

Chapter 1

Introduction

The history of the nine decades when the Hasmonean dynasty ruled Judea (152–63 B.C.E.) is the tale of a family whose zeal for their ancestral faith helped them survive a turbulent period in the Middle East, and create an independent state surrounded by hostile powers. This book seeks to tell this exciting story by going beyond the accounts of the Hasmoneans in Josephus to bring together new evidence to reconstruct how the Hasmonean family transformed their kingdom into a nation that lasted until the arrival of the Romans. It also explores Josephus, whose life is intertwined with the Hasmoneans through a common ancestry and his historical accounts of their rule. This book has three basic goals:

- To compare Josephus's accounts of the Hasmonean state with archaeological findings, numismatics, literary works, and all relevant inscriptions.
- To show the interconnectedness between the Hasmonean state and the neighboring empires.
- To demonstrate the extent to which non-literary evidence can alter our reading of the literary records pertaining to the Hasmonean state.

This study differs from all previous books on the Hasmonean period because it is the only work to integrate the full array of extant data to reconstruct the relationships between the Hasmonean state and the rulers of the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic Empires, the Itureans, the Nabateans, the Parthians, the Armenians, and the Roman Republic. It accomplishes this by including a variety of previously unused sources, including papyrological documentation, inscriptions, archaeological evidence, numismatics, Dead Sea Scrolls, pseudepigrapha, and texts from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine periods.¹ This book includes reconstructions of several previously unknown

1. For the importance of integrating textual and archaeological evidence to reconstruct the history of the Hasmonean state, see H. Eshel 2008, vii–ix; Popović 2011, esp. 4–17.

historical events that shaped the reigns of the Hasmoneans and their faith, and which helped them create an independent state. It also explores how Josephus's political and social situation in Flavian Rome affected his accounts of the Hasmoneans and why any investigation of the Hasmonean state must go beyond Josephus to gain a full appreciation of this unique historical period that shaped Second Temple Judaism, and created the conditions for the rise of the Herodian dynasty and the emergence of Christianity.

Preceding Studies

The majority of studies devoted to Hasmonean history typically focus on Mattathias's rebellion to liberate Judea from Seleucid rule, following the oppressive decree of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (169–67 B.C.E.) that prohibited the practice of Judaism, and often end with Simon's establishment of an independent state. The cleansing of the temple by Judas and the impact of Hellenization in Judea are typically the major topics covered by these books.² Unfortunately, the later Hellenistic period when the Hasmonean family ruled a state and their relationships with their neighbors have not received as much attention. However, several new books on the Hasmonean period have departed from the traditional focus on the family's struggle for independence, often referred to as the Maccabean Revolt, to explore the development of the Hasmonean high priesthood.³ Other recent works devoted to Second Temple Jewish religious practices contain valuable discussions concerning the relationship between the Hasmonean rulers and the major forms of Jewish sectarianism, namely the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Qumran community.⁴ Several studies on Josephus that explore his importance as the chief chronicler for much of Jewish history contain important discussions of his presentations of the Hasmonean dynasty and its religious practices.⁵ All these works are useful for understanding the history of the Hasmonean family and their creation of a state. However, despite their different subjects and methodological perspectives, these books largely adopt the outdated chronology and historical reconstructions of the Hasmonean state found in the revised

2. For influential examples, see Bar-Kochva 1989; Bickerman 1937; Bringmann 1983; Harrington 1988; Hengel 1974; Sievers 1990; Tcherikover 1959.

3. See Babota 2014; Brutti 2006; Hunt 2006; Rooke 2000; Seeman 2013.

4. See esp. Baumgarten 1997; Klawans 2012.

5. S. Cohen 1979; Gruen 2016; Rajak 1983; S. Schwartz 1990b; 2001; Thackeray 1929.

edition of Emil Schürer's classic multi-volume work on the late Second Temple Period and early Christianity.⁶

It is only recently that scholars have begun to depart from Schürer's presentation of Second Temple history to offer new reconstructions of selected aspects of the Hasmonean period. Edward Dąbrowa's study of the Hasmonean state focuses on ideology and institutions, such as the priesthood, kingship, court, capital, finances, and the military.⁷ Eyal Regev has written a similar publication that explores the Hasmonean family's control of the