testimony to Jesus by Josephus must maintain that every one of those prolific Christian writers … along with several minor ones, was motivated to keep silent and deny the most natural inclination to note and address what a famous historian had said about the founder of their faith - despite, in some cases, being willing to address him on other matters.

One particularly noteworthy example (cf. Jackson and Gilmore, 1910: 271) that needs to be highlighted here concerns Origen’s *Cels.* written in c. 248 C.E. In it, Origen (cf. Chadwick, 1980: xxviii) informs his reader that Celsus the Platonist (Κέλσος) opposed Christianity in his book entitled *TW* (*True Word*) (c. 177 C.E.).

Unfortunately we do not have Celsus the Platonist’s actual arguments, but from Origen’s responses it is possible to re-establish at least some of the key issues of dispute. In this regard, Origen, in his attempts to counter Celsus’ criticism of Christianity, makes use of, inter alia, the works of Josephus (Cf. Sections 3.3.4 and 5.7).

With this point in mind, Doherty (2009: 538 - 539) believes that Origen must have been particularly intimate with the *AJ* because he made as many as eleven references to Josephus in his various writings. As an example, and has already been mentioned, in his *Cels*. I, 47 Origen refers specifically to *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 - 119 to recapitulate what Josephus had to say about John the Baptist. Doherty also reminds his reader that despite this assumed familiarity with the text, for reasons unknown, nowhere in his enormous oeuvre does Origen bother to refer to the *TF* (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 - 64).

Considering that this specific reference would have proven most beneficial to Origen’s case against Celsus given that only a few years later Eusebius happily quotes the *TF* in its entirety, it should be seen as highly significant that either Origen seems to be totally ignorant of the latter’s existence, or did not feel that it was in any way useful for countering the allegations of Celsus. Although this fact in itself does not prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the *TF* did not exist before Origen’s time and/or did not appear in Origen’s version(s) of the *AJ* (taken together with all the other supporting

evidence), it is well-nigh impossible to prove that it did exist before the fourth century C.E..

It is for this very reason that scholars like Doherty, Mason and Price (R.M.) believe that the *TF*, in whatever form one would like to imagine it, simply did not exist in Origen's day. If it had, Origen (and certainly many others) would surely have eagerly pointed the Christian critic to the recorded words of Josephus as an independent and neutral witness.

Now, based on this kind of reasoning, the allegation is commonly made that the *TF* is an obvious forgery, possibly added to the *AJ* sometime in the fourth century C.E. In support of this viewpoint it is often implied, if not openly stated, that Origen's version of *AJ* (which is referenced in his *Cels*), could not have contained the *TF*. Scholars such as Price (R.M.) (2003: 38), repeat the oft-quoted fact that the *TF* does not appear in the edition of *AJ* as read by Origen. In addition, Price (R.M.) (2003: 38 - 39), believes that *Irenaeus*' passage on the gospel origins may have first originated with Eusebius and then been interpolated subsequently into *Irenaeus*' *CH* (c. 180 C.E.). In his *Cels* (1 / 47 and 2 / 13) Origen claims that Josephus blamed the destruction of Jerusalem on the death of James, when he should have said the death of Jesus.

Josephus explains in his *AJ*, XX, 8, 5 / 160 – 166) that God punished the Jews by destroying Jerusalem, mainly because of the increasing lawlessness of the people, the increased number of undesirables (robbers and zealots) in the city and the constant disrespect shown to the Temple and its sanctuaries by these criminals, including, inter alia, their assassination of the High Priest Jonathan. He sums up his reasoning thus:

> And this seems to me to have been the reason why God, out of his hatred of these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, he no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities.

| Date | Author | Reason Given For Destruction of Temple/Jerusalem | Claimed Reference | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **c. 97 C.E.** | **Josephus** | Rise of zealotry and the Death of the High Priest Jonathan | Personal Knowledge | True |
| **c. 248 C.E.** | **Origen** | Death of James the Just | Josephus | False |
| **c. 326 C.E.** | **Eusebius** | Death of James the Just | Josephus | False |
| **c. 392 C.E** | **Jerome** | Murder of James the apostle. | Josephus | False |
| **c. 400 C.E.** | **Chrysostom** | Death of John the Baptist | Josephus | False |

**Figure 13**

A Survey of False References to Josephus Apropos
Reasons for the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

On this point it must be stressed that although the evidence (or lack thereof), makes it highly unlikely that the *TF* existed before the time of Eusebius, given that only supposedly Christian annotated versions have survived, there is no real way of knowing for sure if this assumption is correct.

As an aside, it should also be seen as significant that even Christian commentators who lived quite some time after Eusebius also seem to make no mention of the *TF*. Such authorities as Zindler (2003: 45 - 48) confirm that St. John Chrysostom, who wrote late in the fourth century C.E., was also obviously quite familiar with the works of Josephus as he made use of them in his many homilies. Regardless, he never mentions anything that could be ascribed to the *TF* or one of its claimed variants.

By way of proving Chrysostom's knowledge of Josephus, Zindler (2003: 45 - 48) draws his reader's attention to some pertinent examples, viz:

1. In Homily 76, Chrysostom proffers that Jerusalem was ultimately devastated as divine punishment for the death of Jesus. In order to justify the enormous scale of the destruction to the city as fitting and just compensation for the crucifixion of his deity he refers to Josephus' account of the horror.

2. Chrysostom, like Origen before him, also makes it clear that Josephus *was not* a Christian let alone considering Jesus (of Nazareth) to be more that human.

However what Chrysostom also does (which will be dealt with in more detail later) is to fabricate, in Homily 13, that Josephus had accredited the destructive war to the murder of John the Baptist. Of course Josephus did no such thing and, further, Chrysostom also contradicts both Origen and Eusebius who both claimed that Josephus blamed the destruction of Jerusalem on the death of James the brother of Jesus. As has already been pointed out, Josephus actually implies in his Jewish Wars that the destruction of the war was due to the zealot's murder of the former High Priest Jonathan.

Given that Chrysostom makes no mention of the *TF* (which surely would have proven most useful for his many homilies), but still finds the need to fabricate Josephan-backed claims elsewhere. This would seem to support firmly the hypothesis that Chrysostom's version of the *AJ* (like the one possessed by Origen), *did not* contain the *TF*.

Mason (2003: 57), also observes that "…during the century after Eusebius there are five church fathers, including Augustine, who certainly had many occasions to find it useful and who cite passages from Josephus but not this one [i.e. the *TF*]." [My insertion].

Here, the collective wisdom is that as Augustine lived and worked in North Africa, whereas both Eusebius and Jerome operated in the Levant, versions of the *AJ* that contained the *TF* did not appear in the west until at least the fifth century C.E. onwards. It should also be seen as significant that as late as the ninth century (cf. Zindler, 2003: 48 - 50), Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople[181], possessed a copy of the *AJ* sans *TF*. Zindler makes it clear that given Photius was most concerned with recording the history

[181] Photius I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (858 to 867 C.E. and 877 to 886 C.E.).

of nascent Christianity, his silence on the *TF* is highly significant.

Furthermore, had the *TF* been both extant and critical in nature (as claimed by Chilton and Evans [1998: 470 – 471] and Barnett [2009: 50]), Photius would not have held back if mention had been made of a false Jewish messiah. In addition Zindler takes note that Photius quotes marginal inscriptions on a few occasions demonstrating the relative ease that foreign material could eventually be worked into a manuscript and subsequently be considered to be "original" material.

This conclusion is strengthened by the additional fact that Photius even discusses the *BP* (*Baptist Passage*) found in the same book (i.e. Book XVIII of the *AJ*) that is also home to the *TF* (when it is included in the *AJ*).

Conventional wisdom would seem to favour that the very reason why it was necessary for an early Christian scribe or apologist to create something like the *TF* was because of the need for some extra-biblical historical context to support the emerging belief structure. The very real suspicion is that these authors suddenly discovered that such information was sorely lacking.

The solution, within this scenario, would surely be to manufacture it. Unbelievably, a typical conservative scholar will tend to argue the very opposite, claiming that no-one would have seriously questioned the existence of Jesus of Nazareth in the first centuries of the nascent Christian Church, and thus they would never have had any real reason to quote something like the *TF* if in fact it already existed. On this issue Lowder (2000) confirms:

> Assuming that contemporary reconstructions of the passage are accurate, it is difficult to imagine why the early church fathers would have cited such a passage. The original text probably did nothing more than establish the historical Jesus. Since we have no evidence that the historicity of Jesus was questioned in the first centuries, we should not be surprised that the passage was never quoted until the fourth century.

#### 3.3.4.1 Jerome

Finally, it would behove us to look at a fourth century Christian apologist who did make use of the *TF*. In this respect, Jerome's comments are most useful. In his

*DVI* (*De Viris Illustribus*) 13[182] Jerome (c. 392 - 393 C.E.) writes:

> *Iosephus Matthiae filius, ex Hierosolymis sacerdos, a Vespasiano captus, cum Tito filio eius relictus est. Hic Romam veniens, septem libros Iudaicae captivitatis Imperatoribus patri filioque obtulit, qui et bibliothecae publicae traditi sunt, et ob ingenii gloriam, statuam quoque meruit Romae… Hic in decimo octavo Antiquitatum libro, manifestissime confitetur, propter magnitudinem signorum,* ***Christum a Pharisaeis interfectum****, et Ioannem Baptistam vere prophetam fuisse, et propter interfectionem Iacobi apostoli, dirutam Hierosolymam*. [My emphasis, layout, and amended punctuation for greater clarity].

> Josephus, the son of Matthias, priest of Jerusalem, taken prisoner by Vespasian and his son Titus, was banished. Coming to Rome he presented to the emperors, father and son, seven books On the captivity of the Jews, which were deposited in the public library and, on account of his genius, was found worthy of a statue at Rome…In the **eighteenth*** book of his Antiquities he most openly acknowledges that **Christ was slain by the Pharisees** on account of the greatness of his miracles, that John the Baptist was truly a prophet, and that Jerusalem was destroyed because of the murder of James the apostle. [My emphasis, correction* and layout for greater clarity].

Jerome then gives his slightly altered version of the *TF* (*DVI*, 13)[183] which reconstructed in Greek reads as follows:

> Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων, εἵς τε νῦν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένων οὐκ ἔλιπε τὸ φύλον.

> In this same time was Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him man. For he was a worker of wonderful miracles, and a teacher of those who freely receive the truth. He had very many adherents also, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, and was believed to be Christ, and when through

[182] Latin text according to Migne. 1883. *Patrologiae: Cursus Completus, Series Latina, Tomus* XXIII: *S. Eusebius Hieronymus:* 662. English translation according to Richardson (Tr.). 1892. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. III, in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2708.htm [24 July 2014].

[183] Greek text according to Migne. 1883. *Patrologiae: Cursus Completus, Series Latina, Tomus* XXIII: *S. Eusebius Hieronymus:* 663. English translation according to Richardson (Tr.). 1892. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. III in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2708.htm [24 July 2014].

the envy of our chief men Pilate had crucified him, nevertheless those who had loved him at first continued to the end, for he appeared to them the third day alive. Many things, both these and other wonderful things are in the songs of the prophets who prophesied concerning him and the sect of Christians, so named from Him, exists to the present day.

| **Josephus *AJ*, XVIII, 3 / 63 – 64** | **Jerome *DVI*, 13** |
|---|---|
| Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. | Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων, εἵς τε νῦν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένων οὐκ ἔλιπε τὸ φύλον. |

**Figure 14**

A Comparison between the *AJ* and *DVI* Versions of the *TF*.

*AJ* words that do not appear in Jerome's *DVI* are indicated in blue. Additions to Jerome's text are indicated in red. Slight alterations of punctuation or spelling are indicated in orange.

Firstly, Jerome specifies the nature of the vague Jewish leadership mentioned in Eusebius' version of the *TF*. Here Jerome does two interrelated things, viz.: he

emphasises the guilt of the Jews concerned - thus making it even less likely for Josephus to have written the account.

Secondly Jerome specifies that it was jealous Pharisees who were responsible for delivering Jesus to Pilate. Eusebius's copy of the *TF* made no such distinction and Jerome is clearly embellishing.

Considering that most scholars, as confirmed by Bilde, (1988: 189) with reference to Rajak (1983: 11 – 45) (especially from the latter half of the twentieth century onwards), seem to favour the notion that Josephus was certainly a practicing Pharisee would make this even more unlikely to be a genuine Josephan utterance.

Of course some evidence also exists, based on but a cursory reading of his works, that Josephus, may only have ultimately become a Pharisee. However, equally, he was obviously not always that enthused by the activities of the Pharisees, so it is quite open as regards which Jewish sect he consistently favoured. By way of but one example, in his *AJ*, XVII, 2, 4 / 41[184] Josephus states:

> καὶ ἦν γὰρ μόριόν τι Ἰουδαϊκὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐπ᾽ ἐξακριβώσει μέγα φρονοῦν τοῦ πατρίου καὶ νόμων οἷς χαίρει τὸ θεῖον προσποιουμένων, οἷς ὑπῆκτο ἡ γυναικωνῖτις, Φαρισαῖοι καλοῦνται, βασιλεῖ δυναμένῳ μάλιστα πράσσειν προμηθεῖς κἀκ τοῦ προὔπτου εἰς τὸ πολεμεῖν τε καὶ βλάπτειν ἐπηρμένοι.
>
> For there was a certain sect of men that were Jews, who valued themselves highly upon the exact skill they had in the law of their fathers, and made men believe they were highly favoured by God, by whom this set of women were inveigled. These are those that are called the sect of the Pharisees, who were in a capacity of greatly opposing kings. **A cunning sect they were, and soon elevated to a pitch of open fighting and doing mischief**. [My emphasis].

Regardless, Josephus, who was born a Sadducee, was a religious, practicing Jew, who was obviously very critical of anyone who did not share his particular sense of morality.

Furthermore, it is quite apparent that Eusebius' copy (ies) of the *AJ* complete with his version of the *TF* (most likely composed whilst he was in Caesarea) had easily reached

[184] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D17%3Awhiston+chapter%3D2%3Awhiston+section%3D4 [21 July 2014].

Bethlehem (home to Jerome) by the end of the fourth century C.E. and further, Jerome felt no compunction in liberally embroidering the *TF*, giving it a distinctly anti-Semitic tone. This, then, has to be seen as an additional interpolation by a known Christian apologist and suggests that this was acceptable practice at the time.

Certainly, Jerome was quite capable of blatant exaggeration. Possibly, one of the most overt examples of his "pious frauds" can be witnessed with this statement he makes in c. 386 C.E. he writes from Bethlehem in the names of *Paula* and *Eustochium*, to *Marcella* (i.e. *Jer.Ep.* XLVI, 4.)[185]:

> *denique etiam Iosephum, qui uernaculus scriptor est Iudaeorum, adserere illo tempore, quo crucifixus est dominus, ex adytis templi uirtutum caelestium erupisse uocem dicentium: "transmigremus ex his sedibus"*
>
> Josephus, himself a Jewish writer, asserts that at the Lord's crucifixion there broke from the temple voices of heavenly powers, saying: "Let us depart hence"

This flagrant mistruth aside, Jerome also seems to condone a more "pragmatic" approach to conversion when in his *Jer.Ep*. XLIX (XLVIII), 13[186] which was written to one *Pammachus*, he states:

> *Videmus exempla captiva: servierunt tibi ad victoriam, quae in suis voluminibus non dimicant. nonne nobis loquitur cum salvatore: aliter foris, aliter domi loquimur? turba parabolas, discipuli audiunt veritatem. pharisaeis proponit dominus quaestiones et non disserit. aliud est docere discipulum, aliud aversarium vincere. mysterium, inquit, meum mihi, mysterium meum mihi et meis.* [My corrections].
>
> **We see passages taken captive by your pen and pressed into service to win you a victory which in the volumes from which they are taken have no controversial bearing at all**. May he not reply to us in the words of the Saviour: "I have **one mode of speech for those that are without and another for those that are within**; the crowds hear my parables, but their interpretation is for my disciples alone"? [Matthew 13:10-17] The Lord

[185] Original Latin text according to *Hilberg (Tr.). 1910. Corpvs Scriptorvm Ecclesiasticorvm Latinorvm, Vol. LIV. S. Evsebii Hieronymi Opera (Sect. I Pars I:* 333. English translation according to Fremantle *et al.* (Trs). 1893. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. VI, in *New Advent.org.* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001046.htm [10 August 2014].

[186] Original Latin text according to *Hilberg (Tr.). 1910. Corpvs Scriptorvm Ecclesiasticorvm Latinorvm, Vol. LIV. S. Evsebii Hieronymi Opera (Sect. I Pars I:* 370. English translation according to Fremantle *et al.* (Trs). 1893. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. VI, in *New Advent.org.* [Online] Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001048.htm [10 August 2014].

> puts questions to the Pharisees, but does not elucidate them. To teach a disciple is one thing; **to vanquish an opponent, another**. "My mystery is for me," says the prophet; "my mystery is for me and for them that are mine." [My emphases].

However, Jerome continues in *Jer.Ep*. XLIX (XLVIII), 14[187] and confirms that he will not force a non-believer to embrace the truth:

> *quasi vero rogandus fuerit, ut mihi cederet, et non inuitus ac repugnans in veritatis vincla ducendus. et haec dicerem, si vincendi studio contra regulam scripturarum quippiam locutus fuissem et, sicut viri fortes in controversiis solent facere, culpam praemio redimerem.* [My corrections].
>
> **I had no right** to disregard his [a doctrinal opponent called Jovinian] struggles and to drag him against his will into the bonds of truth! I might use such language had the desire of victory induced me to say anything counter to the rule laid down in Scripture, and had I taken the line - so often adopted by strong men in controversy - **of justifying the means by the result.** [My insertion and emphases].[188]

Thus we have an interesting situation, one where, based on Jerome's supposed baring of his soul in *Jer.Ep*. XLIX (XLVIII), 13 - 14, makes it highly unlikely that he would knowingly debase a source, certainly a scriptural one – to win an argument. However, based on his fabrication in *Jer.Ep.* XLVI, 4, and his *DVI*, 2 where he patently fabricates Josephus' reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Fig. 13 *ut supra* and Section 4.2 *ut infra*) he demonstates that on occasion he has no scruples.

### 3.3.5 Issues Related to Literary Progression

As is commonly pointed out by more sceptical scholars such as Doherty (2009: 535 – 536), Mason (2003: 226 – 227), and Wells (1989: 22)[189] etc. there appears to be a lack

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[187] Original Latin text according to *Hilberg (Tr.). 1910. Corpvs Scriptorvm Ecclesiasticorvm Latinorvm, Vol. LIV. S. Evsebii Hieronymi Opera (Sect. I Pars I:* 370 - 371. English translation according to Fremantle *et al.* (Trs). 1893. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. VI, in *New Advent.org.* [Online] Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001048.htm [10 August 2014].

[188] It is important to note that in c. 384 C.E. Jerome comments on the very issue of fraudulent behaviour in his *Jer.Ep.* XXVII, 1 - 3. to *Marcella*. Here, Jerome defends himself against an accusation that he had distorted a scriptural text. Jerome explains that he merely modified the Latin text so that it would better reflect the original Greek. Cf. Migne. 1877. *Patrologiae: Cursus Completus, Series Latina, Tomus* XXII: *S. Eusebius Hieronymus:* 431 - 432.

[189] Wells explains that the "Jesus passage occurs in a context which deals exclusively with the misfortunes of the Jews (only some of which are attributed to Pilate) and that Jesus's condemnation by Pilate at the behest of the Jewish leadership has no connection with such misfortunes except from the standpoint of a Christian, who would naturally regard this crime

of continuity or progression with what is assumed to be Josephus' authentic encapsulating passages when either the *TF* or the *BP* (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 – 119) are concerned.

Thus we have an obvious break (i.e. the *TF* itself) in the larger narrative found in Book XVIII of the *AJ*, which logically, can only be either deliberate or entirely fraudulent. Certainly, if this violation into the main text, complete with stylistic anomalies, was in any way deliberately intended by Josephus, it shows him up as being a very sloppy writer. However, conversely, if it is yet another indicator of interpolation, it clearly shows various degrees of both naiveté and even arrogance on the part of the forger(s) responsible. Certainly, it would appear that these anomalies have only managed to be largely overlooked by the general reader up until quite recently due to the power of the accepted constructed worldview wherein Christianity was the sole apotheosis of all that is true and real.

The issues under discussion in the dominant text before the commencement of the *TF* first concerns Pontius Pilate's attempt to introduce effigies of the Roman Emperor[190] into Jerusalem, as well as the ensuing Jewish insurrection culminating with Pilate's countermand to have the images removed and sent back to Caesarea. Then an account is given of how Pilate undertook to supply water to Jerusalem (albeit funded with monies taken from the Temple treasury), the subsequent Jewish revolt and the manner in which Pilate's soldiers inflicted many injuries and casualties against the seditious masses and the eventual curtailment of hostilities.

This narrative is immediately followed, with no explanation, by the *TF*. The opening words of the text (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 4 / 65)[191] immediately following the *TF* are as follows:

> Καὶ ὑπὸ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους ἕτερόν τι δεινὸν ἐθορύβει τοὺς Ἰουδαίους καὶ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Ἴσιδος τὸ ἐν Ῥώμῃ πράξεις αἰσχυνῶν οὐκ ἀπηλλαγμέναι συντυγχάνουσιν.
>
> About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder,

---

as the greatest misfortune ever to have befallen the Jews." Wells. 1989. *Who Was Jesus*: 22.

[190] i.e. *Gaius Iulius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* a.k.a. *Caligula* (12 - 41 C.E.).

[191] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D18%3Awhiston+chapter%3D3%3Awhiston+section%3D4 [11 August 2014].

and certain shameful practices happened about the temple of Isis that was at Rome.

These words in line 65 introduce a long passage that details a series of calamitous events that result in the destruction of the temple of Isis and the crucifixion of certain Isiac priests.

Assuming for the moment that the *TF* is an outright forgery then, originally, Josephus must have first described the great misfortunes visited by the Romans upon the Jews in Jerusalem (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 1 / 55 – 2 / 62) and then moved directly on to an equally tumultuous act of Roman oppression directed at the followers of Isis (albeit in Rome) (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 4 / 65 – 80). Certainly, if the suspected interpolation is removed, there seems to be a greater sense of continuity and logic behind the delivery of the two interrelated accounts.

However, if the *TF* is not an interpolation, and it was really intended to be placed at this juncture by Josephus himself, then its presence disturbs the flow of what must be assumed to be the dominant narrative (i.e. the tribulation of the Jews under oppressive Roman rule). For example, a hypothetical, non-Christian reader, historically contemporary to Josephus - one who had no inkling of the enormous baggage that the topic of Jesus of Nazareth would one day have on say, a more modern reader – would, at the time, have surely been quite confused to read "About this time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder…" after having just read: "as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

Thus, it should be obvious to any critical scholar worth his/her salt, that if the *TF* is in any way Josephan, his inclusion of this passage (i.e. the *TF*) at the specific position it now occupies, clearly breaks the logical flow of the main narrative.

Now, although in his various writings, Josephus' themes are on occasion, not flawlessly organised[192] there is generally, a recognizable logic to the order of events that he narrates so why would he have placed the *TF* in such an obviously arbitrary position?

[192] Cohen has explored numerous examples of Josephus' sloppiness, inconsistent introduction of characters in his narrative etc. but in the specific context of the *BJ*. In this regard, nowhere does Cohen report the same type of discord apropos literary progression as displayed in the case of the *TF* in the *AJ*. Cf. Cohen. 2002. *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*.

The assumption is thus made that the *TF* is more likely to be an interpolation than a genuine Josephan passage.

One way of obtaining greater clarity before leaping to any obvious conclusions, is to determine if similar illogical textual interludes (albeit with no Christian import) exist elsewhere in any of Josephus' extant writings.

If they do exist, it would provide valuable evidence that confirms that Josephus was:

1. on occasion, proficient at writing disconnected passages; and therefore
2. quite capable of producing something akin to the *TF* as it now stands.

As an aside, even if originally, the *TF was not part* of the narrative, Josephus' jump from Jewish affairs in Jerusalem to events involving the cult of Isis in Rome may initially seem equally out of context until one also realizes that:

1. Josephus warns his reader that he will be digressing. For example he clearly states: "I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I formerly told you I would." (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 4 / 80); and
2. Josephus uses the cult of Isis event (which took place in Rome) as a literary bridge to ultimately deal with negative Jewish concerns (i.e. the banishment Jews), that took place in Rome (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 5 / 81-84).

Thus, although possibly clumsily executed, there does exist a valid reason, given by Josephus himself, behind the specific placement of the two accounts of Roman oppression in Jerusalem and Rome respectively. If so, then the possibility that the *TF* may be genuine makes even less sense, since Josephus at no point explains why he inserts the *TF* at the very point he has explained that he will be digressing for other reasons. This in itself should be seen as highly significant.

Certainly, both Zindler and Mason have taken up this point in their own work.

On this issue, the highly sceptical Zindler (2003: 42 - 43) notes that Josephus is quite clear when he wants to make a digression yet in the case of the *TF* he remains strangely silent.

Zindler (2003: 42 - 43), confirms that whereas Josephus is very careful to warn his reader of the digression from a Jewish event in Jerusalem, to a sexual scandal

involving Isiac cultists in Rome, at no time does Josephus explain his supposed digression concerning a certain Jesus (of Nazareth) appearing well and alive again on the third day following his crucifixion and death. Doherty (2009: 535) also confirms this interpretation when he states: **"…**the event of Jesus' crucifixion is not portrayed in any way as a 'calamity' for the Jews."

Mason (2003: 225 - 227) also concurs with this position and explains that with the glaring exception of the *TF*, all the other surrounding passages are presented as moral criticisms of often violent anti-Jewish behaviour by the Romans. In sharp contradistinction, the *TF* itself, neither moralizes, preaches or criticizes. Rather, it praises both Jesus (of Nazareth) as well as his adherents. Mason (2003: 227) clarifies that the supporting text refers directly to upheavals however, in the case of the *TF* he confirms that the text "is completely supportive of both Jesus and his followers." Most significantly, Mason (2003: 227), points out that this episode, unlike the adjoining passages, "has no moral, no lesson." Indeed, most unexpectedly, and as confirmed by, inter alia, Mason himself, the passage does not even reprove or mildly sanction Pontius Pilate's obviously excessive actions.

On this point, Mason (2003: 225 - 227) looks closely at the terminology that Josephus employs and draws our attention to the fact that the various events contained in the text surrounding the *TF* are all specifically described as "outrages", "uprisings" or "tumults" but no such description is applicable to the *TF*. Mason (2003: 227) goes on to verify that logically, the reader might well expect some censure of either the Roman and/or Jewish leadership. Instead the passage only mentions that Jesus was possibly betrayed by the "leading men among us."

To counter this finding, and as confirmed by, inter alia, (Olson, 2013a: 99) conservative scholars such as Bardet (2002) and Whealey (2009: 73 – 116) have both put forward the possibility that originally Josephus might have said something about Jesus (of Nazareth) but that it had been somewhat negative in its original formulation and more in accord with his Jewish calamity theme, within which it is now encapsulated.

The facts are that as the *TF* has come down to us, the only negative aspect of it concerns the possibly inferred criticism of the Jewish leadership who condemned Jesus to death. Certainly, as will be discussed in more detail later, it is hardly likely that Josephus as a Jewish leader himself, would have held such (conceivably), anti-Semitic

views.

According to this hypothetical scenario (i.e. originally the *TF* was quite negative in tone), the more conservative scholars postulate that a later Christian scribe, not at all intent on deceit, had only to give the original text a more positive spin. Doherty (2009: 565 - 568) for one, finds this possibility somewhat too speculative for comfort. As evidence he cites the Arabic and Slavonic[193] versions of the *TF* which each serve as variants on the same issues mentioned in the Greek version. Here, there is absolutely no evidence of any negative terminology or calamitous language.

As is well known, ancient writers did not make use of things such as footnotes for reference purposes. This point is confirmed by the conservative scholar M. Grant (1995: 53):

> A further main reason why ancient historiography differed from its modern counterparts was provided by digressions. They were far more frequent in Greek and Roman writings than in our own. For one thing, there was a simple technical explanation for such digressions. Nowadays we have footnotes; the ancients did not, so that what would now be relegated to a footnote had to appear in the text.

In this sense, if they wanted to expand on an issue or perhaps make a small digression, they normally inserted that information into the main text whilst copying by hand, and/or made a comment in the margins when greater clarity was indicated and/or it was discovered that a piece of text had been inadvertently left out during a previous replicating process. This fact might be seen as useful ammunition for more conservative scholars who believe the *TF* to be partially or totally authentic.

However, some conservative scholars go even further and go so far as to claim that such "digressions" such as the *TF* are also wholly characteristic of Josephus' writing style. For example, Smallwood in Williamson (1981: 20 – 21) declares:

> One feature of Josephus' writing which may be disconcerting to the modern reader and appear inartistic is the way in which at times the narrative is proceeding at a spanking pace when it is unceremoniously cut short by a paragraph or a longer passage of material unrelated or only marginally related to the subject in hand, and then resumed equally abruptly. Basically, these interruptions are of two types, with different reasons behind them, and it may therefore be helpful if a word is said here about the conventions

[193] Cf. Whealey, 2008: The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic: 573 – 590.

of ancient historiography, which differed considerably from ours.

> One type of interruption, such as a sudden move to another theatre of war, occurs because ancient historians usually wrote annalistically - literally, by years … A quite different explanation lies behind other interruptions to the flow of the narrative. The ancient world never invented those useful lay-bys in which the modern author can park essential but intractable material, and thus avoid breaking the main thread of his argument, the footnote and the appendix.

This statement appears innocent enough until one realises that except in the specific cases of the *TF* and the *BP* Josephus does not characteristically make such drastic digressions. Accordingly the obvious suspicion here is that this testimonial by Smallwood is nothing more than an apologetic to ultimately justify the inclusion of "interruptions to the flow of the narrative" such as the *TF* and the *BP*.

### 3.3.6 The Characteristics of the *Testimonium Flavianum* as regards Length and Positivism

As has already been highlighted, when antagonists of an historical Jesus/Christ consider the *TF* they are quick to point out the obvious coincidence that, despite the shortness of its length (a mere 89 words in the Greek version), this paragraph manages to spell out quite succinctly and confidently all the salient tenets of the Christian dogma as more normally espoused far later than the first century C.E..

Undeniably, this conspicuously concise and precocious text, which seems to draw its inspiration solely from the canonical gospels, strongly suggests that Jesus (of Nazareth) should not be regarded as a mere human and goes even further, intimating that he has a status higher than that of even a "wise man" and refers to Jesus as "ὁ χριστὸς" ("the anointed"). The only other comparable document from this period that also claims to be the source for the first use of a similar accolade "Χριστιανός" ("follower of Christ") is the *Act.Ap.* which, depending on the authority, has been variously dated to anywhere between 60 - 150 C.E..

No doubt, because of the dominant worldview upheld by the more typical Christian scholar, Origen's failure to employ the *TF* creates an obvious problem that needs a creative solution to explain away. As a result, more conservative scholars will attempt to do one of two things at this juncture: Either they will argue the complete opposite and demonstrate that the very *brevity* of the *TF* points to it being an authentic Josephan

comment, or do a seeming *volte-face* and alternatively claim that originally it was *far longer* and/or more neutral if not extremely negative in character.

Here a typical conservative argument runs along the following lines: A committed, early Christian apologist, would not have been satisfied with such an understated reference. Instead, whilst using the opportunity to give fraudulent, extra-biblical/scriptural and pseudo-independent historical support to Jesus being an actual, celebrated, flesh-and-blood personage, they would have insisted on elaborating him as the incarnation of the supreme deity. Thus the *TF* must be authentic since it is so short.

For example, the well-respected Christian authority (albeit considered quite moderate by many), Meier, holds to this view and thus naively argues (1991: 79), that the *TF* must have existed in Origen's time. Moreover, it did not quite appear as it does today and further, its original form must have been overtly negative in nature and hence the early Christian Fathers would have had to have contended with the realization that Josephus was a non-Christian. In addition, it would have negatively emphasised that Josephus neither accepted Jesus' divinity nor believed that he had risen from the dead.

As an example, consider but one sentence from the *TF*, couched in overtly negative undertones as supplied by the conservative scholar, Stanton (1994: 169 - 171): "Jesus was a doer of strange deeds, and a deluder of the simple-minded. He led astray many Jews and Greeks."

As already noted Doherty, for one, finds this argument questionable. He (Doherty, 2009: 539) comments on Meier's thesis that the original negative wording of the *TF* reflected Josephus' non-Christian stance and was accordingly circumvented by the early Christian apologists:

> But should the apologists have found this disconcerting in a non-Christian? They dealt with unbelief every day, faced it head on, tried to counter and even win over the opponent. Justin's major work, *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, did just that. Origen, in his confrontation with Celsus, did not hesitate to criticize Josephus for attributing the fall of Jerusalem to God's punishment on the Jews for the death of James, rather than for the death of Jesus. In fact, Origen calls attention to the very point which Meier suggests Christian commentators shied away from, that Josephus did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah… It hardly seems that the silence on the *Testimonium* by all the apologists prior to Eusebius can be explained in this manner.

The last point made by Doherty seems to be the most convincing since, even if one

accepted the slim possibility that the *TF did exist* in Origen's day (regardless of its supposed format), not *all* of the early Christian apologists active at this time would have automatically rejected it. This is especially true if one considers that this would have appeared as an expedient, substantiated, non-partisan, extra-biblical/scriptural proof for the existence of Jesus of Nazareth and his avowed ministry. In this latter regard, Meier's argument make's little sense and reads as some feeble and irresolute attempt to deny what is really quite self-evident to anyone who is more objective and critically minded.

To bolster this implausible argument, a number of more contemporary Christian scholars have variously attempted to recreate what they imagine the original negative format of the *TF* must have looked like. In this regard, seemingly swayed by their constructed realities, they deliberately manufacture more hostile and negative versions of what they need the *TF* to have been originally, and/or attempt to justify translations of key phrases within the *TF* as being far more deleterious than is normally acceded to by a neutral reader.

From a more sceptical point of view this response makes absolutely no sense at all. Certainly, if argued from the constructed reality of a typically more liberal scholar like Doherty, Mason or Wells, it is the very *shortness* of length, coupled with its *compactness* of dogmatic material that gives the *TF* away as being quite fraudulent.

Arguing from a neutral position, why would a forger, making use of what he perceived to be an opportune place in the genuine Josephan text to insert a carefully worded reference to bolster his personal belief system want to overplay his hand by writing a long and obvious prevarication? Again, if (at the time), copying the style of Josephus was really subject to critical scrutiny (which is doubtful), why would an early Christian apologist want to increase the risk of detection and possible ridicule by supplying a very lengthy passage that would surely exponentially increase the dangers of detection?

In addition, more sceptical scholars will quickly point out that if Josephus wrote this passage (remembering that without more obvious Christian interpolations that are even accepted by more conservative scholars, it would be even shorter than it now appears!), it is uncharacteristically lacking in details that unquestionably abound in the supporting text.

On this very point, Doherty (2009: 537) states:

> [T]he shortness of the passage [*TF*] could be seen as a strike *against* authenticity. If the 'authentic' *Testimonium* is supposed to represent more or less what Josephus wrote, why is it so lacking in detail when compared to that which he gives to his surrounding anecdotes? Such an original passage would pale in comparison to the rich accounts of the crisis over Pilate's attempted introduction into the city of the effigies on the army standards, or the riots over his use of Temple funds to finance the new aqueducts. The related incidents succeeding the *Testimonium* are also very detailed - two scandals happening 'about the same time,' …

For example, the cited "two scandals" that clearly occurred at "about the same time" in history, and which encapsulate the *TF,* contain an abundance of rich detail and quite exhaustive descriptions and explanations of historical events. Thus, there are at least two reasons why this counter-claim (i.e. originally the *TF* was more negative in character), finds such little favour in the eyes of the more liberal and sceptical camp:

1. Firstly, within the claimed reconstruction, that the *TF* was originally quite negative, Josephus would have had to have made (possibly quite lengthy), comments that were distinctly anti-Jesus in nature. Yet paradoxically, the shorter text that now exists, is highly positive, and clearly retains extraordinarily superlative claims about Jesus. These include such features as, he was *not a man*, that he was *prophesied in scripture*, crucified on a cross and even *rose from the dead* etc.

2. Secondly the claimed, possibly hostile version of the *TF,* and its avowed negative comments about Jesus, would surely have attracted the attention of any number of Christian (and indeed non-Christian) commentators in the first four centuries of the Common Era. Instead there is absolute silence on the matter until the time of Eusebius' recorded interactions.

What is quite remarkable at this juncture is that the more conservative scholars such as Meier, Eddy and Boyd (due to their acknowledgment of partial interpolation), are all quite prepared to admit to what can only be described as shameful interventions into the Josephan text by Christian hands in the first centuries of the Common Era. However, this is undertaken in order to save the *TF* in *any* form that will still serve today as a useful, independent, extra-biblical/scriptural account of Jesus (of Nazareth).

### 3.3.7 Stylistic Idiosyncrasies for Authorship Attribution

Another methodology that might prove useful is to turn things around and instead of looking for "Josephan fingerprints", to look for evidence of a Eusebian trail running, as it were, through Josephus' writings. We could even borrow and adapt Doherty's term and look for "Eusebian footprints". Certainly, if one examines the writings of Eusebius, he is often put forward as the very author of (at least), one of the suspected interpolations. Of course, this is an assumption as it stands, but the argument is that *if* Eusebius is really the forger of the *TF,* then there may well be stylistic evidence that similarly points to him.

Doherty (2009: 535) sums up the two-fold problem very well when he states:

> …we can say that the unusual application of certain terms in the *Testimonium,* when considering their usual use elsewhere by Josephus, is an argument *against* their authenticity. It speaks to an interpolator drawing on Josephan vocabulary, but failing to take into account that the use he makes of it would be rather *unlike* Josephus.

These stylistic idiosyncrasies are well-researched and cover many aspects of either Josephus' acknowledged writing style and comparisons with other writer's peculiarities.

Set out below are some primary examples of the more frequently discussed stylistic idiosyncrasies that, when dealt with by more critical, liberal scholars, predominantly end up comparing Josephus with Eusebius. It will also be quite evident that in each and every case where a reasonable, substantiated argument is made proving total interpolation of the *TF,* more conservative scholars will typically feel the need to launch an apologetic defence of at least a partial degree of authenticity that is easily identifiable by its improbability, naivety and illogic:

#### 3.3.7.1 Σοφὸς ἀνήρ

The phrase "σοφὸς ἀνήρ" normally translated as "wise man" is used to describe Jesus (of Nazareth) in the *TF*. In the early part of the twentieth century, most scholars accepted that this phrase was spurious. For example, Zeitlin (1931: 398) confirms that the "phrase 'wise man,' in my analysis of the Testimonium, was presented as Eusebius' assumption of what Josephus, a non-Christian, might have written".

This phrase is employed elsewhere by Josephus and, where there is little or no doubt as regards Josephus' genuine authorship, it is most typically applied to persons who are Jews.

For example in *AJ*, VIII, 2, 7 / 53 in Hiram's epistle to King Solomon, Josephus writes: "It is fit to bless God that he hath committed thy father's government to thee, who art a wise man [ἀνδρὶ σοφῷ], and endowed with all virtues". [My insertion]. Again in *AJ*, X, 11, 2 / 237, Josephus writes: "…whose name was Daniel, a wise man [σοφὸς ἀνὴρ], and one of great sagacity in finding out what was impossible for others to discover, and what was known to God alone…". [My insertion]. Also, in *BJ*, VI, 5, 4 / 313 Josephus states: "The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and many of the wise men [πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν] were thereby deceived in their determination". [My insertion]. In the latter example, Josephus uses the phrase: "πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν" which could also be translated as "many of those who were highly skilled". Regardless, "σοφὸς" or "σοφῶν" is the key adjective that is employed in all cases.

As an aside: these are precisely the sort of authentic statements and key phrases made by Josephus that would surely serve as useful examples for mimicry by a forger intent on creating the illusion of authenticity elsewhere in the manuscript with very little training or expertise.

Regardless, C.E. Price (2008: 27) sees the term as distinctly Josephan in character. As has already been discussed (*ut supra*) it is normally employed to describe notable Jewish individuals of great insight like a Solomon or a Daniel. In this context, C.E. Price (2008: 27) states that it is "not surprising that Josephus would use the phrase 'wise man' to refer to Jesus". He obviously overlooks the more conservative need to emphasise that if the *TF* is in any way authentic, Josephus was originally neutral if not negative towards Jesus – a common argument of those in support of partial authenticity.

#### 3.3.7.2 Παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής

More conservative scholars who wish to prove that Josephus is the author of the *TF* will often claim that "παραδόξων ἔργων" should be translated in a very neutral if not negative vein.

Specifically, these scholars will typically argue that when the *TF* refers to "παραδόξων

ἔργων" it *should not* be translated as "wonderful works" and may mean little more than say, "startling" or possibly "unusual" occurrences.

Meier (1991: 81) gives his reader a lengthy explanation as to why he thinks Josephus chose to use this specific term:

> [I]t is used elsewhere in Josephus only in the sense of "poet"; but Josephus… has a fondness for resolving a simple verb into two words: a noun expressing the agent and the auxillary verb (e.g. *krites einai* for the simple *krinein*). Moreover, Josephus uses such cognates as *poietos*, "that which is to be done," *poiesis*, "doing, causing" (as well as "poetry, poem"), and *poietikos*, "that which causes something" (as well as "poetic").

The underlying insinuation here is that this phrase should not be interpreted as anything akin to "miraculous". Instead, it is argued that this phrase should be seen as analogous to say, cheap tricks employed to hoodwink a gullible audience, and hence should be viewed as quite negative and thus anti-Christian in tone. This quite contrived reasoning is, of course, necessary to maintain Josephus as the author of the *TF,* and thus conserve credible extra-biblical/scriptural evidence for an historical Jesus of Nazareth. C.E. Price (2008: 28) even goes so far as to justify his faith in Josephus' authorship by stating that "ancient authors commonly used words in unusual ways". Although this may be quite true, it hardly serves as useful evidence for a specific term being employed by a particular author. He then tries to justify this generalisation by referring to unusual word usage in "undisputed" letters of Paul. The fact that no letter of Paul is undisputed makes this weakest of arguments all the more absurd.

However, a closer inspection of Josephus' other passages where the term "παραδόξων " features, reveals that, in some twenty instances, he more typically uses this term to describe something clearly divine and miraculous. Not once does Josephus employ this adjective to describe something related to the natural world order. Possibly a more balanced translation would be "wonderful" or "contrary to expectation" (which still implies a miracle) and thus "παραδόξων ἔργων" was surely meant to be interpreted as "wonderful works" or events that occurred by dint of divine authority or agency.

Josephus (*AJ*, II, 16, 4 / 345)[194] states:

[194] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook

> "Τοὺς δ' Ἑβραίους οὐδὲ κατασχεῖν ἦν ἐπὶ τῇ χαρᾷ τῆς παραδόξου σωτηρίας καὶ τῇ τῶν πολεμίων ἀπωλείᾳ, βεβαίως νομίζοντας ἠλευθερῶσθαι τῶν ἀναγκαζόντων δουλεύειν διεφθαρμένων καὶ τὸν θεὸν οὕτως ἐναργῶς ἔχοντας βοηθοῦντα."
>
> But the Hebrews were not able to contain themselves for joy at their wonderful deliverance, and destruction of their enemies; now indeed supposing themselves firmly delivered, when those that would have forced them into slavery were destroyed, and when they found they had God so evidently for their protector.

Here the context seems to indicate that Josephus is employing the term "παραδόξου" to express something akin to divine intervention at the very least, since the Jews were expecting the worst, and the deliverance was somewhat unexpected. Certainly the term, as employed here, cannot possibly be interpreted in any negative sense.

Again, when Josephus makes mention of the prophet Elisha (*AJ*, IX, 4, 3 / 58)[195], who, on behalf of the Samaritans, prayed for their enemies (i.e. the Syrians) to be blinded by a divine mist, he talks about "an action so Divine and surprising" ("παραδόξῳ πράγματι κειμένων"). Thus even though the term "παραδόξῳ" is translated by Whiston (1895) as "surprising" the context is clearly miraculous and positive for the Samarians who ultimately benefited from the overt divine intervention.

Other notable examples include the Jews enjoying a "wonderful deliverance" ("παραδοχου σōτēριας"), in *AJ*, III, 1, 1 / 1; Moses obtaining water after striking the rock in *AJ*, III, 1, 7 / 35 and the specific *TF* formulation of the phrase (i.e. "παραδόξων ἔργων") which appears in *AJ,* IX, 8, 6 / 182, when Josephus refers to the divine and miraculous works of the prophet Elisha.

More liberal scholars have no problem with this sort of information since it merely supports their notion that Josephus is unlikely to employ a pet phrase in one way throughout his works, and then, in one single instance (i.e. the *TF*), break with his normal conventions. Certainly, Doherty (2009: 540), emphasizes that in the *AJ* alone, the term "παραδόξων" and its derivatives, is never employed to indicate anything that could be construed as negative. The only exception would be the implied negative reaction that a particular character in a narrative might have to something being

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%3D2%3Awhiston+chapter%3D16%3Awhiston+section%3D4 [6 September 2014].

[195] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D9%3Awhiston+chapter%3D4%3Awhiston+section%3D3 [6 September 2014].

"miraculous". A good example here is when Nebuchadnezzar is gripped with fear when he sees the "surprising/miraculous" appearance of the oracular writing on his wall (cf. *AJ*, X, 11, 2 / 235). Here the specific term employed by Josephus (i.e. "παραδόξῳ"), implies an event that is incredible and contrary to expectation. This can in no way be deemed negative or naturalistic; rather it accurately describes the upbeat, wondrous, divine disposition of the event.

In this context, Doherty (2009: 540), states: "that anything other than positively-viewed events and miracles (a phenomenon which Josephus believed in) was intended in the *Testimonium* verse is not persuasive".

Doherty (2009: 539 - 540), rejects the obviously belaboured attempt of certain Christian scholars to find negativity (or even neutrality) where there is obvious positivity, as being irreconcilable with the passage's subsequent comment concerning those who "receive the truth with pleasure," which most Christian scholars also accept as being present in their supposed "original" version of the *TF*.

Finally Doherty (2009: 539) claims that the adjective "παραδόξων" was regularly used by the writers of the day to suggest something quite optimistic if not miraculous. As evidence, he cites writers such as Philo of Alexandria (when referring to the miracles of God during the Exodus) (cf. *DVM* [*De Vita Mosis*] I, 38); the author(s) of *Ev.Luc.* when referring to the miracles performed by Jesus (cf*. Ev.Luc.* 5: 26); and Origen (cf. *Cels.* I, 6)[196], when he states:

> Κατηγορεῖ δ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἑξῆς καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος, ὡς γοητείᾳ δυνηθέντος ἃ ἔδοξε **παράδοξα** πεποιηκέναι καὶ προϊδόντος ὅτι μέλλουσι καὶ ἄλλοι τὰ αὐτὰ μαθήματα ἐγνωκότες ποιεῖν τὸ αὐτό.
>
> And he [Celsus] next proceeds to bring a charge against the Saviour Himself, alleging that it was by means of sorcery that He was able to accomplish the **wonders** which He performed. [My emphases and insertion].

The phrase "παραδόξων ἔργων" becomes even more problematic when the term "ποιητής" is added. This can be translated along the lines of either "a maker of

[196] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

wonderful works" or a "poet of wonderful things".

Other eminent Josephus scholars seem to agree with this observation. For example, Mason (2003: .231) points out that when Josephus employs the term "ποιητής" he unswervingly *means* "poet". In fact he is quite emphatic on the point (Mason, 2003: 231):

> … the word translated "worker" in the phrase "worker of incredible deeds" is poietes in Greek, from which we get "poet." Etymologically, it means "one who does" and so it can refer to any sort of "doer." But in Josephus's day it had already come to have a special reference to literary poets, and that is how he consistently uses it elsewhere (nine times) - to speak of Greek poets such as Homer.

Similarly, Eisler (1931: 53) substantiates that, in the writings of Josephus, the word "ποιητής" always means "poet", whereas it is mostly later Christian writers who tend to employ this term to refer to "worker", "doer" or "perpetrator".

With the foregoing arguments in mind, *if* Josephus actually wrote the *TF* (which contains the phrase: "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής"), then, based on similar word usage elsewhere, he is more likely to have meant "poet of miracles" and was referring to bona fide supernatural and positive events like divine miracles. Therefore, if Josephus really did know of an historical Jesus (of Nazareth) he was uncharacteristically extremely positive and even possibly idealistic about this individual's religious mission and popular acclaim.

However, *if* Josephus *was not* the author of the *TF* and the phrase: "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής", then we must conclude that the forger lived sometime after Josephus, when the term "ποιητής" meant "worker" or "doer" and clearly points to later Christian usage and meaning and supports the preliminary findings that the unknown interpolator, inter alia, wanted his reader to:

1. uncritically accept that Josephus wrote the *TF*; and
2. naively believe that even Josephus believed Jesus to be a "producer" of miracles as well as the "Christ".

If the second possibility is the correct one then, here, the suspected interpolator certainly made good use of Josephus' writing style and choice of idioms from other places in his writings (albeit with no thorough understanding of their exact meaning or

nuance in Josephus' time) in order to give his forgery a more genuine feel. In addition the interpolator needed to convince his reader that Jesus was truly divine. However, he was also trapped within his own paradigm of meaning and would have interpreted the Greek, Josephan or no, in what was (for him) a more contemporary idiom. Hence "ποιητής" *only* meant "producer" for the forger. This mistake (which is one of many) made by the forger provides valuable evidence for more critical contemporary scholars to make better informed opinions about actual authorship and provenance.

Olson (2013a: 103) believes that, based on his survey of Eusebius' extant writings, this extended phrase should, by dint of ratiocination, be viewed as distinctly Eusebian in tone:

> The term "maker of miraculous works" παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, contrary to what one frequently finds in the literature on the Testimonium, is far more characteristic of Eusebius than of Josephus. Josephus never elsewhere uses the word ποιητής in the sense of "maker" or "doer" rather than "poet." Nor does he ever elsewhere combine a form of ποιέω with παράδοξος in the sense of wonder- working. The combination of παράδοξος and ποιέω to mean "wonder-working" is extremely common in Eusebius and occurs more than a hundred times. With the disputed exception of the Testimonium itself, the word ποιητής modiied by παραδόξων ἔργων does not show up anywhere in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database of extant Greek literature before Eusebius, who uses this combination of words ten times outside the Testimonium, usually of Jesus, but also of God.

What is extremely convincing here, is that if one takes up Olsen's claims, it becomes clear that only Eusebius employs the following terms together when referring to Jesus, viz.: "παράδοξος", "ἔργων" "and "ποιέω".[197]

In addition, Olson (1999: 305 - 322) confirms that in his *DE*, III, 4 – 5 (which of course contains Eusebius' reference to the *TF*), Eusebius promises to repudiate those who either reject the claim that Jesus of Nazareth performed divine works or try to dismiss his miracles as mere deceit or wizardry.

Again, in his *HE*, I, 2 / 23[198] Eusebius writes a passage that is extremely close to the

[197] Cf. *DE*, 114 - 115, 123, 125 and *HE*, I, 2.23.

[198] Greek text according to Lake *et al.* 1926 – 1932. Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1- 2, in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D2%3Asection%3D23 [29 July 2014].
English translation according to Richardson (Tr.). 1890. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd

*TF* in flavour:

> τῆς ἀγρίας καὶ ἀπηνοῦς θηριωδίας ἐπὶ τὸ πρᾶον μεταβεβλημένης, ὡς καὶ εἰρήνην βαθεῖαν φιλίας τε καὶ ἐπιμιξίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔχειν, τηνικαῦτα πᾶσι δὴ λοιπὸν ἀνθρώποις καὶ τοῖς ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔθνεσιν ὡς ἂν προωφελημένοις καὶ ἤδη τυγχάνουσιν ἐπιτηδείοις πρὸς παραδοχὴν τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς γνώσεως, ὁ αὐτὸς δὴ πάλιν ἐκεῖνος ὁ τῶν ἀρετῶν διδάσκαλος, ὁ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπουργός, ὁ θεῖος καὶ οὐράνιος τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, δι᾽ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ μηδὲν σώματος οὐσίᾳ τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν διαλλάττοντος ἀρχομένης τῆς Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας ἐπιφανείς, τοιαῦτα ἔδρασέν τε καὶ πέπονθεν, οἷα ταῖς προφητείαις ἀκόλουθα ἦν, ἄνθρωπον ὁμοῦ καὶ θεὸν ἐπιδημήσειν τῷ βίῳ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητὴν καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν διδάσκαλον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς εὐσεβείας ἀναδειχθήσεσθαι τό τε παράδοξον αὐτοῦ τῆς γενέσεως καὶ τὴν καινὴν διδασκαλίαν καὶ τῶν ἔργων τὰ θαύματα ἐπί τε τούτοις τοῦ θανάτου τὸν τρόπον τήν τε ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἔνθεον ἀποκατάστασιν αὐτοῦ προκηρυττούσαις.
>
> Then, finally, at the time of the origin of the Roman Empire, there appeared again to **all men and nations throughout the world**, who had been, as it were, previously assisted, and were now fitted to receive the knowledge of the Father, **that same teacher of virtue**, the minister of the Father in all good things, the divine and heavenly Word of God, **in a human body not at all differing in substance from our own**. He did and suffered **the things which had been prophesied**. For **it had been foretold that one who was at the same time man and God should come** and dwell in the world, **should perform wonderful works**, and should show himself **a teacher to all nations** of the piety of the Father. The marvellous nature of his birth, and **his new teaching**, and his **wonderful works had also been foretold**; so likewise the manner of his death, **his resurrection from the dead**, and, finally, his divine ascension into heaven.

This of course creates a problem for those more contemporary conservative scholars who want to:

1. retain Josephus as the author of at least some form or another of the *TF* (since it offers extra biblical/scriptural proof that Jesus actually existed; and
2. ensure that Josephus remains true to his character as the authentic author by having him express himself in his more normal derogatory and negative fashion (since they do not want anything that points to a later upbeat Christian interpolation).

Unfortunately, one cannot have one's cake and eat it too. Consequentially, regardless

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Series, Vol. 1, in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/25021.htm [6 September 2014].

of authorship, the *TF* phrase "παραδόξων ἔργων" must refer to miraculous, divine works. Accordingly, if Josephus actually employed this phrase, he must have been:

1. a true believer in Jesus' divinity;
2. precociously knowledgeable about specific Christian terminology, possibly several decades before it became more common place;
3. well-versed in, inter alia, the *Ev.Luc.* which according to some scholars was written at the precisely the same time as the *AJ*.

As no other text allegedly written by Josephus can in any way support this construction, given the verifiable evidence, the entire phrase "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής" must be seen as a forgery.

#### 3.3.7.3 Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος

Goldberg (1995: 69) points out that when Josephus discusses the accusers of Jesus in the *TF* as "the principal men among us" he is uncharacteristically narrating in the first person. Here Goldberg (1995: 69) elucidates further:

> In the Antiquities, as a rule, Josephus is careful to distance himself from his subject and refer objectively to "the Jews" rather than "us." When there is an exception, there is usually an obvious explanation for it. Typically he will make a clear digression from the narrative to explain something about still-current Jewish customs, "our laws" or "our customs," to his non-Jewish readers; or he may speak of the present and use "our nation" when referring to the Jewish people after the war with Rome. But inserting himself implicitly into a historical narrative, as in the case of "the principal men among us," is extremely rare.

C.E. Price (2008: 31) argues that the phrase "the principal men among us" is typically Josephan since a Christian would have written either "the Jews" or "the Sanhedrin" or the "Sadducees" and/or "Pharisees".

#### 3.3.7.4 Ἐπηγάγετο

In the *TF*[199] we read: "τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ

[199] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston. 1999. *The New Complete Works of Josephus:* 662, (*AJ*, XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 - 64). Cf. *Flavius Josephus*, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Ed. B. Niese in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0145 [30 May 2012].

Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο" translated as "He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles [i.e. Greeks]" [My insertion].

Within this context, more conservative scholars, in their attempt to preserve the *TF*'s status as an authentic Josephan utterance, endeavour to translate the term "ἐπηγάγετο" as "leading into error" or something equally disapproving implying deception or deceitfulness.

However, when not attempting to stress any negativity, it is more reasonable to translate "ἐπηγάγετο" as "drew over" or even "won over", both of which are surely more optimistic in nature.

In addition, Doherty (2009: 540), points out that if one also considers the preceding phrase: "…a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure" coupled with the subsequent statement: "…, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him", it makes it quite difficult to see any negativity at all in "ἐπηγάγετο".

He (Doherty 2009: 540) concludes that: "The attempt to reduce the tone of the *Testimonium* from positive to fully neutral or even negative is a strained one, and seems entirely apologetic".

Again, as in the previously reviewed arguments submitted for a negative response to "παραδόξων ἔργων" even if it could be proven that certain of the Ante-Nicene church fathers and apologists refused to employ the *TF* because of its then *perceived* negativity it is hard to imagine *each and every one* of these writers during the first four centuries of Christianity, blindly conforming to this single point of view. However, in the case of Eusebius who in the early fourth century C.E. strangely had no qualms about employing these verses when he employed them to support his arguments, we are left with one of only two rational possibilities:

1. Eusebius, for whatever reason, invented the *TF* in its entirety; or
2. Eusebius was presented with an original/earlier version of the *TF* that was so extremely negative, no-one before or immediately after his time, dared to quote

from it, forcing him, due to the pressures of his own agenda, to reformulate it in its entirety.

It should go without saying that the second probability is highly unlikely.

#### 3.3.7.5 Οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες

Another possible “Eusebian footprint” contained in the *TF* concerns the text that indicates that despite the fact that Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus to the cross, those who had loved him did not cease to do so. Mason (2003: 169) points out this is an unusual phrase as the translated words "they did not cease" are in fact left incomplete in the text. Specifically, the reader would only know what had “ceased” by reference to the preceding sentence. This is as irregular in Greek as it is in English. More importantly, this type of construction is not found in any of Josephus' writing outside the *TF*.

Olson (1999) confirms that this specific text encapsulates Eusebius’ predominant argument concerning Jesus’ divinity as found in his *DE*, III, 5.

Specifically, Eusebius wants to assure his reader that had Jesus been a fraudster, then it would naturally follow that his disciples would have eagerly deserted both him as well as his now suspect teachings the moment he was dishonourably crucified as a common criminal at the hands of the Romans.

Within this context, Eusebius’ useful fourth century “discovery” of an extra-biblical /scriptural witness confirming that Jesus was a/ divine (i.e. more than a man); b/ spoke the truth; and c/ was not abandoned by his disciples is nothing short of wondrous serendipity.

What makes this all the more suspicious is that (as has been stated elsewhere), this particular collection of positive attributes ascribed to an individual is not at all Josephan in character.

#### 3.3.7.6 Τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν

Those conservative scholars that reject certain portions of the *TF* but still believe it to have a genuine Josephan core, normally agree that the text that speaks to Jesus rising

on the third day is an obvious insertion[200]. Regardless, it would also seem that even here, Eusebius is the most likely candidate for composing this largely accepted interpolation, since proof for the resurrection of Christ also concurs with Eusebius' avowed agenda. As an example, in his *DE,* III / 2[201] Eusebius, appealing to the Jewish prophets, states:

> καὶ εὐσέβειαν νομοθέτου Μωσεῖ παραπλησίου, γένος τε αὐτοῦ καὶ θυλὴν καὶ τόπον ὅθεν προελεύσεται, χρόνον τε καθ᾽ὃν ἥξειν προθητεύεται, καὶ γένεσιν, καὶ τελευτὴν, καὶ ἀναβίωσιν, καὶ ἀρχὴν τὴν κατὰ πάντων ἐθνῶν, ἅ δὴ πάντα παρέστη, καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς παραστήσεται ἐπὶ μόνον τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν συμπεπερασμένα.
>
> They foretold the coming of a prophet and the religion of a lawgiver like Moses, his race, his tribe, and the place he should come from, and they prophesied the time of his appearance, his birth, and death, and resurrection, as well as his rule over all the Gentiles, and all those things have been accomplished, and will continue to be accomplished in the sequence of events, since they find their completion in our Lord and Saviour alone.

Doherty (2009: 552) stresses that one can but marvel that the *TF* contains many elements that are so conveniently germane to underscoring Eusebius' many central arguments.

Doherty (2009: 553) also draws our attention to another issue, namely, if the *TF* was originally couched in such negative tones, how does that explain the very positive comments including references to disciples who clearly "loved" Jesus?

Furthermore, even if Eisler (1931: 61)[202] is correct and the term "ἀγαπήσαντες" should in

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[200] Cf. C.E. Price (2008: 32).

[201] Greek text according to *Dindorfius* (Tr.) 1867b. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Demonstrationis Evangelicae. Vol. III. Libri I – X:* 157.
English translation according to Ferrar (Tr.). 1920. *The Proof of the Gospel Being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, Vol. I: 117.

[202] Eisler's complete and somewhat whimsical reconstruction of the *TF* reads as follows:

> Now about this time arose an occasion for new disturbances, a certain Jesus, a wizard of a man, if indeed he may be called a man who was the most monstrous of all men, whom his disciples call a son of God, as having done wonders such as no man hath ever yet done…He was in fact a teacher of astonishing tricks to such men as accept the abnormal with delight…. And he seduced many also of the Greek nation and was regarded by them as the Messiah… And when, on the indictment of the principal men among us, Pilate had sentenced him to the cross, still those who before had admired him did not cease to rave. For it seemed to them that having been dead for three days, he had appeared to them alive again, as the divinely-inspired prophets had foretold -- these and ten thousand other

fact be translated as only “like” or “admire”, it is still too *positive* to elicit such a negative concluding sentence as implied by, inter alia, Meier, Eddy and Boyd, and can only strengthen a positive, cheerful, interpretation which is in fact completely out of character for Josephus.

Lastly, Eisler (1931: 61) does not even see a reference to the “Third Day” as distinctly Christian. Indeed he finds nothing strange in accepting that Josephus would have been aware of this tenet of Christian belief and merely repeated what he had heard.

#### 3.3.7.7 Εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν

Although Josephus does on occasion employ such phrases as “ἔτι νῦν” and even, “καὶ νῦν ἔτι”, the exact wording “εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν” is only found in the *TF* to express the concept of “until this time” or “up until now”. However, “εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν” and other similar formulations, occurs several times in the works of Eusebius.

From this perspective (regardless of the frequency of similar utterances in either of the two authors’ writings), the specific phrase: “εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν” is most often employed by Eusebius, and in addition appears solely in the context of his attempts to prove contemporary validity for the continuing veracity of both Jesus as well as the import of his message. By stark contrast, this specific phrase only occurs once in the *AJ,* and appears nowhere else in any of Josephus’ four books. The fact that its single occurrence just happens to be in the disputed *TF* is seen by the more liberal camp as additional weighted evidence that falls squarely in the court of those that suspect total forgery.

Doherty (2009: 553 - 554) also makes an important reference to the overtly apologetic conservative scholars Eddy and Boyd (2007: 194), who, with reference to Meier (1991), argue apropos the phrase “until now, the tribe of the Christians, who are named after him, has not died out” as containing what they term “an element of surprise” from Josephus’ side. They hypothesize that Josephus is somewhat taken aback by the fact that an objectionable religious cult that foolishly believes their leader actually survived physical death on a Roman cross, is still managing to gain advocates up until his own

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> wonderful things -- concerning him. And even now the race of those who are called "Messianists" after him is not extinct.

Eisler, 1931. *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist according to Flavius Josephus' recently discovered "Capture of Jerusalem" and other Jewish and Christian Sources:* 61.

time.

Meier (1991: 66), the originator of this particular notion, explains his position in some detail:

> But the phrase does not stand in isolation; it is the subject of the statement that this tribe has not died out or disappeared down to Josephus' day. The implication seems to be one of surprise: granted Jesus' shameful end (with no new life mentioned in the core text), one is amazed to note, says Josephus, that this group of post-mortem lovers is still at it and has not disappeared even in our own day (does Josephus have in the back of his mind Nero's attempt to get it to disappear?). I detect in the sentence as a whole something dismissive if not hostile (though any hostility here is aimed at Christians, not Jesus): one would have thought that this "tribe" of lovers of a crucified man might have disappeared. This does not sound like an interpolation by a Christian of any stripe.

In opposition to this somewhat contrived line of reasoning, Doherty (2009: 554), implies strongly that if one sets out to interpret this phrase - regardless of what language it is translated into - unless a negative insinuation is imposed onto the text it is not possible to come even close to the depreciatory interpretation proffered by Eisler, Meier, Eddy and Boyd.

Furthermore, Olson (2013a: 109 - 110) has pointed out that this specific phrase "εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν" may well be an unconscious writer's trope or literary mannerism ("tell") that habitually crops up in the works of none other than Eusebius, yet, apart from the versions already cited, does not occur in the writings of Josephus.

Eusebius' is well known for his *AH* (*Adversus Hieroclem*) (composed before 303 C.E.), which sets out to refute the anti-Christian polemic of one *Sossianus Hierocles* (fl. 303 C.E.) who was the author of Φιλαλήθης i.e. "Lover of Truth"). In this book, Hierocles compares the claimed life and activities of Jesus Christ with those of the Neo-Pythagorean philosopher Apollonius of Tyana (c. 15 – c. 100 C.E.). Undeniably, both biographies are quite similar[203] and Hierocles sets out to show that Apollonius's

[203] The two accounts are so similar that Ehrman was able to give the following short biography which most readers would normally assume referred to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact the account describes the life of Apollonius of Tyrana:

> Even before he was born, it was known that he would be someone special. A supernatural being informed the mother that the child she was to conceive would not be a mere mortal but would be divine. He was born miraculously, and he became an unusually precocious young man. As an adult he left home and went on

undisputed existence and activities are in fact far superior and (unlike those of Jesus), truly divine.

In his apologetic *AH*, IV[204] Eusebius responds to Hierocles and, inter alia, attempts to demonstrate, that, unlike Apollonius, Jesus' message continues to make an impact even in contemporary times. Eusebius appeals to his reader in words that again closely echo the *TF*:

> οὐχ ὅστις θειότερος γεγόνει. οὐδ᾽ ὁποῖος θανμασιωτερά τε καὶ πλειώ διεπραξατο παραδοξα, οὐδ᾽ ὡς μόνος παρὰ τοῖς ἀνέκαθεν πρὸ μυριών ὅσων ἑτῶν γενομένοις Ἑβραιών σοφοῖς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἠξειν εἰς ἀνθρώπους κατὰ θειαν ἐπιπνοιαν προπεφητευτο, οὐδ᾽ ὡς πλειούς ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς θειάς διδασκαλιάς αὐτοῦ λόγον προὐτρέψατο, οὐδ᾽ ὡς γνησιούς καὶ ὄντως ἀληθεῖς ἐκτήσατο φοιτητὰς μονονουχὶ καὶ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν ἑτοίμως τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ παρεσκευασμένους, ουδ ὡς μόνος σώφρονος βιόυ διδασκαλεῖον καὶ ἐς τὸν μετέπειτα χρόνον συνεστήσατο, οὐδ᾽ ὡς τῇ ἰδιᾳ θεότητι τε καὶ ἀρετῇ πᾶσαν ἔσωσε τὴν οἰκουμένην καῖ εἰσέτι καὶ νῦν μυριά πληθη πανταχοθεν ἐπὶ τὴν θειαν ἑαυτοῦ διδασκαλιάν ἐπαγομένος,
>
> [L]et us ask at once, not which of them [i.e. Jesus or Apollonius] was **the more divine** nor in what capacity one worked more **wondrous and numerous miracles** than the other; nor let us lay stress on the point that our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ was the only man of **whom it was prophesied**, thanks to their **divine inspiration**, by Hebrew sages who lived far back thousands of years ago, that he should once come among mankind; nor on the fact that **he converted to his own scheme of divine teaching so many people**; nor that he formed a group of genuine and really **sincere disciples**, of whom almost without exaggeration it can be said that they were prepared to **lay down their lives for his teaching** at a moment's call; nor that he alone established a school of sober and chaste living **which has survived him all along**; nor that by his peculiar divinity and virtue he saved the whole inhabited world, **and still rallies to his divine teaching races from all sides by tens of thousands**; (My emphases and insertion for clarity).

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an itinerant preaching ministry, urging his listeners to live, not the material things of this world, but for what is spiritual. He gathered a number of disciples around him, who became convinced that his teachings were divinely inspired, in no small part because he himself was divine. He proved it to them by doing many miracles, healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead. But at the end of his life he roused opposition, and his enemies delivered him over to the Roman authorities for judgment. Still, after he left this world, he returned to meet his followers in order to convince them that he was not really dead but lived on in the heavenly realm. Later some of his followers wrote books about him.

Cf. Ehrman. 2012. *Did Jesus Exist?: The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth*: 208 - 209.

[204] Greek text according to Kayser. (Ed.). 1870. *Flavii Philostrati Opera*, Vol. I.: 371 – 372. English translation according to Conybeare (Tr.) 1912. *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus*, Vol. 2: 484 – 605.

In support of Olson's observations, Doherty (2009: 552) draws his reader's attention to the work of Raskin who, although clearly operating on the fringes of academia, has made quite an impact on the *TF* debate through his self-published research.

Undeniably, a thorough review of certain (but not all) of Raskin's insights can be most rewarding. For example, Raskin (2006: 80 - 98) claims, like Olson, that a "literary fingerprint" or if one prefers, a Eusebian "tell" is very evident in a number of passages from variously, Eusebius' Th, *AH*, *DE*, and *HE.* Here Eusebius, needing to emphasise that Jesus' import (spoken of in the distant past), is still virile and relevant, in that it has retained its veracity and has survived right up to (from his perspective), contemporary times. As a result, Eusebius often makes use of such phrases as "to our times," "even to the present day," and "even until now."

For example, in his *Th*, III / 31,[205] which unfortunately has not survived in its original Greek, Eusebius comments on Jesus' miracles:

> Nor was it only, that He impressed on the souls of those who (immediately) followed Him such power, that when, having <u>done</u> nothing worthy of death, they willingly underwent every species of punishment and torment, for the sake of the righteousness of that God who is overall; but also, on those who received (it) from them; and so again, on those who came afterwards; and on those **even to this present**, and (who live) **in our own times**; - How does this not transcend every sort of miracle? [My emphases and correction (underlined)].

This evidence, as should be expected, is almost reflexively rebutted by the more conservative school. And, given that all researchers concerned are privy to the same textual evidence, it should be seen as highly significant that such contrary conclusions can be obtained as a result of ratiocinating the self-same evidence. However, as is so palpable, especially in the *TF* debate, it is a scholar's particular worldview that seems to be more important than the specific facts. For example, Eisler (1929: 56) feels that there are certain phrases that still equate to the expression: "εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν" that are in fact equally *common* to Josephus.

However, to be fair, even Eisler (1929) at least supports the *possibility* of later Christian

[205] English translation according to Lee (Ed. and Tr.). 1843. *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea on the Theophania, or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* (Transcribed by Pearse, 2002) in *New Advent.Org*. [Online]. Available: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_theophania_04book3.htm [30 July 2014].

interpolation because the specific phrase employed in the *TF* is identified by its redundant accumulation of particles and that is *not characteristic* of Josephus but is employed by later authors.

Regardless, more conservative commentators try to create a different interpretation by maintaining that the translation, accepted for many centuries now, may not be so accurate after all. Here, typically traditionalist scholars try to put forward the argument that possibly we are not reading this last sentence of the *TF* correctly. Perhaps it should not be read as a positive utterance at all but rather (as is normally the claim by Christian scholars), as a more negative, typically Josephan comment. If so, they argue, it would suggest some degree of authenticity. Here again Eisler (1929) attempts to come to the rescue of the conservative interpretation, and suggests that the wording: "has not died out" may in fact indicate Josephus' frustration that this unsavoury cult was unfortunately still in existence "εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν".

To support this interpretation, Eisler (1929) highlights the phrase "οὐκ ἐπέλιπε" which he suggests should be translated as "it has not died out yet". He suggests that maybe his more *accurate* translation reflects what he terms "a silent hope" on Josephus' part, that perhaps, in time, this bothersome cult will thankfully disappear.

#### 3.3.7.8 Φῦλον

In the final sentence of the *TF* a reference is made to the "tribe" of the Christians. Doherty (2009: 554), expresses the obvious sentiment, that the word "φῦλον" ("tribe"), should surely be a common one, given the fact that Josephus, inter alia, wrote about the history of the Jewish people. Despite this expectation, Josephus does not employ the term "φῦλον" when he refers to the adherents of a religion. For example, when referring to his own Jewish kinfolk in his *AJ,* XIV, 7, 2 / 115[206], Josephus refers to Jews as "this tribe of men," which seems more likely to refer to Jewish ethnicity. Specifically he states:

> καὶ παρελήλυθεν καὶ τόπον οὐκ ἔστι ῥᾳδίως εὑρεῖν τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὃς οὐ παραδέδεκται τοῦτο τὸ φῦλον…

[206] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D14%3Awhiston+chapter%3D7%3Awhiston+section%3D2 [7 September 2014].

> and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted **this tribe of men** [My emphasis].

Mason (2003: 232) finds it peculiar that the *TF* states that Jesus was a Jew and was ultimately condemned by the Jewish leadership, yet for some reason describes Christians as being a distinct racial grouping:

> Again, the phrase "the tribe of the Christians" is peculiar. Josephus uses the word "tribe" (phyle) eleven other times. Once it denotes "gender," and once a "swarm" of locusts, but it usually signifies distinct peoples, races, or nationalities: the Jews are a "tribe" (War 3.354; 7.327) as are the Taurians (War 2.366) and Parthians (War 2.379). It is very strange that Josephus should speak of the Christians as a distinct racial group, since he has just said that Jesus was a Jew condemned by the Jewish leaders.

Mason (2003: 232) also makes the additional comment that it is later Christian writers who sometimes refer to fellow Christians as a “third race”. In this latter context, this might be viewed as additional circumstantial evidence to support a later Christian interpolation.

As an aside, it is a common mistake (especially of more contemporary times), to assume that Jews should only be viewed as an ethnic or racial group. Even many Jews themselves naively believe this to be true and ironically, a distinctly racial or ethnic yardstick has often been used as a device to identify, stereotype and even persecute them. In reality, practicing Jews can be of any ethnicity and although many can still trace some link to a Hebrew origin, equally most modern people who call themselves Jews may also have, inter alia, Eastern European, Anglo Saxon, Ethiopian and even Chinese roots. In short, Judaism, especially since 70 C.E., has been primarily a religion and technically anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, can convert to become Jewish.

What is overlooked by most scholars involved in the *TF* debate is that from the time of Josephus onwards, extremely large numbers of Romans (from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds) converted to one form or another of Judaism. According to Scheidel (2007) it is now known (of course guesstimates vary depending on the source), that of the estimated 8.6 million citizens living in Italy and at least 61.4 million empire-wide by 164 C.E. (i.e. the entire Roman Empire at its greatest extent) at least 10% were Jews. These individuals did not all descend from Hebrew stock; most were

recent converts. Aberbach (2010) confirms that:

> Judaism reached the peak of its expansion in the years prior to the 66 C.E. revolt. Salo Baron, in his monumental A Social and Religious History of the Jews, points out that the Jews - comprising as many as 10 percent of the Western Roman empire and 20 percent of the Eastern Roman empire were seen by Rome as a threat to the unity of the Roman empire, whose universal culture was Greek, not Jewish.

Zeitlin (1928: 240) was one of the first scholars to notice the similarities between the *TF* and the tell-tale writer's trope of Eusebius:

> We may say with some assurance that the words "tribe of Christians" which we find in the Christian passage [i.e. the *TF*] of Josephus, shows that this passage was written by Eusebius. We have seen from the above quotations that he is the only man who used the word tribe in connection with Christians. [My insertion].

It should be pointed out that this realisation dates back some time: Zeitlin (1931: 395 - 396) reminds his reader that the earliest scholar to accuse Eusebius of the *TF* forgery was Le Fèvre (1655).

Zeitlin (1928: 231) concludes that "This passage, as is well known, has been rejected by scholars of note as not authentic"

With this amplified background in mind, Doherty's (2009: 554) findings become very pertinent. By the fourth century, during the period when conversion to Christianity dominated the scene, Eusebius, employs the noun "φῦλον" in two distinct ways:

1. When referring to what *he sees* as being an ethnic or national grouping of people. Examples include Jews, Ethiopeans, Paeonians, etc.
2. When attempting to categorize an identical group of objects or natural things.

An example for the employment of φῦλον is found in Eusebius' *PE,* VII, 15 / 12[207] (c. 313 C.E.):

[207] Greek text according to *Dindorfius,* (Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X:* 377. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III:* 325.

> Οὕτω δὴ μετὰ τὰ πρῶτα τῶν ἐν ἀσωμάτοις δυνάμεσιν ἐπινοουμένων ἄστρων, φωτὸς νοεροῦ δυνάμει τε καὶ οὐσίᾳ διαπρεπόντων, πολλή τις καὶ ἡμῖν ἀπερινόητος διαφορὰ τυγχάνει, ἀναριθμητά τε **φῦλα** καὶ γένη, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ καὶ τῷ τῶν ὅλων **ποιητῇ**. [My emphases].
>
> Thus then after those first luminaries which are reckoned among incorporal powers, and excel in power and essence of intellectual light, there are countless **tribes** and families of stars and a vast difference incomprehensible to us, but not to the **Maker** of the universe. [My emphases].

It will be noticed that Eusebius also makes use of the word "ποιητῇ" when referring to the act of creation.

Eusebius also employs the "tribe" theme in his *PE,* VII, 22 / 9 [208] except here he does not employ the specific noun "φῦλον" but rather "γένη"·

> εἰ δέ τὴν ὕλην ἐν τῷ θεῷ εἶναί τις λέξει, ὁμοίως ἐξετάξειν δεῖ πότερον ὡς διισταμένον αὐτοῦ ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν ἀέρι ζῴων ὑπάρχει **γένη**, διαιρουμένου καὶ μεριζομένου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὑποδοχὴν τῶν γινομένων ἐν αὐτῷ, ἢ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ, τουτέστιν ὥσπερ ἐν γῇ ὕδωρ.
>
> If however any one shall say that matter is in God, it is equally necessary to inquire whether it is by God's being separated from Himself, just as **tribes** of living creatures subsist in the air, by its being divided and parted for the reception of the creatures that arise in it; or whether matter is in God as in a place, that is, as water is in land. [My emphasis].

Eisler, (1929: 56) as has been pointed out previously, due to his agenda, is intent on demonstrating a more pejorative tone to the closing sentences of the *TF* and sees the noun "φῦλον" as not being employed to indicate ethnicity but rather as a more derogatory grouping of individuals. Eisler, in accord with his attempts to prove the Josephan origin of the *TF* explains "The fact itself that *phulon* here does not designate an ethnical unit, but the 'Christians,' makes it clear that the author did not mean to use a term of affection."

Doherty (2009: 554) roundly attacks Eisler's explanation and points out, that at no time does Eisler bother to provide an example of this more depreciatory usage of the term in a comparable Greek text. On the other hand Doherty is quite satisfied that the normal word that should have been applied when referring to ethnic groups would have been something like "ἔθνος" (i.e. "nation" or "people").

[208] Greek text according to *Dindorfius,* (Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X:* 391 - 392. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III:* 338 - 339.

C.E. Price (2008: 32) asserts that the phrase “the tribe of” is typical of Josephus but acknowledges Mason (2003: 169 -170) who tells us that the term is unusual in the context of the *TF*. C.E. Price repeats Mason’s oft-quoted comment that it is very strange the *TF* refers to the Christians as a distinct racial group, given that he has just referred to Jesus as a Jew condemned by Jewish leaders. In this context, C.E. Price gets around Mason’s concern by assuming that a non-Christian author like Josephus would have wanted to specify that the Christians (although consisting of both Jew and Greek alike) would have needed to be emphasised as being distinctive from other regular Jews and Greeks. Hence, Josephus could easily have used the term “tribe” to distinguish Christians as a separate group.

C.E. Price also proffers a very creative foil to Doherty’s (2009: 554) substantiated assertion that Eusebius repeatedly makes use of the term and, as a consequence, is a prime suspect for being the composer of the *TF*. He states that Eusebius made use of the term purely because he was influenced by Josephus. C.E. Price (2008: 32) then states: “Accordingly, it is more reasonable to believe that Josephus applies this term to Christians than it is to suspect an early Christian interpolator invented it”.

Doherty (2009: 554) also explains that one needs to be aware of the fact that the term for “tribe” in Greek has two distinct forms:

1. ἡ πυλή (feminine) and
2. τὸ φῦλον (neuter).

Both forms of this noun seem to enjoy comparable usage in ancient Greek literature. However, in all the *NT* texts, only the feminine form is ever employed, whereas in Josephus’ works (although he clearly prefers the feminine version), he does on rarer occasions employ the neuter form. Doherty fully subscribes to this fact.

Of course, in the *TF* it is “τὸ φῦλον” that is employed. This is distinctly non-Gospel as well as being the least favoured form for this noun from a Josephan perspective. The more conservative group of scholars see this as evidence of authenticity.

However, as seen from the quoted examples of his writing style, Eusebius *also* favours the feminine form in his extant writings but Doherty (2009: 554 - 555), points out that the neuter form ( i.e. “φῦλον”), occurs twice in *HE*, III, 33 and on both occasions forms part of the quoted *TF* phrase that reads “the tribe of the Christians.”

This observation merely adds to the mounting evidence which points directly at Eusebius as the most likely forger of the *TF*.

#### 3.3.7.9 Principal Men Among Us

As has been discussed in some detail, Olson has taken issue with the text which translates as the "principal men among us". However, in this context, he also takes note that a survey of Josephus' writings reveals that he never has occasion to link the phrase "principal men" directly with the phrase "among us".

Doherty (2009, 556) quotes Olson who confirms that:

> Josephus elsewhere refers to the "principal men," but he consistently refers to the principal men "of Jerusalem" or "of [or, belonging to] the city," using these phrases instead of the first person plural.

Certainly, according to Olson, even the phrase "among us" is employed infrequently (six times) and when it is used, it takes an adverbial form. By contrast, in the *TF* it is employed adjectivally. For example, Josephus (*AJ*, X, 2, 2 / 35) states: "And whatsoever is done among us..."

What is very telling for Olson is that this same phrase appears quite often in the works of Eusebius where, like the *TF* version, it often takes an adjectival form.

Olson sees this as additional evidence of the *TF* demonstrating typically non-Josephan language whilst co-incidentally suggesting quite Eusebian characteristics.

On the other hand, C.E. Price (2008: 31) makes a number of illuminating claims:

Seemingly oblivious of the fact that if someone wanted to interpolate something about Jesus being crucified by Pilate, then they could do worse than insert it into an existing context related to the actions of said Pontius Pilate, C.E. Price (2008: 31) makes the naïve statement that "[t]he mention of Pilate is neutral…".

Moreover, in distinct contradiction to Olson's findings, C.E. Price (2008: 31) goes on to make the pronouncement that the "reference to 'principal men' is very common in Josephus, but has no counterpart in the Gospels or in any other early Christian literature." C.E. Price obviously thinks that because the term "principal men" does not exist in the gospels it somehow proves that a non-Christian wrote the *TF*?

He then refers to Mason's (2003: 169) finding that the phrase "principal men among us" is unusual because elsewhere Josephus employs the phrase "principal men" in the context of a place or city such as Jerusalem. Of course, as already noted, this is also argued by Olson (1999). However, C.E. Price feels that this fact does not do much to weaken the partial interpolation theory. Furthermore, because the term has a higher concentration in book XVIII of the *AJ* he feels that its conjunction with "among us" (which he tells us is in itself a quite common Josephan phrase) clearly favours partial authenticity.

Regardless, C.E. Price's assertion that the term "principal men" does not appear in "early Christian literature" could be seen as deliberately misleading and ambiguous:

1. Firstly, assuming C.E. Price is quite ignorant of the matter, Eusebius, who *does* employ the term must surely qualify as an early Christian writer?
2. Secondly, if C.E. Price is in fact aware of Eusebius' employment of the term, is he then implying that Eusebius is *not* an early Christian writer? And accordingly, he must have intended the adjective "early" to refer to Christian writers who were active before the fourth century C.E.? Irrespective, he deliberately neglects to mention Eusebius in his "analysis". Considering that C.E. Price (2008: 32) later refers to Eusebius in the context of possible "early Christian", interpolators makes this point even more forcibly.

As a consequence, this line of argument clearly lacks intellectual integrity.

#### 3.3.7.10 Winning Over Jews and Greeks

Olson (1999: 305 - 322) also comments on the *TF* text translated as "he won over many Jews and many Greeks". He believes we can be fairly certain that this is also Eusebian. After all, a detailed reading of the *NT* would seem to validate the interpretation that, if there ever was an historical Jesus of Nazareth, he never directly preached to the Gentiles, although he is recorded as coming into contact with them on occasion, and thus, within that presumed context, could conceivably have associated with them to some degree or other.

Because this possibility was not overtly indicated in the *NT*, and due no doubt to the pressures brought to bear by the mores of fourth century Christian missiology, Eusebius desperately required some extra-biblical/scriptural evidence to demonstrate

that both Jew and Gentile (Greek) were equally ministered to by an historical Jesus. Olson (1999: 305 - 322) confirms this possibility when he, inter alia, points his readers to the *DE* where Eusebius is intent on presenting to his reader a Jesus who revealed his divine powers to Jew and Gentile alike, by virtue of his sermonizing and his miracles.

Good examples of this practise can be seen in *DE,* III, 5 / 107 - 109 (cf. Section 3.4.1.1) and *DE,* III / 2 (cf. Section 3.3.7.6).

Olson (2013a: 105) also finds evidence in the *DE*, V, 25) where Eusebius identifies Jesus as the saviour of human beings and the teacher of barbarians and Greeks alike. Olson emphasises here, that Eusebius places the recipients of the teaching
in the genitive.

Doherty (2009: 552) comments that Eusebius makes these assertions, despite the fact that the Jesus portrayed by Matthew pointedly instructs his disciples *not to go* to the gentiles.

Indeed, in *Ev.Matt.* 10: 5 - 6[209] we read:

> Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς λέγων Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε· **πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ.**
> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. **Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel**.” [My emphases].

Again in *Ev.Matt.* 15: 22 - 26[210] the following tale is narrated:

> καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ Χαναναία ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐκείνων ἐξελθοῦσα ἔκραζεν λέγουσα Ἐλέησόν με, Κύριε υἱὸς Δαυίδ· ἡ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαιμονίζεται. ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ λόγον. καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἠρώτουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες Ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, ὅτι κράζει ὄπισθεν ἡμῶν. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ. ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγουσα Κύριε, βοήθει μοι. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις.
>
> A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.” Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and

[209] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 22.
[210] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 37.

> urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel**." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "**It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs**" [My emphases].

Olson (1999: 305 - 322), strengthens his argument by demonstrating that within the context of the first two books of his *DE*, Eusebius often pairs together the two opposing groups i.e. “Jew and Greek’” as a single concept.

Olson (2013a: 107) explains his finding as follows:

> Eusebius devotes the entirety of Book II of the Demonstration to answering the charge that the Christ was promised to the Jews. Eusebius argues, to the contrary, that the hope of the Christ was promised equally to the Jews and Gentiles and that the Christian church contains both Gentiles and the remnant of the Jews.

This is, of course, a more modern Christian practice, one where Christ came into this world, not only for the “lost sheep of Israel” but for all nations. Had Josephus actually written the *TF* he could not possibly have known that this change of doctrine was to occur in later Church policy and thus would have been more likely to concentrate on the role of Jesus for a Jewish audience only.

As an aside, the conservative claim that the author could not have been a Christian and therefore *must* have been Josephus due to the leniency shown to the Jews is a very weak argument and in fact made null and void by the *TF*’s implied criticism of the Jewish leadership at the time of the crucifixion: “And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross…”

Lastly, the suspected interpolator more likely belonged to a time when Gentiles made up the majority membership of the church (i.e. third to fourth centuries C.E.) and so would not have felt out of place claiming conversion amongst gentiles for an earlier epoch.

Doherty (2009: 552), argues that Josephus, in terms of a more accurate historical context (c. 95 C.E.) would not have been so eager to pair off these two specific factions (i.e. Jew and Greek) repeatedly, let alone having any interest in some unfamiliar religious leader specifically being concerned with these two groupings. Furthermore, if the gospel accounts are to be taken as historical fact, whether or not Josephus ever

had access to any aspect of them, why would he (assuming Josephus is the author of the *TF*), want to invent something that could only have relevance for someone attempting to convert the Greeks to a version of the Christian faith only fully understood by someone living in the late third or early fourth century?

Doherty (2009: 552) underscores this conundrum, when he says:

> Josephus, on the other hand, ought to have been less concerned with pairing the two; and the winning over of Greeks, if we were to accept the Gospels as accurate on this question, would not have been based on factual tradition such as Josephus is alleged to have been drawing on.

Now what is so common, especially in the context of the interpolation debate, is that on occasion, the established evidence to prove the complete forgery of a supposed Josephan passage is completely turned around by the more conservative scholars. Indeed, driven by the need (either conscious or unconscious) to preserve at all costs any viable notion of an independent and extra-biblical/scriptural Jesus, these scholars manage to propose, considering the evidence available, a completely antithetical conclusion.

For example, the overtly conservative and extremely credulous Eddy and Boyd[211] (2007: 194) postulate that the assertion that "Jesus 'won over' many Jews *and Gentiles* seems inconsistent with a Christian interpolator. For the Christian tradition, as contained in the Gospels, gives no indication that Jesus ever evangelized the Gentiles…"

Meier (1991: 64 - 65) supports this view when he remarks that a possible Christian

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[211] An indication of the level of naivety reflected by these two authors' preferred approach to research, is manifestly displayed by their introductory comments in their book entitled: *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. As proof of their claimed "objectivity" and scholarship they, inter alia, state:

> In all honesty, a main reason the authors of this book continue to profess faith in Jesus is because we cannot with integrity account for the evidence without concluding that the Gospel presentation of Jesus is deeply rooted in history. Of course, our faith is not *entirely* based on historical evidence. As we shall explain in chapter 12, our faith, like everyone else's faith (whatever its object), is also rooted in personal experience and deep intuitions of the heart. Still, if the Jesus story wasn't as solidly rooted in history as we've found it to be, we would, in all likelihood, still believe the Jesus story is the most *beautiful* legend ever told - but we wouldn't base our lives on the conviction that the story *actually happened*.

Cf. Eddy and Boyd. 2007. *The Jesus Legend*: 13.

interpolator is *unlikely* to have wanted to go against the *NT*'s divinely sanctioned presentation of Jesus' activities and message. Meier goes a little further and even suggests that Josephus may well have introduced into his text a reflection of what *he observed* in his own day (here one might additionally presume that Josephus was really quite ignorant of the narratives contained in the gospels) accordingly he saw nothing contradictory in grouping the Jews together with the Greeks. Meier also reminds his reader, that "naïve retrojection is a common trait of Greco-Roman historians".

To be fair, Greco-Roman retrojection is something to consider here. However, given the realities of the context of this debate, Doherty (s.a.)[212] does not buy into this argument at all. He points out that "retrojection" is also a common activity of early Christian commentators and apologists and takes serious issue with the likes of Meier and company:

> That even evangelical scholars could make such a statement with a straight face is remarkable, given the blatant propensity of Christian scribes throughout the early centuries to amend their own documents to reflect new developments and retroject such evolving outlooks into those past writers.

Doherty's views are equally shared by Ehrman (1993: xii) who affirms: "scribes sometimes changed their scriptural texts to make them *say* what they were already known to *mean*."

As should be understood, this criticism is not levelled at Christian apologists alone – it is common knowledge that many scholars who worked within a Hellenistic ethos and even beyond, were all quite capable of retrojection and were also quite adept at adjusting what a previous author had written to agree with what they now believed *ought to have been stated*. After all, this is what happens when even well-meaning individuals naively accept their worldviews as inviolable and sacrosanct.

### 3.3.8 The Table of Contents Issue

As is well known, and as many more liberal scholars have pointed out (cf. Doherty [2009], Feldman [1998], Mason [2003], Wells [2009], Zindler [2003] etc.) the extant Greek Josephan manuscripts include tables of contents applicable to each book of the *AJ*. However, no mention is made of the *TF*. Feldman (1998: 57) confirms that:

[212] Doherty. s.a. Supplementary Article No. 16: Josephus on the Rocks in *Jesus Puzzle.Humanists.Net* [Online]. Available: http://jesuspuzzle.humanists.net/supp16.htm [23 July 2014].

> The fact that an ancient table of contents, already referred to in the Latin version of the fifth or sixth century, omits mention of the *Testimonium* (though, admittedly, it is selective, one must find it hard to believe that such a remarkable passage would be omitted by anyone, let alone by a Christian, summarizing the work) is further indication that there was no such notice...

Doherty (quoting Zindler, 2003: 51) states that there is evidence that such tables attached to Latin manuscripts of the *AJ* as early as the fifth century.

Thackeray (1961: 636 - 637), stated that the "though it is improbable that these more elaborate chapter headings are the production of his [Josephus'] pen, they may well be not far removed from him in date. They are ostensibly written by a Jew…"

What is of extreme importance to this debate is that Book XVIII of the *AJ* boasts a Table of Contents which lists twenty topics dealt with within the book. What must be considered to be the most important issue here is not that Josephus (or his assumed Jewish assistants) failed to mention the *TF* in the table of contents – indeed such a small interlude about a minor Jewish religious leader (if authentic), would hardly warrant such an inclusion.

What is far more telling is the undisputable fact that, as Christianity became more dominant, it is strange that nobody bothered to even embellish this table of contents due to the need to *highlight* Josephus' brief mention of Jesus (of Nazareth) within Book XVIII of the *AJ*? This fact alone should be seen as possibly the most convincing evidence that no-one knew of the *TF* before the time of Eusebius.

Feldman (1998: 57), for one, states, "one must find it hard to believe that such a remarkable passage would be omitted by anyone, let alone a Christian summarizing the work."

More liberal scholars are happy to use this information to support the fact that the *TF never* existed (certainly not in *AJ*, XVIII, 3) and they may well be correct. However, to be balanced, this omission in *itself* is not sufficient to come to that conclusion. It is only, at best, circumstantial evidence that if removed from the context of all the other evidence against the existence of the *TF* before the fourth century, remains inconclusive.

### 3.3.9 The "Silence" of the *Bellum Judaicum*

It is also a common observation by more sceptical scholars that extant versions of Josephus' earlier work (i.e. the *BJ* [*Bellum Judaicum*]), do not mention either Jesus or John the Baptist, yet most other individuals and events covered in the *AJ*, are repeated, often along quite similar lines.

For example. R. Grant (1963: 291) is well known for his sarcastic comment that neither Jesus, James nor John the Baptist "is to be found in the parallel passages in his [Josephus'] earlier War; presumably Christians had become more important in the interval." [My insertion].

An example of this normal duplication of information found in the two manuscripts has already been witnessed in the parallel accounts of the activities of the Jewish Egyptian charlatan (cf. *BJ*, II, 13, 5 / 261- 263 and *AJ*, XX, 8, 6 / 169 - 171).

In this regard, the repeated material concerning Pontius Pilate's oppressive activities in Judea (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 1 / 55 - 59) is also covered in similar detail in *BJ*, II, 9, 2 - 4. Indeed, in both books (i.e. the *BJ* and the *AJ*), Josephus gives an account of Pilate's attempt to bring the Roman standards bearing the Emperor's images into Jerusalem, as well as his underhanded employment of the Temple monies to bring water into the city.

In the *AJ*, these accounts of a crisis in Judea are immediately followed by the *TF*. However, in the *BJ*, Josephus remains silent on the issue of Jesus (of Nazareth) and his ministry.

Distractors have also drawn attention to the similarity of the wording that Josephus employs in the two separate accounts concerning Pilate's two crises in Judea. Specifically, in *BJ*, II, 9, 4 we read "After this he [Pontius Pilate] raised another disturbance." [My insertion]. This is characteristically very similar to the opening of the paragraph in the *AJ*, XVIII, 3, 4 / 65 – 80, immediately following the *TF*, viz.: "About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder."

In the *BJ* this particular sentence appears immediately after the crisis connected with the bringing of images into Jerusalem and is employed to introduce the new crisis involving Pilate's misuse of the Temple funds.

In the *AJ*, the comparable sentence with similar wording and import is used entirely differently. Here it introduces the topic of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome and immediately follows the *TF*. If the *TF* was really a complete forgery then this sentence would have originally followed on immediately *after* the account of the Temple fund crisis.

Reminiscent of the discussion concerning literary progression (cf. 3.3.4), the gist of the argument by more sceptical scholars is that, as Josephus uses this sentence to move from one Jewish calamity to another, it proves that the *TF* is an interpolation as that particular passage does not concern a crisis.

What is certain is that, in more recent times, the entire *TF* has been known to be artificially placed by persons unknown, at, *inter alia*, either the beginning or the end of the manuscript of the *BJ* but never at the same position as found in the *AJ*.

More conservative scholars, such as C.E. Price (2008: 38) counter the perceived problem of Josephus' silence in his *BJ*:

> Some have argued that Josephus' failure to mention Jesus in his prior work *Jewish Wars* indicates that he failed to do so in *Antiquities*. This argument adds nothing to the case against partial authenticity. These two works, though sharing the same author, are different in scope and breadth. It actually would have been surprising if Josephus had mentioned Jesus in *Jewish Wars*.

Apart from the fact that all those Christian scholars who are currently trying to prove an extra-biblical/scriptural validation for an historical Jesus would surely be more likely to leap for joy than be surprised by an additional reference to Jesus in the *BJ*, the general import of this claim needs to be very carefully unpacked:

Firstly, we will have to shelve the obvious objection that, although the Pilate narrative as found in the *AJ* is quite possibly the only place where one could "safely" insert the *TF* (assuming it is an interpolation), it still remains a glaring imposition that interrupts the logical flow of the entire narrative. Thus, purely for the sake of argument, before continuing, we will have to temporarily assume that it is not an obvious insertion at all, but a perfectly acceptable passage that belongs where it currently exists in the *AJ*.

Moreover, it is common for commentators to make the inference that the *BJ* was most likely written for the benefit of Vespasian and in places overlaps the same time frame

as the *AJ*, except that its focus is the Jewish homeland and with more emphasis on history for history's sake.

Most would also agree that it has a distinctly pro-Roman feel to it and certainly it is possible to consider that Josephus might have censored his text so as not to annoy his intended readership. However, if one examines the two Pilate narratives it is fair to state that neither the *BJ* nor the *AJ* version can claim to be any more or less violent than the other. In fact they are so similar in tone it begs the question why so many scholars repeat this line of reasoning?

By a more general comparison, the later *AJ* (apart from being, at the time, the most comprehensive work on Jewish culture and history in the Greek language), was primarily composed for the benefit of attentive non-Jews who, Josephus felt, needed to be educated and enlightened as regards the ancient and culturally rich heritage, institutions and laws of the Jewish people.

Regardless, as has already been explained, it is inevitable that certain overlaps occur as regards replicated historical accounts, especially as this applies to Jewish history. Specifically, in the case of the *BJ* and the *AJ*, the duplication occurs from about the time of the Maccabees up until the time of Nero. Below is a comparison of those specific chapters which contain a certain amount of overlapped material:

| ***Bellum Judaicum*** | ***Antiquitates Judaicae*** |
|---|---|
| Book I:<br><br>From the Taking of Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes to the Death of Herod the Great | Book XII -- From the Death of Alexander the Great to the Death of Judas Maccabeus<br><br>Book XIII -- From the Death of Judas Maccabeus to the Death of Queen Alexandra |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Book XIV -- From the Death of Queen Alexandra to the Death of Antigonus<br><br>Book XV -- From the Death of Antigonus to the Finishing of the Temple by Herod |
| Book II:<br><br>From the Death of Herod till Vespasian was sent to subdue the Jews by Nero | Book XVI -- From the Finishing of the Temple by Herod to the Death of Alexander and Aristobulus<br><br>Book XVII -- From the Death of Alexander and Aristobulus to the Banishment of Archelaus<br><br>Book XVIII -- From the Banishment of Archelaus to the Departure of the Jews from Babylon<br><br>Book XIX -- From the Departure of the Jews from Babylon to Fadus the Roman Procurator<br><br>Book XX -- From Fadus the Procurator to Florus[213] |
| Book III:<br><br>From Vespasian's coming to Subdue the Jews to the Taking of Gamala | |

[213] Gessius Florus - last procurator of Judea (c. 64 – 66 C.E.).

Book IV:

From the Siege of Gamala to the Coming of Titus to besiege Jerusalem

Book V:

From the Coming of Titus to besiege Jerusalem to the Great Extremity to which the Jews were reduced

Book VI:

From the Great Extremity to which the Jews were reduced to the taking of Jerusalem by Titus

**Figure 15**

A Comparison of Similar Historical Information as Contained in the *Bellum Judaicum* and *Antiquitates Judaicae* Respectively

Where the arguments of commentators like C.E. Price (ever mindful of the need to preserve the *TF* at all costs), become unstuck, is when one compares critically the structure of the two Pilate narratives which appear respectively in the *BJ* and the *AJ*. C.E. Price's attempt to contrast and differentiate the entire *BJ* with the entire *AJ* as regards their respective "scope and breadth" is no more than a red herring. It is quite irrelevant that these two histories may well serve different purposes. What is far more

important and pertinent to this debate are the specifics of the repeated historical and social contexts which deal with Pontius Pilate's atrocities.

Below are pertinent extracts (Fig. 16), from each of the Pilate narratives; one refers to the *BJ* and the other to the *AJ*. They are presented in the order in which the historical events are narrated and any common occurrences are juxtaposed for comparative purposes:

| **Bellum Judaicum, II, 9 2 - 4** | ***Antiquitates Judaicae*, XVIII, 3 1 - 2** |
|---|---|
| Pilate, sent as procurator into Judea by Tiberius | Pilate, the procurator of Judea |
| [Pilate] sent by night those images of Caesar that are called ensigns into Jerusalem. This excited a very great tumult among the Jews when it was day; for those that were near them were astonished at the sight of them, as indications that their laws were trodden under foot; for those laws do not permit any sort of image to be brought into the city. Nay, besides the indignation which the citizens had themselves at this procedure, a vast number of people came running out of the country. These came zealously to Pilate to Caesarea, and besought him to carry those ensigns out of Jerusalem | So [Pilate] introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account the former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem, and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people, because it was done in the night time; but as soon as they knew it, they came in multitudes to Caesarea, and interceded with Pilate many days that he would remove the images<br><br>[My inserts]. |

| | |
|---|---|
| upon Pilate's denial of their request, they fell down prostrate upon the ground, and continued immovable in that posture for five days and as many nights. On the next day Pilate sat upon his tribunal, in the open market-place, and called to him the multitude, as desirous to give them an answer | and when [Pilate] would not grant their requests, because it would tend to the injury of Caesar, while yet they persevered in their request, on the sixth day he ordered his soldiers to have their weapons privately, while he came and sat upon his judgment-seat, which seat was so prepared in the open place of the city [My inserts]. |
| [He] gave a signal to the soldiers, that they should all by agreement at once encompass the Jews with their weapons; so the band of soldiers stood round about the Jews in three ranks. The Jews were under the utmost consternation at that unexpected sight. Pilate also said to them that they should be cut in pieces, unless they would admit of Caesar's images, and gave intimation to the soldiers to draw their naked swords | [He] gave a signal to the soldiers to encompass them routed, and threatened that their punishment should be no less than immediate death, unless they would leave off disturbing him, and go their ways home<br>[My inserts]. |
| Hereupon the Jews, as it were at one signal, fell down in vast numbers together, and exposed their necks bare, and cried out that they were sooner ready to be slain, than that their law should be transgressed | But they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their death very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed |
| Hereupon Pilate was greatly surprised at their prodigious superstition, and gave | [U]pon which Pilate was deeply affected with their firm resolution to keep their laws |

| | |
|---|---|
| order that the ensigns should be presently carried out of Jerusalem | inviolable, and presently commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Caesarea |
| After this he raised another disturbance, by expending that sacred treasure which is called Corban upon aqueducts, whereby he brought water from the distance of four hundred furlongs | But Pilate undertook to bring a current of water to Jerusalem, and did it with the sacred money, and derived the origin of the stream from the distance of two hundred furlongs |
| At this the multitude had indignation; and when Pilate was come to Jerusalem, they came about his tribunal, and made a clamour at it | However, the Jews were not pleased with what had been done about this water; and many ten thousands of the people got together, and made a clamour against him, and insisted that he should leave off that design |
| Now when he was apprized aforehand of this disturbance, he mixed his own soldiers in their armour with the multitude, and ordered them to conceal themselves under the habits of private men, and not indeed to use their swords, but with their staves to beat those that made the clamour | So he habited a great number of his soldiers in their habit, who carried daggers under their garments, and sent them to a place where they might surround them |
| He then gave the signal from his tribunal [to do as he had bidden them] | So he bid the Jews himself go away |
| Now the Jews were so sadly beaten, that | [H]e gave the soldiers that signal which |

| | |
|---|---|
| many of them perished by the stripes they received, and many of them perished as trodden to death by themselves; by which means the multitude was astonished at the calamity of those that were slain, and held their peace | had been beforehand agreed on; who laid upon them much greater blows than Pilate had commanded them, and equally punished those that were tumultuous, and those that were not; nor did they spare them in the least: and since the people were unarmed, and were caught by men prepared for what they were about, there were a great number of them slain by this means, and others of them ran away wounded. And thus an end was put to this sedition |

**Figure 16**

A Comparison of Historical Information Pertinent to Pontius Pilate as Contained in the *Bellum Judaicum* and *Antiquitates Judaicae* Respectively

Here it is most significant that the original author of the *TF* (regardless of who that individual might actually be – including Josephus) must have chosen the specific Pilate narrative in the *AJ* as the ideal context within which to place his concise passage concerning Jesus the Christ. When one compares the same narrative in the *BJ*, it becomes patently clear that apart from some stylistic differences the accounts are almost exactly the same and most importantly, a common *fabula* is related employing identical "milestones". In short, regardless of which of the two narratives a person reads the resultant *fabula* (i.e. storyline) is almost identical.

Certainly, the only real difference between these two accounts concerns that which *followed* the cruel suppression of the Jewish rioters by Pilate's soldiers. In the *BJ*, apart from the missing account of Jesus the Christ there is also no account of Roman atrocities in Rome and the burning of the Isiac temple.

Assuming that when he wrote the *AJ*, Josephus also composed the *TF*, there are only two possible reasons why he did not include something about Jesus the Christ and the burning of the Temple of Isis when he wrote the *BJ* nearly two decades earlier:

1. At the earlier date, Josephus did not want to recount too many tales of gratuitous Roman violence; and/or
2. As the *BJ* was only concerned with historical events in Judea, Josephus is not at all concerned with what happened to Isiac cultists in Rome.

Assuming for the sake of argument that the *TF* is wholly authentic, as it is concerned solely with a Jewish occurrence that took place in Jerusalem and it is not too offensive for a Roman readership, then the absence of something similar in the *BJ* is conspicuous (albeit with the hindsight of the *TF*).

However, before coming to any conclusion, one also needs to consider that Josephus introduces the *BJ* with, inter alia, the following words (*BJ*, I, Pr.) [214]:

> Ἐπειδὴ τὸν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον οὐ μόνον τῶν καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἐθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων, οἱ μὲν οὐ παρατυχόντες τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκοῇ συλλέγοντες εἰκαῖα καὶ ἀσύμφωνα διηγήματα σοφιστικῶς ἀναγράφουσιν,οἱ παραγενόμενοι δὲ ἢ κολακείᾳ τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους καταψεύδονται τῶν πραγμάτων, περιέχει δὲ αὐτοῖς ὅπου μὲν κατηγορίαν ὅπου δὲ ἐγκώμιον τὰ συγγράμματα, τὸ δ᾽ ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας οὐδαμοῦ προυθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν Ἑλλάδι γλώσσῃ μεταβαλὼν ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον ἀφηγήσασθαι Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς, αὐτός τε Ῥωμαίους πολεμήσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τοῖς ὕστερον παρατυχὼν ἐξ ἀνάγκης·
>
> WHEREAS the war which the Jews made with the Romans hath been the greatest of all those, not only that have been in our times, but, in a manner, of those that ever were heard of; both of those wherein cities have fought against cities, or nations against nations; while some men who were not concerned in the affairs themselves have gotten together vain and contradictory stories by hearsay, and have written them down after a sophistical manner; and while those that were there present have given false accounts of things, and this either out of a humor of flattery to the Romans, or of hatred towards the Jews; and while their writings contain sometimes accusations, and sometimes encomiums, but nowhere the accurate truth of the facts**; I have proposed to myself, for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans, to translate those books into the Greek tongue, which I formerly composed in the language of our country, and sent to the Upper Barbarians; Joseph, the son of Matthias, by birth a Hebrew, a priest also, and one who at first fought against the Romans myself**, and was forced to be present at what was done afterwards, [am the author of this work]. [My emphasis].

[214] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148 [23 July 2014].

If true to his word, Josephus is clearly stating that originally his *BJ* was not necessarily intended solely for the Romans and that he is merely translating an existing work from (presumably) Aramaic into Greek. Further he gives the distinct impression that he is not out to flatter anyone. He will tell the truth as he sees it.

Indeed, Josephus confirms this interpretation, for a little later having just criticised those writers who wish to show the greatness of the Romans at the expense of his own people, he (*BJ*, I / 9) [215] goes on to state:

> Οὐ μὴν ἐγὼ τοῖς ἐπαίρουσι τὰ Ῥωμαίων ἀντιφιλονεικῶν αὔξειν τὰ τῶν ὁμοφύλων διέγνων, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἔργα μετ᾽ ἀκριβείας ἀμφοτέρων διέξειμι, τοὺς δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασι λόγους ἀνατίθημι τῇ διαθέσει καὶ τοῖς ἐμαυτοῦ πάθεσι διδοὺς ἐπολοφύρεσθαι ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος συμφοραῖς.
>
> However, I will not go to the other extreme, out of opposition to those men who extol the Romans nor will I determine to raise the actions of my countrymen too high; but **I will prosecute the actions of both parties with accuracy**. Yet shall I suit my language to the passions I am under, as to the affairs I describe, and must be allowed to indulge some lamentations upon the miseries undergone by my own country. [My emphasis].

This more likely context for Josephus' intentions, taken together with the fact that (as compared to the relatively innocuous comments made in the *TF* passage), the material in the Pilate narrative has real potential to displease a Roman readership, then the absence of an inoffensive comment about an historical Jesus of Nazareth from the *BJ* is quite difficult to explain.

However, if the *TF* is an interpolation then its absence from the *BJ* should be quite obvious.

Finally, if we add to this the issues relating to the lack of literary progression and the fact that the *TF* gives all the warning signs of being out of context, then again, it is not even necessary to explain its absence from the *BJ*.

[215] Original Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148 [23 July 2014].

### 3.3.10 The Artificial Creation of the Neutral Account

This section deals with the attempt by predominantly Christian scholars to remove the sting of obvious interpolation and rescue the *TF* as a valid historical record made by the hand of Josephus.

In order to assist in the reading and comprehension of the following arguments proffered by the various scholars concerned, the *TF* is again reproduced below in English. However, in this version, those phrases that many conservative Christian scholars claim were present in an earlier version of the *TF* are emboldened. In this latter regard, the late Geza Vermes (2010) gives his reasons in the online *Standpoint* Magazine for accepting certain sections of the *TF* and expurgating others:

> The Christian passages, those that cannot be ascribed to the Jew Josephus, are easily distinguishable.
>
> - The gloss, "If indeed one ought to call him a man", is the interpolator's reaction to the superhuman/divine Jesus being called a mere "wise man".
>
> - "He was the Christ" is a common Christian interpolator's confession of the messianic status of Jesus. Nevertheless, the original text must have contained the epithet, "Christ", to account for the later statement about "the tribe of the Christians" named after the founder. The most likely original version read, "He was called the Christ", as Josephus puts it in the James passage.
>
> - The reference to Jesus attracting to himself "many Greeks" is without Gospel support. Nevertheless, if Josephus knew of a mixed Jewish-Gentile church in Rome, he may have believed that a similar structure existed at the time of Jesus.
>
> - The resurrection appearances on the third day, together with the relevant prophecies, are part of the apologetic arsenal of the early church and have nothing to do with Josephus.

Thus, the more moderate version as proffered by Vermes would read more or less as follows and best approximates what many conservative scholars would have us believe was the original shorter version of the *TF*:

> Now about this time there lived Jesus a wise man, for he was a doer of wonderful works and a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was known as the Christ and when Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who in the first place had come to love him did not forsake him. And the tribe of

the Christians, so called after him, continues to the present day.

This, they claim, is the *TF* stripped of all overt gospel flavour and thus the more likely original wording employed by Josephus.

This resultant *TF* (and similar renditions) is often referred to as the “neutral” account and, as has already been alluded to, far from removing overt Christian content, this action emphasises the degree to which the entire *TF* is steeped in Christian concepts of a period somewhat later than the first century of the common era.

Most conservative scholars eagerly accept the “partial authenticity” thesis because it still leaves them with enough material to claim an historical reference to Jesus of Nazareth. What is strange is that the vast majority never mention the problem that if even they can see something fallacious about this out of place passage due to its overt Christian glosses why should any of it be authentic? The Christian glosses are the very indication that the entire text is suspect. To simply remove the bits that one does not like and artificially reconstruct something intelligible with those words that can safely be regarded as devoid of Christian content make absolutely no sense.

Regardless, based purely on consensus of opinion, conservative scholars argue that the reason that anyone would want to claim that the entire text is fraudulent is primarily to disprove the existence of Jesus. As they know Jesus exists, it is obvious that Josephus must have heard about him and thus the reconstructed passage is authentic. In this regard, C.E. Price (2008: 25) states: “Our own studies have revealed a very strong majority for partial authenticity, with the few dissenters being almost all Jesus myth proponents”. Then in an endnote, C.E. Price refers his reader to a long list of 25 conservative scholars who support partial authenticity as the very evidence that it is somehow authentic.

C.E. Price (2008: 25 - 26) goes on to make a common conflation, arguing that it is *not a coincidence* that it is those who deny the existence of Jesus who are “carrying the water against the partial authenticity theory”.

A more balanced comment from Fredriksen (2000: 249) claims that “[m]ost scholars currently incline to see the passage as basically authentic, with a few later insertions by Christian scribes.”

Charlesworth (1988: 93 - 94), clearly reflecting his dominant worldview, gladly makes the following unsubstantiated statements based on a very faulty historical background: “We can be confident that there was a minimal reference to Jesus … because once the clearly Christian sections are removed, the rest makes good grammatical and historical sense”. He then makes the most unusual observation that once the Christian sections have been excised the remaining passage reads better, specifically “the flow of thought is improved and smoother”.

Vermes (2010) is also happy to accept this line of reasoning. He is quite content that once the hypothetical Christian interpolations have been removed, what remains is authentic Josephan text and even tries to argue that the *TF* is in accord with the context of the encapsulating passages which speak to Jewish calamity:

> The fact that Josephus makes Pilate responsible for the crucifixion is highly significant. It is perfectly in line with Josephus's critical attitude towards the prefect of Judaea, the perpetrator of a series of dreadful acts. One would imagine that a later Christian forger would try to exculpate him and place the blame for the death of Jesus on the shoulders of the Jews, as do the New Testament and especially later church tradition. Finally, the detached picture of the followers of Jesus is in harmony with the attitude of an outsider, but would be odd in the case of a Christian apologist:

Meier (1991: 61) apart from being quite satisfied to accept the partially authentic *TF* theory believes that one of the reasons for his approval of that finding rests on the fact that most of the words that appear in the passage also occur elsewhere in Josephus’ works.

Furthermore, if this was really more or less what Josephus actually wrote, it is strange that he makes no attempt to identify this specific Jesus. For example, based on the way he introduces other Jesuses in his works if he really knew about a specific itinerant Jewish teacher from Galilee he would have said something like “Now about this time there lived a wise man called Jesus ben Yoshef who hailed from Galilee…”

On this very issue, Meier (1991: 61) makes the most amusing claim that it was because Jesus of Nazareth was so well known that Josephus did not want to insult his reader by explaining who he was!

Regardless, the problem with most of the *TF* reconstructions is that they still have Josephus referring to Jesus (of Nazareth) as a “σοφὸς ἀνήρ” and performing actions

which reveal his divinity and defy nature (παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής) and apart from winning over *both* Jews and Gentiles is described as a "teacher of the truth".

Doherty (2009: 538), rightly comments that this version of the *TF* "cannot be described as neutral, and would hardly be viewed as such by Christians."

Certainly, based on the hard evidence, Pines' (1971: 21) opinion best sums up the current situation:

> The discouraging fact about all these attempts is that the scholars who made them were guided in the main (though not in all cases exclusively; some of them used various secondary sources to good purpose) by their personal subjective view of the probable position of Josephus with regard to Jesus and of the way in which he was most likely to have set forth this position. In other words, the reconstructions had, by and large, only a subjective validity.

## 3.4 Eusebius as the Potential Forger of the *TF*

### 3.4.1 Introduction

As should be obvious, based on the information reviewed thus far, the very first indication that the *TF* even existed comes solely from a reading of extant works by Eusebius. This section reviews the various analyses that have been undertaken of the manner in which Eusebius refers to the *TF* in two of his works. This sheds valuable light on his possible role as forger of the *TF*.

### 3.4.2 The Evidence of the *Demonstratio Evangelica* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*

To emphasise the point, reproduced below (Fig. 17) are the Greek versions of the *TF* and the reference to the *TF* by Eusebius as it appears in his *HE*. This comparison is loosely based on the work of Zeitlin (cf. 1928: 252 – 253):

| Josephus *AJ*, XVIII, 3 / 63 – 64 | Eusebius *HE*, I, 11 |
|---|---|
| Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. | Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. |

**Figure 17**

A Comparison Between the *AJ* and *HE* Versions of the *TF*.

The *AJ* words that do not appear in Eusebius' *HE* are indicated in blue. Additions to Eusebius' text are indicated in red.

Although in terms of content and import the texts are all but identical, Eusebius does not quote the *TF exactly* the same way as it now appears in the *AJ*. It will be noticed that Eusebius writes "καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο" whereas Josephus' *TF* renders "καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο". As a consequence, at this stage, we are left with only two logical conclusions:

1. Eusebius, who had had earlier opportunities (i.e. the *AH*), to mention the *TF* but for some unknown reason, remained silent, suddenly decided to become the very first Christian apologist to realise that the authentic *TF* as it appeared in his copy or copies of the *AJ* could be very useful to his mission. He carefully memorised its content and subsequently without referring to Josephus' text he paraphrased it, from memory alone, in his *DE* and *HE*; or

2. Sometime after writing the *AH* (which does not contain a reference to the *TF*), whilst busy with his *DE*, Eusebius decided to compose a counterfeit Josephan reference to Jesus of Nazareth (which he had obviously committed to memory due to the fact that he was the originator). Subsequent to this action, he inserted this passage from memory into his *HE*. Then, in order to falsely substantiate his fraudulent references he inserted it into his copy/copies of the *AJ*. Within this scenario, purely for the sake of argument, it is also vaguely possible that Eusebius found a pre-existing fraudulent version of the *TF* which he then embellished and/or he found a marginal gloss that he then improved upon and subsequently placed into the main text.

In this regard, Doherty (2009: 550), with reference to claims by Christian scholars who support the notion of partial authenticity, comments that:

> [Eusebius] quotes the passage exactly as we have it now, with all the pro-Christian elements intact. From Eusebius' time and for the next 13 centuries, no one in Christendom doubted that Josephus had written that Jesus "was the Messiah." [My insertion].

For this reason, it should not be viewed as out of the ordinary that when the *TF* was first questioned by scholars (c.1500s C.E.) Eusebius was quickly identified as being the likely mastermind behind its creation and insertion into the *AJ*. This notion is still very prevalent today.

Another angle, already alluded to, and which needs to be explored at this juncture, involves the careful reconsideration of a partial forgery rather than total interpolation. In this regard, Zindler (2003: 58) has contemplated the possibility that Eusebius may have originally come across an earlier form of the *TF* and further that this version was already inserted in the place where it now resides in the *AJ.* In this regard we should also allow for the possibility that Eusebius may have come across a small marginal

gloss that he chose to “upgrade” and elevate to “main text” status.

After all, there is some evidence that other Christian tampering may well have occurred in other parts of the *AJ*, before Eusebius’ time so the possibility always exists that an earlier forger had already started the ball rolling so to speak and had inserted a preceding, possibly shorter, version of what was to eventually become known as the *TF*

However, Zindler (2003) also acknowledges that even if this was what in fact happened it is now quite impossible to extricate what is the Eusebian “improvement” from what may have been the original interpolation.

One possible piece of evidence for this possibility relates to the previously discussed usage of the word ‘‘φῦλον’’ for “tribe” as it is what Doherty (2009: 556) describes as being “so markedly a distant second choice for both Josephus and Eusebius” that perhaps it was originally coined by an earlier (albeit unknown) interpolator.

Again, suspicion is cast when it is realised that phrases like “παραδόξων ἔργων’’ are not typical of Josephan language but feature prominently in non-other than the works of Eusebius. Olson (2013a: 103) comments:

> The combination of παράδοξος and ποιέω to mean “wonder-working” is extremely common in Eusebius and occurs more than a hundred times. With the disputed exception of the Testimonium itself, the word ποιητής modiied by παραδόξων ἔργων does not show up anywhere in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database of extant Greek literature before Eusebius, who uses this combination of words ten times outside the Testimonium,

As evidence Olson cites HE, I, 2.23; DE, III, 4.21; 5.59; 5.103; and 7.4; Commentary on Isaiah 2.57.62; VC, I, 18.2; and Commentary on Psalms: 23 cols. 541, 984 and 1033.

Despite the seemingly overwhelming circumstantial evidence that points to Eusebius as a potential fraudster, conservative scholars will more typically refuse to give any quarter in this regard. For example, with possible reference to his various insubstantial refutations of, inter alia, the more sceptical arguments based on the stylistic idiosyncrasies for authorship attribution (cf. 3.3.7) C.E. Price (2008: 30) makes the following unsupported tautological pronouncement:

> The notion that it [i.e. the *TF*] served some apologetic purpose of Eusebius, as argued by a few, is erroneous…the theory of Eusebian interpolation is

> unpersuasive and its explanation of Eusebius' use of the Testimonium for apologetic purposes is particularly misguided. [My insertion].

Therefore, more discussion needs to take place here and all the angles explored before assuming anything. In this context, additional evidence is brought to bear by primarily, Olson (cf. 1999, 2013a and 2013b):

Olson (1999: 305 - 322), goes somewhat further than the previous comment that there are very slight discrepancies between the *AJ* and the *HE* versions of the *TF*. Undeniably, the discrepancies do not really alter the meaning of the *TF* significantly. However, Olson makes a most important additional observation that, if accurate, gives additional evidence to support the candidacy of Eusebius as the creator of the *TF* in the form that has survived until contemporary times.

As is well-known, in the *TF*, Pilate condemns Jesus on an accusation by "τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν" ("the principal men" among us). Olson points out that "πρώτων ἀνδρῶν" is found in other works by Josephus but *never* in association with the words "among us"
However, this exact phrase (i.e. "τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν"), is to be found in various works by Eusebius.

Furthermore, and most importantly, Olson has noticed a discrepancy between the two references made to the *TF* by Eusebius in his *DE*, and *HE* respectively. The table provided below (Fig. 18) makes this discovery clearer:

| Josephus *AJ*, XVIII, 3 / 63 – 64 | Eusebius *DE*, III, 5 / 105 - 106[216] |
|---|---|
| Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. | Γίνεται δὲ κατ᾽ ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴ γε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή. ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τἀληθῆ δεβομένων. καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τοῦ Ἰουδαϊκοῦ, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀρχόντων σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. ὅθεν εἰδέτι νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦδε τῶν Χριστιανῶν οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον. |

**Figure 18**

A Comparison between the *AJ* and *DE* Versions of the *TF*.

The *AJ* words that do not appear in Eusebius' *DE* are indicated in blue. Additions to Eusebius' text are indicated in red.

Olson (2000) translates the *DE*, III, 5 / 105 – 106 version of the *TF* (*ut supra*) as follows:

[216] Greek text according to *Dindorfius,* (Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X:* 377. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III:* 187.

> About this time arose Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one should call him a man, for he was a maker of miraculous works, **a teacher of men who revere the truth**, and he won over many of the Jewish and even many of the Greek [nation]. He was the Christ; and although Pilate, upon an accusation **from our rulers**, condemned him to the cross, nevertheless those who had loved him earlier did not stop, for he appeared to them alive again on the third day, the divine prophets having foretold these and also **myriads** of other wonders about him. **From that time to this the nation of Christians has not failed**.

(Critical differences of meaning have been emboldened and are discussed below).

Specifically, in his later *HE,* Eusebius quotes the phrase from the *TF* (apart from some very minor grammatical changes already indicated earlier) exactly as it is known today, i.e. "by the principal men [πρώτων ἀνδρῶν] among us." However, in his earlier *DE*, as has been pointed out earlier (i.e. Section 3.2), the same phrase is reproduced as "from our rulers/leaders [αρχόντων]."

In this regard, Olson (2000) wonders why Eusebius should quote the same text that he claims that he saw in Josephus' *AJ,* in two different ways.

Explanations obviously include the possibility that he was paraphrasing or merely misquoting from memory, but regardless, Olson cannot believe that, like sacred scripture, Eusebius would have committed this entire passage to enduring memory. Surely, if authentic, he would have copied the quotation directly from his personal copy or copies of the *AJ*?

However, to be fair, even Olson (2000) admits that it is widely accepted that most, if not all, ancient writers surely had to rely heavily on their memories since they made use of manuscripts that did not contain convenient indices and/or cross-references to various passages. However, Olson (2000) feels that even if we are to believe that on this one critical occasion Eusebius was not referring directly to the written text in front of him and whilst trying to recollect the wording, had as it were a small memory lapse, it does not explain how he managed to remember everything else so flawlessly.

It is for this reason that Olson (2000) has considered the possibility that on both occasions Eusebius unashamedly composed the *TF*. Originally he created a version of the *TF* when desperately looking for extra-biblical/scriptural support for his claims whilst writing his *DE*. Later, whilst busy composing his *HE*, Eusebius decided to re-use this

interpolation but modify certain of the wording, such as changing "ἀρχόντων" into "πρώτων ἀνδρῶν".

Olson (2013a: 106) gives us other good evidence for Eusebius being considered the possible author of the *TF* when he highlights Eusebius' own introduction to the suspect passage whilst engaged in a defence of attacks made against the gospel accounts of the disciples being valid eye-witnesses. Specifically, *immediately* after quoting the *TF* verbatim in his *DE,* III, 5 / 107 - 109[217] Eusebius states:

> Εἰ τοίνυν καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἱστορικὸν μαρτυρειται οὐ μόνον τοὺς δωδεκα ἀποστολους οὐδὲ τοὺς ἑβδομήκουτα μαθητας ἐξωκειωμένος, ἀλλὰ πολλοὺς μὲν του Ἰουδαικοῦ, πολλοὺς δὲ του Ἑλληνικοῦ προσαγομένος, δῆλος ἂν ειν περιττόν τι κεκτημένος παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους. πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἄλλως προσήγετο τοῦ Ἰουαικοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ πλειόυς, εἰ μή τισι θαυμαστοῖς καὶ παραδοξοις ἔργοις καὶ ξενιζούση κέχρητο διδασκαλίᾳ; μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν Πραξεων τῶν ἀποστολων γραφὴ, ὅτι πολλαὶ μυριαδες ἦσαν Ἰουδαίων ἀνδρῶν πεπεισμένων αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸν ὑπὸ τῶν προφητῶν κατηψγελμένον. καὶ ἡ ἱστορία δὲ κατέχει ὡς καὶ μεγίστη τις ην ἐκκλεσία Χριστοῦ ἐν τοις Ἱεροσολυμοις ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων συγκροτονμένη μέχρι τῶν χρόνων τῆσ κατ᾽ Ἀδριανὸν πολιορκίας. λέγονται γοῦν οἱ πρῶτοι κατὰ διαδοχὴν πρσταντες αὐτοθι ἐπισκοποι Ἰουδαιοι γεγονέναι, ων καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα εἰσέτι νῦν παρὰ τοῖς ἐγχωπίοις μνημονευέται. ὡς καὶ ἐκ τούτων λελύσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν κατὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ διαβολὴν, ὅτε καὶ πρὸς αὐτῶν καὶ διχα της αὐτῶν μαρτυριάς μυριά ὁμολλογεῖται πληθη Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δὶ ὧν ἐπετελει παραδοξων ἔργων ὑθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν πεποιημένος.
>
> If, then, **even the historian's evidence** [i.e. **Josephus**] shews that He attracted to Himself not only the twelve Apostles, nor the seventy disciples, **but had in addition many Jews and Greeks, He must evidently have had some extraordinary power beyond that of other men**. **For how otherwise could He have attracted many Jews and Greeks**, **except by wonderful miracles and unheard-of teaching?** And the evidence of the Acts of the Apostles goes to shew that **there were many myriads of Jews who believed Him to be the Christ of God foretold by the prophets.** And history also assures us that there was a very important Christian Church in Jerusalem, **composed of Jews**, which existed until the siege of the city under Hadrian. The bishops, too, who stand first **in the line of succession there are said to have been Jews,** whose names are still remembered by the inhabitants. So that thus the whole slander against His disciples is destroyed, when by their evidence, and apart also from their

[217]Greek text according to *Dindorfius,* (Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X:* 377. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III:* 187 - 188. English translation according to Ferrar (Tr.). 1920. *The Proof of the Gospel Being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, Vol. I: 143 - 144.

evidence, **it has to be confessed that many myriads of Jews and Greeks were brought under His yoke by Jesus the Christ of God through the miracles that He performed.** [My emphases and insertion for clarification].

Again in his *DE*, IV, 10 /14[218] Eusebius states:

> καὶ τούσδε μὲν καὶ δι᾽ ὧν ἔπραττε καὶ ἐδιδασκεν ἰσχυρῶς ἠκιζετο, παῦν δὲ το ἀνθρώπινον γένος τοῖς δια λογών ἡμέροις καὶ προσηνέσι φαρμάκοις ταῖς τε πραέσι καὶ προτρεπτικαῖς αὐτοῦ διδασκαλίαις ἰᾶτο καὶ ἐθεράπευε, νόσων τε παντοίων καὶ παθῶν οὐχ ἧττον σωμάτων ἢ ψυχῶν ἀπηλλαττεν, παλαιᾶς τε δεισιδαιμονίας καὶ δειμάτων πολυθέου πλάνες τές τε αἰσχρᾶς καὶ ἀκολάστου διαίτης παύντας τοὺς προσιόντας ἐλευθέρους ἀφεὶς, μεθιστῶν τε και μεταβάλλων τοὺς αὐτῷ προσανεχοντας, ἐκ μὲν ἀκολασίας ἐπὶ σώφρονα βιόν, ἐκ δὲ ἀσεβειάς ἐπὶ εὐσεβειαν καὶ ἐξ ἀδικίας ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνην, ναὶ μὴν καὶ ἐκ τῆς τῶν πικρῶν δαιμόνων δυναστειάς ἐπὶ τὴν ἔνθεον καταληψιν τῆς ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβειάς, καὶ πρός …
>
> And these by His deeds and words He mightily plagued, while He healed and cured **the whole human race with the gentle and kind medicines of His words, and with the tonic of His teaching.** He freed them from all sorts of sicknesses and suffering of body as well as soul, He set all that came to Him free from age-long superstition, and the fears of polytheistic error, and from a low and dissolute life ... [My emphasis].

Olson (2013a: 106) sees these references as evidence of Eusebius' mind-set and committed message. He wanted to emphasise that huge numbers of people from diverse groups were acknowledging Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Those who want to bring in counter-arguments that claim this is Josephan because it makes use of distinctly Josephan-style language are quickly silenced by Olson, who implies that it is a very simple matter to look though Josephus' works for common utterances such as "principal men" and "with pleasure" and then to simply re-use them in a new pro-Christian context.

A final counter-argument to be considered at this juncture is that perhaps Eusebius and others had more than one version of the *AJ*; and this was the actual cause of these discrepancies.

[218] Greek text according to *Dindorfius,* (Tr.) 1867a. *Eusebii Caesariensis*: *Opera: Praeparationis Evangelicae. Vol. I. Libri I – X:* 377. English translation according to Gifford (Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III:* 233 - 234. English translation according to Ferrar (Tr.). 1920. *The Proof of the Gospel Being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, Vol. I: 183.].

Apart from the fact that that possibility would indicate that Eusebius must have owned at least two different versions of the same manuscript it does not explain why both versions have not survived to the present day. Certainly, at the very least this would prove that Eusebius made sure that only one version of the *TF* - his preferred version, survived to be read by subsequent unsuspecting Christian scholars.

### 3.4.3 The Evidence of the *Adversus Hieroclem*

Olson (1999: 305 - 322; 2013a: 97 - 114) has put forward another convincing argument for Eusebius being the *preferred* forger of the *TF*. Obviously, if this could be unequivocally substantiated it would be the indispensable confirmation that the *TF* is an unmitigated fake.

Olson's methodology here, is to compare the *TF* in terms of the language employed by Josephus and Eusebius. As has been reviewed already, the more normal approach by typically more conservative scholars is to support the partial authenticity of the *TF* and then point out where it supposedly contains Josephan terminology and by default, allegedly non-Christian content.

However, Olson's view is that if one looks at the *entire TF* passage, the language seems to point to none other than Eusebius being the originator.

Olson (2000) reminds his reader that Eusebius in fact refers to the *TF* in *three* of his works, i.e. the *DE* and the *HE* (both in Greek), and the Th (which as has already been mentioned, is only extant in its Syriac form). In all three cases, Eusebius calls upon the *TF*, which he identifies as from Josephus' AJ (i.e. specifically Book XVIII), as a witness to Jesus' divine and excellent character.

However, Olson (2000) also points out that there is a work by Eusebius produced only a few years earlier than these three previously mentioned. In this context, our attention is again drawn to the *AH*. It will be recalled (cf. 3.3.6.7) that Eusebius took issue with the Hierocles' assertion that Apollonius of Tyana was far superior to Jesus (of Nazareth). In addition, the biographer, Philostratus referred to Apollonius as "σοφὸς" (here translated as "sage"), which Eusebius seems to have been willing to accept since he refers to Apollonius as "σοφὸν τινα" ("type of sage"). However, in the case of Jesus, Eusebius employs the superior accolade, viz.: "θιος ἀνήρ" (i.e. "divine man").

Now, what is most informative here is that Eusebius, for some inexplicable reason, yet in accord with the practices of other Christian apologists who came before and in some cases even after him, does not make use of the *TF* when he refutes Hierocles.

Doherty (2009: 551) for one, asks the obvious question:

> [W]hy, in this earliest work in which he was concerned to cast Jesus in a favorable light, did Eusebius not appeal to the *Testimonium*, as he was to do in similar circumstances in two later works? We can hardly presume that he only discovered Josephus in the interim. There is no reason why the *Testimonium* could not have served his purpose in *Adversus Hieroclem*.

Both Olson (1999 and 2013a) and Doherty (2009) believe it is this very interim period within which Eusebius made the decision to make his life easier and have Josephus say something that would serve a very useful purpose apropos the Christian cause.

Doherty (2009: 555), who fully supports Olson's extremely important contributions to this debate states:

> The conclusion would be that Eusebius composed the *Testimonium* initially for his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, and later refined it for his *History of the Church*. This would require, of course, that Eusebius then inserted it into his copy of the *Antiquities*, and from there over the centuries it found its way into all copies, as we see it today in the extant manuscripts.

### 3.4.4 Evidence that Eusebius was Capable of Duplicity

If it could be proved that Eusebius did have at least a hand in the final version of the *TF* is there much point in criticizing him for these actions? After all one of the central concerns of this thesis is whether or not Josephus was an eyewitness to an historical Jesus and not an attack on one or more of the early church fathers.

In this regard, a number of scholars have also attempted to ratiocinate Eusebius' agenda as Church historian and apologist, and have tried to determine whether, from his own perspective, he was being entirely fraudulent or whether he was so blinded by his adherence to his belief system that he can only really be accused of over-zealousness and "pious fraud". In short, he, like the conservative scholars of today, perhaps did not see himself as being in any way fraudulent when he encouraged a particular interpretation to satisfy a specific worldview. Further, if individuals are

sincerely and firmly convinced of the truth of their particular point of view, are they committing fraud if they rework or add a text and/or force a particular outcome to ensure that others will not follow another path?

After all, from, say, a Christian perspective, where a fundamentalist/literalist believer may well feel that it his/her divine obligation to ensure that others believe what they do to save them the pains of eternal damnation - to ensure, at all costs, that nothing stands in the way of the global acceptance of the Christian dogma should be seen as akin to saintliness.

What is important about this seeming side-issue is that perhaps Eusebius himself gives a clue as to his state of mind that might shed some light on his ethical stance and whether he would even have been able to commit such a fraudulent act. After all, if Eusebius admits to fraud, in the light of the other acquired evidence, then that should be seen as conclusive proof that suspicious texts (i.e. like the *TF*), are not to be trusted as regards their historical value.

It is already well known that ancient writers exaggerated or embellished their texts. It is also accepted that plagiarism must have been quite common. Lastly it is known that ancient writers did not have quite the same outlook as exists today, as regards stretching the truth to get a particular message across.

As an example, in his *Cels*. IV. 19[219] Origen's states:

> Ἄλλοι μὲν οὖν διδότωσαν τῷ Κέλσῳ ὅτι οὐ μεταβάλλει μέν, ποιεῖ δὲ τοὺς ὁρῶντας δοκεῖν αὐτὸν μεταβεβληκέναι· ἡμεῖς δὲ πειθόμενοι οὐ δόκησιν ἀλλ᾽ ἀλήθειαν εἶναι καὶ ἐνάργειαν κατὰ τὴν Ἰησοῦ εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίαν, οὐχ ὑποκείμεθα τῇ Κέλσου κατηγορίᾳ. Ὅμως δ᾽ ἀπολογησόμεθά ὅτι οὐ φῄς, ὦ Κέλσε, ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρᾳ ποτὲ δίδοται χρῆσθαι τῷ πλανᾶν καὶ τῷ ψεύδεσθαι; Τί οὖν ἄτοπον, εἰ τοιοῦτόν τι ἔμελλε σῴζειν, τοιοῦτόν τι γεγονέναι Καὶ γάρ τινες τῶν λόγων τὰ τοιαδὶ ἤθη κατὰ τὸ ψεῦδος μᾶλλον λεγόμενοι ἐπιστρέφουσιν, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν ποτε λόγοι τοιοίδε πρὸς τοὺς κάμνοντας, ἤπερ κατὰ τὸ ἀληθές. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν περὶ ἑτέρων ἀπολελογήσθω ἡμῖν. Καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπόν ἐστι τὸν ἰώμενον φίλους νοσοῦντας ἰάσασθαι τὸ φίλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος τοῖς τοιοῖσδε, οἷς οὐκ ἄν τις χρήσαιτο προηγουμένως ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ περιστάσεως. Καὶ μεμηνὸς δὲ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔδει θεραπευθῆναι διὰ μεθόδων, ὧν ἐώρα ὁ λόγος χρησίμων τοῖς μεμηνόσιν, ἵνα σωφρονήσωσι. Φησὶ δ᾽ ὅτι καὶ τὰ τοιάδε τις ποιεῖ πρὸς ἐχθρούς, κίνδυνον ἐκφυγεῖν προμηθούμενος. Οὐ φοβεῖται δέ τινας ὁ θεός, ἵνα πλανήσας

[219] Greek text according to Chadwick (Ed. and Tr.). 1980. *Origen: Contra Celsum*: 196. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen164.html [12 September 2014].

τοὺς ἐπιβουλεύοντας κίνδυνον διαφύγῃ.

Others may agree with Celsus that He does not change, but makes those who see Him think that he has changed. But we, who are persuaded that the advent of Jesus to men was not a mere appearance, but a reality and an indisputable fact, are unaffected by Celsus' criticism. Nevertheless we will reply thus: "**Do you not say, Celsus, that sometimes it is allowable to use deceit and lying as a medicine? Why, then, is it unthinkable that something of this sort occurred with the purpose of bringing salvation? For some characters are reformed by certain doctrines which are more false than true, just as physicians sometimes use similar words to their patients.** This however has been our defence on other points. But further, there is nothing wrong if the person who heals sick friends healed the human race which was dear to him with such means as one would not use for choice, but to which he was confined by force of circumstances. [My emphasis].

Chadwick (1980: 195 n.4), informs his reader that Celsus is obviously quoting from Plato's *Republic,* specifically sections 382C; 389B; 459 C and D. Indeed, Rep. 389A and 389B[220] yields:

εἰ σύ, ἔφη, βούλει ἐμὸν τιθέναι· οὐ γὰρ οὖν δὴ ἀποδεκτέον. ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ἀλήθειάν γε περὶ πολλοῦ ποιητέον. εἰ γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἐλέγομεν ἄρτι, καὶ τῷ ὄντι θεοῖσι μὲν ἄχρηστον ψεῦδος, ἀνθρώποις δὲ χρήσιμον ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου εἴδει, δῆλον ὅτι τό γε τοιοῦτον ἰατροῖς δοτέον, ἰδιώταις δὲ οὐχ ἁπτέον. δῆλον, ἔφη. τοῖς ἄρχουσιν δὴ τῆς πόλεως, εἴπερ τισὶν ἄλλοις, προσήκει ψεύδεσθαι ἢ πολεμίων ἢ πολιτῶν ἕνεκα ἐπ᾽ ὠφελίᾳ τῆς πόλεως, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐχ ἁπτέον τοῦ τοιούτου·

"If it pleases you to call it mine," he said; "at any rate we must not accept it." "But further we must surely prize truth most highly. For if we were right in what we were just saying and falsehood is in very deed useless to gods, **but to men useful as a remedy or form of medicine,** it is obvious that such a thing must be assigned to physicians and laymen should have nothing to do with it." "Obviously," he replied. "The rulers then of the city may, if anybody, fitly lie on account of enemies or citizens for the benefit of the state; no others may have anything to do with it. [My emphasis].

Depending on one's point of view this could be construed as evidence that Origen sanctioned deceit if it was for a good cause – in short the means justified the end. If the salvation of the world is at stake then it is justified to fabricate or embellish.

What is interesting is that Eusebius openly quotes Origen's sentiments and further in

[220] Greek text and English translation (end of *R.* 389A and 389B) according to Shorey (Tr.) 1969. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 and 6 in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online}. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0168%3Abook%3D3%3Asection%3D389b [22 July 2014].

his *PE*, XII, 31[221] Eusebius first quotes Plato (*Lg.* 663 D), as follows:

> But even if the case were not such as our argument has now proved it to be, if a lawgiver, who is to be of ever so little use, could have ventured to tell any falsehood at all to the young for their good**, is there any falsehood that he could have told more beneficial than this, and better able to make them all do everything that is just, not by compulsion but willingly**?
>
> Truth, O Stranger, is a noble and an enduring thing; it seems, however, not easy to persuade men of it.

Eusebius then goes on to state:

> Now you may find in the Hebrew Scriptures also thousands of such passages concerning God as though He were jealous, or sleeping, or angry, or subject to any other human passions, **which passages are adopted for the benefit of those who need this mode of instruction**.
>
> I have repeated whatever may rebound to the glory, and **suppressed all** that could tend to the disgrace of our religion. [My emphases].

Eusebius seems to be intimating that even the Jews (who he also wants to point out influenced the Ancient Greeks), were not adverse to using fiction in their scriptures to get a message across. However, it is difficult to agree with such extreme interpretations as are found in, inter alia, Gibbon[222], where this kind of statement is used as hard evidence for Eusebius' wholesale endorsement of employing mistruths as long as the end justifies the means. In point of fact this passage in *PE*, XII, 31 is open to interpretation and does not comfortably prove anything in itself. At best one might intimate that Eusebius would rather withhold information if it would benefit his belief system.

Often the assertion that Eusebius is condoning the pious employment of falsehood and lies is strengthened by reference to the chapter heading for *PE,* XII, 31[223]:

> XXXI: That it will be necessary sometimes to use falsehood as a remedy for the benefit of those who require such a mode of treatment.

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[221] English text according to Gifford (Ed. and Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III*: 607.

[222] Edward Gibbon (1737 - 1794) author of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776 – 1788).

[223] English text according to Gifford (Ed. and Tr.). 1903. *Eusebii Pamphili: Evangelicae Praeparationis, Libri XV, Tomus III*: 571.

However, it seems that even this is open to question as the title for the chapter is more than likely more recent than that employed by Eusebius himself. Indeed, at the time of the original composition he is most unlikely to have made use of modern chapters and other, more contemporary conventions. Thus, the choice of a chapter title cannot be laid at his feet.

## 3.5 Hata's Proof: A Case Study

### 3.5.1 Introduction

Hata[224] (2007: 91 - 91) draws our attention to Eusebius' enormous dependency on the writings of Josephus in order to provide his propaganda with the semblance of legitimacy. Hata's thesis should be seen as valuable supporting evidence when juxtaposed with the various findings of other scholars who suspect Eusebius as being the very author of the *TF*.

Specifically, Hata who has presented his thesis in an essay titled: *The Abuse and Misuse of Josephus in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Books 2 and 3* (2007: 91 - 102) confirms that Eusebius both "abused and misused" Josephus in order to convey a distinctly anti-Semitic doctrine – one which would subsequently lay the very foundation for the anti-Jewish mind-set that characterised Christianity for well over 1,600 years.

Hata's (2007: 91 – 92) claim as to the key components of Eusebius's anti-Semitic message may be summarised as follows:

1. Jews were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion;
2. Accordingly, the Jews had committed a crime against Christ;
3. Consequently, the entire Jewish "race" stood accused for all time;
4. Assuredly, God sought compensation from the Jews for their crime; but
5. Simultaneously, God gave the Jews ample time to repent and to accept Christ as Saviour; however
6. Because the Jews did not repent, God destroyed both Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E.

[224] Professor Dr Gohei Hata, Sometime professor at Dropsie University for Hebrew and Cognate Learning and professor at Tama Art University in Japan.

Hata sets out to prove that the works of Josephus are employed as a “form of citation”, specifically for clauses 4, 5 and 6 (*ut supra*) and which appear in his *HE*, II and III, 2.

As an aside, Hata (2007: 91) also draws his reader’s attention to an alarming fact. Hata quotes from Lawlor and Oulton (1928: 19): “in the History we find nearly 250 passages transcribed from early sources. . . . In addition to these there are 90 or 100 indirect quotations or summaries . . .”.

In this context, Hata (2007: 92) has calculated that the first three books of the *HE* contain 16 passages from the *BJ*, 13 passages from the *AJ*, one passage from the *Ap*. and another from the *Vit.* This translates to more than 12% of the entire *HE* consisting of quoted texts from Josephus!

Certain key highlights of Hata’s thesis will now be presented and analysed:

### 3.5.2 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 1 - 9

Hata (2007: 92 - 101) carefully unpacks Eusebius’ *modus operandi* (including his heavy reliance on Josephus) to formulate and substantiate the validity of his anti-Semitic propaganda. Hata (2007: 93) states that Eusebius is “surprisingly skillful in the construction of his narrative for his specific purpose”.

The central points of this process as initiated in *HE*, II, 1 are itemised below in point form:

1. Eusebius employs *HE*, II, 1 to describe the apostles’ accomplishments and the resultant rapid spread of Christianity after the ascension of Christ;
2. In the process of this narrative, Eusebius (who wants to justify God’s retribution against the Jews for their involvement in the slaying of Christ) makes much of a pogrom (*HE*, II, 5) that befell the Alexandrian Jews in 37 C.E. In this regard, he refers to Philo and quotes a prolonged episode from the *AJ*, XVIII, / 257 – 260;
3. With reference to Philo, (*HE*, II, 5) Eusebius comments on Sejanus’ ruthless actions to annihilate the Jewish nation. He also mentions Pontius Pilate’s harassment of the Jews in Jerusalem – the site of the crucifixion of Christ;

4. Eusebius then suddenly changes direction (*HE*, II, 6) and returns to the issue of the Alexandrian pogrom. Specifically he gives the distinct impression that this event occurred almost immediately after the crucifixion and accordingly, is proof of divine punishment for Jewish crimes committed against Christ the Saviour;
5. Eusebius (c.f. *HE*, II, 6 / 8) also manages to move from a local event in Alexandria to the calamitous events that affected the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea. In this way, he manages to emphasise that the *entire* nation of Jews is being punished by God;
6. What is most important to realize when contemplating Hata's theory is the fact that whilst referring to Pilate's actions in Jerusalem, Eusebius is almost totally reliant for his information on Josephus' *BJ* - specifically *BJ*, II, 169 – 170 and II, / 175 – 177; and
7. Eusebius compounds the association of "justifiable" Jewish calamity by boldly referring (e.g. *HE*, II, 6 / 8) to Josephus' record of countless uprisings which had their origin in Jerusalem and culminated with Vespasian's destruction of the city and the Temple.

However, as Hata confirms, in point of fact, Josephus never did refer to *innumerable* examples of Jewish misfortune. Eusebius has exaggerated the content of Josephus' texts purely to support his own narrative that seeks to substantiate evidence of Divine retribution against the whole Jewish nation. It should also be noted that Eusebius even justifies Pilate's suicide (cf. *HE*, II, 7 / 1) and a famine in the time of Claudius (*HE*, II, 8 / 1) as evidence of God's retribution.

In *HE*, II, 6 / 8[225] Eusebius states:

> Ἰουδαίους μὲν οὖν ὧν κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τετολμήκασιν, ταύτῃ πῃ τὰ ἐκ τῆς θείας μετῄει δίκης.
>
> Thus the divine vengeance overtook the Jews for the crimes which they dared to commit against Christ.

[225] Greek text according to Lake *et al.* 1926 – 1932. Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1- 2, in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D6%3Asection%3D8 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

It is noteworthy that Hata (2007: 93) incorrectly translates this as “Thus the penalty of God pursued the Jews for their crimes against God.”

Regardless, Hata (2007: 93) points out that we should give particular consideration to Eusebius’ deployment of such phrases as “the penalty of God pursues without delay” (which would be better translated as “the divine vengeance overtook”) which in one form or another is repeated often (cf. *BJ*, II, 7, 1; II, 10, 1; III, 5, 5; III, 5, 6; and III, 5, 7).

Hata (2007: 93 - 94) explains:

> When ancient writers say in their narratives that the penalty of God fell on some nation or some city, we understand that their statements suggest nothing more than the “once-ness” of an event, but when they say that the penalty of God pursued, we understand that their statements intend to create the continuity of the event. We also know that if an adverb or an adverbial phrase such as ‘without delay’ or ‘promptly’ is inserted after the verb ‘pursue’ in the narrative of the punishment of God, that inserted adverb or adverbial phrase will certainly heighten the tension between the event and any possible audience of the narrative. And the repeated use of the phrases such as “the penalty of God pursued” also gives an impression to his audience that the whole nation of the Jews is destined to destruction… We should bear in mind that Eusebius is the kind of person who changes words or phrases in the text for his own theological purposes.

### 3.5.3 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 10

Hata illustrates Eusebius’ deviancy, when, with reference to *Act.Ap.* 12: 21 - 23 he comments on the death of king Herod Agrippa I (11 B.C.E. – 44 C.E.). However, when stressing the harmony between this account and the one given by Josephus he initially gives the impression that he has overlooked the fact that the *AJ* is referring to king Herod Agrippa II (a.k.a. Marcus Iulius Agrippa (c. 27 - 92 C.E.). Eusebius then misquotes the *AJ*, XIX, 34 - 51 by deliberately swopping the owl (mentioned by Josephus as the omen for Agrippa II’s impending death) for an angel. This dishonest action helps to force some suggestion of alignment of Josephus’ text with *Act.Ap.* 12: 23[226]:

> παραξηρῆμα δὲ ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν ἄγγελος κυρίου ἀνθ᾽ ὧν οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὲν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος ἐξέψυξεν.

[226] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 275.

> Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

The fact that Eusebius must know that he is deliberately forcing his text is again confirmed when after having just made the necessary connection between the *AJ* and the *Act.Ap.* he confidently states in his *HE*, II, 10 / 10[227]:

> ταῦτα τὸν Ἰώσηπον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ταῖς θείαις συναληθεύοντα γραφαῖς ἀποθαυμάζω· εἰ δὲ περὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως προσηγορίαν δόξειέν τισιν διαφωνεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γε χρόνος καὶ ἡ πρᾶξις τὸν αὐτὸν ὄντα δείκνυσιν, ἤτοι κατά τι σφάλμα γραφικὸν ἐνηλλαγμένου τοῦ ὀνόματος ἢ καὶ διωνυμίας περὶ τὸν αὐτόν, οἷα καὶ περὶ πολλούς, γεγενημένης.

> **I marvel greatly** that Josephus, in these things as well as in others, **so fully agrees with the divine Scriptures**. But if there should seem to any one to be a disagreement in respect to the name of the king, **the time at least and the events show that the same person is meant**, whether the change of name has been caused by the error of a copyist, or is due to the fact that he, like so many, bore two names.

It is significant that having just misused the reference to Marcus Iulius Agrippa to establish an alignment between the *AJ* and the *Act.Ap.* Eusebius then unabashedly denies the discrepancy and justifies that the same period of time is indicated.

As Eusebius proceeds with his proof of concept he repeatedly aligns personalities and incidents from his two sources in a very casual and non-critical way. Hata (2007: 94) confirms:

> Eusebius naively regards those sources as referring to the same persons and as belonging to the same period. What is important for Eusebius is not the critical analysis of the two sources he uses, but the agreement that seems to exist at first sight between them.

[227] Greek text according to Lake *et al.* 1926 – 1932. Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1- 2, in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D10%3Asection%3D10 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

### 3.5.4 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 11

Another pertinent example cited by Hata (2007: 94) which clearly showcases Eusebius' preferred *modus operandi* concerns his *HE*, II, 11 / 1 reference to the *Act.Ap.* 5: 36[228] account of a revolt by Theudas:

> πρὸ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνέστη Θευδᾶς, λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτόν, ᾧ προσεκλίθη ἀνδρῶν ἀριθμὸς ὡς τετρακοσίων·
>
> Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him.

Eusebius then immediately backs this account up with a reference to the *AJ*, XX, 97 – 98. Eusebius' quote is taken from *HE*, II, 11 / 2[229]:

> ‘Φάδου δὲ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπιτροπεύοντος, γόης τις ἀνήρ, Θευδᾶς ὀνόματι, πείθει τὸν πλεῖστον ὄχλον ἀναλαβόντα τὰς κτήσεις ἕπεσθαι πρὸς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν αὐτῷ·
>
> While Fadus was procurator of Judea a certain impostor called Theudas persuaded a very great multitude to take their possessions and follow him to the river Jordan.

Hata (2007: 94) correctly notes that the individual named Theudas, as mentioned by Josephus, lived far later (i.e. c. 44 – 46 C.E.) than the individual with the same name mentioned in *Act. Ap.*

Again, Eusebius conflates the famine that occurred during Claudius' reign (i.e. 41 - 54 C.E.) with an account found in *Act.Ap*. 11: 28[230]:

> ἀναστὰς δὲ εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἄγαβος ἐσήμαινεν διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος λιμὸν μεγάλην μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι ἐφ’ ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην· ἥτις ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου.
>
> One of them [prophets], named Agabus, stood up and through the spirit predicted that **a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world.** (This happened during the reign of Claudius). [My insertion and emphasis].

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[228] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 257.

[229] Greek text according to Lake *et al.* 1926 – 1932. Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1-2, in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D10%3Asection%3D10 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

[230] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 273.

### 3.5.5 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 12

Eusebius deliberately confuses this event with an account in *HE*, II, 12 / 2 taken from the *AJ*, XX, 5, 2 / 101[231]:

> ἐπὶ τούτου δὲ καὶ τὸν μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν συνέβη γενέσθαι, καθ᾽ ὃν καὶ ἡ βασίλισσα Ἑλένη πολλῶν χρημάτων ὠνησαμένη σῖτον ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰγύπτου διένειμεν τοῖς ἀπορουμένοις, ὡς προεῖπον.
>
> Under these procurators that great famine happened in Judea, in which queen Helena bought corn in Egypt at a great expense, and distributed it to those that were in want, as I have related already.

With reference to the *AJ*, XX, 1, 2 / 5 which speaks to the same event, it is only possible to confirm that the *AJ* famine (although admittedly, it may have happened during the late reign of Claudius) only affected Judea and not the entire Roman World.

Hata (2007: 95) continues to cite various examples from the *HE* which would certainly be construed as very sloppy research by contemporary standards. In addition, Eusebius, at this stage of his argument needs to prove that James the Just died shortly before the destruction of the Temple (c. 70 C.E.) In this way he can demonstrate to his reader a direct link between James' death and God's divine retribution – in short, cause and effect.

### 3.5.6 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 19 - 23

Hata mentions that the *BJ*, II, 12 / 1 / 227 and the *AJ*, XX, 5, 3 / 112 both comment on the tumult that resulted in the death of some 20,000 Jews in Jerusalem during Cumanus' governorship (c. 48 - 52 C.E.). In his *HE*, II, 19 / 1 Eusebius indicates that this calamity occurred towards the end of Claudius' reign. Thus he manages to imply that this event took place closer to Nero's reign (52 - 60 C.E.). Subsequently, Eusebius aligns this to the *AJ*, XX, 8, 8 / 180 – 181 which speaks of events that took place at the end of the governorship of Felix (52 - 60 C.E.).

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[231] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus*. in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D20%3Awhiston+chapter%3D5%3Awhiston+section%3D2 [6 August 2014].

This association is strengthened by an account (*HE*, II, 20) of the Sicarii and the assassination of Jonathan the high priest (cf. *BJ,* II, 13, 3 / 254 - 256) and the account (cf. *HE*, II, 21) of the false prophet who led 4,000 Sicarii into the desert (cf. *BJ,* II, 13, 5 / 261 - 263); both events which occurred during Felix' governorship of Judea and Nero's reign.

Finally, Eusebius compares these accounts to the narrative in *Act.Ap*. 21: 38[232] where Paul is initially identified by a Roman commander as being the Egyptian false prophet:

> οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων;
> Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?

It has already been seen that Eusebius falsely explains James the Just's death as the cause for the destruction of the Temple (cf. Fig. 13). Furthermore, it will be recalled (Cf. Section 4.2) that Eusebius lies to his reader in the *HE*, II, 23 / 20[233] claiming that Josephus himself confirms this:

> ἄγος. Ἀμέλει γέ τοι ὁ Ἰώσηπος οὐκ ἀπώκνησεν καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι δι᾽ ὧν φησιν λέξεων ‘ταῦτα δὲ συμβέβηκεν Ἰουδαίοις κατ᾽ ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν.
>
> Josephus, at least, has not hesitated to testify this in his writings, where he says, "These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ. For the Jews slew him, although he was a most just man".

Hata (2007: 95) confirms that Eusebius most likely obtained this reference via a reading of Origen (cf. *Cels.* I, 47).[234] This specific passage, which was previously

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[232] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 299.

[233] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D23%3Asection%3D19; D20; D21 and D22 [24 July 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

[234] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

reviewed in Section 3.3.4 is reproduced here for convenience:

> Ὁ δ᾽ αὐτός, καίτοι γε ἀπιστῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς Χριστῷ, ζητῶν τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πτώσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ ναοῦ καθαιρέσεως, δέον αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἡ κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιβουλὴ τούτων αἰτία γέγονε τῷ λαῷ, ἐπεὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὸν προφητευόμενον Χριστόν· ὁ δὲ καὶ ὥσπερ ἄκων οὐ μακρὰν τῆς ἀληθείας γενόμενός φησι ταῦτα συμβεβηκέναι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατ᾽ ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς ¨Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα ἀπέκτειναν. Τὸν δὲ Ἰάκωβον τοῦτον ὁ Ἰησοῦ γνήσιος μαθητὴς Παῦλός φησιν ἑωρακέναι ὡς ¨ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίοϋ, οὐ τοσοῦτον διὰ τὸ πρὸς αἵματος συγγενὲς ἢ τὴν κοινὴν αὐτῶν ἀνατροφὴν ὅσον διὰ τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὸν λόγον. Εἴπερ οὖν διὰ Ἰάκωβον λέγει συμβεβηκέναι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐρήμωσιν τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, πῶς οὐχὶ εὐλογώτερον διὰ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦτο φάσκειν γεγονέναι; Οὗ τῆς θειότητος μάρτυρες αἱ τοσαῦται τῶν μεταβαλόντων ἀπὸ τῆς χύσεως τῶν κακῶν ἐκκλησίαι καὶ ἠρτημένων τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πάντ᾽ ἀναφερόντων ἐπὶ τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ἀρέσκειαν.
>
> Now this writer [i.e. Josephus], although not believing in Jesus as the Christ, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, whereas he ought to have said that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, says nevertheless--being, although against his will, not far from the truth--that **these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ),--the Jews having put him to death**, although he was a man most distinguished for his justice. Paul, a genuine disciple of Jesus, says that he regarded this James as a brother of the Lord, not so much on account of their relationship by blood, or of their being brought up together, as because of his virtue and doctrine. If, then, he says that it was on account of James that the desolation of Jerusalem was made to overtake the Jews, how should it not be more in accordance with reason to say that it happened on account (of the death) of Jesus Christ, of whose divinity so many Churches are witnesses, composed of those who have been convened from a flood of sins, and who have joined themselves to the Creator, and who refer all their actions to His good pleasure. [My emphasis and insertion].

Hata, seems to treat the *JP* (i.e. as it appears in *AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 197 - 203) as an authentic Josephan text. Today, we know that the context for the *JP* passage is c. 62 C.E (i.e. during the governorship of Festus [c. 59 – 62 C.E.]). Thus, Hata uses this information to prove that there is a discrepancy of some eight years between the *JP* account of the death of James (c. 62 C.E.) and Eusebius' desired date of c. 69 - 70 C.E.

However, it has been demonstrated already, that Eusebius could not have been the author of the *JP* and that it must have existed in the *AJ* by his time. In addition, given

that the *JP* is quite likely a forgery, it was already placed into the wrong historical context beforehand. This possible misplacement was most likely due to the need to find a suitable context for the interpolation (cf. Section 4.3.3) and in addition, the forger responsible may not even have known that the date of the chosen context was out by some eight years.

Therefore, to be fair to Eusebius, Hata is somewhat hasty in condemning him at this point. Eusebius, despite his many failings, may well have treated the passage as an authentic Josephan text. In addition, he probably did not even know that there was a discrepancy of time in this particular instance. If he had, he would also have realized that the time of James' death (as described in the *JP*) conflicted with the popular Christian tradition.

### 3.5.7 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 26

Hata (2007: 96) describes how Eusebius continues to misuse Josephus in his *HE*. Eusebius summarises the *BJ*, II, 14, 9 / 306ff. account of Florus' mistreatment of the Jewish population in *HE*, II, 26 / 1[235]:

> Αὖθις δ᾽ ὁ Ἰώσηπος πλεῖστα ὅσα περὶ τῆς τὸ πᾶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος καταλαβούσης διελθὼν συμφορᾶς, δηλοῖ κατὰ λέξιν ἐπὶ πλείστοις ἄλλοις μυρίους ὅσους τῶν παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις τετιμημένων μάστιξιν αἰκισθέντας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Ἱερουσαλὴμ᾽ ἀνασταυρωθῆναι ὑπὸ Φλώρου· τοῦτον δὲ εἶναι τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπίτροπον, ὁπηνίκα τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναρριπισθῆναι τοῦ πολέμου, ἔτους δωδεκάτου ϛ᾽ τῆς Νέρωνος ἡγεμονίας, συνέβη.
>
> Josephus again, after relating many things in connection with the calamity which came upon **the whole Jewish nation**, records, in addition to many other circumstances, that **a great many of the most honorable among the Jews were scourged in Jerusalem itself and then crucified by Florus**. It happened that he was procurator of Judea when the war began to be kindled, in the twelfth year of Nero. [My emphasis].

[235] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D26%3Asection%3D1 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

Immediately afterwards Eusebius (*HE*, II, 26 / 2)[236] states:

> εἶτα δὲ καὶ καθ' ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀποστάσει δεινήν φησι κατειληφέναι ταραχήν, πανταχόσε τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους πρὸς τῶν κατὰ πόλιν π. ἐνοίκων ὡς ἂν πολεμίων ἀνηλεῶς πορθουμένων, ὥστε ὁρᾶν τὰς πόλεις μεστὰς ἀτάφων σωμάτων καὶ νεκροὺς ἅμα νηπίοις γέροντας ἐρριμμένους γύναιά τε μηδὲ τῆς ἐπ' αἰδῷ σκέπης μετειληφότα, καὶ πᾶσαν μὲν τὴν ἐπαρχίαν μεστὴν ἀδιηγήτων συμφορῶν, μείζονα δὲ τῶν ἑκάστοτε τολμωμένων τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀπειλουμένοις ἀνάτασιν. ταῦτα κατὰ λέξιν ὁ Ἰώσηπος. καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἐν τούτοις ἦν.
>
> Josephus says that at that time a terrible commotion was stirred up throughout all Syria in consequence of the revolt of the Jews, and that everywhere the latter were destroyed without mercy, like enemies, by the inhabitants of the cities, so that one could see cities filled with unburied corpses, and the dead bodies of the aged scattered about with the bodies of infants, and women without even a covering for their nakedness, and the whole province full of indescribable calamities, while the dread of those things that were threatened was greater than the sufferings themselves which they anywhere endured. Such is the account of Josephus; and such was the condition of the Jews at that time.

As can be seen, Eusebius based this on a passage from *BJ*, II, 18, 2 / 465[237]:

> ἦν δὲ ἰδεῖν τὰς πόλεις μεστὰς ἀτάφων σωμάτων καὶ νεκροὺς ἅμα νηπίοις γέροντας ἐρριμμένους γύναιά τε μηδὲ τῆς ἐπ᾽ αἰδοῖ σκέπης μετειληφότα, καὶ πᾶσαν μὲν τὴν ἐπαρχίαν μεστὴν ἀδιηγήτων συμφορῶν, μείζονα δὲ τῶν ἑκάστοτε τολμωμένων τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀπειλουμένοις ἀνάτασιν.
>
> It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies, still lying unburied, and those of old men, mixed with infants, all dead, and scattered about together; women also lay amongst them, without any covering for their nakedness: you might then see the whole province full of inexpressible calamities, while the dread of still more barbarous practices which were threatened was every where greater than what had been already perpetrated.

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[236] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D26%3Asection%3D2 [1 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm [8 September 2014].

[237] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.). 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* In Perseus Digital Library [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D2%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D18%3Awhiston%20section%3D2 [10 September 2014].

Hata (2007: 96) supports the finding that such Eusebian phrases as "the whole Jewish nation" and "a great many of the most honorable among the Jews were scourged in Jerusalem itself and then crucified by Florus" are blatant exaggerations:

1. Firstly, Josephus does not indicate such great numbers of Jewish victims from the upper classes; and
2. Secondly, the same incident, as recounted in *BJ*, II, 14, 9 / 305 – 308 specifically states that the number of victims was about 3,600 and also mentions that certain Jews (i.e. not large numbers) who were of the equestrian order were whipped and crucified.

Hata (2007: 96) concludes: "The exaggeration of the figure makes a contribution in heightening the tragic element of the incident which fell on 'the whole nation of Jews'". Hata also points out that when Josephus refers to future threats against the Jews he is specifically referring to anti-Jewish attacks which occurred in Alexandria, Ascalon and Scythopolis. Eusebius palpably avoids the true context of Josephus' *BJ*, II, 18, 2 / 465 narrative in order to prepare his reader for the tragedy which he is about to relate in *HE*, III.

### 3.5.8 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 1 - 6

Book III of the *HE* deals with Titus' siege of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple. In this context, Eusebius ensures that his reader is left in no doubt that this cataclysmic event is a just dessert for Jewish culpability. This is clearly spelled out in *HE*, III, 5 / 2:[238]

> ἐγχειρίζει πόλεμον. μετά γε μὴν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἀνάληψιν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς τῷ κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ τολμήματι ἤδη καὶ κατὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ πλείστας ὅσας ἐπιβουλὰς μεμηχανημένων, πρώτου τε Στεφάνου λίθοις ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀνηρημένου, εἶτα δὲ μετ᾽ αὐτὸν Ἰακώβου, ὃς ἦν Ζεβεδαίου μὲν παῖς, ἀδελφὸς δὲ Ἰωάννου, τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθέντος, ἐπὶ πᾶσί τε Ἰακώβου, τοῦ τὸν αὐτόθι τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς θρόνον πρώτου μετὰ τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἀνάληψιν κεκληρωμένου, τὸν προδηλωθέντα τρόπον μεταλλάξαντος, τῶν τε λοιπῶν ἀποστόλων μυρία εἰς θάνατον ἐπιβεβουλευμένων καὶ τῆς μὲν Ἰουδαίας γῆς ἀπεληλαμένων, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ

[238] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D5%3Asection%3D2 [10 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250105.htm [8 September 2014].

> τοῦ κηρύγματος διδασκαλίᾳ τὴν εἰς σύμπαντα τὰ ἔθνη στειλαμένων πορείαν σὺν δυνάμει τοῦ᾽ Χριστοῦ, φήσαντος αὐτοῖς “πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί”
>
> For the Jews after the ascension of our Saviour, in addition to their crime against him, **had been devising as many plots as they could** against his apostles. First Stephen was stoned to death by them, and after him James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, was beheaded, and finally James, the first that had obtained the episcopal seat in Jerusalem after the ascension of our Saviour, died in the manner already described. **But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea**, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them, "Go and make disciples of all the nations in my name." [My emphasis].

Hata (2007: 97) comments that despite Eusebius' claim that Jews carried out "numberless plots" he only manages to describe three such cases, viz.:

1. The death of Stephen (*Acts.Ap.* 7: 58 – 60);
2. The death of James, the son of Zebedee (*Acts.Ap.* 12: 2); and of course
3. The death of James the Just.

In addition, neither *Acts.Ap.* nor Josephus makes mention of Jews devising "as many plots as they could". Based on this finding, Hata (2007: 97) explains:

> Since the audience of Eusebius does not necessarily test the accuracy of each of his statements or remarks, it is quite safe for him to exaggerate here and there the number of the crimes or plots of the Jews. And the repetition of a simple slogan is most effective in giving an impression to his readers that the siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 was a sure result of the verdict of God upon the crimes of the Jews.

Certainly, after Eusebius has exaggerated the enormous degree of wicked Jewish scheming against the Christian apostles he goes on to present a narrative involving Christians who had to flee from Jerusalem to Perea shortly before the start of the Jewish war. It is also understood that this passage (*HE*, III, 5 / 3)[239] may well be inspired by the writings of Hegesippus:

[239]Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D5%3Asection%3D3 [10 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1.

> μου,’ οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς ἐν Ἰεροσολύμοις ἐκκλησίας κατά τινα χρησμὸν τοῖς αὐτόθι δοκίμοις δὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐκδοθέντα πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου μεταναστῆναι τῆς πόλεως καί τινα τῆς Περαίας πόλιν οἰκεῖν κεκελευσμένου, Πέλλαν αὐτὴν ὀνομάζουσιν, ἐν ᾗ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ μετῳκισμένων, ὡς ἂν παντελῶς ἐπιλελοιπότων ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν αὐτήν τε τὴν Ἰουδαίων βασιλικὴν μητρόπολιν καὶ σύμπασαν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν, ἡ ἐκ θεοῦ δίκη λοιπὸν αὐτοὺς ἅτε τοσαῦτα εἷς τε τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους αὐτοῦ παρηνομηκότας μετῆιει, τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἄρδην τὴν γενεὰν αὐτὴν ἐκείνην ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίζουσα.
>
> But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come there from Jerusalem, then, **as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men**, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men. [My emphasis].

Hata (2007: 97) feels that Eusebius makes too many assumptions in *HE*, III, 5 / 3. Hata clarifies: “No one knows whether those Christians who fled to Perea were ‘holy men’- they might have been simply timid - but Eusebius defines them as such, perhaps in contradistinction with the ‘generation of the wicked’”.

Perhaps the most overt example of Eusebius’ dishonesty is encapsulated in *HE*, III, 5 / 5 – 6[240] where he deliberately creates a false impression of divine retribution against the Jews on a truly exponential scale by assiduously misrepresenting Josephus:

> ὡς δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος τῶν ἀθροισθέντων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἁπάσης ἐν ἡμέραις τῆς τοῦ πάσχα ἑορτῆς ὥσπερ ἐν εἰρκτῇ ῥήμασιν αὐτοῖς ἀποκλεισθῆναι εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀμφὶ τριακοσίας μυριάδας τὸ πλῆθος ἱστορεῖ, ἀναγκαῖον ὑποσημήνασθαι.
>
> χρῆν δ οὖν ἐν αἷς ἡμέραις τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην Χριστόν τε τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ κατὰ τὸ πάθος διατέθεινται, ταῖς αὐταῖς ὥσπερ ἐν εἰρκτῇ κατακλεισθέντας τὸν

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Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250105.htm [8 September 2014].

[240] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D5%3Asection%3D5 [10 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250105.htm [10 September 2014].

μετελθόντα αὐτοὺς ὄλεθρον πρὸς τῆς θείας δίκης καταδέξασθαι.

> But it is necessary to state that this writer records that the multitude of those who were assembled from all Judea at the time of the Passover, to the number of **three million souls, were shut up in Jerusalem "as in a prison," to use his own words.**
>
> For **it was right that in the very days in which they had inflicted suffering upon the Saviour and the Benefactor of all, the Christ of God, that in those days, shut up "as in a prison," they should meet with destruction at the hands of divine justice.**

Hata (2007: 98) draws our attention to the fact that Josephus is not only the sole source for his diatribe, he is also misquoted.

Firstly, in *BJ*, VI, 420 – 426 Josephus gives tallies of all those Jews who were casualties during the War period. In this context Josephus informs his reader of the following:

1. Number of Jewish captives: 97,000; and
2. Number of Jews who perished during the siege: 1,100,000. Josephus is careful to mention that this figure *includes* Jews who were not resident in Jerusalem but who were there purely for the Passover festival and suddenly found themselves trapped (shut up) inadvertently by the Roman army.

Based on the number of sacrifices (i.e. 256,500) offered by the priests during the festival Josephus guesses that Jerusalem hosted some 2,700,200 persons who were *eligible* to make sacrifice. Thus, this considerable estimate must have also *excluded* women who were in *niddah,* a man who was a *ba'al keri,* lepers etc.

Clearly, Josephus has greatly overestimated the numbers. Hata (2007: 98) feels that this was done in order to gratify Vespasian and Titus.

Whiston (1895)[241] also takes issue with these embellished figures and comments in a footnote:

> The whole multitude of the Jews that were destroyed during the entire seven years before this time, in all the countries of and bordering on Judea,

[241] Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus*. in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D6%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D9%3Awhiston%20section%3D3 [10 September 2014].

> is summed up by Archbishop Usher, from Lipsius, out of Josephus, at the year of Christ 70, and amounts to 1,337,490. Nor could there have been that number of Jews in Jerusalem to be destroyed in this siege, as will be presently set down by Josephus, but that both Jews and proselytes of justice were just then come up out of the other countries of Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and Perea and other remoter regions, to the passover, in vast numbers, and therein cooped up, as in a prison, by the Roman army, as Josephus himself well observes in this and the next section, and as is exactly related elsewhere, B. V. ch. 3. sect. 1 and ch. 13. sect. 7.

Eusebius clearly ignores the fact that Josephus' calculations - apart from being inflated – apply to the entire seven-year period of the war and not a single incident. Hata (2007: 98) generously feels that it is Josephus who should be responsible ultimately for any error of interpretation, since his own exaggerations merely assisted Eusebius in his mission. Regardless, by employing Josephus in such a non-critical way, Eusebius efficaciously creates the impression that admissibly and justifiably, God had managed to chastise almost the entire Jewish nation on one grand occasion.

Hata (2007: 98 - 99) points out that based on a reading of *BJ*, VI, 435 it is possible to calculate that Jerusalem fell to Vespasian on 26th September 70 C.E.

Regardless, this tragic Passover incident, which elicited Josephus' exaggerated calculations in *BJ*, VI, 420 – 426 occurred shortly before the fall of Jerusalem. Therefore, irrespective of whether this event occurred in c. 68 C.E. or 70 C.E. (cf. Sections 2.11.3 and 4.6) it certainly did not occur *immediately* after the passion and crucifixion of Jesus in c. 33 C.E.

Hata (2007: 99) refers to Schreckenberg and Schubert (1992: 69) who confirm that Eusebius employs Josephus' Passover calamity in a very non-critical manner merely to give the distinct impression that the catastrophe that occurred at the Passover festival (*BJ*, VI, 420 – 426) was directly related to the passion of Christ.
Furthermore, Eusebius deliberately fails to mention the specific details of the Jews' tribulations in his *HE*, III, 5 / 7:[242]

[242] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D5%3Asection%3D7 [10 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available:

> Παρελθὼν δὴ τὰ τῶν ἐν μέρει συμβεβηκότων αὐτοῖς ὅσα διὰ ξίφους καὶ ἄλλῳ τρόπῳ κατ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐγκεχείρηται, μόνας τὰς διὰ τοῦ λιμοῦ ἀναγκαῖον ἡγοῦμαι συμφορὰς παραθέσθαι, ὡς ἂν ἐκ μέρους ἔχοιεν οἱ τῇδε τῇ γραφῇ ἐντυγχάνοντες εἰδέναι ὅπως αὐτοὺς τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ παρανομίας οὐκ εἰς μακρὸν ἡ ἐκ θεοῦ μετῆλθεν τιμωρία.
>
> But passing by the particular calamities which they suffered from the attempts made upon them by the sword and by other means, I think it necessary to relate only the misfortunes which the famine caused, that those who read this work may have some means of knowing that **God was not long in executing vengeance upon them for their wickedness against the Christ of God.**

### 3.5.9 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 7

In *HE*, III, 7 / 6[243] Eusebius states:

> Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν μετὰ τὸ σωτήριον πάθος καὶ᾽ τὰς φωνὰς ἐκείνας ἐν αἷς ἡ τῶν Ἰουδαίων πληθὺς᾽ τὸν μὲν λῃστὴν καὶ φονέα τοῦ θανάτου παρῄτηται, τὸν δ᾽ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἱκέτευσεν ἀρθῆναι, τῷ παντὶ συμβεβηκότων ἔθνει, οὐδὲν ἂν δέοι ταῖς ἱστορίαις ἐπιλέγειν, ταῦτα δ᾽ ἂν εἴη δίκαιον ἐπιθεῖναι,
>
> If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian concerning the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvellously strange.

Thus Eusebius emphasises that the "prophecy of our Saviour" agrees with Josephus' numerous narratives. He also implies that Jesus foretold of those events ultimately recorded by Josephus.

Hata (2007: 100) believes that the recurrent references to Josephus indicate that Eusebius possibly thought he shared a form of a kinship with him. Specifically, Eusebius believed that he and Josephus enjoyed similar perceptions of God and/or how God's divine plan manifested in history.

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http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250105.htm [10 September 2014].

[243] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library*. [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D7%3Asection%3D6 [10 September 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm [10 September 2014].

Hata (2007: 100 - 101) substantiates this view as follows:

> The Greek word *theos* appears 192 times in the *War*, and in each instance it is used in the singular form. According to Josephus, this *theos* stays in the Temple of Jerusalem as long as both the Temple and Jerusalem are not polluted. Conversely, if the hands of Jews contaminate the Temple in Jerusalem, the *theos* moves out of it and stays away from it. The *theos*, with or without mobility, is also used to designate the God who governs the actual human history. It is this *theos* who has built up so vast an empire of the Romans (*War* 2.390, 5.367–8). It is this *theos* who has placed the sovereignty of the world in the hands of the Roman emperor (*War* 3.404, 5.2. Cf. 4.622).

Thus, Hata (2007: 101) theorises that perhaps Josephus justifies what has happened to the Jewish people – however negative - as a divinely sanctioned plan that will ultimately conclude with some form of divine resolution and ultimate justice for his people.

By way of example, Josephus clearly justifies the hegemony of the Romans by emphasising the following:

1. God's seeming support for the Romans (cf. *BJ*, II, 16, 4 / 390; *BJ*, III, 10, 2 / 484; *BJ*, IV, 6, 2 / 366; *BJ*, V, 9, 4 / 378; *BJ*, VI, 1, 5 / 38 – 40 and *BJ*, VI, 9, 1 / 411) which is manifested in numerous ways (cf. *BJ*, III, 7, 31 / 293; *BJ*, III,10, 4 / 494; *BJ*, IV, 2, 3 / 104; *BJ*, IV, 6, 1 / 362; *BJ*, IV, 6, 2 / 366; *BJ*, IV, 9, 11 / 573; *BJ*, V, 1, 6 / 39; *BJ*, V, 2, 2 / 60; *BJ*, V, 8, 2 / 343; and *BJ*, VII, 8, 5 / 318 - 19);
2. God's physical departure from the Holy Temple due to its defilement (cf. *BJ*, II, / 239; *BJ*, V, / 9, 4 / 412 – 413; and *BJ*, VI, 2, 4 / 127);
3. His desire to see Jerusalem condemned to destruction and the Temple purified by fire (cf. *BJ*, IV, 5, 2 / 323; and VI, 2, 1 / 110); and
4. His request to have the Jews delivered to the Romans (*BJ,* IV, 6, 2 / 370).

### 3.5.10 Conclusions

Hata's thesis is aimed at proving the primary source for anti-Semitism in the Christian Church. Inadvertently, he also manages to highlight two distinct pieces of evidence that are of great importance to this research project:

1. Despite Hata's occasional error of analysis, he has still provided more than enough hard evidence to show that Eusebius has great respect for Josephus

and relies heavily on his writings. This is either because he has some genuine affinity for his work or more likely because he knows that Josephus, apart from having a treasure house of data to exploit, commands such respect that if he is an invaluable tool for substantiating the validity of his own propaganda.

2. Hata has shown beyond any doubt that Eusebius, for whatever reason, is not to be trusted when he employs an authority like Josephus to substantiate a particular argument. Eusebius is quite capable on occasion, of brazen dishonesty and hyperbole to obtain his goals.

It is safe to state that for Eusebius, the end justifies the means.

## 3.6 Barnett's Proof: A Case Study

No doubt because of the author's unswerving faith in his personal belief system, he has no real reason to doubt the assumptions made by his fellow Christian scholars who have also naively assumed, inter alia, that most of what is found in the writings of Josephus is by his hand. In this regard, they are unlikely to find any direct fault with anything recorded by the early Christian Church or Christian apologists like Origen, Eusebius etc.

They will also, presuppose, largely without critical question, the oft-repeated view that the early Christians were consistently the poor victims of Roman oppression as well as being severely persecuted by non-believers and misinformed "pagans" and that through the divine power of the Holy Spirit their "true" faith finally triumphed when it became the official belief system of the entire Roman Empire.

Within this constructed world view, estimated dates for the various books ultimately canonized as the *NT* are always, and without exception, given the oldest possible date. Certainly, it would be difficult to find any conservative Christian scholar who would in any way favour the latest possible date for any *NT* book or gospel.

Barnett (2009: vii – viii) is no exception. He declares that the early Christians were not guilty of transforming a "lesser figure" (i.e. an historical Jesus as possible Jewish Rabbi or social reformer), into a deity. Rather, Jesus was in fact the "Christ" and was always

fully aware of his role: “On historical grounds I will argue that the early Christians were neither mistaken nor willful, but that the preresurrection Jesus believed he was the ‘One who was to come,’ and that the disciples also came to this conviction.”

Barnett (2009: viii), also finds no problem in viewing his “evidence” through the eyes of personal faith. He states: “I engage in this project [to recover the historical Jesus] as one who belongs to the ‘household of faith,’ although my approach aims to be historical rather than theological.”

Despite his unwillingness (intentional or unwitting) to step outside his comfort zone and deal with issues more objectively, he does have the short term honesty to acknowledge that his subjectivity may well be viewed as problematic. He (Barnett, 2009: 7), confirms:

> Try as I might, I too am affected by my own subjectivity so that I will tend to select evidence and interpret it as it seems right to me. So it is important to say something about my inner universe from which I view the world. I admit to being a creedal believer and an Anglican churchman. There are other labels, but these two are sufficient to identify my subjectivity and to help a reader to understand the eyes through which I see things.

What is very revealing about this forthright acknowledgment of subjectivity is that Barnett does not see that this obviously flawed approach will exacerbate any attempt to access any degree of truth regarding an historical personage called Jesus, who it is assumed was the founder of Christianity.

He even goes on to state: “Nonetheless, I have the goal of ‘attainable honesty’ based on the attempt to consider all the sources and to propose hypotheses that make the best sense of the evidence.” (2009: 7)

In point of fact, in his 2009 book entitled: *Finding the Historical Christ* (a title that incidentally clearly embodies his bias), Barnett does not manage to attain any honesty but merely adheres largely to the accepted “party line” by making deductions and pronouncements which merely bolster his constructed worldview and belief system.

For the purposes of this research, Barnett’s employment of Josephus is highly informative as regards the dominance of his constructed worldview. Indeed, one can determine by virtue of his very argument what he takes for granted, and what less-

cherished aspect of his worldview he is grudgingly prepared to risk to critical dissection:

Firstly Barnett (2009: 8) obediently views both the gospels and the writings of Josephus as historically accurate and, based on his particular "research" into Jewish-Roman relations (c. 63 B.C.E. to c. 74 C.E.) and his personal visits to Israel and Jordan, he happily deems his understanding of the origins of Christianity to be "readily imaginable".

Certainly, in the case of Josephus he confirms that he (2009: 8) treats the extant texts attributed to this Jewish scholar as being valid "primary sources". He also pays more than lip service to the writings of Tacitus and Pliny which are more normally criticized by serious scholars as being either suspect (evidence of interpolation) and/ or worthless (e.g. accounts based on hearsay), when it comes to ascertaining the actual existence of an historical Jesus (cf. Sections 2.2 and 2.4).

Despite this well-known circumspection by other prominent scholars, Barnett gives no inkling to his reader that certain important reservations even exist and certainly, regardless of his intentions, he has no personal misgivings whatsoever as regards his unsubstantiated pronouncements. He merely confirms that their import is in total accord with the *NT* (which he incidentally does not seem to question either) as regards an accurate picture of both the early Church as well as the Julio-Claudian period. In this context, Barnett (2009: 8) confirms that:

> Through the Roman eyes of Tacitus and Pliny early in the second century, we see Christ executed in Judea by Pilate, Christians martyred in Rome under Nero and persecuted by Pliny for their worship of Christ ("as if a god") in northern Anatolia. In other words, Tacitus and Pliny confirm the general picture from the *NT* about origin, spread, and religious practices of Christianity.

It is noteworthy that Barnett does not even bother to refer to the object of his research as, say, "Jesus", "*Yeshu*" or even the "Nazarene". Instead, he confidently and without question, not only proclaims the existence of a person who has yet to be confirmed in any extra-biblical/scriptural source as the "Christ", but intimates that he was God himself. This is hardly objective and far from his earlier promise of wanting to seek "attainable honesty".

It is a commonly held assumption that the gospel accounts were written down some years after an oral tradition had been established. This oft-repeated conjecture goes further and strongly intimates that the oral tradition (as yet unproven) was based on eyewitness accounts of an historical Jesus. Now, although this is a reasonable possibility (assuming that an historical Jesus or proto-Jesus actually existed), it does not address other equally plausible possibilities, inter alia, that the Jesus cult was established by other, equally plausible means, and further may not have needed to have been based on the life and mission of an actual person.

By way of but one possibility, it is feasible to explain the creation of the various gospel accounts as part of an extended process whereby metaphoric concepts employed in earlier Jewish assemblies became increasingly literalized in later more gentile circles. For example, the Jewish God was (and still is) often referred to as the saviour by Jews and the Jewish term for saviour is *Yeshu*. *Yeshu* was also, coincidentally, a very common Jewish name. In this scenario, the possibility exists that a fictitious character called *Yeshu* was created over time by more gentile communities, equally influenced by Egyptian, Greek and Roman cults, lost sight of the original metaphoric meaning of the term and inadvertently gave rise for the need to envision a flesh and blood god man called *Yeshu*/Jesus complete with a genealogy, nativity myth and potted biography.

This one possibility is merely presented here to illustrate an important point. The only evidence that someone called *Yeshu* (Jesus of Nazareth) walked the earth some two thousand years ago is to be found in a limited number of often contradictory, blatantly pseudepigraphical narratives. Some of these were more gnostic in nature and were themselves suppressed by early literalist Christian groups as being pseudepigraphical and apocryphal.

Furthermore, the subjective selection and ultimate canonization[244] of but four of these more literalist gospels was largely due to strong Roman Imperial machination. This was undertaken despite the fact that these four gospels, apart from select pericopes, possibly derived from an earlier common source or sources, still fail to fully corroborate each other.

Regardless, as a result of the subsequent dominance of Christianity as a world view on

[244] I.e. The Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E.

Western civilization for the past 1800 years or so, we find modern scholars, raised with all the benefits of modern scientific enquiry and methodologies, who appear to be quite incapable of considering anything but the official party line. Barnett clearly falls into this characterisation as he at no time considers other possibilities. For example Barnett (2009: 9), makes the following statement:

> When we turn to the Christian tradition in the New Testament, we seek methodically to establish the earliest information about the preresurrection Jesus, that is in Jerusalem. We observe a continuum between the oral gospel and the earliest written (synoptic) gospel, a continuum that is biographical in character and that identifies Jesus as the Christ.

Here alone, Barnett infers the following unsubstantiated assumptions:

1. The Christian tradition is totally beyond reproach; it does not need to be subjected to the rigours of modern scientific inquiry and is self-evidently true in every aspect.

2. Jesus not only existed; he was divine, if not God himself, and actually rose from the dead despite the scientific impossibility of such an action ever taking place.

3. There was an oral tradition concerning *bona fide* first-hand accounts of Jesus and his activities ever before there was a written tradition.

4. Jesus was an actual person who had a real life on earth and all accounts in the gospels accurately record precise biographical aspects of that existence.

5. Jesus was the anointed one or messiah.

At no time does Barnett seem to be aware that his statements and his “methodology” are completely illogical and unscientific. In effect he is saying something like “My belief system/world view/constructed reality is beyond reproach and needs no justification. The onus is on you to prove otherwise.”

Having assured his reader of a self-evident “continuum” as far as the Christian tradition is concerned, he acknowledges that the gospel of John is independent to the synoptic gospels and then Barnett (2009: 9 - 10) makes what is possibly amongst the most unscientific statements in his book:

> Thus John's [gospel] is a fascinating alternative version to Mark's, one in which we are left in no doubt that Jesus was indeed the Christ the Son of God. It is difficult in the extreme to account for the high Christology of this gospel unless it was to a significant degree true of the historical Jesus.

From this utterance it is clear that for Barnett the only logical explanation why there should be such a high degree of Christology in the gospel of John is because Jesus really was the Christ and this is also an historical fact. Due to the extremely low caliber of academic rigour of Barrett's book it is impossible to employ anything he says with any degree of trustworthiness. It is also an indictment against the pitiful lack of basic common sense and logic on the part of a conservative Christian scholastic output.

When it comes to the *TF,* Barnett seems to confirm the obvious suspicion that certain scholars, especially those who have a personal commitment to their belief system, will tend to agree with the majority view of like-minded researchers. This no doubt offers a false sense of security in numbers.

The assumption that seems to be made here is that, if the majority of scholars are convinced of something being true, then the chances are that it so. As regards the *TF* Barnett makes the following revealing statement in view of the need to safeguard his faith and exactly how far he (Barnett, 2009: 48) is prepared to go to seek some degree of objectivity:

> While minorities of scholars take the extreme positions that it is totally authentic or entirely spurious, a majority hold that it is a genuine text that has been compromised by Christian interpolations.

Barnett (2009: 48 - 49), like many other so-called moderate scholars, holds that, although someone between the time of Origen and Eusebius most likely did make some amendments to Josephus to give rise to what scholars today read as the *TF*, originally Josephus had in fact written down something about Jesus as an historical reality. As is well known, various, normally more moderate, Christian scholars, (i.e. those who admit to a degree of interpolation), have reproduced what they believe the *TF* must have looked like *before* it was amended to appear as it does today. Possibly the most famous version being the one proffered by Vermes (cf. Section 3.3.10).

For accuracy, the theoretical, pre-interpolation version favoured by Barnett is backed

up by a text found in Agapius' *Book of the Title*[245]*.* In this context, the critical phrases: "if indeed one could call him a man" and "he was the Christ" are absent. However, the phrase "he appeared to them three days after his crucifixion … alive" still features.

The version that Barnett (2009: 49) accepts, is reproduced below:

> About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people who accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the so-called Christ. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. And the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.

Barnett, like many other Christian scholars, clearly places his faith in his constructed reality that originally Josephus *must have* said something about Jesus. However, he is equally aware that hard evidence exists that proves that an unknown degree of Christian interpolation definitely occurred in the *AJ*. Thus, Barnett has to resort to painting a rather concocted and certainly convoluted picture, that will allow him to address and subsequently deflect the charges of Christian forgery, whilst still leaving him with a nifty (albeit amended and even shorter version of the *TF*), but which is still conveniently able to support his unconditional belief in the historical existence of Jesus.

Barnett, knowing that if Josephus did write the *TF* (albeit in an earlier form) he would still have had to have been uncharacteristically complimentary towards Jesus given his normal scathing attitude towards all other Jewish sages or self-proclaimed holy men. Thus, Barnett makes use of that hoary old chestnut that tries to convince the reader that in fact the *TF* is in fact *not* out of character and is being quite neutral if not negative.

To undertake this sleight of hand and literally force the text to yield a more pessimistic flavour, Barnett draws attention to the Greek verb ἐπηγάγετο (won over), which he claims "in its middle verb form" is normally intended by Josephus to be somewhat negative. With reference to Chilton and Evans (1998: 470 - 471) who takes a similar stance, Barnett (2009: 50), translates ἐπηγάγετο as "bring something upon someone,

[245] Cf. Pines,1971. *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications:* 4 – 87.

mostly something bad".

Next, Barnett would have his reader interpret "For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people who accept the truth gladly." as evidence that Jesus is presented by Josephus as deceiving the gullible. He then goes on to strongly intimate that the reason why Josephus uncharacteristically does not choose to condemn Jesus as he does with every other messianic claimant is because Jesus did not bring calamity upon the Jewish people. Barnett (2009: 50) explains:

> …Josephus does not damn Jesus in the way he does the charlatans and impostors who led the people into the series of disastrous conflicts with the Romans. No loss of life occurred for those who followed Jesus, the "wise man".

Even at this point in Barnett's argument, there are glaring inconsistencies in basic logic. The main issue against the *TF* (regardless of its assumed original form) is that it is sandwiched between two very elaborate accounts of serious calamities that befell the Jewish people. Certainly, the two accounts are also introduced as typical examples of highly negative occurrences. The uncomfortable appearance of even a neutral account, which is uncharacteristically cryptic in nature, is highly suspicious. Therefore, Barnett needs to show his reader that the suspected interpolation is in keeping with:

1. the broader context of the other highly negative and elaborate material that encases it; and
2. Josephus' normal hostility towards Jewish wonderworkers.

He ends up doing neither, since he is still forced to admit to the obvious positivity of the suspected interpolation (e.g. Jesus was a wise man and loved by his followers who still exist to the present day) which simultaneously proves that it is totally out of context because no calamity of the Jewish people is ever intimated.

Specifically, Barnett first tries to convince his reader that the use of the verb ἐπηγάγετο is to be seen in a solely negative light and then goes on to contradict himself by attempting to prove to his reader that Josephus is quite positive to Jesus because he did not kill anyone. Surely, Barnett cannot have it both ways?

As has been discussed earlier, another more obvious reason why the *TF* is suspected

of being a forgery is that it so succinctly reproduces and confirms Christian dogma and confession of the faith, including the anti-Semitic propaganda which normally involves wicked Jewish priests encouraging a mild-mannered Pilate to unwillingly administer the death penalty. Unbelievably, Barnett (2009: 50) turns this notion around and claims that the *TF* is authentic precisely because it so accurately repeats the Gospel's exhortations.

Barnett (2009: 50), states: "…Josephus's words confirm the gospels' account of the step-by-step process that led to the crucifixion of Jesus. Jewish leaders accused him to Pilate, who tried him, found him guilty, and crucified him."(Sic)

Barnett also has some very idealistic notions about Ancient Roman justice. Assuming for a moment that a Jewish rabbi had been presented for punishment to Roman authorities in the early first century C.E. by disgruntled members of the *Sanhedrin*, it is highly unlikely that the Romans would have spent much time debating legal niceties when intent on permanently removing an individual whom they considered to be a threat to civic order. Certainly, it is highly doubtful that the Roman authorities would have been too concerned regarding an individual's personal ethics, his religious convictions or his political persuasion.

Nevertheless Barnett (2009: 51) would have his reader believe that somehow the *TF* is authentic, because he naively believes that the Romans did not execute individuals on religious grounds. For him, Jesus was executed for purely political reasons. To support this unsubstantiated notion, Barnett postulates that the Romans must have been concerned by the claims that Jesus was the "Christ". He even intimates that the term "Christ" has something to do with being a temporal leader – no doubt to strengthen his claim that the crucifixion was purely political and thus somehow proves the authenticity of the *TF* because it will be seen to conform to the gospel accounts.

In this regard, Barnett (2009: 51) states:

> There must have been something "political" about Jesus that secured his capital punishment by crucifixion. The Romans had no reason to execute a *didaskalos*/rabbi who reputedly performed miracles, That "something" most likely was his claim or the claim of others that he was the 'the Christ'. This is the reason Josephus calls him "the so-called Christ," and it explains why his followers are called *Christianoi* "after him." In short, Josephus

> corroborates the gospel's account that the temple authorities in Jerusalem handed over Jesus to Prefect Pilate on the treasonable charge that he was a self-appointed Christ, "a king of the Jews," and it was for this claim that he was crucified.

This particular argument is laden with presumption, blatant misinformation as well as ignorance concerning some very basic issues.

Firstly, the Greek term that is translated as "Christ" is normally assumed to be derived from the Hebrew concept of "Messiah" or "Anointed One" and which originally referred to a person who had been anointed with oil as a confirmed agency of God to fulfil his sacred function, inter alia, as a priest, a king or even a military leader. Many commentators have pointed out that the very employment of the term "Christ" by Josephus is highly suspicious because its later Christian connotation of being applicable to a Pharaonic/Greek Godman who is the literal incarnation of the supreme deity, and who intercedes for all humankind would have been quite alien to his historical, religious and social context.

Secondly, even if Josephus (c. 97 C.E.) was somehow aware of this uncharacteristically precocious employment of the "Christ" epithet, he could not possibly have meant "King of the Jews". If he had written about a Jewish wonder worker and further he was aware of Jesus' claims to be a temporal sovereign it would in fact be yet an additional reason to question seriously the positive spin found in the *TF*.

Thirdly, if one pushes aside logic and naively accepts that Josephus was:

1. aware of the term "Christ"; and
2. fully aware of its religious significance to early Christians,

then one must also assume that Jesus was condemned to death on purely religious grounds (i.e. according to the *TF* as opposed to the gospel accounts). Thus the *TF* would not be in accord with the gospel accounts as Barnett claims.

## 3.7 Van Voorst's Proof: A Case Study

With the preceding debates in mind it is instructive to present at this point, another case study. Specifically, Olson's (2013b) recent review[246] of the arguments of a leading Christian scholar, Van Voorst, who is perhaps one of the more erudite spokespersons of the partial authenticity camp, and who has possibly been the most successful in presenting a plausible case for determining an authentic Josephan foundation for the essential aspects of the extant *TF* passage.

This is important, because Van Voorst (2000), unlike Barnett, clearly attempts to approach the issue rationally and tries to distance himself from his faith in an attempt to be as objective as possible. Van Voorst claims to be arriving at his deductions by stint of logic and not personal agenda. However, as will become quickly self-evident, even Van Voorst cannot escape the pitfalls of embracing and defending his constructed reality, which quickly collapses when confronted by Olson's genuinely rational response.

Certainly, Van Voorst is also fully aware of all the preceding arguments that have been put forward by, inter alia, more liberal and critical scholars. Van Voorst is even, as it were, pre-warned of the dangers that he faces in making certain assertions. Regardless, most would accept that he very skilfully presents the conservative Christian case (his personal worldview), refutes the previously arrived at summations (perceived threat to his worldview) and then attempts to retain the majority of the *TF* as an authentic Josephan text (necessary for the continuation of his constructed reality).

However, as has been so expertly confirmed by, Olson (2013b), when these assertions are countered in the light of the constructed worldview of more liberal scholars, the refutations simultaneously highlight Eusebius as the very forger of the *TF*.

Regardless, the basic outlines of his proffered argument (cf. Van Voorst, 2000: 89 - 90) are paraphrased (with some amplification) below, for fairness and balanced argument:

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[246] Olson recently appeared as a guest contributor on the well-known, fairly balanced, *Jesus Blog* spot hosted by Le Donne and Keith. Here he offered criticism of Van Voorst's book (cf. Van Voorst, Robert. 2000. *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.) Cf. Olson, Ken. 2013b. The Testimonium Flavianum, Eusebius, and Consensus (Guest Post) http://historicaljesusresearch.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-testimonium-flavianum-eusebius-and.html.

1. Jesus (of Nazareth) is merely referred to as a "σοφὸς ἀνήρ" ("wise man"), which, despite its positive allusions does not go nearly far enough to satisfy what a Christian forger would have wanted to have expressed about an individual (i.e. Jesus of Nazareth), who he considered to be "ὁ χριστός" and the incarnation of the living God. Furthermore the idiom: "σοφὸς ἀνήρ" should be seen as unusual in a distinctly Christian context. Notice that Van Voorst assumes that he knows exactly what a first-century Christian writer would be thinking.

2. Jesus (of Nazareth) is only spoken of as "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής" ("a worker of wondrous/startling/controversial deeds"). Although highly flattering, the idiom would not have satisfied an early Christian forger due to its possible "ambiguity" and mere inference that Jesus was nothing more than a magician or faith-healer rather than being the Supreme Deity and divine performer of miracles.

3. Jesus (of Nazareth) is labelled as being a teacher of people who "accept the truth with pleasure." For this reason, Van Voorst feels that an early Christian apologist would have been uncomfortable associating a term such as "ἡδονῇ" with its allusions to "sensual pleasure" and Hedonism with Jesus and/or his followers.

4. An early Christian apologist, well-versed in Gospel literature would never have represented Jesus (of Nazareth) as winning over "both Jews and Greeks" because the *NT* (which he guilelessly assumes is reliable from an historical perspective!) presents a different scenario.

5. The statement "Those who had first loved him did not cease [doing so]" is:

   a. typically Josephan in style; and
   b. clearly demonstrates that the author believed that the religion or cult (now known as Christianity) survived after Jesus' death solely because his adherents *loved* him.

   Van Horst argues that a typically Christian forger would rather have stressed that Jesus' devotees focused their continued faith on the sole basis of Jesus' death and divine *resurrection* and not merely on their loving attachment to him as faithful devotees.

6. An early Christian writer would have been somewhat apprehensive apropos the employment of the term "φῦλον" ("tribe") when referring to fellow members of the Christian faith. Specifically, Van Voorst believes that the term "φῦλον" has distinctly constricted and individualistic connotations which do not correspond to Christianity's manifestly *all-embracing* mission. Here we witness a glaring lack of logic, as Van Voorst's fourth claim requires our previous acceptance of what now becomes an antithetical state of affairs, viz.: the early Christians were not trying to convert both Jew and Gentile.

According to Olson (2013b) each one of the hypotheses posited by Van Horst *cannot* be dismissed easily as they are formulated by him. However, the six assertions should in fact be quite erroneous except that due to the "qualified way they are stated (in terms of what is usual, general or common)" they permit Van Voorst to accommodate "an unspecified number of exceptions".

Olson (2013b) successfully demonstrates that since each exclusion is identified and produced as evidence, so do the stated premises, as tendered by Van Voorst, exponentially lose their veracity. And, more importantly, in each case it is Eusebius of Caesarea who is ultimately highlighted as the glaring exception.

Specifically, Olson's (2013b) counter claims are explained below:

1. Eusebius, who typically signifies the personage of Jesus of Nazareth as "our Saviour and Lord" also makes reference to him as "σοφὸς ἀνήρ" ("a wise man" ) in the *Prophetic Eclogues* (PG 22, 1129) which successfully counters Van Voorst's first claim that this accolade does not go far enough to describe Jesus from a Christian perspective. Furthermore, it is also important to take note that certain non-Christian writers at the time, such as the philosopher Porphyry and the oracles of Apollo and Hecate also refer to Jesus of Nazareth as being "a wise man", no doubt as a disclaimer to his having any divine connotations but still admitting that he:

    a. existed; and
    b. should at least be viewed as being an important personage (albeit mortal).

    Some scholars also theorise that Eusebius (as the suspected forger of the *TF*),

used the interpolated text to make a pointed reference to Christ as being "more than a wise man" as a means to counter the then distinctly non-Christian view that Jesus was merely mortal. If so, this clearly flies in the face of Van Voorst's suppositions. Certainly a contemporary Christian apologist such as Lactantius (*Divine Institutes* 4.13.11-17) and, slightly later, Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, 19.23) both employed the self-same tactic, by pointing out in their respective writings that although the oracles of Apollo and Hectate correctly referred to Jesus of Nazareth as a "wise man" they failed to mention his divine status.

2. Olson (2013b) argues that whilst the specific formulation "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής" ( "worker of amazing deeds" ) is only to be found once (i.e. the *TF*) in any claimed works by Josephus, it should be seen as highly significant that it appears many times in the works of Eusebius and - most pointedly – when describing either Christ or God. Thus, clearly, this specific idiom would have satisfied an early Christian apologist and suspected forger.

   Olson clarifies his position on this issue by pointing out that Van Horst's claim, viz.: the phrase formulation "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής" is "ambiguous"; reveals a much larger problem of interpretation. Specifically "παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής" might seem somewhat equivocal to a contemporary (predominantly Christian) audience who supposed that it was written by a first century, non-Christian, Jewish historian (i.e. Josephus). However, if the expected context is changed, and the modern interpreter believes that the text was written by, say, Eusebius, it would not be considered in any way confusing.

   Olson (2013b) gives two examples where Eusebius does use the phrase and where contemporary interpreters do not find the idiom at all ambiguous, viz.: when Eusebius describes the Logos of God in the IE, 1, 2 / 23 and when portraying God himself in the panegyric VC (*Vita Constantini*), 1,18, 2.

   Thus, it is clear that Eusebius for one, did not feel the need to avoid this particular idiom in case it was misconstrued.

3. Olson (2013b) reminds his readers that the early church fathers (including Eusebius) were quite able to distinguish between good and bad kinds of pleasure,

and thus refutes Van Voorst's third claim. For example, Eusebius praises the Christian martyrs who went to their deaths "with pleasure" in the *Martyrs of Palestine* 6.6 and *In Praise of Constantine* 17.11. He also employs the term "pleasure" to qualify the type of rejoicing experienced by the faithful when seated in the presence of God in the world to come (cf. Psalm 67).

Olson (2013b) also stresses that certain terms that are not employed by Josephus in any of his works, but which do appear in the *TF,* curiously appear many times in the works of Eusebius. Thus again, it is Eusebius who becomes the glaring exception to Van Voorst's many claims.

Olson (2013b) also cites the employment of the term "διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων" as it appears in the *TF* which is normally translated as "teacher of human beings". Of special importance here is the fact that those who are to *receive* the teaching are placed in the genitive case. Olson sees this formulation as "peculiar", as it is found nowhere in any of Josephus' writings *apart* from the *TF*. However, it is found several times in Eusebius' *DE*, III, 6 / 27; IX, 11 / 3 when he describes Christ. Olson clearly believes that this betrays Eusebius as the very author of the *TF* and backs up his views, by pointing out that Eusebius was especially concerned with the incarnation theme of Christ being sent into this world to teach the truth about the One God to all human beings who were willing to receive it.

Within this Christian dogma, the OT (Old Testament) is viewed as merely divine preparation for the Christian message of the *NT*. Here the pre-incarnated Christ (as the divine Λόγος) communicated to the Jewish nation, the awareness of the One God and the necessity to worship Him to the exclusion of all others. However, with the advent of the incarnate Christ in the form of Jesus (of Nazareth) the truth was now available to *all nations* prepared to accept the truth.[247]

4. Olson's (2013b) counter argument for Van Voorst's fourth claim that early Christians would not have contemplated a Christ "winning over both Jew and Greek" is perhaps less compelling. Regardless, he confirms the obvious observation, that Van Voorst seems to take for granted that *all* early Christians read

[247] For a concise discussion of Eusebius' Christology, see Frances M. Young, From Nicaea to Chalcedon 2nd edition 2010, 1 - 24, especially 10 -11).

their gospels exactly the same way that say modern historical critics do. Olson (2013b) cites Bauer (1909: 344 - 345) who clearly shows that there was in fact a tendency amongst early Christian writers to assume that Jesus' interaction with gentiles was *far greater* than normally assumed.[248]

Again, Eusebius becomes the primary example of an early Christian apologist whose actions pointedly refute Van Voorst's claims. We have already seen that Eusebius (DE, III, 5 / 109) (cf. Section 3.4.1.1) states that Jesus brought under his power myriads of both Jews and Gentiles.

We have already witnessed in the *DE*, IV, 10.14 (cf. Section 3.4.1.1), that Jesus freed all who came to him from the polytheistic error. In addition, in his DE, III, 5 / 107 – 109, Eusebius claims that Jesus revealed the power of his divinity to all equally whether Greeks or Jews (cf. Section 3.4.1.1).

Olson (2013b) confirms this finding and points out that in retelling the story of King Abgar in the *HE*, I, 13 / 1 - 5, Eusebius says that Jesus' miraculous powers became so well known that myriads from foreign lands far remote from Judea were led to him, seeking healing. Eusebius also says that Jesus sent his disciples to *all the nations* after his resurrection, but this does not repudiate what he says about Jesus attracting Gentiles during his ministry.

5. Van Voorst's (2000) fifth claim consists of two assertions:

Firstly, the assertion that the phrase: "Those who had first loved him did not cease [doing so]" is characteristically Josephan, is, from Olson's perspective, unusual apropos contemporary scholarship on the issue. Moreover, Van Voorst does not discuss the matter further; it is not even footnoted. As Mason (2003: 169) observed, in 3.6.3.9, in this passage, it is not clearly stated what Jesus' adherents "ceased" to

[248] The second century C.E. non-Christian,Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata also possibly described early Christians as being more inclusive in their proselytization, when he wrote:

> The Christians . . . worship a man to this day - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account… [It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.

Cf. Fowler and Fowler (Trs). 1949. *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, Vol IV: 11 - 13.

do, but leaves the reader to infer their actions from the previous sentence. As has already been stated, this is just as unusual for the Greek language as it is for say English today. Certainly it is also unusual for Josephus and can in no way be described as "characteristic" of Josephus' writing style.

Van Voorst's second assertion, viz.: the passage makes the *love* of Jesus' followers (rather than Jesus' resurrection appearances), the principal reason for the continuation of his following is in fact based on an incomplete reading of the text that Olson (2013b) feels sets up a false dichotomy. The *TF* explicitly gives Jesus' resurrection appearance as the reason for his followers not ceasing in their "love" (or "adherence"). In addition, yet again, this is a distinctly Eusebian perspective. Eusebius elsewhere ranks Christ's desire to give his followers visual proof of life after death so that they would continue in and spread his teaching as one of the major reasons for the resurrection (Cf. *DE*, 4.12).

6. As Van Voorst himself notes (2000: 90): "the exception that proves the rule is Eusebius, *HE*, 3.3.3, 'the Christian tribe.'" Also, in, inter alia, his *PE* (*Praeparatio Evangelica*), Eusebius uses such ethnic terms (including γένος, λάος and ἔθνος) and similar concepts when describing Christianity. [249]

After successfully refuting Van Voorst, Olson (2013b) makes a very important observation that is especially pertinent to the import of this thesis:

At the very least, this particular case study should remind all scholars to be wary of arguments from authority. The fact that one or more scholars have endorsed a particular argument does not mean it is automatically sound. Scholarship is not based on some form of democracy or majority consensus of opinion but rather on providing substantiated evidence to support an argument. Even if one were to reject the overall conclusion that it was most likely Eusebius who wrote the *TF*, it would not change the fact that Van Voorst's six arguments are based on false premises about what a Christian writer would or would not have written. Arguments about what a generic

[249] See especially the discussion in Johnson, 2006. Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' *Praeperatio Evangelica*: 25 – 54.

Christian writer is likely to have done always need to be checked against the actual practices of real Christian authors.

In summary, the six arguments against Christian authorship of some elements of the *TF* that Van Voorst has culled from the scholarly literature do not hold with respect to Eusebius.

## 3.8 The Historical Context for Christian Forgery

Considering that it seems quite difficult to find a more conservative scholar who can deal with the contextual evidence for forgery in an objective and dispassionate manner due to their unwavering belief, is there any justifiable evidence to indicate that Josephus may have had a hand in any aspect of the *TF*? Doherty (2009: 562), for one finds this possibility highly unlikely. He states:

> In addition to the silence in Christian commentators before the 4th century, there are other broad considerations which discredit the idea that Josephus could have penned even the reduced *Testimonium Flavianum* advocated by modern scholars.

He maintains that, apart from the analyses "of the individual words and phrases, the entire tenor of the modern 'authentic' *Testimonium does not ring true for Josephus*."

Doherty raises another important issue here. Josephus' personal beliefs aside, what Jewish author before the end of the first century C.E. would have openly praised the largely unorthodox teachings and actions of a "marginal Jew" as Meier (1991) terms him, regardless of whether or not he was a wandering Hasidic holy man, exorcist, magician or revolutionary? Certainly, from the late first century and second century onwards, as Christianity became more visible, the Jewish leadership would have become increasingly anti-Christian. In addition to this, Josephus was writing for a largely Roman audience. Why would he want to elevate as a (Jewish?) champion, a Jew who was supposedly crucified by the Romans as a common criminal; a reminder of a troublesome culture that had taken decades of painful and costly effort to conquer and ultimately subdue?

On this very issue, Doherty (2009: 563), reasons as follows:

> Why, then, would Josephus have made an exception for Jesus? Did he have reports of Jesus' teachings, all of which he perceived as laudable? That is difficult to envision. By the late first century, if we can judge by the Gospels and even scholarly reconstructions of Q, any commendable teachings of Jesus would have been inextricably mixed with all sorts of inflammatory and subversive pronouncements and prophecies of a revolutionary and apocalyptic nature - whether authentic to Jesus or not. The latter would have been an expression of the very thing Josephus hated and condemned in all the other popular agitators of the period.

When one counters this clearly, highly reflective and learned opinion with that of one seemingly based solely on a confession of faith it yields the following retort by Charlesworth (1988: 93):

> Josephus **must have** made a reference to Jesus because the passage, **divested of the obvious Christian words**, is not Christian and is composed in such a way that it is very difficult to attribute to a Christian. What Christian would refer to Jesus' miracles in such a way that a reader could understand them as merely "surprising works"? Would a Christian have written that "first-rate men" or "men of the highest standing amongst us" accused Jesus before Pilate, leaving the impression that he deserved a guilty verdict? Would a Christian scribe have ended a reference to Jesus by referring to "the tribe of Christians" who "are not extinct," as if they should soon become extinct? [My emphases].

Whichever way one approaches this issue, it would be an understatement to say that it is difficult to find any believable context within which a Jewish or Roman author living in the latter half of the first century would have described an individual like the gospel Jesus, in anything but a biased manner.

Even the great Christian scholar, Meier, is unable to prove, with his overtly faith-based conclusion that the *TF* once stripped of obvious Christian meddling is the real deal. He, for one surely realises that without the *TF*, there is no record from antiquity to bolster his cherished belief system. Thus he is prepared to deviate from even the most fundamental of academic principles, and force a conclusion based on emotion and the modicum of rational thought. The desperation that he displays to preserve the *TF* as possibly the last bastion for preserving his irrational belief system is apparent when he (Meier, 1991: 68) states that the *TF*:

> is a passage of monumental importance. In my conversations with newspaper writers and book editors who have asked me at various times to write about the historical Jesus, almost invariably the first question that arises is: But can you prove that he existed? … Thanks to Josephus the answer is yes.

Leidner (2000: 299) with reference to this same utterance by Meier sums up the problem expertly:

> Josephus is the sole prop for the Christian case, and this in two brief, endlessly disputed passages [i.e. the *TF* and the *JP*]. It is passing strange that thousands of books by Christian scholars have failed to confirm one line of the gospel story, but ten alleged lines by a Pharisee, a Temple priest and an unswerving defender of Judaism can accomplish what all the thousands of Christian scholars could not. [My insertion].

Within a verified historical context certain key phrases from the *TF* appear very suspicious.

Firstly, it is doubtful that any first century C.E. (mainly Jewish) members of an evolving Jewish-based cult or cults which were to be described ultimately as "Christianity" would have had identical notions about their faith. This is also true for any individuals who call themselves "Christians", in any specific period of history, let alone those who lived variously in either the second, third, or fourth centuries.

It is for example, well known that both excommunication and anathema were exercised by the dominant groups against those that were considered to be wayward in either their beliefs and/or religious practices (e.g. The Council of Elvira c. 306 C.E.).

Most of these disputes were Christological as they tended to concentrate on both the nature, as well as the person, of Jesus. This fact alone is highly significant given that if the *TF* is authentic, Josephus is already dealing with such advanced issues as early as 94 - 97 C.E. Regardless, the eventual evolution of a more or less universal Christian doctrine (i.e. Catholic orthodoxy) remains a matter of on-going scholarly opinion and debate. Conservative wisdom seems to favour the view that, since the time of the apostles, there always existed an overriding majority view which co-existed uncomfortably with any number of lesser "fringe" or splinter groups. Examples here include Docetism, the rise of Montanism in the second century as well as Valentinus' gnostic Christian teachings.

There are also the examples of anti-heretical writings such as *Irenaeus*' *CH* (c. 180 C.E.) and the then acknowledged Epistle of Barnabus that exhorted its readers not to confuse Jewish and Christian practices. It was only when Constantine I started to ease the Christian persecution (c. 305 C.E. onwards) and finally validated Christianity after

313 C.E., that a real sense of uniformity was instilled within the Church. Here, canons were used to endorse acceptable dogmas by various General Councils. Certainly, it was only after the First Ecumenical Council of 325 C.E. that a concerted effort was made to establish a universal, mainstream belief structure complete with documented creed, associated dogmas and canonical books. Before that time any number of minor variations on a theme had been possible and after 325 C.E. any variations in the new dominant national version were outlawed, including the very powerful Christian grouping known as Arianism.

With the aforementioned facts in mind, the *TF* seems to exhibit a distinctly post-Nicene canonical gospel version of Christianity, with a conspicuously literalist tone devoid of, inter alia, Gnosticism or Docetism. Certainly, the *TF* does not reflect in any obvious way the characteristics that are currently understood as being in accord with the late first century C.E.

The question that no-one seems to have asked directly is "How could Josephus as a first century Pharisaic Jew have composed the tenets of a belief system that was only expressed in such absolute terms in the early fourth century C.E.?

As an example, the *TF* line: "(he was) a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure" could not have emanated from an individual who was a devout Jew; who advocated the primacy of Torah; and who would have had no time for any deviation from Jewish tradition.

As has been noted by other scholars countless times, Josephus rarely has anything good to say about anyone in his histories and, certainly when he comments on other supposed "messianic" figures known to him (and who are also, incidentally, verified by other historical sources), he is overtly unsympathetic and censorious.

Only in the single case of the *TF* does he ever praise a "messianic" figure, viz.: Jesus, even going so far as to claim that Jesus was more than human and even more unbelievable (given his earlier references to the religions known to him at the time), he speaks suddenly of another, previously unmentioned extant Jewish cult and religion - the "tribe of Christians".

Doherty (2009: 562) confirms this interpretation:

> Distinct from an analysis of the individual words and phrases, the entire tenor of the modern 'authentic' *Testimonium* Flavianum does not ring true for the historian [i.e. Josephus]. In the case of every other would-be messiah or popular leader opposed to or executed by the Romans, he has nothing but evil to say. Indeed, he condemns the whole movement of popular agitators and rebels as the bane of the period. It led to the destruction of the city, of the Temple itself, of the Jewish state. And yet the 'recovered' *Testimonium* would require us to believe that he made some kind of exception for Jesus. [My insertion for clarity].

Another important consideration here, apart from the fact that no mention is made of Jesus in his other comparable book (Jewish Wars), is that the reference to Jesus in *AJ*, is so short, so succinct and so suspiciously overloaded with the essential tenets of the Christian dogma. Surely had Josephus found in Jesus a quality that he could never find in any other "messianic" Jewish personage - would that not compel him to expand his commentary, just enough even, to give his reader some meaningful justification for a) this change of writing style and b) obviously uncharacteristic respect and devotion that he suddenly felt for this incredible yet strangely enigmatic individual? After all, why would he even bother to include this passage unless he believed it was important? Again, why place it at a point in his narrative that so obviously breaks continuity and detracts from the primary issue he is reporting on (i.e. disastrous events in Jerusalem and in Rome)?

## 3.9 Chapter Three Summary

Doherty, as a typical sceptic, confirms that for certain scholars who are aware of Josephus' political stance and historical context, even if they want to believe that Josephus did in fact write a genuine record relating to an historical Jesus, certain phrases within the *TF* passage are highly suspicious given that all the evidence points to him being a devout Jew who never ever claimed to be, inter alia, a Christian. And as already discussed, the fact that Josephus, apart from the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, never hints at the existence of any other religious sect or cult in either Judah, Galilee or Samaria in any of his four books, yet, in the *TF* seemingly contradicts himself by speaking about a "tribe of Christians". This is especially pertinent if one considers that Josephus must have been in Rome (at the very latest), soon after 71 C.E. (cf. Bilde, 1988: 58), and thus in a perfect position to witness at first hand the supposed impact that Christianity was making in that city by that time.

Therefore, if anyone accepts Josephus as the author of the *TF* (even a reduced version) then he or she must also know that Josephus must have been the only known non-Christian author from this (and even later periods), who ever had something positive to say about Christians, let alone admiring them or commending them.

This incredible conclusion is made even more outlandish by the knowledge that in the *AJ* Josephus was writing for a primarily Roman audience under the sponsorship of Flavian.

Most, if not all, conservative scholars who accept partial interpolation, tend to argue that the logic behind their hypothesis is dependent on attempting to reconstruct the presumed authentic original wording of the *TF*. In short, typically an attempt is made to remove any text that is accepted as being non-Josephan and what is left is deemed to be somehow authentic by default.

However, as supported by Doherty and others, the task of even establishing a feasible core of text attributable to Joseph is well-nigh impossible. Doherty (2009: 534) and with reference to Guignebert (1956: 18), reminds his reader that up until the 1950s the prevalent learned estimation was that the two passages in the *AJ,* that made mention of Jesus (of Nazareth) were more than likely, total forgeries. It was only in the latter half of the twentieth century onwards, that increasing attempts have been made by solely Christian scholars to rescue these texts and suggest that there is a valid core of material which can still be employed to prove the existence of an historical Jesus.

In this connection, Doherty (2009: 534), states:

> In recent decades, however, the almost universal tendency among scholars is to attempt an extraction of a residual passage authentic to Josephus. This has proven to be something of a "bandwagon" process in which certain basic arguments are regularly recycled, with little or no progress achieved in making them more effective, let alone rendering them conclusive.

As has been reviewed, various approaches have been employed to prove partial interpolation. These include references to specific Josephan writing style, literary progression, the length of the suspected interpolations and its gospel character. When a text contains characteristically Josephan terminology and turns of phrase it is then deemed to be a candidate for authenticity.

Of course, this approach is open to criticism. For example, Doherty makes the obvious point that if someone really wanted to make a passage appear Josephan they merely had to take note of certain phrases and terms employed by him elsewhere and apply them to the interpolation. Doherty (2009: 535) refers to these idiosyncratic literary aspects as “Josephan fingerprints”.

Doherty (2009: 535) even goes so far as to claim that an individual intent on forging Josephus’ hand, and who had spent considerable time reading and digesting his works beforehand, would find this almost second nature. He also quotes Guignebert (1956: 17) (in Doherty, 2009: 535): “It may be admitted that the style of Josephus has been cleverly imitated, a not very difficult matter…”

In point of fact, given the wealth of examples supplied by Josephus himself in his extensive writings, literally anyone can lift his ready formulated sentences and re-appropriate meaning as they see fit.

This makes an obvious falsehood of puffed up claims by such scholars as Meier (1991: 63) who seemingly wants his reader to believe that to forge the writing style of Josephus is nothing short of impossible. In this regard, Mason (2003: 171) naively claims that "To have created the *testimonium* out of whole cloth would be an act of unparalleled scribal audacity."

We could go further and state categorically that an individual, intent on deceitful interpolation *à la* Josephus, would surely first ensure that they understood the layout and style of a particular work by Josephus intimately in order that they could establish the most convincing position in a passage to either a) make fraudulent alterations and/or b) insert additional (fictional) text.

Certainly, it would be hard to imagine someone who was intent on inserting forged text into a genuine Josephan passage to do so after only a very cursory reading of the original text as regards both content and style of writing.

Yet it is this sort of naïve premise that seems to underpin the most common argument that when something looks Josephan it must therefore be Josephan.

Doherty believes that the combined evidence against the *TF* being an original creation by Josephus is overwhelming and quite substantial. He also takes note of the great

lengths that more conservative scholars will go to, to ostensibly refuse to deal with the evidence presented, and then proceed to put forward alternative, often quite absurd, explanations to explain why one should still seriously consider either part or all of the *TF* to be genuine:

> Indeed, inconsistencies seem to infect virtually every line of the reconstructed *Testimonium* that is in favor today. The more 're-doctoring' that must be devised in order to rescue an authentic *Testimonium* from its later Christian depredations, the more the whole exercise falls into discredit and the more modern scholars are forced to ignore the flow of the text and its ideas, which possess a greater 'all of a piece' impression than they would like to admit.

Doherty also strongly intimates that it should be viewed as somewhat peculiar that so many more or less conformist scholars are quite content to accept that some unknown Christian apologist or scribe deliberately Christianised at least part of Josephus' *AJ*, but will not even look at the possibility that Eusebius may have been one of the chief (if not sole), culprits.

In this regard, Doherty (2009: 555 - 556) specifically points out the following:

> That Eusebius would have been able to accomplish this is no more far-fetched than scholarship's general view that some scribe somewhere reworked an original *Testimonium* into the blatantly Christian version Eusebius witnessed to, and this new version eventually became universal.

What has been more than suspected for some time now is that, as Constantine's official Church historian responsible for, inter alia, assisting with the aggressive promotion of the then brand new state religion. In this context, armed as he was with a wide range of manuscripts (that many others were not privy to), Eusebius was in an ideal position to help in not only the dissemination of the official politically motivated spiritual message, but even at times to assist in refining the new imperial religious dogma as well.

Of especial importance to this debate is the unquestionable fact that scribes who came after Eusebius were more likely to quote the *TF* as presented in his *HE* than from the *DE.* This was, because, as Doherty has carefully pointed out, the *HE* was much more widely circulated than Eusebius' *DE*, at the time (i.e. late fourth century C.E.). This would also help to explain how future Christian scribes eventually came to have the

standard *HE* version of the *TF* since when eventually able to obtain a genuine copy of the *AJ,* they would have assumed that the absence of the *TF* was merely an error that could be quickly amended by replacing it. In this context, they would place the missing *TF* into what they assumed was its rightful location as previously proscribed by Eusebius, their trusted church father.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE *JAMES PASSAGE*

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals more specifically with the other well-known extra-biblical/scriptural narrative concerning Jesus, viz.: the *AJ* (Antiquitates Judaicae), XX, 9, 1 / 197-203 which for the sake of clarity, will be referred to as the *JP* (*James Passage*) in this thesis. The most common Greek version of this passage is presented below, followed by a modern English translation:

#### 4.1.1 Passage from *Antiquitates Judaicae*, XX, 9, 1 / 197 - 203[250] (*James Passage*)

> Πέμπει δὲ Καῖσαρ Ἀλβῖνον εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἔπαρχον Φήστου τὴν τελευτὴν πυθόμενος. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀφείλετο μὲν τὸν Ἰώσηπον τὴν ἱερωσύνην, τῷ δὲ Ἀνάνου παιδὶ καὶ αὐτῷ Ἀνάνῳ λεγομένῳ τὴν διαδοχὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔδωκεν. τοῦτον δέ φασι τὸν πρεσβύτατον Ἄνανον εὐτυχέστατον γενέσθαι· πέντε γὰρ ἔσχε παῖδας καὶ τούτους πάντας συνέβη ἀρχιερατεῦσαι τῷ θεῷ, αὐτὸς πρότερος τῆς τιμῆς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀπολαύσας, ὅπερ οὐδενὶ συνέβη τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀρχιερέων. ὁ δὲ νεώτερος Ἄνανος, ὃν τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ἔφαμεν εἰληφέναι, θρασὺς ἦν τὸν τρόπον καὶ τολμητὴς διαφερόντως, αἵρεσιν δὲ μετῄει τὴν Σαδδουκαίων, οἵπερ εἰσὶ περὶ τὰς κρίσεις ὠμοὶ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, καθὼς ἤδη δεδηλώκαμεν. ἅτε δὴ οὖν τοιοῦτος ὢν ὁ Ἄνανος, νομίσας ἔχειν καιρὸν ἐπιτήδειον διὰ τὸ τεθνάναι μὲν Φῆστον, Ἀλβῖνον δ᾽ ἔτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὑπάρχειν, καθίζει συνέδριον κριτῶν καὶ παραγαγὼν εἰς αὐτὸ τὸν **ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ,** καί τινας ἑτέρους, ὡς παρανομησάντων κατηγορίαν ποιησάμενος παρέδωκε λευσθησομένους. ὅσοι δὲ ἐδόκουν ἐπιεικέστατοι τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν εἶναι καὶ περὶ τοὺς νόμους ἀκριβεῖς βαρέως ἤνεγκαν ἐπὶ τούτῳ καὶ πέμπουσιν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα κρύφα παρακαλοῦντες αὐτὸν ἐπιστεῖλαι τῷ Ἀνάνῳ μηκέτι τοιαῦτα πράσσειν· μηδὲ γὰρ τὸ πρῶτον ὀρθῶς αὐτὸν πεποιηκέναι. τινὲς δ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ τὸν Ἀλβῖνον ὑπαντιάζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ὁδοιποροῦντα καὶ διδάσκουσιν, ὡς οὐκ ἐξὸν ἦν Ἀνάνῳ χωρὶς τῆς ἐκείνου γνώμης καθίσαι συνέδριον. Ἀλβῖνος δὲ πεισθεὶς τοῖς λεγομένοις γράφει μετ᾽ ὀργῆς τῷ Ἀνάνῳ λήψεσθαι παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ δίκας ἀπειλῶν. καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀγρίππας διὰ τοῦτο τὴν Ἀρχιερωσύνην ἀφελόμενος αὐτὸν ἄρξαντα μῆνας τρεῖς Ἰησοῦν τὸν τοῦ Δαμναίου κατέστησεν. [My emphasis].

[250] The Greek and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.). 1999. *The New Complete Works of Josephus*: 662 (*AJ*, XX, 9, 1 / 197-203). Cf. Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus*. in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0145

> And now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them **the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James,** and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king, desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest. [My emphasis].

## 4.2 Brief Historical Background

In his *COM* (*Commentary on Matthew*), X, 17 / 5268 – 5269[251] (composed c. 246 – 248 C.E.), Origen specifically mentions the *AJ* claiming that Josephus had affirmed that those who were involved in James' stoning had suffered divine vengeance:

> Ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον δὲ διέλαμψεν οὗτος ὁ Ἰάκωβος ἐν τῷ λαῷ ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνῃ ὡς Φλάβιον Ἰώσηπον ἀναγράψαντα ἐν εἴκοσι βιβλίοις τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν, τὴν αἰτίαν παραστῆσαι βουλόμενον τοῦ τὰ τοσαῦτα πεπονθέναι τὸν λαὸν ὡς καὶ τὸν ναὸν κατασκαφῆναι, εἰρηκέναι κατὰ μῆνιν θεοῦ ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ἀπηντηκέναι διὰ τὰ **εἰς Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ** ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν τετολμημένα.
>
> And to so great a reputation among the people for righteousness did this James rise, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the "Antiquities of the Jews" in twenty books, when **wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the temple was razed to the**

[251] Greek text according to Migne (Ed. and Tr.) 1862b. *Patrologiae: Cursus Completus, Series Latina, Tomus* XXIII: 877. English translation according to Patrick (Tr.) 1986b. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. X, in New Advent.org [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1016.htm [12 September 2014].

**ground, said, that these things happened to them in accordance with the wrath of God in consequence of the things which they had dared to do against James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ.**

**Καὶ «τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν» ὅτι, τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἡμῶν οὐ καταδεξάμενος εἶναι Χριστόν, οὐδὲν ἧττον Ἰακώβῳ δικαιοσύνην ἐμαρτύρησε τοσαύτην.** Λέγει δὲ ὅτι καὶ ὁ λαὸς ταῦτα ἐνόμιζε διὰ τὸν Ἰάκωβον πεπονθέναι. Καὶ Ἰούδας ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολὴν ὀλιγόστιχον μέν, πεπληρωμένην δὲ τῶν τῆς οὐρανίου χάριτος ἐρρωμένων λόγων· ὅστις ἐν τῷ προοιμίῳ εἴρηκεν· «Ἰούδας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, ἀδελφὸς δὲ Ἰακώβου.»

**And the wonderful thing is, that, though he did not accept Jesus as Christ, he yet gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great**; **and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James**. And Jude, who wrote a letter of few lines, it is true, but filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace, said in the preface, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." [My emphases].

As an aside, it should also be pointed out that some scholars (cf. Kirby 2013), believe that this specific passage proves that Origen was referring to an additional source whom he assumed was Josephus, as the latter, based on the extant version of the *JP*, does not make reference to the destruction of the temple being caused by James' death. Therefore, either Origen is fabricating, or he is making use of some now lost source that was also quoted by, inter alia, Eusebius at a later date.

Also, in c. 248 C.E. Origen (in *Cels.* I, 47)[252] confirms his stance:

Ὁ δ᾽ αὐτός, καίτοι γε ἀπιστῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς Χριστῷ, ζητῶν τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πτώσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ ναοῦ καθαιρέσεως, δέον αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἡ κατὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιβουλὴ τούτων αἰτία γέγονε τῷ λαῷ, ἐπεὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὸν προφητευόμενον Χριστόν· ὁ δὲ καὶ ὥσπερ ἄκων οὐ μακρὰν τῆς ἀληθείας γενόμενός φησι ταῦτα συμβεβηκέναι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατ᾽ ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα ἀπέκτειναν. Τὸν δὲ Ἰάκωβον τοῦτον ὁ Ἰησοῦ γνήσιος μαθητὴς Παῦλός φησιν ἑωρακέναι ὡς ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου, οὐ τοσοῦτον διὰ τὸ πρὸς αἵματος συγγενὲς ἢ τὴν κοινὴν αὐτῶν ἀνατροφὴν ὅσον διὰ τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὸν λόγον. Εἴπερ οὖν διὰ Ἰάκωβον λέγει συμβεβηκέναι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐρήμωσιν τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, πῶς οὐχὶ εὐλογώτερον διὰ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦτο φάσκειν γεγονέναι; Οὗ τῆς θειότητος μάρτυρες αἱ τοσαῦται τῶν μεταβαλόντων ἀπὸ τῆς χύσεως τῶν κακῶν ἐκκλησίαι καὶ ἠρτημένων τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πάντ᾽ ἀναφερόντων ἐπὶ τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ἀρέσκειαν.

Now this writer [i.e. Josephus], although **not believing in Jesus as the**

[252] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

> **Christ**, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, whereas he ought to have said that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, says nevertheless--being, although against his will, not far from the truth--that **these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ),--the Jews having put him to death**, although he was a man most distinguished for his justice. Paul, a genuine disciple of Jesus, says that he regarded this **James as a brother of the Lord,** not so much on account of their relationship by blood, or of their being brought up together, as because of his virtue and doctrine. If, then, he says that it was on account of James that the desolation of Jerusalem was made to overtake the Jews, how should it not be more in accordance with reason to say that it happened on account (of the death) of Jesus Christ, of whose divinity so many Churches are witnesses, composed of those who have been convened from a flood of sins, and who have joined themselves to the Creator, and who refer all their actions to His good pleasure. [My emphases and insertion].

As extant works of Josephus do not make reference to the destruction of the Temple as being caused by James' death. It might be assumed that either Origen is manufacturing a narrative or more likely he is referring to some now lost source that was also quoted by, inter alia, Eusebius at a later date.

In his *Cels.* II, 13, (*i.e. c. 248 C.E.*)[253]*,* Origen writes:

> Οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοὺς αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ γνωρίμους καὶ ἀκροατὰς φήσουσι χωρὶς γραφῆς τὴν τῶν εὐαγγελίων παραδεδωκέναι διδασκαλίαν καὶ καταλιπεῖν τοὺς μαθητὰς χωρὶς τῶν περὶ Ἰησοῦ ἐν γράμμασιν ὑπομνη μάτων. Γέγραπται δὴ ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ· Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλου μένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ, τότε γνῶτε ὅτι ἤγγισεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς. Καὶ οὐδαμῶς τότε ἦν στρατό πεδα περὶ τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ κυκλοῦντα αὐτὴν καὶ περιέχοντα καὶ πολιορκοῦντα. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἤρξατο μὲν ἔτι Νέρωνος βασιλεύοντος παρέτεινε δὲ ἕως τῆς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἡγεμονίας· οὗ ὁ υἱὸς Τίτος καθεῖλε τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὡς μὲν Ἰώσηπος γράφει, διὰ **Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ**, ὡς δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια παρίστησι, διὰ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.
>
> For they will not maintain that the acquaintances and pupils of Jesus Himself handed down His teaching contained in the Gospels without committing it to writing, and left His disciples without the memoirs of Jesus contained in their works. Now in these it is recorded, that "when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then shall you know that the desolation thereof is near." But at that time there were no armies around Jerusalem, encompassing and enclosing and besieging it; for the siege began in the reign of Nero, and lasted till the government of Vespasian,

[253] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Crombie (Tr.). 1885. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV, in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04161.htm [13 September 2014].

whose son Titus destroyed Jerusalem, on account, as Josephus says, of **James the Just, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ**, but in reality, as the truth makes clear, on account of Jesus Christ the Son of God. [My emphases].

Here, again, Origen seems to want to confirm what he believes is true: James' death was the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Later between c. 311 – c. 323 C.E., Eusebius (*HE*, II, 23 / 3)[254] states:

> τὸν δὲ τῆς τοῦ Ἰακώβου τελευτῆς τρόπον ἤδη μὲν πρότερον αἱ παρατεθεῖσαι τοῦ Κλήμεντος φωναὶ δεδηλώκασιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ πτερυγίου βεβλῆσθαι ξύλῳ τε τὴν πρὸς θάνατον πεπλῆχθαι αὐτὸν ἱστορηκότος· ἀκριβέστατά γε μὴν τὰ κατ᾽ αὐτὸν ὁ Ἡγήσιππος, ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης τῶν ἀποστόλων γενόμενος διαδοχῆς, ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ αὐτοῦ ὑπομνήματι τοῦτον λέγων ἱστορεῖ τὸν τρόπον·
>
> The manner of James' death has been already indicated by the above-quoted words of Clement, who records that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and was beaten to death with a club. But Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the apostles, gives the most accurate account in the fifth book of his Memoirs. He writes as follows:

Eusebius (*HE*, II, 23 / 12 - 22)[255] continues:

> *HE*, II, 23 / 12:
>
> ἔστησαν οὖν οἱ προειρημένοι γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι τὸν Ἰάκωβον ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ναοῦ, καὶ ἔκραξαν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπαν· δίκαιε, ᾧ πάντες πείθεσθαι ὀφείλομεν, ἐπεὶ ὁ λαὸς πλανᾶται ὀπίσω Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σταυρωθέντος, ἀπάγγειλον ἡμῖν τίς ἡ θύρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.
>
> The aforesaid Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James upon the pinnacle of the temple, and cried out to him and said: "You just one, in whom we ought all to have confidence, forasmuch as the people are led astray after Jesus, the crucified one, declare to us, what is the gate of Jesus."

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[254] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D23%3Asection%3D19; D20; D21 and D22 [24 July 2014].

[255] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D23%3Asection%3D19; D20; D21 and D22 [24 July 2014].

*HE*, II, 23 / 13:

καὶ ἀπεκρίνατο φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· τί με ἐπερωτᾶτε περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ αὐτὸς κάθηται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς μεγάλης δυνάμεως, καὶ μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ;

And he answered with a loud voice, “Why do you ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He himself sits in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come upon the clouds of heaven.”

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*HE*, II, 23 / 14:

καὶ πολλῶν πληροφορηθέντων καὶ δοξαζόντων ἐπὶ τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ λεγόντων· ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ, τότε πάλιν οἱ αὐτοὶ γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον· κακῶς ἐποιήσαμεν τοιαύτην μαρτυρίαν παρασχόντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ·
ἀλλὰ ἀναβάντες καταβάλωμεν αὐτόν, ἵνα φοβηθέντες μὴ πιστεύσωσιν αὐτῷ.

And when many were fully convinced and gloried in the testimony of James, and said, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” these same Scribes and Pharisees said again to one another, “We have done badly in supplying such testimony to Jesus. But let us go up and throw him down, in order that they may be afraid to believe him.”

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*HE*, II, 23 / 15:

καὶ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· ὢ ὤ, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος ἐπλανήθη, καὶ ἐπλήρωσαν τὴν γραφὴν τὴν ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ γεγραμμένην· ἄρωμεν τὸν δίκαιον, ὅτι δύσχρηστος ἡμῖν ἐστιν. τοίνυν τὰ γενήματα τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν φάγονται.

And they cried out, saying, “Oh! Oh! The just man is also in error.” And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, “Let us take away the just man, because he is troublesome to us: therefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”

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*HE*, II, 23 / 16:

ἀναβάντες οὖν κατέβαλον τὸν δίκαιον. καὶ ἔλεγον ἀλλήλοις· λιθάσωμεν Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον, καὶ ἤρξαντο λιθάζειν αὐτόν, ἐπεὶ καταβληθεὶς οὐκ ἀπέθανεν· ἀλλὰ στραφεὶς ἔθηκε τὰ γόνατα λέγων· παρακαλῶ, κύριε θεὲ πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν.

So they went up and threw down the just man, and said to each other, “Let us stone James the Just.” And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall; but he turned and knelt down and said, “I entreat you, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

*HE*, II, 23 / 17:

οὕτως δὲ καταλιθοβολούντων αὐτόν, εἷς τῶν ἱερέων τῶν υἱῶν Ῥηχὰβ υἱοῦ Ῥαχαβείμ, τῶν μαρτυρουμένων ὑπὸ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου, ἔκραζεν λέγων· παύσασθε· τί ποιεῖτε; εὔχεται ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὁ δίκαιος.

And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of the Rechabites, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, “Stop. What are you doing? The just one prays for you.”

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*HE*, II, 23 / 18:

καὶ λαβών τις ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν, εἷς τῶν γναφέων, τὸ ξύλον, ἐν ᾧ ἀποπιέζει τὰ ἱμάτια, ἤνεγκεν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ δικαίου, καὶ οὕτως ἐμαρτύρησεν. καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ τόπῳ παρὰ τῷ ναῷ, καὶ ἔτι αὐτοῦ ἡ στήλη μένει παρὰ τῷ ναῷ. μάρτυς οὗτος ἀληθὴς Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν γεγένηται ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν. **καὶ εὐθὺς Οὐεσπασιανὸς πολιορκεῖ αὐτούς».**

And one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man on the head. And thus he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple. He became a true witness, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the Christ. **And immediately Vespasian besieged them.**

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*HE*, II, 23 / 19:

ταῦτα διὰ πλάτους, συνῳδά γε τῷ Κλήμεντι καὶ ὁ Ἡγήσιππος οὕτω δὲ ἄρα θαυμάσιός τις ἦν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνῃ βεβόητο ὁ Ἰάκωβος, ὡς καὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίων ἔμφρονας δοξάζειν ταύτην εἶναι τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς παραχρῆμα μετὰ τὸ μαρτύριον αὐτοῦ πολιορκίας τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἣν δὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον αὐτοῖς συμβῆναι ἢ διὰ τὸ κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ τολμηθὲν

These things are related at length by Hegesippus, who is in agreement with Clement. **James was so admirable a man and so celebrated among all for his justice, that the more sensible even of the Jews were of the opinion that this was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem**, which happened to them immediately after his martyrdom for no other reason than their daring act against him.

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*HE*, II, 23 / 20:

ἄγος. Ἀμέλει γέ τοι ὁ Ἰώσηπος οὐκ ἀπώκνησεν καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι δὶ ὧν φησιν λέξεων ‘ταῦτα δὲ συμβέβηκεν Ἰουδαίοις κατ᾽ ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ,

ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν.

Josephus, at least, has not hesitated to testify this in his writings, where he says, “These things happened to the Jews to avenge **James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ**. For the Jews slew him, although he was a most just man.

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*HE*, II, 23 / 21:

Ὁ δ᾽ αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐν εἰκοστῷ᾽ τῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας δηλοῖ διὰ τούτων· ‘πέμπει δὲ Καῖσαρ Ἀλβῖνον εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἔπαρχον,᾽ Φήστου τὴν τελευτὴν πυθόμενος. ὁ δὲ νεώτερος᾽ Ἄνανος, ὃν τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην εἴπαμεν παρειληφέναι, θρασὺς ἦν τὸν τρόπον καὶ τολμητὴς διαφερόντως, αἵρεσιν δὲ μετήει τὴν Σαδδουκαίων, οἵπερ εἰσὶ περὶ τὰς κρίσεις ὠμοὶ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, καθὼς ἤδη δεδηλώκαμεν.

And the same writer [Josephus] records his death also in the twentieth book of his Antiquities in the following words: “But the emperor, when he learned of the death of Festus, sent Albinus to be procurator of Judea. But the younger Ananus, who, as we have already said, had obtained the high priesthood, was of an exceedingly bold and reckless disposition. He belonged, moreover, to the sect of the Sadducees, who are the most cruel of all the Jews in the execution of judgment, as we have already shown.

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*HE*, II, 23 / 22:

ἅτε δὴ οὖν τοιοῦτος ὢν ὁ Ἄνανος, νομίσας ἔχειν καιρὸν ἐπιτήδειον διὰ τὸ τεθνάναι μὲν Φῆστον, Ἀλβῖνον δ᾽ ἔτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὑπάρχειν, καθίζει συνέδριον κριτῶν, καὶ παραγαγὼν εἰς αὐτὸ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ Χριστοῦ λεγομένου, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ, καί τινας ἑτέρους, ὡς παρανομησάντων κατηγορίαν ποιησάμενος, παρέδωκεν λευσθησομένους.

Ananus, therefore, being of this character, and supposing that he had a favourable opportunity on account of the fact that Festus was dead, and Albinus was still on the way, called together the Sanhedrim, and brought before them the **brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, James by name**, together with some others, and accused them of violating the law, and condemned them to be stoned”. [My emphases and insertion].

In c. 392 - 393 C.E., Jerome (*DVI*, 2)[256], states that:

***Iacobus, qui appellatur frater Domini cognomento Iustus****, ut nonnulli*

[256] Latin text according to *Stridonensis, s.a. De viris illustribus* in *Ruslan Khazarzar: The Son of Man* [Online]. Available: http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/books/hieronym/viris_l.htm [24 July 2014]. English translation according to Richardson (Tr.). 1892. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. III, in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2708.htm [13 September 2014].

*existimant, Ioseph ex alia uxore, ut autem mihi videtur, Mariae sororis matris Domini cuius Ioannes in libro suo meminit, filius, post passionem Domini statim ab Apostolis Hierosolymorum episcopus ordinatus, unam tantum scripsit Epistolam, quae de septem Catholicis est, quae et ipsa ab alio quodam sub nomine eius edita asseritur, licet paulatim tempore procedente obtinuerit auctoritatem. Hegesippus vicinus Apostolicorum temporum, in quinto Commentariorum libro de Iacobo narrans, ait:*

*Suscepit Ecclesiam Hierosolymorum post Apostolos frater Domini Iacobus, cognomento Iustus. Multi siquidem Iacobi vocabantur. Hic de utero matris sanctus fuit, vinum et siceram non bibit, carnem nullam comedit, nunquam attonsus fuit, nec unctus fuit unguento, nec usus balneo. Huic soli licitum erat ingredi Sancta sanctorum: siquidem vestibus laneis non utebatur, sed lineis, solusque ingrediebatur templum, et fixis genibus pro populo deprecabatur, in tantum, ut camelorum duritiem traxisse eius genua crederentur.*

*Dicit et alia multa, quae enumerare longum esset. Sed et Iosephus in vicesimo libro Antiquitatum refert, et Clemens in septimo ὑποτυπώσεως, mortuo Festo, qui Iudaeam regebat, missum esse a Nerone successorem eius Albinum, qui cum necdum ad provinciam pervenisset, Ananus, inquit, Pontifex adolescens Anani filius, de genere sacerdotali, accepta occasione ἀναρχίας, concilium congregavit, et* ***compellens*** *publice* ***Iacobum, ut Christum Dei Filium denegaret****, contradicentem lapidari iussit. Qui cum praecipitatus de pinna templi, confractis cruribus, adhuc semianimis tendens ad coelum manus, diceret: Domine, ignosce eis, quod enim faciunt, nesciunt fullonis fuste, quo uda vestimenta extorqueri solent, in cerebro percussus interiit. Tradit item Iosephus, tantae eum sanctitatis fuisse, et celebritatis in populo, ut propter eius necem, creditum sit subversam esse Hierosolymam*. [My emphasis, layout, spacing and amended punctuation for greater clarity].

**James, who is called the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just**, the son of Joseph by another wife, as some think, but, as appears to me, the son of Mary sister of the mother of our Lord of whom John makes mention in his book, after our Lord's passion at once ordained by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem, wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles and even this is claimed by some to have been published by some one else under his name, and gradually, as time went on, to have gained authority. Hegesippus, who lived near the apostolic age, in the fifth book of his Commentaries, writing of James, says

"After the apostles, James the brother of the Lord surnamed the Just was made **head of the Church at Jerusalem**. Many indeed are called James. This one was holy from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, ate no flesh, never shaved or anointed himself with ointment or bathed. **He alone had the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies**, since indeed he did not use woollen vestments but linen and went alone into the temple and prayed in behalf of the people, insomuch that his knees were reputed to have acquired the hardness of camels' knees."

He says also many other things, too numerous to mention. **Josephus also**

> **in the 20th book of his Antiquities, and Clement in the 7th of his Outlines** mention that on the death of Festus who reigned over Judea, Albinus was sent by Nero as his successor. Before he had reached his province, Ananias the high priest, the youthful son of Ananus of the priestly class, taking advantage of the state of anarchy, assembled a council and publicly tried **to force James to deny that Christ is the son of God.** When he refused Ananius ordered him to be stoned. Cast down from a pinnacle of the temple, his legs broken, but still half alive, raising his hands to heaven he said, "Lord forgive them for they know not what they do." Then struck on the head by the club of a fuller such a club as fullers are accustomed to wring out garments with - he died. **This same Josephus records the tradition that this James was of so great sanctity and reputation among the people that the downfall of Jerusalem was believed to be on account of his death.** [My emphasis, layout, spacing and amended punctuation for greater clarity].

Finally, as recorded earlier (cf. Section 3.3.4.1) Jerome, in his *DVI,* 13*,* (c*.* 392 - 393 C.E.)[257] writes:

> *Iosephus Matthiae filius, ex Hierosolymis sacerdos, a Vespasiano captus, cum Tito filio eius relictus est. Hic Romam veniens, septem libros Iudaicae captivitatis Imperatoribus patri filioque obtulit, qui et bibliothecae publicae traditi sunt, et ob ingenii gloriam, statuam quoque meruit Romae… Hic in decimo octavo Antiquitatum libro, manifestissime confitetur, propter magnitudinem signorum, Christum a Pharisaeis interfectum, et Ioannem Baptistam vere prophetam fuisse,* ***et propter interfectionem Iacobi apostoli, dirutam Hierosolymam.*** [My emphasis, layout, and amended punctuation for greater clarity].

> Josephus, the son of Matthias, priest of Jerusalem, taken prisoner by Vespasian and his son Titus, was banished. Coming to Rome he presented to the emperors, father and son, seven books On the captivity of the Jews, which were deposited in the public library and, on account of his genius, was found worthy of a statue at Rome…In the eightheenth book of his Antiquities he most openly acknowledges that Christ was slain by the Pharisees on account of the greatness of his miracles, that John the Baptist was truly a prophet, **and that Jerusalem was destroyed because of the murder of James the apostle**. [My emphasis, correction (underlined) and layout for greater clarity].

[257] Latin text according to *Stridonensis, s.a. De viris illustribus* in *Ruslan Khazarzar: The Son of Man* [Online]. Available: http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/books/hieronym/viris_l.htm [24 July 2014]. English translation according to Richardson (Tr.). 1892. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Vol. III, in *New Advent.org* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2708.htm [13 September 2014].

### 4.2.1 The Possible Role of Hegesippus

Kirby (2014a) makes a compelling (albeit circumstantial), argument that Origen, far from fabricating and/or embellishing Josephus in *COM*, X, 17 / 5268 – 5269; *Cels.* I, 47 and *Cels.* II, 13 (*ut supra*, Section 4.2), is innocently attributing too much data to Josephus as his source. Furthermore, Origen displays the same kind of reaction to Josephus in his writings as when quoting Hegesippus. Therefore it follows that Origen probably thinks that they are the same source.

Kirby (2014a) also posits that perhaps Origen is mistaking a Christian tradition prevalent by the second century C.E. (i.e. the specifics of the greatly exaggerated death of James) which is not found in the *NT*. Certainly it is not to be found today in any of Josephus' writings, including the *JP* which has come down to us in the *AJ*, XX, 1 / 197 - 203.

Due to this reality, Kirby (2014a) postulates that there once existed a now lost written source that supplied, inter alia, Origen with information that he truthfully presumed came from Josephus.

With reference to both Origen and Eusebius, Kirby (2014a) makes the following observation:

> It is a curious fact that both exegetes from early third century Alexandria should make the same kind of error and one which leads us to wonder about the otherwise-unattested manuscript tradition of Hegesippus and/or Josephus that may have existed there. It seems vain to suppose they independently decided to misrepresent Josephus.

Although it is not impossible that either or both authors was capable of deceit, Kirby makes a valid point, that, in this particular instance, the similarity of occurrences makes it less likely that both authors, separated by some six decades of history, were attempting the identical deception.

Kirby (2014a) points out that Origen moved from Alexandria to Caesarea during his lifetime[258]. In this regard, he hypothesises that perhaps Origen took the now lost source

[258] Based on Eusebius' comments Origen first moved to Alexandria in c. 231 – 232 C.E. Cf. *HE*,

with him to Caesarea which was subsequently employed by Eusebius when he worked there some sixty years later.

Kirby (2014a) confirms that there may have been a manuscript, once erroneously attributed to Josephus, whilst it resided in Alexandria. This was quoted from by both Clement of Alexandria as well as his student Origen. It was then transferred to Caesarea by Origen, where it was later quoted by Eusebius. Certainly, Eusebius does seem to quote a passage from Hegesippus that Origen once ascribed to Josephus.

Kirby (2014a) believes that the upshot of this probability is that perhaps there once existed a manuscript that was written by either a Jewish or Christian author – more likely the latter – who was subsequently confused with Josephus. Sometime later, someone, noticing the error of attribution, literally invented the name "Hegessipus" to distinguish the authorship of the manuscript so that it would not be confused with Josephus.

Lastly, Kirby (2014a) makes a convincing case for the dating of this lost manuscript. This exercise requires the input of both Clement and Eusebius:

In his *HE*, IV, 7 /15 – 8 / 3[259], Eusebius states the following:

> Ὅμως δ' οὖν κατὰ τοὺς δηλουμένους αὖθις παρῆγεν εἰς μέσον ἡ ἀλήθεια πλείους ἑαυτῆς ὑπερμάχους, οὐ δι' ἀγράφων αὐτὸ μόνον ἐλέγχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἐγγράφων ἀποδείξεων κατὰ τῶν ἀθέων αἱρέσεων στρατευομένους· ἐν τούτοις ἐγνωρίζετο Ἡγήσιππος, οὗ πλείσταις ἤδη πρότερον κεχρήμεθα φωναῖς, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ παραδόσεως τινὰ τῶν κατὰ τοὺς ἀποστόλους παραθέμενοι. ἐν πέντε δ' οὖν συγγράμμασιν οὗτος τὴν ἁπλανῆ παράδοσιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος ἁπλουστάτῃ συντάξει γραφῆς ὑπομνηματισάμενος, καθ' ὃν ἐγνωρίζετο σημαίνει χρόνον, περὶ τῶν ἀρχῆθεν ἱδρυσάντων τὰ εἴδωλα οὕτω πως γράφων· »οἷς κενοτάφια καὶ ναοὺς ἐποίησαν ὡς μέχρι νῦν· ὧν ἐστιν καὶ Ἀντίνοος, δοῦλος Ἀδριανοῦ Καίσαρος, οὗ καὶ ἀγὼν ἄγεται Ἀντινόειος, ὁ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενόμενος. καὶ γὰρ πόλιν ἔκτισεν ἐπώνυμον Ἀντινόου καὶ προφήτας». κατ' αὐτὸν δὲ καὶ Ἰουστῖνος, γνήσιος τῆς ἀληθοῦς φιλοσοφίας ἐραστής, ἔτι τοῖς παρ' Ἕλλησιν ἀσκούμενος ἐνδιέτριβεν λόγοις. σημαίνει δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τουτονὶ τὸν χρόνον ἐν τῇ

VI, 26.

[259] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D4%3Achapter%3D7%3Asection%3D15 [14 August 2014]. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1, in *New Advent.org*. [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250104.htm [14 August 2014].

πρὸς Ἀντωνῖνον ἀπολογία ᾗδε γράφων· »οὐκ ἄτοπον δὲ ἐπιμνησθῆναι ἐν τούτοις ἡγούμεθα καὶ Ἀντινόου τοῦ νῦν γενομένου, ὃν καὶ ἅπαντες ὡς θεὸν διὰ φόβον σέβειν ὥρμηντο, ἐπιστάμενοι τίς τε ἦν καὶ πόθεν ὑπῆρχεν».

> Nevertheless, in those times the truth again called forth many champions who fought in its defence against the godless heresies, refuting them not only with oral, but also with written arguments. **Among these Hegesippus was well known. We have already quoted his words a number of times, relating events which happened in the time of the apostles according to his account. He records in five books the true tradition of apostolic doctrine in a most simple style, and he indicates the time in which he flourished when he writes as follows concerning those that first set up idols**: "To whom they erected cenotaphs and temples, as is done to the present day. **Among whom is also Antinoüs, a slave of the Emperor Adrian, in whose honor are celebrated also the Antinoian games, which were instituted in our day. For he [i.e. Adrian] also founded a city named after Antinoüs, and appointed prophets." At the same time also Justin, a genuine lover of the true philosophy, was still continuing to busy himself with Greek literature**. He indicates this time in the Apology which he addressed to Antonine, where he writes as follows: **"We do not think it out of place to mention here Antinoüs also, who lived in our day, and whom all were driven by fear to worship as a god, although they knew who he was and whence he came."** [My emphases].

Kirby (2014a) confirms that this passage reveals Eusebius' obvious concern with calculating a date for Hegesippus' period of activity as well as confirming a Christian tradition for his narratives. If he is reliable, Eusebius, places Hegesippus' texts alongside those of Justin Martyr (c.100 / 103 -165 C.E.), sometime in the reign of Antonius[260].

As an aside it is worth taking a brief look at what Clement actually wrote regarding his claimed "Josephan" source material. Depending on the reference cited, a date of anywhere between 180 and 190 C.E. is reckoned for Clement's move to Alexandria.[261] It is also accepted that most, if not all, of his *Stromata* was written sometime between c. 198 and 203 C.E. which means that this work was largely conceived whilst Clement was resident in Alexandria.

Regardless, in his *Strom*. I, 21, 147, 2 / 2 [262] Clement states:

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[260] *Titus Fulvius Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius* (86 – 161 C.E.)

[261] Greek text and English translation according to Havey (Tr.). 1908. Clement of Alexandria. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. in *New Advent.org*, [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04045a.htm [13 September 2014].

[262] Manuscripts of Josephus. 2003. CCAT at University of Pennsylvania. [Online]. Available:

> Φλαύιος δὲ Ἰώσηπος ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ὁ τὰς Ἰουδαϊκὰς συντάξας ἱστορίας καταγαγὼν τοὺς χρόνους φησὶν ἀπὸ Μωυσέως ἕως Δαβὶδ ἔτη γίγνεσθαι φπε΄, ἀπὸ δὲ Δαβὶδ ἕως Οὐεσπεσιανοῦ δευτέρου ἔτους ͵αροθ΄. εἶτα ἀπὸ τούτου μέχρι Ἀντωνίνου δεκάτου ἔτους ἔτη οζ΄, ὡς εἶναι ἀπὸ Μωυσέως ἐπὶ τὸ δέκατον ἔτος Ἀντωνίνου πάντα ἔτη ͵αωλγ
>
> Flavius Josephus the Jew, who composed the **history of the Jews**, computing the periods, says that from **Moses to David were five hundred and eighty-five years**; from David to **the second year of Vespasian**, **a thousand one hundred and seventy-nine**; then from that to the tenth year of Antoninus, seventy-seven. So that from Moses to the tenth year of Antoninus there are, in all, **two thousand one hundred and thirty-three years** [i.e. 2133]. [My insertion and emphases].

As should be evident, there is something wrong with Clement's calculation. As confirmed by the University of Pennsylvania CCAT (Center for Computer Analysis of Texts website[263], the total should come to 1179 (i.e. +585 + 1179 + 77 = 1841) and *not* 2133.

Another feature is the mention of the "History of the Jews" which does not precisely replicate the title of any of Josephus' works known today. Also, if one surveys the complete works of Josephus it becomes evident that, apart from the fact that he obviously could never have said anything about Antonius Pius, he does come close to agreeing with some of the other points quoted in *Strom.* I, 21, 147, 2 / 2. For example in his *BJ*, VI, 10, 1 / 435[264], Josephus states:

> Ἑάλω μὲν οὕτως Ἱεροσόλυμα ἔτει δευτέρῳ τῆς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἡγεμονίας Γορπιαίου μηνὸς ὀγδόῃ,
>
> AND thus was Jerusalem taken, in **the second year** of the reign **of Vespasian**, on the eighth day of the month Gorpeius [Elul] [My emphasis].

Here, the phrase "the second year (of the reign) of Vespasian" is common to both passages.

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http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/journals/kraftpub/josephusMSS.html [28 July 2014].

[263] Manuscripts of Josephus. 2003. CCAT at University of Pennsylvania. [Online]. Available: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/journals/kraftpub/josephusMSS.html [28 July 2014].

[264] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D6%3Awhiston+chapter%3D10%3Awhiston+section%3D1 [28 July 2014].

Again, in his *BJ,* VI, 4, 8 / 269 - 270[265] Josephus informs his reader that:

> καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς πρώτης αὐτοῦ κτίσεως, ἣν κατεβάλετο Σολομὼν ὁ βασιλεύς; μέχρι τῆς νῦν ἀναιρέσεως, ἣ γέγονεν ἔτει δευτέρῳ τῆς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἡγεμονίας, ἔτη συνάγεται χίλια ἑκατὸν τριάκοντα, πρὸς δὲ μῆνες ἑπτὰ καὶ πεντεκαίδεκα ἡμέραι· ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ὕστερον, ἣν ἔτει δευτέρῳ Κύρου βασιλεύοντος ἐποιήσατο Ἀγγαῖος, ἔτη μέχρι τῆς ὑπὸ Οὐεσπασιανοῦ ἁλώσεως τριακονταεννέα πρὸς ἑξακοσίοις καὶ ἡμέραι τεσσαρακονταπέντε.
>
> Now the number of years that passed from its **first foundation** [i.e. the Temple], which was laid by king Solomon, till this its destruction, which happened in **the second year** of the reign **of Vespasian**, are collected to be **one thousand one hundred and thirty**, besides seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were six hundred and thirty-nine years and forty-five days.

Later in his *AJ*, VIII, 3, 1 / 61 [266]Josephus states:

> Τῆς δ᾽ οἰκοδομίας τοῦ ναοῦ Σολόμων ἤρξατο τέταρτον ἔτος ἤδη τῆς βασιλείας ἔχων μηνὶ δευτέρῳ, ὃν Μακεδόνες μὲν Ἀρτεμίσιον καλοῦσιν Ἑβραῖοι δὲ Ἰάρ, μετὰ ἔτη πεντακόσια καὶ ἐνενήκοντα καὶ δύο τῆς ἀπ᾽ Αἰγύπτου τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν ἐξόδου,
>
> **Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign**, on the second month, which the Macedonians call Artemisius, and the Hebrews Jur, **five hundred and ninety-two years after the Exodus** out of Egypt;

There is a mention of "the second year (of the reign) of Vespasian" (*BJ*, VI, 4, 8 / 269) as well as two sets of numbers that are redolent of what is contained in *Strom*. I, 21, 147, 2 / 2. Although the figure of 1130, if added to the 40-year period[267] for David's reign plus the four years of Solomon's reign (i.e. the date of the laying of the Temple's foundation according to Josephus in *AJ*, VIII, 3, 1 / 61), yields 1174. Thus we end up with a total that is five less than that calculated by Clement (i.e. 1179 years from David

[265] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D6%3Awhiston+chapter%3D4%3Awhiston+section%3D8 [30 July 2014].

[266] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus.* in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D8%3Awhiston+chapter%3D3%3Awhiston+section%3D1 [30July 2014].

[267] MT text (1 *Ki.* 2: 11) yields "And the days that David reigned over Israel (were) forty years, seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years".

to the second year of Vespasian). In addition, if we understand the phrase “from Moses” (*Strom*. I, 21, 147, 2 / 2) to refer to the end of the Exodus and thus equitable to the phrase “after the Exodus” (*AJ*, VIII, 3, 1 / 61), then we have another slight discrepancy when it comes to calculating length of time:

Clement seems to indicate that 585 years separate Moses (i.e. end of the Exodus) from David (i.e. beginning of his reign). Josephus informs us that the first Temple was commenced 592 years after the Exodus ended.

Given that David’s reign was 40 years long and the Temple was commenced four years after his death, one obtains + 592 - 40 - 4 = 548 years from the Exodus to the beginning of David’s reign (according to Josephus). Whereas for Clement, the calculation comes to 585 years. However, if Clement meant either “from the *death* of Moses to the *death* of David” or “from the beginning of Moses’ ministry (i.e. we allow 40 years for the exodus event), to the beginning of David’s reign” then one obtains + 585 – 40 = 545 years and accordingly he is only three years out. Here we must assume that Josephus’ figures are the standard by which we measure accuracy.

Whichever way one approaches this conundrum, the following conclusions seem to present themselves:

1. either Clement did refer to Josephus for part of his information but was extremely bad at quoting his source and/or he could not deal with basic arithmetic;
2. or Clement is quoting someone else who may have in turn, previously misquoted Josephus.

This raises a number of possibilities. If Kirby is correct then we can ascribe Clement’s inaccurate arithmetic and his reminiscent text to faulty memory as well as confusion between two different but seemingly similar authorities. It is possible that the “Hegesippus” authority (mis-quoted as “Josephus” by Clement) actually mentioned the facts quoted verbatim in *Strom*. I, 21, 147, 2 / 2, and that it is this unknown author who was inspired by his own less than rigorous reading of Josephus.

Another possibility is that Clement is embellishing on Josephus alone, and merely made a quick mental calculation that was out by a few years. In this scenario there is

no Hegesippus – certainly not in Clement's time.

Regardless, based on these passages, Kirby (2014a) maintains that we can safely ascertain that the unknown author (called Hegesippus by Origen) was active in or around the tenth year of Antonius Pius' reign.

It is only contra-indicated by an error of memory on Eusebius' behalf some sixty years later when he makes an incidental reference to Hegesippus whilst commenting on Justin Martyr.

Kirby (2014a) concludes:

> Although the fifth book and its two false attributions do not give us the author's name, we can make certain deductions from the fragments still known. Both Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea put the best evidence for the date of authorship in the reign of Antoninus. The reference from Clement allows us to narrow it down further, between 138 AD and 148 AD, the period of the reign of Antoninus up to the tenth year, the extremity of its chronology.

## 4.3 Arguments For and Against Authenticity

### 4.3.1 Introduction

The *JP* is normally accepted by more conservative scholars as being wholly authentic based on the primary fact that Jesus (of Nazareth) is not referred to here as actually being "ὁ χριστός" but rather as "λεγομένου Χριστοῦ" (i.e. "*called* the anointed one"). The argument here, is that a Christian forger would have felt compelled to confirm that Jesus *was* the "Messiah" (i.e. "ὁ χριστός"), whereas, a non-Christian, like Josephus would not. Therefore, by this sole line of reasoning, Josephus is deemed to be the more likely author.

Indeed, the *JP* is claimed by some scholars to be the most obviously trustworthy of the three texts currently under investigation. For example, Van Voorst (2000: 83), states that "the overwhelming majority of scholars consider both the reference to 'the brother of Jesus called Christ' and the entire passage that includes it as authentic."

Bauckham (1999: 199 - 232) not only confirms that the greater majority of scholars

consider the *JP* to be genuine but also believes that James was duly executed by Ananus for blasphemy.

Even Vermes (2010) is perfectly content to accept the *JP* as it is written and because he largely accepts the *TF* believes that the reference to Jesus is not out of place:

> … Josephus's identification of James as "the brother of Jesus called Christ" would have made no sense unless there was an earlier mention of Jesus in Antiquities. The Testimonium Flavianum is likely to be this prior reference.

Finally, Painter (2005: 134 -141) also makes it quite clear that the JP is totally authentic and is a valid historical document.

### 4.3.2 Origen's References to Jesus and James

Had the *TF* existed in Origen's version of the *AJ*, where Jesus is called "the Christ", why does Origen insist so frequently (cf. Section 4.2 *ut supra*), that Josephus had not accepted Christ? Although this is completely true - albeit for other more obvious reasons - as the *TF* now stands, Josephus' acceptance or non-acceptance of Jesus' right to any form of approbation is surely equivocal. Given his normally quite negative view of Jewish arrivistes, his highly positive and matter of fact statements about Jesus could just as easily be interpreted as evidence for some level of support, if not total acceptance. Regardless, the fact that Origen a) is convinced that Josephus was not a Christian supporter and b) relies solely on what is surely the *JP* in his attempts to justify that it was the death of Jesus, and not James, that caused the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem makes it far more likely to presume that the *TF* did not exist in Origen's version of the *AJ*.

Wells (1971: 193) also confirms that Origen speaks of the death of James (the Just) and mentions that it was the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 68 - 70 C.E. He does not agree with the interpretation that the death of Jesus was the cause of the Roman Siege. Also, as has been established, Origen's information (assuming he didn't forge it himself), most likely comes solely from a reading of the account found in Josephus, and which might be the *JP* as it appears today.

A review of Origen's writings (cf. *COM*, X, 17 / 5268 – 5269; *Cels.* II, 13; and *Cels.* I, 47) reveal that Origen quotes almost the same idiosyncratic *JP* formulation, viz.:

"James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ" and not say "James the son of Joseph" which is the proper Jewish form of address. If so, a fourth-century interpolator - of the calibre of a Eusebius - could not possibly have forged this specific passage. This passage, if a forgery, was produced sometime before the end of the third century C.E. Painter (1999: 203), who is a Christian scholar, and accepts that Josephus is the original author of the *JP*, warns that when Origen refers to this passage he at best paraphrases its content. This, according to him, casts some doubt on the exact form that this passage took in Origen's time. In short, Painter warns us that historians should have no guarantee that in the third century C.E. the text that Origen read appeared exactly as it does today.

This startling conclusion needs to be contested. If one simply reviews the actual statements made by Origen (cf. Section 4.2), it should be regarded as pertinent that he uses almost exactly the same wording as is contained in the current form of the *JP* (i.e. "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James") to describe James, viz.:

1. *COM,* X, 17 / 5268: "James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ*";*
2. *Cels,* I, 47: "James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus called Christ*"; and*
3. *Cels*, II, 13: "James the Just, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ*".*

In addition, considering that all an interpolator had to do (at most) was add the words "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James" and at the very least "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ" to create the forgery, it is safe to assume that Origen does refer to the self-same text. Any other interpretation is forced and coloured by some or other agenda on the part of the scholar concerned.

Lastly, Meier (1991: 57) seems to intimate that, because the account of James' demise is less embellished than the more theatrical versions we typically find repeated in Hegesippus, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome, it points to someone recording an historical event who comes from a different tradition. Certainly, Meier feels that if the interpolator had been a more typical Christian he would have also felt compelled to mention such details as James being thrown off the pinnacle of the Temple and being hit on the head with a fuller's club etc.

### 4.3.3 The Degree of Suspected Interpolation

What does not seem to have been considered up until now, is that without the insertion of this small phrase, viz.: “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ”, the *JP* or more correctly the *entire* passage found in Book XX, 9, 1 / 197 – 203 of the *AJ*, need not ever have referred to an individual called “James” (including James the Just). Certainly, without this imposed possibility, the purpose of the authentic text is clearly intended to inform the reader about the actions of the high priest Ananus the Younger (a.k.a. *Ananus ben Ananus*), who in c. 62 C.E., convened the *Sanhedrin* (without the consent of Albinus, the incoming Roman procurator), for the purposes of removing certain individuals who (we might want to assume), were his political opponents. On this issue more will be deliberated in due course.

Regardless, is it not possible that the original reference to a certain “James” in line 200 included his actual designation such as “son of so-and-so” and subsequently, a Christian forger living sometime between the second and fourth century simply removed this portrayal and replaced it with the words: “the brother of Jesus who was called Christ”? , within this considered scenario, whatever name or names may have originally appeared in Josephus’ original text in line 200 could have been replaced by the name “James”. Indeed, the original text could have read as follows: “… and brought before them Israel son of Abraham and his followers” or even “… and brought before them Jesus son of Ananus, Michael son of Fabus and James son of Abraham” or any other permutation one cares to imagine.

This one simple and certainly ingenuous act of swapping the names which once occurred in the original text in line 200 with “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James” would immediately explain away each of the five arguments put forward by Meier (1991: 57 - 59):

Firstly, fortunately for Eusebius (on this one occasion), he cannot be linked to this possible forgery given the level of agreement between the suspected interpolation (i.e. “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ”) and the statements made by Origen at least six decades earlier. Therefore, if foul play is speculated it is almost certain that Origen (rightly or wrongly), will be amongst the more likely suspects.

Secondly, if a Christian interpolator merely saw a convenient chance to insert some reference to “Jesus” called “Christ”, without disrupting the original text too greatly, he certainly had no need or desire to elaborate upon his easily achieved forgery.

Thirdly, given the scenario already previously described, there was absolutely no need for a Christian interpolator to refer to James as the “brother of our Lord” when it was already known and accepted that Josephus was not a Christian. Such wording would have cast great suspicion on its authenticity – ironically the very reason why some conservative Christian scholars would consider it to be authentic! In addition, even by only referring to “Jesus who was *called* Christ” the Christian interpolator manages to draw his reader’s attention to at least consider the following possibilities, s.c.:

1. Jesus was really an historical figure with a written record other than the gospel accounts;
2. Jesus was already recorded by a neutral witness to be the “Christ” in the late first century C.E., thus proving his divinity;
3. Josephus does not need not be a practising Christian to tell us that Jesus was *called* the “Christ” (This position would have well suited the specific needs of the ante-Nicene Christian apologists); and
4. The interpolation is not too long or over-embellished to arouse any suspicion of it being inserted by another hand.

Fourthly, the account obviously differs in time and manner from the official version (i.e. as pointed out by Meier, 1991: 57 - 59), because, in this scenario, the original account might never have even referred to James (the Just). It could just as easily have referred to somebody else who may not even have been called “James”. The interpolator merely used this convenient point in line 200 of Josephus’ account of Ananus’ atrocities to ensure the inclusion of the following few mission-critical words: “Jesus who was called Christ”.

Also, from the hypothetical interpolator’s point of view, even if a more critical mind should someday question the slight variance in the accounts of James’ death, this could easily be explained away as Josephus’ faulty memory or his employment of imperfect sources. The important point that remains, for the intended Christian believer and doubter alike, is that Josephus *knew about* Jesus in his own day and thus, Jesus

*must have* really existed. That, after all, is the primary reason behind the forgery – an historical record, other than a gospel account, that confirms the mortal existence of Jesus (of Nazareth) as well as James the Just.

Lastly, as has already been explained, the reference to the men on trial is obviously cursory because the original purpose of the passage was for Josephus to illustrate Ananus' iniquity. On the other hand, the suspected Christian interpolator merely used the cursory reference to the stoned man (whose name might not even have been James in the original text) and some compatriots as a useful device to insert the critical words "Jesus who was called Christ".

Now, of course innumerable permutations are possible here but one issue which never seems to be mentioned by scholars is the glaring absence of motive in the *JP* as it reads today.

The lacuna concerns the specifics of the charge against the individual and his colleagues who were stoned as a result of Ananus' judgment. If we ignore for the moment the names that appear in the *JP* in line 200 we realise that we are told precious little about the reasons (political or otherwise) behind the arrests of the men and the nature of their crime.

Perhaps this is why Jerome (*DVI*, 2) in c. 392 - 393 C.E., felt it so necessary to palpably falsify aspects of the account and embroider it with very detailed reasons (that best suited his apologetic agenda). As was observed earlier (cf. Section 4.2 and *DVI*, 2), Jerome has the high priest Ananus "taking advantage of the state of anarchy", assembling a council and publicly compelling James (the Just) to deny that Jesus as the "Christ" is the "Son of God". After James refuses, he is condemned to death by stoning. Even here Jerome, like Eusebius, his possible source, embellishes the tale by having James not merely stoned but also thrown from the "pinnacle of the temple"; James' legs are even broken and whilst still barely alive he has only enough strength in his body to raise his hands to heaven and conveniently repeat the last words of Jesus on the cross (reminiscent of *Ev.Luc*. 23: 34)[268]:

Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς, οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν.

[268] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 182.

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

Not content with this bald-faced lie, Jerome then repeats the dramaturgical tale of James being finally struck on the head by a fuller's club and finally, mercifully, dying.
As has been discussed already, Jerome was most likely influenced by, inter alia, Eusebius' diatribe (*HE*, II, 23 / 12 - 18) (cf. Section 4.2) who in turn was merely aping the second century Hegesippus. Regardless, Eusebius greatly exaggerates the death scene for James as well as lying about Josephus blaming the destruction of the Temple (*HE*, II, 23 / 20) on this event (cf. Section 4.2).

Notwithstanding this fourth century hyperbole, all we are told (in the present Josephan/Eusebian version) is that on the death of Festus, Ananus, who was "very rigid in judging offenders" made use of the "proper opportunity".

As stated in line 199 this makes little sense. For example, was Josephus telling us that Ananus simply liked to have individuals executed without justifiable cause, and was merely waiting for the opportune moment when he was not under Roman authority to give vent to his sadistic temperament?

Or, is something now missing from the original text, immediately before line 200, which formerly gave the correct account of why Ananus needed to get rid of the unknown man or men in question?

In the current version we are only told that Ananus "assembled the sanhedrin of judges" and then presented them with a group of individuals who were "breakers of the law".

If these individuals had been Ananus' political opponents surely Josephus must have originally, made mention of their names and the nature of the threat that they presented to Ananus. However, in the current version, the reader is none the wiser. This is in fact quite noticeable if one has the eyes to see, because after supposedly giving his reader no clear motive for the arrests, Josephus then goes to great lengths (lines 201 – 203) to explain that the charges against the men were not justified. These three lines would only make sense if, before line 200, the reader had been told the nature of the charges and the context behind them being levelled at the men in question.

It might also be consider that originally the *JP* (or preceding text), was somewhat longer than it now appears, and once included the genuine reasons behind Ananus' urgent need to make use of the opportune death of Festus to dispatch his enemies. Here, the unknown Christian interpolator may well have removed one (or possibly two), sentences that originally gave the reader the correct names of the offenders (as well as the true nature of their crime). He then inserted this most convenient of phrases: "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James".

This important possibility strongly suggests that scholars should re-look at this passage far more critically than they have done in the past.

Finally, one must ask the question: "Why would the execution of a small group of, say, religious law breakers (whether or not justified), be of such concern to a Roman procurator?"

Surely the Roman authorities would only be concerned where they felt that the high priest was doing something that might threaten the stability of Roman rule in Judea. Certainly, the Jewish internal doctrinal issues were not their primary concern - otherwise why would Albinus have written in anger to Ananus and threatened him with punishment? Again, why did the Roman puppet king Agrippa then feel the need to replace the high priest? The latter point is also very telling, because if this removal of the high priest by the king was due to some threat to Judaism then the execution of a suspected law breaker would be justified. If this law breaker was really an historical James the Just who, according to the *NT*, was part of the circumcision party[269] and a vehement supporter of Mosaic Law, then the narrative as it now stands, makes even less sense.

Carrier (2012b: 489 - 514) who is an atheist and committed iconoclast agrees that the reference to James as brother of Jesus is bogus but explains that the insertion was

[269] The *NT* informs the reader that Paul wrote to the Galatians (cf. *Ep.Gal:* 2 : 9; and 6: 15) about the doctrinal threat to his mission by the escalating faction of Judaisers in the region who insisted on the faithful's strict observance of the Mosaic laws, especially Sabbath observance, circumcision and the Jewish covenant. In this regard, James the Just is often identified as being Paul's adversary.

merely accidental and not subject to wilful counterfeit. He argues that the words "the one called Christ" resulted from the unintentional insertion of a marginal note added by some anonymous reader.

Regardless of who Carrier believes is to blame for this supposedly “innocent” oversight, he makes a valuable contribution to the debate when he proposes that the original text may have referred to someone called “James” but who was the brother of the high priest Jesus ben Damneus and not Jesus (called Christ).

Meier (1991: 59) who clearly believes that the *JP* is authentic states: “If we judge this short passage about James to be authentic, we are already aided in the much more difficult judgment about the second, longer, and more disputed text in Ant. 18.3.3 §63-64.” Meier is referring to the *TF*. Unfortunately for Meier, even if what he said was absolutely true, it does not in any way assist us in deciding to what degree the much maligned *TF* is credible. Further, considering the real possibility that the *JP* may well be a forgery is it not more likely that one might enter into this exercise with a very negative opinion? Certainly, great caution is required at every step of the way.

Regardless, for the sake of complete objectivity and maintaining a provisional state of understanding, it would do well to consider all of the facts at our disposal when analysing each of the disputed texts. In short, merely because one of the texts is ascribed a particular status does not automatically bequeath a similar status to either of the other two disputed texts. The previously acknowledged "band wagon effect”, which informs a particular worldview, incapable of major alteration and growth, must be avoided at all costs.

### 4.3.4 The Problem of Christian Tradition versus Historical Fact

#### 4.3.4.1 James in the *Novum Testamentum*

There is even more evidence that demonstrates that the current version of the *JP* (especially line 200) is fraudulent. If one looks at the evolution of the tradition behind the historical existence of James as “brother” of Jesus - often called the “Elder” or the “Just”. Many references are made to a disciple/apostle called James in the *NT* but it is not always clear which James is being referred to. More importantly nowhere in the *NT*

is any mention made of an individual called James being martyred or killed, let alone the specifics of a death by stoning.

What can be gleaned is the following:

In the *NT*, Jesus (of Nazareth) is recorded as having had a number of siblings, one of whom is named “James”.

Specifically, the four brothers of Jesus as named in the gospels (*Ev.Matt.* 13: 55 and *Ev.Marc.* 6: 3), were James, Joses, Simon and Judas. It is often assumed (Christian tradition), that James was the eldest and that Joses was the second eldest.

Here it is important not to confuse this James with John’s brother who is mentioned in *Act.Ap.* 12: 1 – 3, and who is assumed to have died c. 44 C.E. This latter James is also known as James the greater, son of Zebedee, and must also be distinguished from James the less, son of Alpheus. Incidentally, he is recorded (*Act.Ap.* 12: 2), as having been killed by the sword.

The hotly disputed Epistle to the Galatians (*Ep.Gal.* 1: 18) informs the reader that some three years after Paul started his ministry he visited Jerusalem where he stayed with Cephas for 15 days. Subsequently, he met with "the Lord's brother" (*Ep.Gal.* 1: 19) who we can determine by ratiocination was considered to be one of the “apostles”. Later in the text (*Ep.Gal.* 2: 1), the reader is informed that, after fourteen years, Paul revisits Jerusalem where he again (*Ep.Gal.* 2: 9) meets with James, Cephas and John. Here, this James, (who together with Cephas and John) is “esteemed” as a “pillar” (of the church) gives rise to the obvious assumption that this is the self-same James previously mentioned in *Ep.Gal.* 1: 19. By the context of what is written it would seem that this James favoured circumcision and was either still a practicing Jew or had strong Jewish roots. It is also implied that he held some high position within the Jerusalem Church leadership.

As an aside, it is informative that this assertion agrees with *Ev.Thom.12*[270] where there is a reference to James the Just as “leader”, viz.:

[270] English translation from the Coptic according to Patterson and Meyer (Eds and Trs) s.a. *The "Scholars' Translation" of the Gospel of Thomas,* in *The Gnostic Society Library: The Gospel of Thomas Collection,* [Online]. Available: http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl_thomas.htm [24 September 2014].

> The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?" Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."

In 1 Corinthians there is a reference to "the Lord's brothers and Cephas" (*1 Ep.Cor*. 9: 5), so once again an assumption may be made that this most likely refers indirectly to James (the Just) as well.

A "James", who is normally assumed to be identical to the gospel accounts, and who is very likely the same individual mentioned in the Pauline epistles, is mentioned in *Act.Ap.* 15: 13: "When they finished, James spoke up. 'Brothers,' he said, 'listen to me.'"

Supposedly, this same person is also mentioned in *Act.Ap.* 21: 17 – 18, in an account that tallies closely with Paul's *Ep. Gal*.: "When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present."

Thus, other than the *JP*, the often ambiguous references found in the gospels, as well as the clearly apocryphal *Ep.Jac*.[271], there is in fact *no independent* account of a brother of Jesus called James. The previously mentioned *Ep.Jac.* merely confirms a Christian tradition that Jesus had a brother called James.

Assuming that this James is really either the half-brother or full brother of an historical Jesus of Nazareth, and based *solely* on the contents of *Act.Ap.* and the *Ep.Gal.* one may make the deduction that the apostle Paul's conversion took place sometime between 33 and 34 C.E. This means that he met with someone named James in c. 36/37 C.E. and possibly again in c. 50/51 C.E. This is the latest date that can be established for a possible brother or cousin of Jesus called James being mentioned. And even here we have no way of knowing whether this is a fictitious James or an actual reference to an historical personage. If we assume the latter, then the latest date

[271] Schaff (1892: 22) reminds us that Martin Luther "disliked, most of all, the Epistle of James because he could not harmonize it with Paul's teaching on justification by faith without works, and he called it an epistle of straw as compared with the genuine apostolic writings". He also (Schaff: 1892: 203) states: "It is well known that Luther deemed it impossible to harmonize the two apostles … and characterized the Epistle of James as an 'epistle of straw,' because it had no evangelical character ('keine evangelische Art')".

that we can adopt for this individual, still being alive, is c. 51 C.E.

#### 4.3.4.2 James According to the Early Church Fathers

Based on the evidence accumulated thus far, one can be fairly certain that Origen, at the very least, either redacted or had access to the same *JP* we know today. Thus, even if he was not the very interpolator we seek, it is not unreasonable to assume that he did have access to it by c. 246 – 248 C.E. On this point, Painter (1999: 205) confirms that Origen claims that Josephus, on two occasions, blamed the destruction of Jerusalem as a divine punishment for the killing of James (the Just) (Cf. Fig. 13).

In point of fact, on reviewing the literature, it turns out that Origen mentions Josephus' reference to James on *four* occasions: twice in his *COM*, X, 17 / 5268 – 5269*,* once in *Cels.* I, 47 and again in his *Cels.* II, 13 (cf. Section 4.2).

The only other early author (apart from the disputed Josephus) to mention James before the close of the second century C.E. is Hegesippus (cf. Fragments from the Acts of the Church; Concerning the Martyrdom of James, the Brother of the Lord, from Book 5), who as early as c. 165 - 175 C.E. tells his reader in great detail that James (as brother of the Lord) was hurled from the top of the Temple and then because he survived this attempt on his life he was then summarily stoned to death. Hegesippus also tells us that this happened immediately *before* the destruction of the Temple by Vespasian and as such it would point to a date of c. 68 - 70 C.E.

If this account is in any way accurate it means that the *JP* is in direct contradiction to both the date (as much as a decade out) as well as the manner and circumstances of James' death (The *JP* states that James was stoned along with "others" after due trial and sentencing by a high priest).

The issue is further compounded by the fact that, by the fourth and fifth centuries it was more normal for the mainstream church to defer from referring to Jesus as having flesh and blood brothers. In this regard, it will be recalled that in his *DVI,* 2 Jerome (c. 347 – 420 C.E.) (cf. Section 4.2), maintains that James was Jesus' cousin and the biological son of Mary of Cleophas. Jerome stresses that James was *not* the son of Joseph by another wife.

At this juncture it is also worth mentioning the Christian scholar, Whealey (2003), who as a result of her supposedly in-depth investigation of, inter alia, the *JP*, deems it to be wholly authentic. Her reason is based on the assumption that all Christians, especially after the second century C.E., would have found it unpalatable to speak of Jesus having a biological brother due to the need to uphold the dogma of Jesus' mother's perpetual virginity.

As previously elucidated at some length, Jerome also lies (cf. Section 4.2 and Fig. 13 *ut supra*) about Josephus' reasons for the destruction of the Temple in his *DVI*, 2, citing him as evidence that it was because of the death of James the Just that God punished the Jews. Jerome's text (*DVI*, 2) also tells us that this particular James was the High Priest. Needless to state, nowhere in any other reliable historical record is such an assertion even vaguely tenable.

Thus in the final analysis it would seem that it is quite unreasonable to want to maintain that Josephus, wrote the words "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James".

#### 4.3.4.3 James in the Dead Sea Scrolls

One last possible place that one might be tempted to try to extract something historically reliable concerning the enigmatic James the Just, pertains to the much maligned Dead Sea Scroll literature. Davies (in Chilton and Evans, 1999: 17 - 19), comments on Eisenman's (1983 and 1986) now discounted hypothesis that the "Teacher of Righteousness" as mentioned several times in the Qumran material, especially the *Damascus Document* (cf. Vermes, 1995: 95 – 105); the *Commentary on Micah* (cf. Vermes, 1995: 335); and the *Commentary on Psalms* (cf. Vermes, 1995: 348 – 352), was none other than Jesus of Nazareth's brother James. Davies points out that the various manuscripts that were found at Qumran did not necessarily originate there, and more importantly, most likely date far too early to accommodate a plausible historical James the Just. Specifically, Davies (in Chilton and Evans, 1999: 20) states:

> [W]hile it is not technically beyond the bounds of scientific possibility that *some* of the Qumran texts that mention the "Teacher of Righteousness" might have been composed sufficiently late to permit James to have been

> the intended bearer of that title, it is virtually impossible that all such texts do…All the known historical allusions in the Scrolls … can be assigned to the first century B.C.E.

The facts are that, even if by some miracle the Qumran literature actually refered to an historical James the Just, there is no way of corroborating this, because the references to James would have to be allusions at best. At no time is an actual individual named or clearly identifiable. Therefore, even here there will be slim pickings for the historian looking for substantiated fact.

## 4.4 Meier's Proof: A Case Study

Meier (1991: 57) is confident that the JP is authentic because "we have here only a passing, almost blasé, reference to someone called James, whom Joseph obviously considers a minor character. He is mentioned only because his illegal execution causes Ananus to be deposed".

To support this notion, Meier (1991: 57 - 59), posits five primary (albeit unsubstantiated) and somewhat laboured, reasons why the *JP* should be considered wholly authentic, viz.:

Firstly, the *JP* occurs, with no apparent variation, in the primary Greek manuscript tradition of the *AJ* and Eusebius quotes the passage in his *HE*, II, 23.22, as early as the beginning of the fourth century C.E. (cf. 3.2).

Secondly, Jesus' brother James (the Just) is only mentioned in passing by Josephus and is "obviously" considered to be of minor importance. However, because "James" is such a common name in both first century C.E. Jewish circles as well as Josephus' writings, Josephus must have felt the need to clarify this particular James' identify. Because he knew so many persons who were called "James" and he did not know who James' father was, (but note, surprisingly, according to Meier [1991: 58], he did know who his famous messianic brother was), he has *no choice* but to seemingly break with long established Jewish tradition and refer to him as "the brother of Jesus-who-is-called-Messiah". Again, it is interesting that Josephus would have done this considering how quickly he denigrates any other supposed messianic upstarts in all of his other writings.

Thirdly, the *JP* does not refer to James in the way that *Ep.Gal*. 1:19[272] does. The only direct reference to James as *the* brother of Jesus of Nazareth in the entire *NT* refers to Jesus as "the Lord":

"… Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου."

"…James, the Lord's brother."

There are only four indirect references in the *NT* where Jesus is mentioned by name in relation to all of his siblings, but here it is always as part of a longer sentence. One typical example reads: "While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him" (*Ev.Matt.* 12: 46)[273] The only other *NT* passage where James is mentioned by name as a brother of Jesus is when he is mentioned as part of a collective: "… his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas". (*Ev.Matt.* 13: 55). Here again, Jesus is not mentioned by name but inferred. Elsewhere the term "Jesus" is only mentioned rarely in relation to unspecified siblings, for example: "Jesus' mother and brothers." (*Ev.Luc.* 8: 19) and by inference: "Your mother and brothers." (*Ev.Marc.* 3: 32). In *1 Ep.Cor.* 9: 5, Jesus is referred to as "Lord" when associated with his brethren: "the Lord's brothers." Finally there is a reference to a believer in Christ being a "brother in the Lord" (*Ep.Philem.* 1: 16).

Meier (1991: 58) confirms that the second century C.E. church historian Hegesippus also only ever uses such terms as "cousin of the Lord" and "brothers of the Saviour" etc. Meier (1991: 58) explains that "…Josephus' designation of James as "the brother of Jesus" squares neither with *NT* nor with early patristic usage, and so does not likely come from the hand of a Christian interpolator". In this connection, Paul Winter (in Schürer, 2014: 431) states "…if a Christian forger had inserted a reference to Jesus, he would scarcely have been content to mention Jesus in such non-committal fashion."
However, this naïve argument can be equally countered: For example, if a person wanted to make a convincing Josephus-type forgery why would they risk detection by interpolating a lengthy and obviously non-Josephus style messianic accolade?

Fourthly, Josephus' account of the stoning event differs significantly in terms of time and event from the "official" church version as espoused by Hegesippus in the second

[272] Greek text according to *NTOG*. 1881. Eds Westcott and Hort: 421.
[273] See also *Ev.Mat* 12: 47; *Ev.Marc.* 3: 31; and *Act.Ap.* 1: 14.

century C.E. Meier (1991: 58), reminds his reader that Eusebius (*HE*, II, 23.3 -19) (Cf. Section 4.2 for full text), had stressed that Hegesippus' version of events agreed fundamentally with Clement of Alexandria's account. In brief then, Hegesippus' account has James's death immediately followed by Vespasian's destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. However, Josephus' version clearly occurred in 62 C.E. Meier's (1991: 58), argument is that if a Christian interpolator was responsible for this passage, he would have written an account that accorded with the more official version. As Josephus' account is at some variance it stands to reason that he must be the authentic author. Indeed, this may well be the only possibly valid reason cited by Meier but, ironically, it may also hold the very key to explaining how and when this text was interpolated.

It is quite surprising that Meier takes Eusebius' account seriously. Indeed it shares many aspects of Jerome's hyperbole (cf. Section 4.3.3).

Lastly, Josephus' reference to James is cursory and lacks the loquacious, enlightening, and more didactic, characteristics of Hegesippus' "Christian" version.

Meier (1991: 59) concludes his affirmation of the *JP* by stating "In short, it is not surprising that the great Josephus scholar Louis H. Feldman notes: '…few have doubted the genuineness of this passage on James.'"

## 4.5 Barnett's Proof: A Case Study

Barnett's need to protect his worldview, despite the weight of evidence stacked up against it, has already been witnessed in his treatment of the *TF* (cf. Section 3.5). As should be expected, his subsequent handling of the *JP* is also totally dependent on his constructed reality.

Firstly, Barnett gives no hint of exactly how easy it would be to perpetuate a fraud in this particular passage and as has already been discussed, the mere swapping of an unknown name for a short phrase, viz.: "James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ" is mere child's play.

The result of such an obvious piece of deceit is to supply hard historical evidence that can convince the more sceptically minded that:

1. James the brother of Jesus actually existed;

2. Jesus actually existed; and, most importantly,

3. Jesus was the divinely prophesied and acknowledged messiah.

However, Barnett treats this text as being authentic and does not even hint at any of the contemporary debate surrounding its status as a bona fide primary source.

Unbelievably, Barnett (2009: 52), states: "Unlike the *Testimonium*, the authenticity of this passage is not in doubt and does not require emending." This is a very foolish and unacceptable claim. It is in fact in a very real sense a palpable mistruth. Perhaps Barnett has not undertaken sufficient reading in this regard? If so, that in itself is hard to fathom, given his renown as a scholar in this particular field. Perhaps Barnett has ignored all criticisms against this passage's authenticity as being merely false and baseless speculations made by non-believers? Perhaps he sincerely can see no problems with the passage.

Certainly, his explanations of what is being described by the text is based on a literalist reading totally devoid of any historical understanding of the customs of the time in question. For example, Barnett fails to make any comment on why a Jewish man (i.e. James) would be recorded so uncharacteristically as being the brother of another individual (i.e. Jesus). Barnett is also seemingly unaware of the basic historical problem of having James martyred during the period that Ananus (Annas) was the high priest. Certainly, as has already been discussed earlier (cf. Section xyz), had the *JP* been authentic it would have gravely undermined the avowed accuracy of the *NT* account which has James the Just executed (depending on the apologist[274] concerned), to anywhere between 62 and 69 C.E.

## 4.6 The Numismatic Evidence

New evidence has only quite recently come to light thanks to the pioneering work of Kokkinos (2010: 385 - 386), that may also aid any attempt to ratiocinate the actual events surrounding James' death. This in turn could well shed some light on whether or

[274] Theologians tend to favour a date of c. 62 C.E. based on their reading of Josephus or Jerome. However, based on Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria or Eusebius, James the Just was stoned in c. 69 C.E. no doubt to serve as a reason for the destruction of the Temple the following year. Cf. Eddy and Boyd. 2007. *The Jesus Legend:* 189.

not the *JP* is a forgery.

To understand the context of this evidence, one must turn to the issue of the terms of office for, inter alia, Cumanus[275], Felix[276] , Festus[277] and Albinus[278] as procurator in Judea. Certainly, the dates for their tenures are still hotly disputed.[279]

However, Kokkinos believes that the year in which Festus succeeded Felix can be proven with some certainty based on the numismatic evidence supplied by extant procuratorial coins. In this context, Kokkinos (2010: 385) points to specific coins[280] issued under Felix' term dated to year 14 of the reign of the emperor Claudius (10 B.C.E. - 54 C.E.), which equates to the period occurring between January and October 54 C.E.

According to Josephus (*BJ*, II, 12, 1 / 223) Cumanus, became procurator of Judea in the summer of 48 C.E., immediately after the death of Herod of Chalcis in the autumn of 48 C.E. However, Josephus also informs his reader (*AJ*, XX, *5, 2* / 103) that this event occurred *before* Herod of Chalcis' death proving that Josephus does not always get things right. Regardless, Kokkinos is certain that Cumanus' arrival occurred shortly after or even during the Jewish revolt which culminated with the crucifixion of the sons of Judas the Galilean under the prefecture of Tiberius Alexander during the period of *Pesach* in 48 C.E. According to Josephus (*AJ*, XX, 6, 1 / 118 - 124; cf. *BJ*, II, 12, 2 / 223 – 240) Cumanus' failure to adequately respond to an anti-Jewish murder in Samaritan territory led to a violent conflict between Jews and Samaritans.

Following an investigation by the governor of Syria, Quadratus[281], Cumanus was sent to Rome for a hearing before the emperor Claudius who held him personally responsible for the violence and accordingly, sentenced him to exile. This trial could not have occurred *before* 51 C.E. It is well known that Felix immediately succeeded Cumanus, therefore, the earliest date for Felix' arrival in Judea as procurator would

[275] *Ventidius Cumanus* (fl. c. 48 – 52 C.E.).
[276] *Marcus Antonius Felix* (born c. 5 – 10 C.E.).
[277] *Porcius Festus* (fl. c. 55 – 62 C.E.?).
[278] *Lucceius Albinus* (fl. c. 62 – 69 C.E.).
[279] Kokkinos (2010: 385) refers his readers to, inter alia, Smallwood, 1976: 269 n. 40; Jewett, 1979: 40 - 44; Kindler, 1981: 20 - 21; Bruce, 1986: 284 – 287; and Schwartz, 1992: 218 - 242.
[280] Kokkinos (2010: 385) refers to various extant examples of procuratorial coins dated to the fourteenth year of Claudius' reign (January 54 to October 54 C.E.) as catalogued in, inter alia, Meshorer, 1982: 284 – 285.
[281] *Gaius Ummidius Durmius Quadratus* (12 B.C.E. - c. 60 C.E.).

have to have been c. 51 - 52 C.E. Kokkinos (2010: 385), emphasises here that it should be accepted that Felix must have served as procurator for at least two years *before* his first coins were minted. Now, Festus' coins were minted in year five of the reign of the emperor Nero (i.e. between October 58 and October 59 C.E.)[282] which means that as his coins were minted at least a year *after* his arrival, he must have taken office sometime before 57 - 58 C.E. If accurate, this would place Paul's journey to Rome (cf. *Act.Ap.* 25: 12 – 27; 27: 1 – 44; 28: 1 - 31) in the winter of 58/59 C.E. Kokkinos' very sound arguments result in the following *provisional* dates of procuratorship, viz.:

- Felix: c. 52 – 57/58 C.E.
- Festus: c. 57/58 – 62 C.E.
- Albinus: 62 – 64 C.E.

According to Kokkinos (2010: 385 - 386) there is yet further evidence that Festus died whilst in office which makes it possible for his procuratorship to have ended even earlier than was previously believed. Again, this is backed up by undisputable numismatic evidence. Kokkinos (2010: 385 - 386) explains that more conventional dating places the renaming of *Panias*/*Caeasarea* to *Neronias* to the period 62 - 64 C.E. but datable coins prove that the *Neronias* era commenced in 60/61 C.E., an event overseen by Albinus himself. This means that he must have already arrived in Judea as early as 59 C.E. and not in 62 C.E. as is normally believed.

Critics fuelled by more conventional wisdom may raise the issue that western history favours a date of no earlier than c. 62 C.E. for Albinius' arrival in Jerusalem. However, in point of fact, much uncertainty exists about the accuracy of the western dating system, especially in the context of the Julian-Claudian period. By way of example, Jewish authorities have always favoured a date of c. 68 C.E. for the destruction of the Temple which is nearly two years earlier than the western date of 70 C.E. In addition the periods of reigns for many of the Julio-Claudian emperors differ quite considerably depending on whether the source is say Josephus, Dio[283] or Epiphanius[284] etc.

[282] Kokkinos (2010: 385), refers to catalogued examples of Festus' coins in, inter alia, Meshorer, 1982: 285 - 286.
[283] (*Claudius* or *Lucius*) *Cassius Dio Cocceianus* (155 – 235 C.E.).
[284] Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis/Constantia (c. 310/320 – 403 C.E.).

Now this evidence of an earlier date for Ananus which is surely convincing, means that Josephus' account of Ananus' actions in the *JP* occurred anywhere between three and thirteen years *earlier* than previously believed, making it even more unlikely that the individual supposedly identified as James the brother of Jesus was the victim of the stoning originally described. A forger, living between the second and fourth century of the Common Era, would not have been aware of how inaccurate their dates were and so happily placed the interpolation in what they thought was the ideal place in the *AJ*'s Ananus narrative but unknowingly in the wrong period. Here, the interpolator quite possibly removed any statements made immediately before line 200 concerning the nature of the charges against the unknown victims as well as replacing their names and designations with "…the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James…".

This evidence should be viewed as insurmountable for any scholar who continues to insist that the *JP* is in any way authentic and by extension places even more doubt on the *Testimonium Flavianum*.

## 4.7 Chapter Four Summary

Based on the arguments reviewed thus far it can be ascertained that:

1. Apart from the *JP* we do not have any other extra-biblical evidence that James even existed. Here, the Dead Sea Scroll literature cannot serve as evidence for James' existence. Based purely on the *NT* it is possible to surmise that he was believed to be Jesus' sibling, favoured circumcision and held a senior leadership position in the Jerusalem Church in the first century C.E. However, it is solely Christian tradition that supplies details of his trial and death;
2. All Christian apologists cited (Origen, Eusebius and Jerome) misquote Josephus as regards the reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem. This means that, apart from them possibly regurgitating a Christian tradition, they were certainly capable of embellishment or there once existed a Josephan text that is now lost;
3. Origen quotes the *JP* practically verbatim strengthening the notion that he had read it. However, he never refers to the *JP* as the *JP* – only in the context of quoting Josephus in order to justify the spurious cause for the destruction of the Temple;

4. The *JP* is far less embellished than one would expect from the details of the Christian tradition;
5. James' mention is cursory. It has been suggested that he is only mentioned because his illegal execution causes Ananus to be deposed. However, given that he is uncharacteristically refered to as "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ" cannot be dismissed as being merely incidental;
6. If a Christian forger had inserted a reference to Jesus in the *JP*, he would have more likely ensured that it received more prominence. However, this factor really depends on the actual opportunity and intentions of the forger. One should not generalise the specific reasons for this possible forgery;
7. Josephus' *JP* account differs in time and details from the official second century Christian accounts, suggesting early authorship;
8. Albinus arrived in Jerusalem in c. 59 C.E. and could not possibly have arrived as late as say 68 or 70 CE as intimated by the Christian tradition. Therefore, if the Christian tradition is correct then the *JP* is a proven forgery. If the *JP* is authentic then the Christian tradition is inaccurate; and
9. The preceding passages leading up to the *JP* appear to be skipping vital information.

Despite the assurances of many Christian scholars, it is difficult to see how the *JP* can in any way appear as an innocent text. If it is authentic, then, in support of Vermes (2010) we must seriously consider the *TF* to also be authentic. To take any other stance would seriously question why Josephus would have expected his reader to know who Jesus (of Nazareth) was in the *JP*.

However, the fact that the *TF* is more likely to be counterfeit strongly suggests that we need to be far more circumspect before naively reading the *JP* as unqualified historical fact.

Regardless of authenticity one can be assured that the context for the *JP* is too early for the trial and death of the traditional James the Just. Also, given the lack of embellishment it might be convenient to believe that the passage is also of an early composition – possibly at a time before the James tradition became exaggerated?

However, to naively excuse a possible Christian interpolator will not suffice. If the purpose was to deceive then there is equally good reason why the forger did not want

to overplay his hand. The mere changing of the name of the condemned individual in the court of Ananas was enough to have an historical reference created without alerting the reader to any possible skulduggery.

The suspected missing text in the preceding passage also serves as additional evidence that the forger needed to first remove the exact details of the issue that troubled Ananas before establishing the James and Jesus references. Here, one can assume that the nature of the issue that led to the opportune executions of the now unknown individuals who so displeased Ananus would have severely contradicted the reference to "…the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James…".

Lastly, if one needs the name of the chief suspect for this interpolation, Origen is certainly the most likely candidate. Although, in his *Cels*. II, 22, he makes it clear that he thinks that the death of Jesus was the ultimate cause for the destruction of the Temple, he repeatedly makes mention of Josephus' reference to James in his many writings. In these contexts, he falsely records Josephus as blaming the death of James for the destruction of Jerusalem and as has been clearly shown, Origen recurrently employs the almost identical phraseology as found in the *JP* today.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE *BAPTIST PASSAGE*

## 5.1 Introduction

As has already been established, this thesis deals with three disputed texts of Christian import, all of which reside within Josephus' *AJ* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*) (c. 97 C.E.). This chapter deals exclusively with the passage (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 – 119), which makes mention of John the Baptist. For the sake of clarity in this thesis, this narrative will be referred to as the *BP* (*Baptist Passage*). This passage is presented below, in its original Greek together with a modern English translation:

### 5.1.1 Passage from *Antiquitates Judaicae*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 - 119[285] (*Baptist Passage*)

> Τισὶ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐδόκει ὀλωλέναι τὸν Ἡρώδου στρατὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μάλα δικαίως τινυμένου κατὰ ποινὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου βαπτιστοῦ. κτείνει γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον Ἡρώδης ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κελεύοντα ἀρετὴν ἐπασκοῦσιν καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείᾳ χρωμένοις βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι· οὕτω γὰρ δὴ καὶ τὴν βάπτισιν ἀποδεκτὴν αὐτῷ φανεῖσθαι μὴ ἐπί τινων ἁμαρτάδων παραιτήσει χρωμένων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἁγνείᾳ τοῦ σώματος, ἅτε δὴ καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δικαιοσύνῃ προεκκεκαθαρμένης. καὶ τῶν ἄλλων συστρεφομένων, καὶ γὰρ ἥσθησαν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον τῇ ἀκροάσει τῶν λόγων, δείσας Ἡρώδης τὸ ἐπὶ τοσόνδε πιθανὸν αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις μὴ ἐπὶ ἀποστάσει τινὶ φέροι, πάντα γὰρ ἐῴκεσαν συμβουλῇ τῇ ἐκείνου πράξοντες, πολὺ κρεῖττον ἡγεῖται πρίν τι νεώτερον ἐξ αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι προλαβὼν ἀνελεῖν τοῦ μεταβολῆς γενομένης μὴ εἰς πράγματα ἐμπεσὼν μετανοεῖν. καὶ ὁ μὲν ὑποψίᾳ τῇ Ἡρώδου δέσμιος εἰς τὸν Μαχαιροῦντα πεμφθεὶς τὸ προειρημένον φρούριον ταύτῃ κτίννυται. τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις δόξαν ἐπὶ τιμωρίᾳ τῇ ἐκείνου τὸν ὅλεθρον ἐπὶ τῷ στρατεύματι γενέσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ κακῶσαι Ἡρώδην θέλοντος.

> Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was

[285] Greek text and English translation according to Whiston (Tr.) 1895. *Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus*. in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D18%3Awhiston+chapter%3D5%3Awhiston+section%3D2 [25 July 2014].

> thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him.

It is most significant that this is the only extant reference to John the Baptist found outside of scriptural writings.

## 5.2 Brief Historical Background

In his *Cels.* (I, 47) Origen refers specifically to *AJ,* XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 - 119 to recapitulate what Josephus had to say about John the Baptist or Baptiser. This fact shows that the *BP* was extant in some form or another, as early as the mid-third century C.E.

## 5.3 Arguments For and Against Authenticity

### 5.3.1 Introduction

As with the other two suspected interpolations, the *BP* is not considered to be the work of Josephus by those authorities who subscribe to a mythical Jesus yet nearly all of those scholars who consider themselves to be Christian more typically consider this passage to be an authentic Josephan text. It is interesting to note that the highly critical scholar, Bilde (1988: 222 - 223), despite declaring the *TF* to be largely fabricated, seemed quite content to accept the *JP* as being wholly authentic.

However, more liberal scholars largely agree that, inter alia, based on its arbitrary placement in *AJ*, XVIII*,* the *BP* gives all the warning signs of being an interpolation by a later Christian hand. To obviate this interpretation, more conservative scholars will tend to argue that it is not even a partial forgery since it is not (like the better known *TF*) reminiscent of a canonical gospel account. Certainly, in the first four centuries of Christianity - even before the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.) - there existed any number

of Antilegomena and Apocrypha. Any one of these might arguably have served as the source for this more atypical version of the better known *NT* Baptist narrative.[286]

### 5.3.2 The Possible Role of Eusebius

As has already been seen many times (cf. Chapter Three), Eusebius is often viewed as the most likely candidate as both formulator and interpolator of the *TF*. However, like the *JP*, when it comes to the *BP* the situation is not quite so clear. As has already been acknowledged, Origen (c. 184/185 – 253/254 C.E.) (*Cels.* I, 47) refers specifically to *AJ* XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 - 119 to recapitulate what Josephus had to say about John the Baptist. This fact shows that the *BP* was extant in some form or another, as early as the mid-third century C.E. If fraud is indicated, then, this fact alone would seem to exonerate Eusebius as being the instigator of the *BP* (albeit in an earlier form).

Regardless, some decades later (c. 325 C.E.), Eusebius quotes from *AJ,* XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 as regards John the Baptist in his *HE* (*Historia Ecclesiastica*), I, 11. This is normally assumed to be (even if not identical with extant versions), at least similar to what is read today. Specifically, Eusebius (*HE*, I, 11), says the following apropos Josephus: "After giving this account of John, in the same part of his work he goes on to speak as follows of our Saviour…" The point is that after referring to the account of John the Baptist in the *AJ*, Eusebius then proceeds to quote the *TF* which of course, refers to Jesus (of Nazareth). Ignoring for the moment the possibility that Eusebius may have interpolated the *TF* and possibly amended the other (i.e. the *BP*), one might want to assume that in *his* version of the *AJ*, the *BP* (or something akin to it), was placed *before* the *TF*.

If this is really the case, it is highly significant given that in the version that has survived to the present day; the *TF precedes* the *BP* by at least two chapters.

Doherty (2009: 560) believes that although this might just be an example of carelessness on the part of Eusebius it might also be evidence that prior to his time, copies of the *AJ* contained various versions of the *BP* and the *TF* which could be found in different places within the greater text (i.e. placed in positions that do not agree with

[286] Cf. *Ev.Matt.* 3: 1 - 12 and 14: 1 -12; *Ev.Marc.* 1: 4 - 9 and 6: 14 - 29; *Ev.Luc.* 3: 2 - 20 and 9: 7 - 8.

where they appear today). Within this strained scenario, Doherty strongly intimates that perhaps Eusebius found himself in the ideal position to finally decide on their final form and location within *AJ*.

This particular scenario should be viewed as being highly unlikely for the simple reason that for an interpolation to be in any way successful requires it to be situated within a plausible context. If the *BP* was to ever be situated elsewhere in the *AJ*, where else would such a context be found? Indeed, it would seem that only the *TF* could be successfully accommodated elsewhere in the *AJ.* However, even here, it would be hard to find a suitable context for the *TF* outside of Chapter XVIII.

Doherty's speculations might lay him open to a charge of wanting to have things both ways: *If* Eusebius had really found pre-existing versions of *both* the *TF* and the *BP* in his version of the *AJ* (regardless of their placement), it would also suggest that he was not the *instigator* of a deception but merely an *opportunist* who refined what had been presented to him by a previous fraudster.

Within this scenario (depending on how considerable an amendment Eusebius made to either of the two passages in question), his culpability may not be as severe as previously suspected, he may merely have been guilty of inserting the ready-made passages into what he considered to be more appropriate positions within the greater text and naively believed their content to be genuine. Of course, conversely, he may also have been supplied with the most rudimentary of glosses that he took great care to expand and modify to suit his own propagandistic commitments.

### 5.3.3 Evidence of Christian Interpolation

What is most significant is that scholars like Doherty who do not accept the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, have seen this as additional evidence that the *BP* was also a Christian interpolation.

Eddy and Boyd (2007), refer to the well-known fact that in Eusebius' *DE,* III, 5 (which is normally assumed to have been written between c. 312 – 318 C.E. and accordingly somewhat earlier than his *HE*), Eusebius, whilst introducing the *TF* (*DE*, III, 5), says he will quote Josephus, "who in the eighteenth chapter [i.e., book] of *The Archaeology of*

*the Jews* [i.e. the *AJ*], in his record of the times of Pilate, mentions our Saviour…"

Scholars such as Doherty, Eddy and Boyd all point out at this juncture that this is somewhat peculiar as if the *TF* was (as Eusebius suggests in his *DE*), at the same position in the *AJ* as it is found today than it must have been situated two chapters *before* the *BP* (i.e. exactly as it is today), and not *after* it as intimated in his later *HE*.
On this issue, Doherty (2009: 561) asks "Does this speak to a fluidity of location for both of these passages in the time of Eusebius"?

Obviously the permutations here are endless, but a popular reconstruction involves considering for a moment the possible situation had an earlier version of the *BP* and the *TF* not been interpolated by Eusebius but found by him situated in his copy of the manuscript at the time of writing his *DE* and *HE*. Within this scenario an earlier Christian interpolator looking for the best place to insert the *TF* (regardless of which version it may have been at the time) is assumed (due to his Christian bias), to have wanted to ideally place it somewhere *after* the *BP*. However, as has already been mooted and as Doherty corroborates, perhaps the alleged interpolator felt more compelled to juxtapose it with the extant references to Pontius Pilate as the only suitable place in the *entire AJ* where some reference to an historical Jesus might be more readily expected to occur.

One assumes here that had the *BP* also been interpolated, it too, needed to be where it is found today, juxtaposed with an extant Josephan reference to a relevant historical personage more normally associated with the Baptist as portrayed by the various gospel accounts (in this case Herod Antipas).

Thus, although the interpolator would have preferred to have had the *BP* precede the *TF* he felt that his fraud would be less obvious if he could at least place the two interpolations in a more convincing context. Unfortunately, as has been fully explained already, these two contexts (viz.: Pilate and Antipas) were not to be found in the desired *NT* order.

On this issue, Doherty refers to Eddy and Boyd's (2007: 195 - 196) comment that, if the entire *TF* had really been the product of Christian interpolation (surely by dint of gospel tradition), it should have been placed *after* any reference to John the Baptist. This is because, in the gospels, he was recorded as preceding and heralding Christ's coming.

However, the modern version of the *AJ* reverses this traditional order (obviously suggesting to Eddy and Boyd, the actions of a non-Christian author) whereas (as has already been pointed out), in his *HE*, Eusebius seems to imply that in his version of the *AJ* the *TF* with its reference to Jesus as the "Christ", did come *after* the *BP* and clearly conformed to a Christian/synoptic gospel worldview.

It should be seen as self-evident that Eddy and Boyd's (2007: 195 - 196), Christian-based argument (regardless of its validity are falsity) also fails to take into consideration (as has already been briefly mentioned), that if someone is intending to place a fraudulent piece of text into an existing manuscript in such a way as to avoid detection, the best way to do so, is to place it within the most appropriate pre-existing context. In short, if a forger wants to include something about, say, John the Baptist and the host text mentions, say, Herod Antipas, then by default, that is the appropriate place to weave in the forged material without raising too much suspicion. Again, if the forger wants to make mention of, say, Jesus of Nazareth and the host text makes mention of, say, Pontius Pilate, then that is the most logical place to merge in the spurious material.

As no other opportunities exist in the host text (other than these previously mentioned examples), then, by default, they become the *only* locations wherein an applicable interpolation may reside successfully. Thus, if the host text makes mention of Pontius Pilate *before* Herod Antipas the resultant interpolations (i.e. *TF* and *BP*), will not be placed in the same chronological order as their counterparts in the *NT*.

This raises the question as to whether Eusebius, regardless of his status as forger and/or opportunist, incorrectly recorded the order of placement for the *BP* and the *TF* solely due to his unconscious bias as a Christian – one who in his mind's eye automatically placed John the Baptist before Jesus Christ due to his total dependence on the gospel tradition. If so, his comments about the placement of the two passages need not cause one too much concern, since his version of the *AJ* ultimately boasted largely the same structure and format as the version we have today.

Of course as has already been suggested, other permutations abound. It is also conceivable that Eusebius found the *BP* (regardless of its formulation), in its present place and then sought a believable context for his version of the *TF* applying the reasoning already described.

Regardless of who may have committed the original *BP* fraud, as a result of the primary

needs of a suitable place to insert the interpolations, both the *TF* and the *BP* ended up where they appear today.

Doherty (2013) confirms aspects of this interpretation:

> There is no denying that a Christian interpolator of the *Testimonium* had a difficult decision to make. If the passage on John was authentic, he could place it in a position following John. On the other hand, because of the role of Pilate which the interpolator was including in his paragraph on Jesus, it would have seemed to belong in the earlier chapter 3, along with the Pilate episodes.

Now assuming that there is any merit in the preceding arguments, then that would imply only one of two possibilities:

1. Eusebius had more than one copy of *AJ* during his life and the placement of the *TF* and/or *BP* possibly differed in these copies.
2. The *TF* (whether amended or created by Eusebius or not) was situated (either by Eusebius and/or a previous author) exactly in the place it is now found (i.e. *AJ,* XVIII, 3, 3 / 63 - 64) and it is merely a misinterpretation of his comments in his later *HE* that gives rise to the belief that he refers to the *TF* as appearing *before* the *BP*. In short, the *TF* never did appear after the *BP*.

In this context, the latter possibility surely seems to be far more likely.

However, Doherty (2013), it would seem, favours the former possibility. Indeed, he considers the possibility that the *BP* may well have had some flexibility in terms of its position in copies of the *AJ* as further evidence for more general Christian interpolation over a period of time.

Doherty (2009: 561) believes that the question of what motivated Eusebius' possible interpolation(s) is revealed when one considers what he has to say in his *HE*, I, 11. In this context, Eusebius (*HE*, I, 11 / 9[287]), makes the following statement immediately after quoting the *BP* and the *TF*:

[287] Greek text according to Lake, *et al*. 1926 – 1932. Eusebius of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History, Vols 1 - 2 in *Perseus Digital Library* [Online]. Available: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0640%3Abook%3D2%3Achapter%3D23%3Asection%3D9. English translation according to McGiffert (Tr.). 1890. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd Series, Vol. 1. Revised and edited for New Advent by Knight. (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250101.htm) in *New Advent* [Online]. Available: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250101.htm [26 July 2014].

> Ταῦτα τοῦ ἐξ αὐτῶν Ἑβραίων συγγραφέως ἀνέκαθεν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ γραφῇ περί τε τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ Ἰωάννου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν παραδεδωκότος, τίς ἂν ἔτι λείποιτο ἀποφυγὴ τοῦ μὴ ἀναισχύντους ἀπελέγχεσθαι τοὺς τὰ κατ᾽ αὐτῶν πλασαμένους ὑπομνήματα; ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐχέτω ταύτῃ.
>
> Since an historian, who is one of the Hebrews themselves, has recorded in his work these things concerning John the Baptist and our Saviour, what excuse is there left for not convicting them [anti-Christian rhetoricians] of being destitute of all shame, who have forged the acts against them? But let this suffice here. [My insertion for clarity].

It would certainly seem that Eusebius reveals his primary concern here - to even the score against what he considers to be previous "pagan" misrepresentation of Christianity.

Doherty (2013) alerts his reader to a typical example of a source of irritation to Eusebius, namely the *Mem.* (*Memoranda)*, published by the emperor Maximinus II (Daia)[288] in 311 C.E., whose coinage reveals that he worshipped *Sol Invictus.*[289]

He was also one of the last emperors to openly persecute Christians. His *Mem*. was alleged by the Romans to be the original and authentic "Acts of Pilate" in which the governor of Judea had apparently reported to Tiberius on his trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Maximinus was antagonistic towards John the Baptist as well as Jesus of Nazareth and openly supported the worship of other long-standing traditional deities. He personally believed that the Christian cult was responsible for such things as drought and pestilence – hence his eagerness to suppress them.

According to Eusebius, in the "Acts of Pilate" (*Mem.*) Pontius Pilate speaks about both Jesus (of Nazareth) as well as John (the Baptist) but in a very unsympathetic manner. Unfortunately this document has not survived, no doubt due to Christian censorship, based on Eusebius' reaction to it.

It should be viewed as quite serendipitous that the *TF* appeared precisely at a time

[288] *Gaius Valerius Galerius Maximinus Daia Augustus* (270 -313 C.E.).

[289] It is known that this particular religion was reformed and officially initiated in 274 C.E. by the Roman emperor Aurelian who made it an official religion alongside the traditional Roman cults. Hence, it initially was allocated the same status as that which Christianity would enjoy from 325 C.E. onwards. It was obviously a very popular religion and the last recorded inscription referring to this religion dates to 387 C.E. Even by the fifth century, this belief system, was considered to be enough of a threat to Christianity, for Augustine to feel the need to preach against its adherents. Cf. Halsberghe, 1972. *The Cult of Sol Invictus*: 155.

when Eusebius requires ammunition to counter the claims of Maximinius II.

Doherty (2009: 561) asserts:

> Conveniently, then, the *Testimonium* has served Eusebius' need to counter and discredit this hostile publication "blackening" Jesus and John. What better situation could exist to justify Eusebius' principle of falsifying something in the interests of defending the faith against malicious and dishonest criticism?

Of particular importance is the possibility that a Christian interpolator is hardly likely to have forged the mention of John the Baptist and then not linked it in some way to Jesus (of Nazareth).

This is especially noteworthy when one considers the actual mention of John's use of baptism (cf. Section 5.7.1) and not seen the obvious opportunity to link it to Christ's baptism by John. Further, the description of John's baptism ritual and its theological underpinning does not harmonise in all cases with a typically Christian understanding of the practice.

However, Doherty (2009: 562) seems to miss a very important issue here. He states "If it *was* genuine, this would have provided further incentive to fabricate one on Jesus to complement it, whether by Eusebius or someone previous."

This opinion does not seem to make much sense: Surely, the more likely reason why it was not employed as a direct link to Jesus is because it was possibly *not* genuine and was itself an interpolation. One could go further and speculate that because the *BP* and the *JP* may have been interpolated at the very same time or by the same person, the forger responsible never considered making a further reference to Jesus that needed to be linked to John as he had already created the *JP* and its reference to Jesus as, inter alia, the "Christ" and had found a suitable place for it in *AJ*?.

Alternatively, had it been genuine (or an interpolation from an earlier century), perhaps the unorthodox description of the baptism ritual would have made it unsuitable to link Jesus at that point (i.e. sometime in the early fourth century C.E.), since it would have overtly contradicted the preferred message of a sinner dying to the world of sin and being reborn in Christ Jesus as preached by Eusebius?

### 5.3.4 Contradiction between the *NT* and the *BP*

Mason (2003: 157; 213 - 225) offers another intriguing insight:

According to the *BP*, Antipas arrested John primarily because he was responsible for causing civil unrest. However, the gospel accounts state that Antipas arrested John because he criticized his union with his brother's wife.

In this context, Mason questions why Josephus (assuming he was the author) did not see John as a dangerous popular leader. As has already been ascertained in the case of the *TF*, elsewhere in the *AJ*, such typical Jewish *arrivistes* are normally singled out for heavy criticism. But the author of the *BP* speaks of John in *positive* terms even calling him a good and righteous leader. This in itself is patently un-Josephan in character.

All of this, taken together with Eusebius' remarks about the relative positioning of the John and Jesus passages in the text, makes it - at this stage of the argument - difficult to come to any clear decision about the authenticity of Josephus on John the Baptist.

## 5.4 Zindler's Proof: A Case Study

In this regard, the pioneering work of the atheist Zindler needs to be highlighted here as one of the more plausible arguments that may be employed when attempting to discount the authenticity of the *BP*.

Zindler (2003: 96) posits the argument that the *BP* was placed in the *AJ* by either a Jewish-Christian or "an apologist for one of the myriad 'heretical' sects which are known to have existed from the earliest periods of Christian history." He also correctly confirms that other written accounts of John the Baptist (i.e. other than those contained in the canonical gospels), must have once existed. In this regard, Zindler (2003: 97) reminds his readers that "a decidedly non-gospel type of John the Baptist holds a very prominent place in the Mandaean religion to this day." Certainly, the religious scriptures of the Mandaeans (i.e. the *Genzā Rabbā*) contains the words of wisdom from their revered prophet *Yahya ibn Zakariyya* (i.e. John the Baptist). These are not found in any other extant source today.

In addition, there exists a brief reference to John the Baptist in the gospel of Thomas (i.e. *Ev.Thom.46)* and Jerome cites a passage that contains a reference to John the Baptist as contained in the once extant Gospel of the Hebrews (cf. *DCP* [*Dialogus Contra Pelagianos III.2]).*

Zindler (2003), gives five reasons why the *BP* is most likely a forgery, viz.:

**5.4.1 First Reason:** The *BP* disrupts the continuity of the main narrative:

If the *BP* (i.e. Section 2 [lines 116 – 119] from chapter 5 of book 18) is removed from the account as it presently appears, then Section 1 (i.e. the preceding Section [lines 109 – 115]) and Section 3 (i.e. the following Section [lines 120 – 129]), can now be read as a continuous, uninterrupted narrative, viz.:

> **End of Section 1 (line 115):**
>
> So Herod wrote about these affairs to Tiberius, who being very angry at the attempt made by Aretas, wrote to Vitellius to make war upon him, and either to take him alive, and bring him to him in bonds, or to kill him, and send him his head. This was the charge that Tiberius gave to the president of Syria.
>
> **Beginning of Section 3 (line 120):**
>
> So Vitellius prepared to make war with Aretas, having with him two legions of armed men; he also took with him all those of light armature, and of the horsemen which belonged to them, and were drawn out of those kingdoms which were under the Romans, and made haste for Petra, and came to Ptolemais.

This action clearly highlights the possibility that Section 2 (i.e. the *BP*) is a clumsy interpolation, as its presence disrupts the continuity of the narrative concerning the various interactions between Aretas IV, Herod Antipas, Tiberius and Vitellius.

**5.4.2 Second Reason:** The *BP* contradicts previous information written about the fortress of Macherus. In this regard, the fortress was first recorded in Section 1 (specifically, it is mentioned twice, once in line 111 and again in line 112): Here, the

In the *BP* (lines 116 – 119) the reader is informed that Herod Antipas sent John to the fortress of Macherus for execution. However, the preceding paragraph (i.e. Section 1)

seems to stress that this fortress belonged to King Aretas IV who incidentally, was Antipas' father in law before becoming his mortal enemy.

Thus, even if it is somehow proven that under more normal conditions, Herod Antipas may have had access to this fortress, once he made an enemy of its legitimate owner (i.e. Aretas IV) he would hardly have been able to send his prisoner there for incarceration and subsequent execution.

As an aside, it should also be seen as highly suspicious, that the *BP* manages to amplify its tenuous relationship to the preceding text by the statement: "…he was sent … to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned…".

**5.4.3 Third Reason:** The *BP* contradicts the reasons for Herod Antipas' defeat at the hands of Aretas IV as stated in the same book:

The *BP* specifically informs the reader that God, displeased by Herod Antipas' atrocious treatment of the Baptist, allowed Aretas IV to have the upper hand in battle. However, Section 2 from Chapter 7 of Book XVIII (line 255) states the following:

> Ἡρωδιάδι μὲν δὴ φθόνου τοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ Ἡρώδῃ γυναικείων ἀκροασαμένῳ κουφολογιῶν δίκην ταύτην ἐπετίμησεν ὁ θεός.
>
> And thus did God punish Herodias for her envy at her brother, and Herod also for giving ear to the vain discourses of a woman.

In this regard, Caligula banished Herodias together with her husband, Herod Antipas.

**5.4.4 Fourth Reason** John the Baptist is not mentioned in Josephus' earlier work, *BJ* (*Bellum Judaicum*) even when it discusses Herod Antipas.

**5.4.5 Fifth Reason** John the Baptist does not feature in the table of contents of the earlier Greek version of the *AJ*. He only appears in the later, Latin translations.

If the *BP* is really a forgery (possibly based on some now long forgotten source), we are only left with the canonical gospels, the *Genzā Rabbā*, the gospel of Thomas and the gospel of the Hebrews, for any knowledge about the Baptist. In addition, Zindler (2003), reminds us that the synoptic gospel accounts tend to emphasize the Baptist

mostly in terms of quoted biblical prophecy and not as attempts to describe an actual historical personage. In this context, they use the literary descriptions of Elijah and his sayings as well as selected passages from the prophets to inform us about John the Baptist. Certainly, John is portrayed by the gospels as being an incarnation of Elijah.

One of the tempting conclusions to be drawn from this investigation at this early stage is that given the paltry historical evidence, there seems to be even less reason to believe that someone called John the Baptist existed than say Jesus of Nazareth.

## 5.5 R.M. Price's Proof: A Case Study

Another critique of this passage's claim to be authentic Josephan material is R.M. Price[290] who gives two very compelling reasons why we should be highly suspicious of this passage.

### 5.5.1 First Reason

The first reason given by R.M. Price (2003: 103) concerns the obvious urgency of the author to "correct a sacramental interpretation" of John the Baptist's baptismal ritual:

> [John] commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.

R.M. Price points out that this is written in the context of the "here and now" rather than as some dispassionate account of a past event. In addition, R.M. Price asks why Josephus, as a practicing Jew, would even care about such subtle doctrinal issues (what he calls "sectarian theological hair-splitting…"), any more than say Gallio did in the *NT* (cf. *Act.Ap.* 18: 14 - 15)?[291]

Given this valid observation, it is astounding how the Christian scholar Rothschild

[290] I.e. Robert M. Price.

[291] *Act. Ap.* 18: 14 - 15 states: "Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law - settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.'"

(2011: 271), can even begin to suggest that the *BP* contains *no* Christian interpolations and further, based on this bogus observation justifies its possible authenticity.

Now, Meager, (1983: 37 - 38), who is also a Christian scholar, tries to rectify the situation by suggesting that Josephus could have drawn from the general knowledge of a Baptist cult in his own day. For some strange reason, R.M. Price seems to buy into this doubtful suggestion that such a cult actually existed. Regardless, even if we allow for such a possibility, R.M. Price (2003: 103) also maintains that he cannot visualise Josephus being that concerned with such issues and suggests that he would have "edited out such extraneous details."

In the context of R.M. Price's argument, this statement makes little or no sense because either Josephus relied on this avowed Baptist cult for his information or he did not. If the former is true than it means that here is some vital evidence for the possible historical existence of John the Baptist. If the latter is true, then it means that it is far more likely that the *BP* (and its implied import), is just a later Christian invention and interpolation. Again, if the latter possibility is correct, then Josephus knew absolutely nothing about a Baptist cult in his own time, regardless of whether or not it actually existed.

### 5.5.2 Second Reason

R.M. Price's second reason (2003: 103) for suspecting interpolation is akin to the observation made by Zindler and concerns the presence of a redactional seam. This has already been discussed (cf. 5.4.1) and concerns the uncomfortable placement of the entire *BP* within supporting text whose logical flow is clearly interrupted.

However, R.M. Price's specific nuance on this observation, which is quite enlightening concerns the sentence that introduces the *BP*: "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly as a punishment of what he did against John."

R.M. Price suggests that this is a paraphrase of the genuine words of Josephus which now have been moved to the end of the passage, viz.: "Now, the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, as a mark of

God's displeasure against him."

Even so, R.M. Price (2003: 104 - 105) still believes that John the Baptist was an historical figure and goes so far as to compare his alleged cult to the hypothetical Qumran sect.

## 5.6 New Evidence Apropos the Herodian Dynasty

Thanks, inadvertently to the recent (2010) mostly numismatic work undertaken specifically on the Herodian Dynasty by Kokkinos[292], some additional facts would seem to sway the argument of whether or not the *BP* was a Christian forgery.

To be clear, Kokkinos seems to accept the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth and John the Baptist. He also argues from the perspective of an individual who is primarily concerned with presenting a more accurate picture of the familial relationships within the Herodian dynasty. He is not concerned with the historicity of Jesus and his associates. Thus, certain of his findings (especially his numismatic evidence [cf. Section 4.6 *ut supra*]) have inadvertently assisted in the interpolation debate.

Based on his complete re-evaluation of the Herodian dynasty Kokkinos (2010: 225) surmises that Herod Antipas was most likely born in c. 25 B.C.E. and if he did in fact execute John the Baptist it would have most likely occurred in 35 C.E. (i.e. on his sixtieth birthday). Kokkinos (2010: 231 - 232) has also identified Antipas' wife who was the daughter of Aretas IV of Nabataea. Based on numismatic evidence it transpires that her name was most likely Phasaelis. He also calculates that in c. 7 – 6 B.C.E. at the time of her marriage to Antipas, she would have been about 12 years old. Antipas divorced her in c. 33 - 34 C.E. Josephus (cf. *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 1 / 109) merely tells us that she was the daughter of Aretas IV but does not name her. It is also possible, but not certain, that no children were produced by this long union – certainly none that were recorded.

Regardless, Kokkinos (2010: 268) determines that on hearing of the death of his half-brother, Philip the Tetrarch, Antipas travelled to Rome in 34 CE. He did this to lay claim

[292] Cf. Kokkinos, 2010. *The Herodian Dynasty.*

to his half-brother's territories – something he could now do as Philip and his wife Herodias most likely had no offspring.

As an aside, Kokkinos solves an old mystery here. Most theologians argue that due to the references to a "Philip" in *Ev.Marc., Ev.Matt.* and *Ev.Luc*. they have determined a seeming contradiction between the gospel accounts and that of Josephus. Kokkinos (2010: 223) states that the "stubborn insistence" of these scholars to conflate Herod II[293] with "'Herod-Philip'… is without value". Here he also cites Hoehner, 1972: 133 – 136 and Hanson, 1989: 79.

Before approaching Tiberius to make his petition, Antipas first went to negotiate with his late brother's widow (Herodias). Kokkinos speculates that Herodias acquiesced subject to Antipas first divorcing Phasaelis and subsequently marrying her. Kokkinos stresses that this proposed union had more to do with politics than romance. Certainly, Herodias (c.15 B.C.E. – after 39 C.E.) would have been some 49 years old by this time (i.e. 34 C.E.). Her motive was purely to guarantee that she remained aligned to a man who would ensure here continued exalted position and status.

Kokkinos (2010: 268) cites further evidence to support this conjecture when he refers to the fact that the pro-Nabataean party from Philip's former tetrarchy ultimately betrayed Antipas by siding with Phasaelis' father (Aretas IV) – an action that helped bring about Antipas' subsequent defeat. This event is recorded accurately by Josephus in his *AJ*, immediately preceding the *BP*.

It can be argued, that what is often overlooked in these debates is that *if* the *BP* is in any way authentic, it means that Josephus (regardless of the actual status of the *BP*), is writing about events that he believed happened between 37 and 41 C.E. Kokkinos' research confirms these dates. This does not fit at all well with the traditional Christian belief that Jesus died in c. 33 C.E. and some time *after* John the Baptist had been supposedly executed. In fact, this issue is taken up by Kokkinos in quite a negative way, because he accepts the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, he also sees it as necessary to push the date of the crucifixion forward to as late as 36 C.E. in order to preserve some gospel accuracy. Here again, is a wonderful example of an individual's

[293] Kokkinos reclassifies Herod II as Herod III in his writings. This point need not detract from the argument cited. Cf. Kokkinos, 2010. *The Herodian Dynasty*: 145, 195, 207, 208, 222, 223, 237, 245, 265 – 267, 268, 310, 340, 359, 364 and 365.

worldview impinging on his reasoning. Had he no need to protect the crucifixion date as occurring after John the Baptist's death he would not have needed to have made this conjecture.

Ironically, instead of focusing on why they believe the *BP* is not a forgery, one would think that the more typically conservative and certainly fundamentalist scholars would be fighting extremely hard to *discredit* the *BP*. Indeed, if it was authentic extra-biblical/scriptural evidence that proved that John the Baptist:

1. was a *bona fide* historical personage; and
2. clearly still lived sometime *after* the Jesus of Nazareth episode

then it would not only throw serious doubt on the gospel accuracy and chronology in general, but in addition would discredit certain of the key tenets of the Christian belief.

For example, such an outcome would show that John *did not*, inter alia, prophecy the coming of Christ or prepare the way for him, not to mention discrediting every utterance that Jesus is recorded as having spoken on all matters relating to either John or the topic of baptism.

Therefore, if one wants to retain the gospel accounts, as at the very least, based on some historical truth, then clearly, the *BP* is an obvious forgery. If the gospel accounts are pure religious mythology then either John the Baptist most probably did not exist or his actions have been adulterated and redacted to suit a religious agenda. Either way, the *BP* is again shown up as fraudulent since it specifically highlights Josephus, as a practicing Jew, brought up as a Sadducee, being uncharacteristically concerned with advanced, perceptive, Christian-based, doctrinal issues concerning the role of baptism.

The only way that one can accept the *BP* as a valid historical account by Josephus is to discredit the gospels' accuracy and accept that Josephus was nothing short of being a practicing Christian with notions that were not only advanced for the time but practically prophetic in nature.

## 5.7 Origen as Prime Suspect

Given that Eusebius is unlikely to have been the instigator for the *BP* since Origen, who wrote several decades earlier, mentions that Josephus refers to John the Baptist, the task now is to try to determine at what point in history the interpolation was first made. Of course this does not rule out Eusebius as having a final redacting hand in the *BP*.

Apart from Origen, if we look at the extant writings of earlier Church fathers who made use of Josephus but do not quote the *TF*, we find that Justin Martyr (*TID*, XLIX; L and LXXXIV), mentions John the Baptist four times, purely in the context of preparing the way for Christ but he makes no mention of the *BP* and further, as he quotes from the *LXX* and the *NT,* he has no need of Josephus.

### 5.7.1 Origen as Suspected Interpolator

To understand Origen's possible role in the creation of the BP it is first necessary to be aware of a number of interrelated issues which only come to light as a result of a critical reading of his *Cels.* (*Contra Celsum*). This background information should be viewed as important in assisting one to understand the more likely raison *d'être* behind Origen's philosophical discourse whilst refuting Celsus' many anti-Christian claims.

### 5.7.2 Origen's Hellenistic Worldview

As has should be obvious, most (if not all) anti-Nicene apologists shared a similar belief in the efficacy of sympathetic magic. Despite their various interpretations apropos the tenets of the then evolving Christian dogma and associated Christology, they also seem to have taken for granted the existence of things like wizards, demons and evil spirits. This is especially true for Origen, who clearly accepts that things like sorcerers and magic not only exist but pose a dangerous threat to an individual who seeks spiritual salvation. He also sees himself as having the important task of trying to counter Celsus' accusation (cf. *Cels.* I, 71[294]), that Jesus of Nazareth was not divine but a "θεομισοῦς ἦν τινος καὶ μοχθηροῦ γόητος" which translates to "wicked and God-hated sorcerer." Origen, like most of his peers, seems to understand the workings of

[294] Greek text according to The Works of Origen [Online]. Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [22 August 2014]. English translation according to New Advent

his world in a typically Hellenistic[295] way. For example, he would affirm that water not only washes away dirt in the natural world but in the right context it will equally cancel out iniquity in the spiritual (supranatural) domain.

In *Cels.* IV, 62[296]. with reference to Plato, Origen explains:

> Ἡ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ λέξις φάσκουσα· Ὅταν δ᾽ οἱ θεοὶ τὴν γῆν ὕδατι καθαίρωσι δεδήλωκεν ὅτι καθαιρομένη ἡ γῆ τοῖς ὕδασιν ἧττονα ἔχει τὰ κακὰ παρὰ τὸν πρὸ τοῦ καθαίρεσθαι χρόνον. Καὶ τοῦτό φαμεν κατὰ Πλάτωνα, τὸ ἧττονα εἶναί ποτε τὰ κακά, διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ Θεαιτήτῳ λέξιν, φάσκουσαν μὴ δύνασθαι ἀπολέσθαι ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τὰ κακά.
>
> For the language in the Timæus, where it is said, "When the gods purify the earth with water, shows that the earth, when purified with water, contains less evil than it did before its purification". And this assertion, that there at one time were fewer evils in the world, is one which we make, in harmony with the opinion of Plato, because of the language in the Theætetus, where he says that evils cannot disappear from among men. [My punctuation for greater clarity].

In the same vein, in *Cels.* II, 7[297], Origen gives his own take on the gospel account of Jesus washing his disciple's feet:

> Ἢ πῶς ἀλαζὼν ὁ "δείπνου γινομένου" ἐκδυσάμενος ἐπὶ τῶν μαθητῶν ζωσάμενος δὲ "λέντιον" καὶ βαλὼν "ὕδωρ εἰς τὸν νιπτῆρα" καὶ νίπτων ἑκάστου "τοὺς πόδας" καὶ ἐπιτιμῶν τῷ μὴ θέλοντι παρέχειν αὐτοὺς καὶ λέγων· "Ἐὰν μὴ νίψω σε, οὐκ ἔχεις μέρος μετ' ἐμοῦ"
>
> [Jesus] who after supper laid aside His garments in the presence of His disciples, and, after girding Himself with a towel, and pouring water into a basin, proceeded to wash the feet of each disciple, and rebuked him who was unwilling to allow them to be washed, with the words, **Except I wash you, you have no part with Me** [My insertion and emphasis for clarity].

This passage reveals an obvious conflation of interpretation: The act of washing the disciple's feet is seen as both symbolic as well as a sacrament which will ensure that

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[295] Associative thinking and sympathetic magic remain common assumptions/practices even today. However, they received larger acceptance as having validity in the time of the Ante-Nicean writers.

[296] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

[297] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

the disciples literally adopt Christ-like qualities, including those of humility and compassion etc.

In *Cels.* III, 24[298], Origen explains how Christians, infused with the power of Christ can undertake all manner of supranatural activities:

> Τινὲς δὲ σημεῖα τοῦ εἰληφέναι τι διὰ τὴν πίστιν ταύτην παραδο ξότερον ἐπιδείκνυνται ἐν οἷς θεραπεύουσιν, οὐδὲν ἄλλο καλοῦντες ἐπὶ τοὺς δεομένους θεραπείας ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὄνομα μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱστορίας. Τούτοις γὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἑωράκαμεν πολλοὺς ἀπαλλαγέντας χαλεπῶν συμπτωμάτων καὶ ἐκστάσεων καὶ μανιῶν καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων, ἅπερ οὔτ᾽ ἄνθρωποι οὔτε δαίμονες ἐθερά πευσαν.
>
> And some [Christians] give evidence of their having received through this faith a marvellous power by the cures which they perform, revoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus, along with a mention of His history. For by these means we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind, and madness, and countless other ills, which could be cured neither by men nor devils.

Origen, also believes that his own God is not averse to employing natural processes to enact supranatural outcomes. For example, in *Cels.* IV, 69[299] he refers to the biblical account where the Jewish God "προσάγει διόρθωσιν τῷ κόσμῳ, καθαίρων αὐτὸν κατακλυσμῷ ἢ ἐκπυρώσει" translated as "[God] administers correction to the world, in purifying it by a flood or by a conflagration". It is important to remember, that in opposition to this, the more rational Celsus would most likely argue that natural events such as floods and conflagrations are not necessarily brought about by some divine need for retribution. Certainly Origen quotes Celsus as elucidating on this very issue in his *Cels.* IV, 11.

Again, in *Cels.* V, 48, whilst speaking on the efficacy of Jewish circumcision, Origen accepts the biblical account of an angel, intent on the annihilation of uncircumcised Jews, and who only allowed those Jews who were physically circumcised to remain

[298] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

[299] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

unharmed. He also comments on the biblical tale of Zipporah who used a pebble to circumcise her son and then attributed the blood of circumcision as an effective agency against the avenging angel.

An attempt will be made here to demonstrate that Origen's worldview, which accepts the ability of mere mortals to influence the fabric of the supranatural spheres by the employment of religious/magical rituals/rites, clearly underscores his own perspectives as regards the Christian baptism rite; its workings and its efficacy. This is essential to ultimately establishing that Origen is the most likely candidate as creator of the *BP*.

### 5.7.3 Celsus' Anti-Jewish Sentiments

It is clear that Celsus (cf. *Cels.* II, 76) takes on the *persona* of a Jew in his now lost treatise[300] against Christianity. However, based on a reading of Origen's *Cels.* He must also have had a low opinion of Jews in general. This is one of the reasons why Origen needs to defuse Celsus' attempts (cf. *Cels.* I, 22), to discredit Christians by finding fault with the beliefs and practices of their perceived predecessors (i.e. the Jews). In *Cels.* I, 15, Origen strives to affirm the importance of Jewish culture when he makes mention of, inter alia, *Numenius* the Pythagorean, *Hermippus* and *Hecatæus* who variously praise the Jews for their antiquity and great piety as well as ascertaining that God was "incorporeal" in nature. Origen contrasts this more positive approach to Jews and Judaism with Celsus' recorded negative comments in *Cels.* I, 16[301]:

> Θαυμάζω δέ, πῶς Ὀδρύσας μὲν καὶ Σαμόθρᾳκας καὶ Ἐλευσινίους καὶ Ὑπερβορέους ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαιοτάτοις καὶ σοφωτάτοις ἔταξεν ἔθνεσιν ὁ Κέλσος, τοὺς δὲ Ἰουδαίους οὐκ ἠξίωσεν οὔτε εἰς σοφοὺς παραδέξασθαι οὔτε εἰς ἀρχαίους· πολλῶν φερομένων συγγραμμάτων παρὰ Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ Φοίνιξι καὶ Ἕλλησι, μαρτυρούντων αὐτῶν τῇ ἀρχαιότητι, ἅπερ ἐγὼ περισσὸν ἡγησάμην εἶναι παραθέσθαι.
>
> I must express my surprise that Celsus should class the Odrysians, and Samothracians, and Eleusinians, and Hyperboreans among the most ancient and learned nations, and should not deem the Jews worthy of a place among such, either for their learning or their antiquity, although there are many treatises in circulation among the Egyptians, and Phœnicians, and Greeks, which testify to their existence as an ancient people, but which

[300] i.e. *TW* (*True Word*) a.k.a. Λόγος Ἀληθής.

[301] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

I have considered it unnecessary to quote.

Origen also berates Celsus for his seemingly anti-Semitic attitude in *Cels.* I, 16[302]:

> Ἔοικεν οὖν οὐκ ἀληθῶς ἀλλὰ φιλαπεχθημόνως ὁ Κέλσος ταῦτα λέγειν, σκοπὸν ἔχων κατηγορῆσαι τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ, ἠρτημένης ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς μὲν Ὁμήρου Γαλακτοφάγους καὶ τοὺς Γαλατῶν Δρυΐδας καὶ τοὺς Γέτας σοφώτατα λέγει ἔθνη εἶναι καὶ ἀρχαῖα, περὶ τῶν συγγενῶν τοῖς ἰουδαϊκοῖς λόγοις διαλαμβάνοντας, ὧν οὐκ οἶδα εἰ φέρεται συγγράμματα· Ἑβραίους δὲ μόνον τὸ ὅσον ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτῷ ἐκβάλλει καὶ τῆς ἀρχαιότητος καὶ τῆς σοφίας.
>
> It seems, then, to be not from a love of truth, but from a spirit of hatred, that Celsus makes these statements, his object being to asperse the origin of Christianity, which is connected with Judaism. Nay, he styles the Galactophagi of Homer, and the Druids of the Gauls, and the Getæ; most learned and ancient tribes, on account of the resemblance between their traditions and those of the Jews, although I know not whether any of their histories survive; but the Hebrews alone, as far as in him lies, he deprives of the honour both of antiquity and learning.

In *Cels.* II, 4, Origen falsely explains that the Jews of antiquity, whether they currently accepted it or not, prophesied the coming of Christ. Due to the fact that Celsus takes issue with Jewish trustworthiness Origen needs to justify the notion that the Jewish scriptures genuinely foretold the coming of Christ and the ultimate demise of the rule of Mosaic Law. He also needs to justify the canonised gospels' narratives of John the Baptist (albeit being a Jew), preparing the way for Christ. After all, from Origen's perspective, many Jews were divinely inspired prophets of Christianity, viz.: Isaiah, Ezekiel and Elijah – the latter clearly serving as the Christian model[303] for John the Baptist:

> Ἀληθῶς μὲν γὰρ Χριστιανοῖς ἡ εἰσαγωγή ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητικῶν γραμμάτων· καὶ μετὰ τὴν εἰσαγωγὴν ἐν τῇ διηγήσει καὶ σαφηνείᾳ αὐτῶν ἐστι τοῖς εἰσαγομένοις ἡ προκοπή, ζητοῦσι τὸ "κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν" μυστήριον, "χρόνοις αἰωνίοις" σεσιγημένον <φανερωθὲν "δὲ νῦν"> ἐν ταῖς προφητικαῖς φωναῖς καὶ τῇ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιφανείᾳ. Οὐχ, ὡς λέγετε δέ, οἱ προϊόντες ἀτιμάζουσι τὰ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένα ἀλλὰ πλείονα τιμὴν αὐτοῖς περιτιθέασιν ἀπο δεικνύντες, ὅσον ἔχει βάθος σοφῶν καὶ ἀπορρήτων λόγων ἐκεῖνα τὰ γράμματα τὰ ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων οὐ τεθεωρημένα, τῶν ἐπιπολαιότερον καὶ μυθικώτερον αὐτοῖς ἐντυγχανόντων. Τί δὲ ἄτοπον τὸ ἀρχὴν τοῦ ἡμετέρου δόγματος, τουτέστι τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶναι τὸν νόμον; ἅτε καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν λέγοντος πρὸς τοὺς μὴ πιστεύοντας αὐτῷ· "Εἰ ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ,

[302] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

[303] Cf. *Is.* 35: 8, *Is*. 40: 3, *Ma.* 3: 1, *Ma.* 4: 5, *Ev.Matt*. 3: 1 - 3, *Ev.Marc*. 1: 2 - 5, *Ev.Luc.* 3: 2 - 6 and *Ev.Jo.* 1: 23.

ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί· περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν. Εἰ δὲ τοῖς ἐκείνου γράμμασιν οὐ πιστεύετε, πῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασι πιστεύσετε;" Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἷς τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν, ὁ Μάρκος, φησίν· "Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς γέγραπται ἐν Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ· Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου", δεικνὺς ὅτι ἡ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἀρχὴ τῶν ἰουδαϊκῶν γραμμάτων ἤρτηται. Τί οὖν καθ' ἡμῶν λέγεται ὑπὸ τοῦ παρὰ τῷ Κέλσῳ Ἰουδαίου ἐν τῷ· Εἴτε γὰρ προηγόρευσέ τις ὑμῖν ὅτι ἄρα ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἀφίξεται, οὗτος ἡμέτερος ἦν ὁ προφήτης καὶ τοῦ ἡμετέρου θεοῦ· ποῖον δὲ ἔγκλημα χριστιανισμῷ ἐστιν, εἰ ὁ βαπτίσας τὸν Ἰησοῦν Ἰωάννης Ἰουδαῖος ἦν;

Now, certainly the introduction to Christianity is through the Mosaic worship and the prophetic writings; and after the introduction, it is in the interpretation and explanation of these that progress takes place, while those who are introduced prosecute their investigations into the mystery according to revelation, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest in the Scriptures of the prophets, and by the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they who advance in the knowledge of Christianity do not, as you allege, treat the things written in the law with disrespect. On the contrary, they bestow upon them greater honour, showing what a depth of wise and mysterious reasons is contained in these writings, which are not fully comprehended by the Jews, who treat them superficially, and as if they were in some degree even fabulous. And what absurdity should there be in our system - that is, the Gospel - having the law for its foundation, when even the Lord Jesus Himself said to those who would not believe upon Him: If you had believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words? Nay, even one of the evangelists – Mark - says: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophet Isaiah, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You, which shows that the beginning of the Gospel is connected with the Jewish writings. What force, then, is there in the objection of the Jew of Celsus, that if any one predicted to us that the Son of God was to visit mankind, he was one of our prophets, and the prophet of our God? Or how is it a charge against Christianity, that John, who baptized Jesus, was a Jew?

### 5.7.4 Origen's Known Acts of Pious Fraud

It must also be accepted that Origen, either by dint of personal conviction or blatant duplicity, is quite capable of academic dishonesty whenever there is a dearth of valid substantiation for his dubious opinions. One very good example of his deceit is witnessed in his account in *Cels.* I, 51, where he attempts to substantiate the then prevalent assumption that a particular cave in Bethlehem was Jesus' birth place. Origen needs this to be treated as *prima facie* evidence that Jesus was undeniably of divine birth. Furthermore he only has recourse to the populist notion, still highly prevalent today, that if enough individuals believe something to be true then it probably is. Thus he needs to stress that Jesus' claimed birthplace is a certainty and

still exists. He also needs to exaggerate the numbers of persons who accept this improbable notion. Further, he strives to expound that this self-same locale for the nativity event was divinely prophesied in Jewish antiquity. Accordingly, to assist his recapitulation, Origen (*Cels.* I, 51)[304], resorts to expressing a blatant falsehood:

> Ἐγὼ δ' οἶμαι ὅτι πρὸ μὲν τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίας οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ διὰ τὸ σαφὲς καὶ ἐναργὲς τῆς προφητείας ἐδίδασκον ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν Βηθλεὲμ γεννηθήσεται. Καὶ ἔφθανεν ὁ λόγος οὗτος καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων·
>
> Moreover, I am of opinion that, before the advent of Christ, the chief priests and scribes of the people, on account of the distinctness and clearness of this prophecy, taught that in Bethlehem the Christ was to be born. And this opinion had prevailed also extensively among the Jews;

Again, as has already been witnessed, Origen is not averse to alleging numerous Jewish prophecies that supposedly foretold the arrival Jesus of Nazareth as Christ and undeniably, in *Cels.* III, 28[305], he typically makes the following ingenuous statement:

> …ὥστε τὸ Ἰουδαίων ὅλον ἔθνος ἠρτημένον τῆς περὶ τοῦ ἐλπιζομένου ἐπιδημήσειν προσδοκίας εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ζήτησιν ἐληλυθέναι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιδημήσαντος, καὶ πολὺ μὲν πλῆθος αὐτῶν ὡμολογηκέναι Χριστὸν καὶ πεπιστευκέναι αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν προφητευόμενον τοὺς δὲ μὴ πιστεύοντας,
>
> …the whole Jewish people who were hanging in expectation of the coming of Him who was looked for, did, after the advent of Jesus, fall into a keen dispute with each other; and that a great multitude of them acknowledged Christ, and believed Him to be the object of prophecy.

These kinds of statements are quite false on many levels, yet Origen confidently employs them as if they were compelling evidence.

### 5.7.5 Christianity as a Religion for the Unlearned

In his *Cels.* I, 9, Origen accuses Celsus of stereotyping Christians as being wholly

[304] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

[305] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

uncritical and relying on blind faith to justify their religious standpoint: Origen, (*Cels.* I, 9)[306] speaks to Celsus' contentions as follows:

> Μετὰ ταῦτα προτρέπει ἐπὶ τὸ λόγῳ ἀκολουθοῦντας καὶ λογικῷ ὁδηγῷ παραδέχεσθαι δόγματα, ὡς πάντως ἀπάτης γινομένης τῷ μὴ οὕτω συγκατατιθεμένῳ τισί· καὶ ἐξομοιοῖ τοὺς ἀλόγως πιστεύοντας μητραγύρταις καὶ τερα τοσκόποις, Μίθραις τε καὶ Σαβαδίοις, καὶ ὅτῳ τις προσέτυχεν, Ἑκάτης ἢ ἄλλης δαίμονος ἢ δαιμόνων φάσμασιν. Ὡς γὰρ ἐν ἐκείνοις πολλάκις μοχθηροὶ ἄνθρωποι ἐπιβαίνοντες τῇ ἰδιωτείᾳ τῶν εὐεξαπατήτων ἄγουσιν αὐτοὺς ᾗ βούλονται, οὕτως φησὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς γίνεσθαι. Φησὶ δέ τινας μηδὲ βουλομένους διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν λόγον περὶ ὧν πιστεύουσι χρῆσθαι τῷ¨Μὴ ἐξέταζε ἀλλὰ πίστευσον¨καὶ¨Ἡ πίστις σου σώσει σε¨. Καί φησιν αὐτοὺς λέγειν¨Κακὸν ἡ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ σοφία ἀγαθὸν δ᾽ ἡ μωρία¨.
>
> He [Celsus] next proceeds to recommend, that in adopting opinions we [Christians] should follow reason and a rational guide, since he who assents to opinions without following this course is very liable to be deceived. And he compares inconsiderate believers to Metragyrtæ, and soothsayers, and Mithræ, and Sabbadians, and to anything else that one may fall in with, and to the phantoms of Hecate, or any other demon or demons. For as among such persons are frequently to be found wicked men, who, taking advantage of the ignorance of those who are easily deceived, lead them away whither they will, so also, he says, is the case among Christians. And he asserts that certain persons who do not wish either to give or receive a reason for their belief, keep repeating, "Do not examine, but believe!" and, "Your faith will save you!" And he alleges that such also say, "The wisdom of this life is bad, but that foolishness is a good thing!" [My punctuation for greater clarity].

It is evident that Origen feels the need to employ what he considers to be sound, logical reasoning to successfully counter Celsus' indictments of typical Christian credulity. However, as has been determined already, he also accepts the power/reality of sympathetic magic, evil spirits and demons.

One of his principle concerns is that Celsus consistently presents Jesus of Nazareth as an evil sorcerer, whom only the very naïve would consider to be a worker of divine miracles. In addition, Celsus compares Jesus of Nazareth negatively to other alleged wonder-worker god-men (e.g. the Bacchæ [*Cels.* II, 34]; Dioscuri, Hercules, Æsculapius and Dionysus [*Cels.* III, 22]). In this context, Origen desperately needs to find convincing evidence to successfully elevate Jesus far above any other comparable

[306] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

individuals. In short, he needs to be able to corroborate that the miraculous accounts recorded on behalf of Jesus of Nazareth were not due to trickery, deceit or invention. Origen needs to convince someone like Celsus that Jesus' teaching, actions and deeds were primary, tangible, evidence of his highest divine authority as God (as claimed by Christians).

Origen also needs to prove that many Christians (who might really be as unlearned and unsophisticated as Celsus has affirmed), were still correct/justified in their chosen belief. Origen needs to be able to demonstrate to someone like Celsus that Christian conversion was a divine event and not mere wishful thinking or ingenuous self-delusion. His preferred approach to solving this conundrum is revealed in (*Cels.* I, 9)[307]:

> Εἰ δὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἀμήχανον πῇ μὲν διὰ τὰς τοῦ βίου ἀνάγκας πῇ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀσθένειαν, σφόδρα ὀλίγων ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον ἀττόντων, ποία ἂν ἄλλη βελτίων μέθοδος πρὸς τὸ τοῖς πολλοῖς βοηθῆσαι εὑρεθείη τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς ἔθνεσι παραδοθείσης; Καὶ πυνθανόμεθά γε περὶ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν πιστευόντων, τὴν πολλὴν χύσιν τῆς κακίας ἀποθεμένων, ἐν ᾗ πρότερον ἐκαλινδοῦντο· πότερον βέλτιόν ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἀλόγως πισ τεύουσι κατεστάλθαι πως τὰ ἤθη καὶ ὠφελῆσθαι διὰ τὴν περὶ τῶν κολαζομένων ἐπὶ ἁμαρτίαις καὶ τιμωμένων ἐπὶ ἔργοις χρηστοῖς πίστιν, ἢ μὴ προσίεσθαι αὐτῶν τὴν ἐπιστρο φὴν μετὰ ψιλῆς πίστεως, ἕως ἂν ἐπιδῶσιν ἑαυτοὺς ἐξετάσει λόγων;
>
> But since the course alluded to is impossible, partly on account of the necessities of life, partly on account of the weakness of men, as **only a very few individuals devote themselves earnestly to study**, what better method could be devised with a view of assisting the multitude, than that which was delivered by Jesus to the heathen? And let us inquire, **with respect to the great multitude of believers, who have washed away the mire of wickedness in which they formerly wallowed, whether it were better for them to believe without a reason,** and (so) to **have become reformed and improved in their habits**, through the belief that men are chastised for sins, and honoured for good works or **not to have allowed themselves to be converted on the strength of mere faith**, but (to have waited) until they could give themselves to a thorough examination of the (necessary) reasons. [My emphases].

What is alluded to, is that God foresaw the need to simplify matters if he was going to succeed in his mission of Christianising the known world. He needed to make things easy for convertees. In this regard, Origen stresses the overriding benefits of Christian

[307] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

baptism as a sympathetic magical rite which successfully overrides any other consideration determined by philosophical debate. Unquestionably, it seems as though Origen is equating the contemplated evaluation of even a well-educated individual who ultimately comes to accept Christ (i.e. based on wisdom alone), with the spiritual conversion of any individual who is the beneficiary of the divine power of the rite of a Christian baptism.

### 5.7.6 The Efficacy of Christian Baptism

Baptism is not seen here as some symbolic way to wash away sins or exemplify the believer's passage into a new spiritual life. For Origen, any individual (irrespective of their rationale or level of intellect), once baptised, will exhibit behaviour patterns that differ significantly from those that they displayed before their conversion. This is the tangible evidence that Origen wants to hold up to Celsus. For example, by the power of Christ, the convertees will reveal that they are now virtuous, righteous and godly. Baptised Christians literally "improve their habits" regardless of their education. Origen does not even bother to give substantiated examples of this claimed change in behaviour patterns but merely states it as a fact.

In his *Cels.* I, 64[308], Origen elucidates through means of generalities and sweeping statements, the change that occurs during the conversion process replete with baptism rite:

> Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους· ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος, οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, τοιοίδε γεγόναμεν.
>
> For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that **the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost**, which He shed upon us richly, we became such as we are. [My emphasis].

[308] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

Another way of understanding Origen's point of view, is to regard the act of baptism as having the same weight as a rational decision to convert. Origen tries to subtly suggest that even an unlearned person receives new life in Christ; even if he/she does not fully understand the finer philosophical points of the Christian conviction. Thus, an individual's chosen faith is given authority by the Christian rite of baptism because it results in him/her literally giving over his/her life to Christ/God. In this regard, the rebirth is not symbolic but actual. The baptism rite marks the very moment when the converted person accepts Christ into his/her life. In this way, Origen develops an argument, based on sympathetic magic, that can be employed against Celsus more logical and rational observations.

In *Cels.* III, 48[309], Origen confirms that anyone is welcome to become a Christian whilst countering Celsus' claim that only unintelligent people convert to Christianity:

> Ἀλλὰ προσίτω μὲν πεπαιδευμένος καὶ σοφὸς καὶ φρόνιμος ὁ βουλόμενος· οὐδὲν δ᾽ ἧττον προσίτω καὶ εἴ τις ἀμαθὴς καὶ ἀνόητος καὶ ἀπαίδευτος καὶ νήπιος. Καὶ γὰρ τοὺς τοιούτους προσελθόντας ἐπαγγέλλεται θερα πεύειν ὁ λόγος, πάντας ἀξίους κατασκευάζων τοῦ θεοῦ.
>
> … let him who wills [i.e. to be converted] come to us instructed, and wise, and prudent; and none the less, if any one be ignorant and unintelligent, and uninstructed and foolish, let him also come: for it is these whom the Gospel promises to cure, when they come, by rendering them all worthy of God. [My insertion for clarity].

Origen believes that once baptised, the individual concerned literally receives and/or internalises Christ/God. As a result, the baptised individual has no choice but to subsequently act in accordance with Christian/Godly principles. Origen confirms this benefit of Christian baptism (which is demonstrated by his claimed tangible changed behaviour patterns) in his *Cels.* I, 9[310]:

> Φανερῶς γὰρ οἱ πάντες παρ᾽ ἐλαχίστους οὐδὲ τοῦτο λήψονται, ὅπερ εἰλήφασιν ἐκ τοῦ ἁπλῶς πεπιστευκέναι, ἀλλὰ μενοῦσιν ἐν κακίστῳ βίῳ. Εἴπερ οὖν ἄλλο τι κατα

[309] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

[310] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

> σκευαστικόν ἐστι τοῦ τὸ φιλάνθρωπον τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἀθεεὶ τῷ βίῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεδημηκέναι, καὶ τοῦτ᾽ αὐτοῖς συγκαταριθμητέον. Ὁ γὰρ εὐλαβὴς οὐδὲ σωμάτων ἰατρόν, πολλοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον νοσοῦντας ἀγαγόντα, οἰήσεται ἀθεεὶ πόλεσι καὶ ἔθνεσιν ἐπιδημεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ χρηστὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀθεεὶ γίνεται.
>
> For it is manifest that, (on such a plan), all men, with very few exceptions, would not obtain this (amelioration of conduct) which they have obtained through a simple faith, but would continue to remain in the practice of a wicked life. Now, whatever other evidence can be furnished of the fact, that it was not without divine intervention that the philanthropic scheme of Christianity was introduced among men, this also must be added. For a pious man will not believe that even a physician of the body, who restores the sick to better health, could take up his abode in any city or country without divine permission, since no good happens to men without the help of God.

Related to this, in his *Cels.* I, 46, Origen explains that we should be assured of Christ's divinity due to his miracles and the fact that his disciples, filled with his power, also performed miracles. Most important of all, he cites both the disciples of Christ as well as contemporary Christian's willingness to face the threat of death for their beliefs as evidence of the truth of Christ's teaching. Origen also claims (again without real substantiation), a Christian's ability to cast out demons, foretell the future and cure illness.

### 5.7.7 The Exploitation of Josephus

With the aforementioned contexts in mind, it is possible to see that one of the more problematic issues for Origen was the effective neutralisation, inter alia, of Celsus' derogatory opinions of Jews in general, unlearned Christian naivety, the Christian claim of Jesus' divinity and his supposed virgin birth. This latter claim also appears to have been supported by the gospel account of John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus. This is because at this event, God (the Father) is recorded as confirming Jesus' divine paternity. The various issues under review thus far, seem to be interrelated in the gospel account of a righteous and pious Jew (John the Baptist) performing the Christian baptism ritual on the Son of God, replete with the bodily appearance of the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) and the heavenly voice of God the Father.

Based on Origen's various comments in his *Cels.* (cf. *Cels.* I, 37; *Cels.* I, 40) it can be safely determined that Celsus considered this whole Baptist narrative to be a "fiction" and also takes issue with the fact that it was the Jews who prophesised Christ and

also the ones who wrote the gospels and thus "invented" Christianity.

Therefore, ostensibly, Origen needs to prove, to Celsus, inter alia, the following points:

1. Jesus is really the son of Almighty God who brought him (conception) into the physical world (incarnation) through the medium of a virgin woman;

2. The Holy Spirit appeared bodily (incarnate) as a dove;

3. The Divine Voice from Heaven (God the Father) actually occurred at the baptism event;

4. Christian baptism had real spiritual efficacy and resulted in its recipient adopting Godly qualities;

5. A person who displays Christlike/Godly behaviour subsequent to a Christian baptism is evidence of Jesus' divine status; and

6. The gospel accounts of, inter alia, the Baptism event were wholly true.

The first recorded reference made specifically to the *BP* was made by Origen. In this regard it is most important to take note that in his *Cels.* I, 47, Origen has the real need to defend the then current form of the Christian practice of baptism. Below is a transcript of the specific passages which refers to John the Baptist in *Cels.* I, 47:[311]

> Ἐβουλόμην δ᾽ ἂν Κέλσῳ, προσωποποιήσαντι τὸν Ἰουδαῖον παραδεξάμενόν πως Ἰωάννην ὡς βαπτιστὴν βαπτίζοντα τὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰπεῖν ὅτι τὸ Ἰωάννην γεγονέναι βαπτιστήν, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων βαπτίζοντα, ἀνέγραψέ τις τῶν μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ τοῦ Ἰωάννου καὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γεγενημένων. Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ τῆς ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιο λογίας ὁ Ἰώσηπος μαρτυρεῖ τῷ Ἰωάννῃ ὡς βαπτιστῇ γεγενημένῳ καὶ καθάρσιον τοῖς βαπτισαμένοις ἐπαγγελλο μένῳ.
>
> I would like to say to Celsus, who represents the Jew as accepting somehow John as a Baptist, who baptized Jesus, that the existence of John the Baptist, **baptizing for the remission of sins**, is related by one who lived no great length of time after John and Jesus. For in the 18th book of his Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus bears witness to John as having been

[311] Greek text according to *Contra Celsum* in *The Works of Origen.* Available: http://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/origen2.htm [23 July 2014]. English translation according to Kirby, 2014b. *Origen. Contra Celsus* in *Early Christian Writings*. [Online]. Available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen161.html [23 July 2014].

> a Baptist, and as **promising purification to those who underwent the rite**. [My emphases].

What is even more telling, given that we have already witnessed the likelihood that Origen forged the *JP* is that the above quoted passage from *Cels.* I, 47 immediately precedes Origen's reference to Josephus as the source for his reference to James. Thus we have evidence here that both suspected interpolations are literally referenced in tandem in the self-same passage.

We have already witnessed in *Cels.* I, 47, Origen's reference to Josephus' assumed mention of James the Just (i.e. the *JP*). We have also seen how throughout his *Cels.* Origen iterates his particular take on the rite of Christian baptism and Christ-directed changes to an individual's prior unacceptable behaviour patterns. However, when it comes to his account of the Baptism of Christ, Origen seems (on the surface) to be neglecting a golden opportunity to talk to his hobbyhorse. Indeed, in *Cels.* I, 47, Origen merely states that John the Baptist baptised "for the remission of sins … promising purification to those who underwent the rite." However, concurrent to this brief comment, Origen also makes a direct reference to Josephus.

In one sense, Josephus merely serves as an independent witness to back up his assertions on a very superficial level. However, if the reader bothers to actually turn to Josephus' *BP* (i.e. *AJ*, XVIII, 5, 2 / 116 -119), he/she will most "conveniently" discover a lengthy, reiteration of those very issues that disprove some of Celsus' claims. In this regard, (assuming that Origen perpetrated this forgery), he manages to legitimise Josephus as author of the substantiation by the link to the castle of Macherus and Herod Antipas (cf. Sections 5.1.1 and 5.4.2). Then, he has Josephus confirm (on his behalf) the following details:

1. John the Baptist may have been a Jew, but he was not only a proven "good man", he also actively worked towards making other Jews "exercise virtue" and practice righteous behaviour and "piety towards God";

2. John the Baptist did not practice, what some may imagine was some form of traditional Jewish purification ritual; he practiced essentially, what was for Origen, a Christian baptism which ensured that the convertee subsequently engaged in a divinely directed, behavioural change, that embodied piety, righteousness and Godly virtues. Specifically, he enacted a religious rite which did two interdependent actions:

    - the remission of (some) sins; and
    - the purification of the body (supposing that the soul was purified beforehand by righteousness).

The latter two points are nothing more than embellishments of the very concepts that Origen had been trying to sell to his reader in his *Cels.* and particularly *Cels* I, 47.

It is clear that within the context of his argument with Celsus, Origen also needs hard evidence to convince his reader that James was the brother of Jesus - and more importantly - Jesus was already known to be the Christ as early as c. 68 C.E.;

For convenience, the pertinent passage from the *BP* is reproduced below:

> [John the Baptist] commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. [My insertion for clarity].

By referring to Josephus at this juncture, Origen literally kills two birds with one stone. He proves his point by supposedly referring to a reliable, non-partisan and objective historian (i.e. one who did not accept Jesus as the messiah but still recognised his enormous virtues). In addition this impartial witness was “one who lived no great length of time after John and Jesus”.

Josephus, who as we have already seen would not have known, let alone been bothered by such specific doctrinal minutiae (cf. Sections 5.3.3 and 5.5.1), is clearly made to say what Origen would ideally need an independent, historically valid, witness to say. Here Josephus (*Cels.* I, 47), clearly seems to confirm Origen’s point of view.

The real possibility here is that given the nature of his specific arguments (i.e. as contained in his *Cels.* generally), and given his need to obtain substantiated evidence to counter Celsus' very valid points, his proven willingness to employ mistruths that suit his agenda, Origen was most likely the creator of the *BP*.

The fact that both the *JP* and the *BP* are mentioned in the same passage penned by Origen strengthens this possibility. It is simply too much of a coincidence that in one paragraph this apologist manages to point to two supporting pieces of evidence, written by the same author, to so conveniently substantiate so many aspects of his debate with Celsus. The fact that both of these substantiations have independently been recognised as suspicious in nature and candidates for total interpolation, based on other evidence, is also enthralling. The obvious conclusion that must be made here is that Origen is the prime candidate for two of the interpolations under review.

## 5.8 Chapter Five Summary

The following points, especially when taken collectively, mitigate against the *BP* being in any way an authentic Josephan text:

If Josephus wrote the *BP* then it follows that he also:

1. contradicts the gospels as regards the date of John the Baptist's activities;
2. contradicts the gospels as regards the reason for John the Baptist's arrest;
3. shows remarkable familiarity and theologically advanced insights into Christian-based baptism rites;
4. contradicts his statements about the range and scope of Jewish-based cults in the Holy land due to failure to mention any other Jewish sect even remotely connected with a Baptist cult or Christianity[312];
5. contradicts his avowed position on the dangers of Jewish religious upstarts;
6. describes an impossible/contradictory situation at the fortress at Macherus;
7. contradicts his previously stated reasons for Gods' divine vengeance against Antipas;
8. seriously disrupts the literary flow of his narration;
9. fails to mention John the Baptist in his earlier work and in the same context (i.e.

[312] This assumes that the *TF* is an interpolation.

the *BJ* ); and

*10.* fails to mention John the Baptist in his table of contents (*AJ*).

Based on the arguments cited thus far, only the following debateable point supports the *BP* being in some way authentic:

Only a non-Christian like Josephus would have:

1. placed the *NT* events in the wrong order.

However, the latter point can be easily countered (cf. Section 5.3.3 *ut supra*), by the need of the interpolator to find a suitable context within the *AJ* for his forgery. Although an interpolator would have preferred to have had the *BP* precede the *TF* he felt that his fraud would be less obvious if he could at least place the two interpolations in a more convincing context. As the only suitable places were not in the correct chronological order this gives the appearance of Josephus having placed the events of Christian import in the wrong order.

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

This investigation set out to determine to what degree the three passages (i.e. the *TF*, *JP* and *BP*) and which appear in Josephus' Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία a.k.a. *Antiquitates Judaicae* may be deemed to be authentic and/or historically reliable.

To this end, five interrelated issues needed to be resolved, viz.:

1. Apart from the possibilities inherent in the writings of Josephus, are there in fact any credible, extra-biblical/scriptural references to an historical Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

2. How indebted are contemporary, leading biblical scholars (especially within the context of the interpolation debate), to their preferred worldview when it comes to engaging in supposedly impartial, constructive and meaningful academic discourse? In short, are their conclusions in any way, reliable or trustworthy?

3. Is it in any way possible that Josephus (based on an in-depth analysis of his own worldview and historical context), would have known and/or written about Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

4. Is there any reliable, hard evidence that specifically anti-Nicean Christian writers in general and/or independently would have needed to invent extra-biblical references to Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just?

5. Is it possible to determine the identity of the interpolators should this conclusion become evident?

## 6.2 Credible, Extra-Biblical/Scriptural References

Based on the available evidence (cf. Chapter Two) it is perfectly clear that, apart from scriptural texts, no artefact, archaeological evidence or verifiable written document exists that can support in any way the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just. This confirmation is important since it establishes a reason why both Christian apologists and polemicists, on occasion, felt it necessary to resort to pious fraud – especially between the second and fourth centuries of the Common Era.

## 6.3 Leading Biblical Scholars' Preferred Worldview

Although many conservative scholars do attempt to give the illusion of impartiality and broad-mindedness their findings invariably serve merely to add support to their confessions of faith. Some, like Meier (1991: 4 – 6) are honest enough to admit this. He for one believes that the most important "hedge against rampant subjectivism" is an honest acknowledgement of ones worldview – something he describes as "one's own personal stance, one's own point of view and background". His solution, however, is entirely self-serving. After acknowledging (1991: 5), that there is "no Switzerland of the mind in the world of Jesus research" he goes on to justify why he should not have to be beholden to absolute objectivity. Here, he feels that this is not even attainable. This is quite so, but to not even attempt to maintain impartiality as an ideal is also not the answer. Meier (1991: 6), as one of the most respected and leading scholars in his field, seems to think that not having some firm point of view will devolve into what he calls "total relativism". This is the sentiment of someone who has not embraced the linguistic paradigm, someone who still believes in a nineteenth century concept of consciousness. Lastly, he honestly confesses his faith and simultaneously justifies how far he will go rationally. Nonetheless he also makes it clear that he will not cross the line that leaves him without a committed standpoint.

Meier is not alone. We have already witnessed throughout this research the attitudes of all conservative scholars. They cannot and will not cross a certain boundary in their deliberations. Those that do (for example) end up becoming agnostics or even atheists. Thus, where rationality does not challenge a particular confession of faith, the deliberations of conservative scholars can still serve a useful albeit, limited purpose.

## 6.4 Josephus' Knowledge Apropos Jesus of Nazareth

Apart from the three suspected interpolations, all of Josephus' surviving works give the impression that he had never heard about Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist, James the Just or indeed Christianity in any form whatsoever.

There are also several good reasons to doubt that he would have wanted to record anything about these three persons even if he had known about them.

Josephus makes mention of a number of individuals who each in their way played some small or decisive role in the lead-up to the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Many of these individuals employed religion/sympathetic magic and/or the credulity of the Jewish people to obtain their goals. Some of them also claimed the power of prophecy and/or divinely-backed miracles. In almost all cases, Josephus condemns their activities roundly. What is most telling is that only in three cases does Josephus speak positively about a Jewish parvenu's religious/spiritual mission, viz.: Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist and James the Just. This in itself should be considered highly questionable given that these are the very passages suspected of interpolation.

### 6.4.1 The *Testimonium Flavianum*

The *TF* contradicts its situation within the context of its encapsulating passages. Most significantly of all, it also manages to serve as a highly detailed confession of the Christian faith in only 89 words. Unless Josephus was a practicing Christian he could never have written this confession.

The *TF* (regardless of whether one only wishes to acknowledge the artificially created shorter version) contradicts Josephus' other statements in his works.

As discussed in Section 3.9 and as supported by Doherty and others, the notion that the present form of the *TF* is based on an earlier shorter and more negative version is contrived and the result of wishful thinking. The task of establishing a feasible core of text attributable to Joseph in the *TF* is well-nigh impossible. The claim by scholars such

as Meier (cf. Sections 3.3.3.2 and 3.3.10) that once obvious Christian interpolation is removed; the “remaining” words must be genuine since they can be found elsewhere in Josephus’ works defies credulity.

It is also significant that up until the early 1950s few doubted the total forgery hypothesis. It is only since that time onwards that Christian scholars (suddenly aware of the threat to their need for an historical Jesus) desperately needed to preserve some credibility as far as the *TF* was concerned. Most if not all of their arguments are forced and based on personal conviction and not sound logic.

One such example of this typically strained reasoning involves the repeated claim that it would be quite difficult to duplicate the writing style of Josephus (Cf. Sections 3.3.3.1; 3.3.5 and 3.4.1.1).

This can be safely discounted. A textual forgery can be very easily accomplished with minimal knowledge and training. A text can be removed, a name or a word can be altered and the literary style remains intact. In point of fact, given the wealth of examples supplied by Josephus himself in his extensive writings, literally anyone can lift his ready formulated sentences and re-appropriate meaning as they see fit.

A more experienced forger would also not risk detection by placing obviously impossible concepts into the mouth of a reputable author. This is the very reason why more amateurish forgeries are so easy to detect as in the case of Tacitus’ reference to Pontius Pilate and an individual called “Christ”.

On this topic it has been clearly shown that the real issue under discussion is not the manner in which the interpolation was executed. Rather, it is necessary to establish the reasons why a particular interpolation was *needed*. Once we have ascertained the motives for the forgery, the “how” becomes self-evident and immediately addresses any issues concerning, inter alia, content and style.

Based on the analyses undertaken in this research, there are a number of plausible reasons why an apologist or polemicist would have needed to create a false literary source.

For example, as we have seen, a forgery might be made (as is more likely in the case of Origen), to win an argument against non-Christian polemic. Whereas for Eusebius the incentive, in addition to needing substantiated evidence to settle a dispute he also on occasion, needs proof for the existence of an historical Jesus. This latter motive is the principal one that now concerns most contemporary Christian scholars.

It is certain, based on the historical contexts recreated in this thesis, that sometime in the late third and early fourth century onwards, it became increasingly evident to Ante-Nicean Christian apologists that there was a dearth of information concerning an historical Jesus. Up until that time, most writers – non-Christian and Christian alike – merely assumed that Jesus was an historical fact. It was only when individuals started to look for what they imagined would be freely available and abundant evidence that they realised they were consistently coming up short. They desperately needed to produce this evidence. They even resorted to quoting non-Christian sources to give credibility to their propaganda. Ironically, these cited texts were written by individuals who themselves had no evidence for an historical Jesus but merely referred to him because they trusted the then prevailing Christian tradition.

Indeed, at the time, a non-Christian polemicist would not have had any reason to question Jesus' historicity. They were far more interested with proving that Jesus was no more special than any other reported wonder-worker or wizard. In short, they merely wanted to preserve the more traditional deities and discount Jesus' claimed miracles as being in any way divine. In an age that believed in the power of sympathetic magic, it was accepted by both Christian and non-Christian alike, that important individuals could be god-like and that supernatural forces of all descriptions could empower an individual to work magical effects and nature miracles.

The fact that such blatant forgeries could be produced by Christian apologists also gives some insight into how the Christian faith was possibly manufactured/developed. In this latter regard it would seem that a more concerted investigation is needed to ascertain how a religion may be created by borrowing key elements from other creeds. It also demands greater clarity apropos the more plausible evolution of Judaism from the time of the Maccabees via Paul's Gnosticism and the Gentile and Hellenistic worldviews to the nascent Christian cults of the second and third century of the Common Era.

### 6.4.2 The James Passage

As has been summarised in Section 4.7, there are numerous reasons why the *JP* should not be considered to be an authentic document. The principle reasons include the following:

1. The *JP* is the only extra-scriptural reference to James the Just in existence;
2. Origen (cf. Section 4.3) quotes the *JP* practically verbatim - even inappropriately referring to a Jewish male as “the brother” of another individual;
3. Origen falsely states that Josephus attributed the destruction of the Temple to James’ death;
4. The encapsulating text fails to clarify the reasons for James’ trial and execution; and
5. If the Christian tradition is to be taken as correct then the historical context for James’ death is out by at least eight years.

### 6.4.3 The Baptist Passage

As has been summarised in Section 5.8, there are numerous reasons why the *BP* should not be considered as an authentic document. The principle reasons include the following:

1. The *BP* contradicts its situation within the context of its encapsulating passages. The only possible link between it and the preceding text is the reference to Macherus and Herod. These references seem to be there merely to create the illusion of authenticity. However, the historical realities clearly prohibit the possibility of Macherus being employed by Herod for the purposes of incarcerating a prisoner at the time indicated;
2. The *BP* contradicts the gospels as regards the date of John the Baptist’s activities;
3. The *BP* contradicts the gospels as regards the reason for John the Baptist’s arrest;
4. The *BP* displays remarkable familiarity and theologically advanced insights into Christian-based baptism rites; and
5. The *BP* contradicts Josephus’ previously stated reasons for Gods’ divine

vengeance against Antipas.

## 6.5 Ante-Nicean Christian Need for Extra-biblical References

Based on the confirmations established in Chapter Two, it is evident that a wealth of forgery existed between the second and fourth century alone. It is quite obvious that there must have been a real need for extra-biblical proofs by early Christian apologists.

The reasons for interpolation and forgery can be placed into two distinct camps which occasionally overlap:

1. The need to prove that Jesus was a real person; and
2. The need to justify/explain a specific aspect of Christian dogma.

## 6.6 The Identity of the Interpolators

### 6.6.1 Testimonium Flavianum

In the case of the *TF*, no early Christian scholar or apologist makes mention of anything vaguely similar until the specific quotations of Eusebius. Again, the contents of the *TF* conveniently assist Eusebius in his difficult task of proving to his reader that Jesus was not a conjurer or wizard but a divine individual – a deity - who performed real miracles. In addition he was a divine teacher who attracted both Greek and Jew alike. Although not conclusive in its own right, the remarkable coincidence that most of the assumed writer's trope contained in *TF* bears close resemblance to that found in Eusebius' works, simply adds more weight to the case. In a comparison between conservative and sceptical conclusions, there is no doubt that the validity and merit of the sceptical findings far outweigh the conservative ones.

Eusebius has been a prime suspect for well over 600 years now and based on this present survey - which proves beyond reasonable doubt that he was capable of gross dishonesty - he must remain the best and sole candidate.

### 6.6.2 Baptist Passage and James Passage:

Origen was not only the first person to make reference to both the *BP* and the *JP*; he also needed their contents to justify his arguments against Celsus' anti-Christian polemic. The assumption that he was the sole individual who manufactured these two interpolations is obvious.

The fact that he also manages to refer to both suspected interpolations in the same passage (one is practically quoted verbatim) is significant. The fact that Origen manages to present Josephus as an independent, well-informed, reliable witness, who ostensibly uses his "own words" to substantiate his own assertion that John the Baptist baptised in accord with then contemporary third-century Christian practice as well simultaneously confirming that Jesus was known to be the messiah whilst still alive should also be viewed as more than accidental.

Previously, Origen did not feature quite so prominently as an obvious originator of specific interpolations in the *AJ*. Due to the present survey, apart from any doubt that he was, on occasion, quite capable of flagrant deceit, he must now be seriously considered the most likely candidate for the creation of both the *BP* as well as the *JP*.

## 6.7 The Contribution Made by This Research Project:

The findings from this study confirm that logical, rational debate cannot be maintained whilst adhering to any irrational belief structure. Intellectual endeavour for the maintenance of any dogma cannot and should not be equated with objective scientific enquiry.

This research also confirms that the three suspected interpolations as found in Josephus' Ἰουδαϊκὴ Ἀρχαιολογία must be seen to be wholly fraudulent. It also strongly advocates the most likely authorship for these three acts of pious fraud, viz.:

1. Origen must be considered to be the prime suspect for the creation of both the *BP* and the *JP* in c. 248 C.E. This occurred a few years before his death; and

2. Eusibius must be considered to be the sole suspect for the creation of the *TF*. In this scenario, he first composed a version of the *TF* in c. 312 – 318 C.E. for his *DE.* Later, he refined it sometime before 323 C.E in his *HE.*

As a consequence, it is clearly demonstrated that, to date, outside of the *NT*, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, no valid written source, artefact or archaeological evidence exist to substantiate the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist or James the Just.

In addition, this research has produced a greater understanding and clarification of the existing literature as well as the underlying reasons for the current impasse in the interpolation debate. It has clearly shown that the weight of the current argument lies firmly on the side of inauthenticity.

The research also should serve as an impetus to re-evaluate what is currently understood about Ancient Roman perceptions of not only Christianity but other faiths during the late Republic, Julio-Claudian period and beyond. There is evidence that recorded/interpolated Christian political aims and general bias may very well have left modern historians with a distorted view of religious practices and associated Graeco-Roman responses and attitudes in the first two to three centuries of the Common Era.

Finally, this investigation successfully exonerates and confirms important aspects of the pioneering work of Wells, Doherty and Zindler.

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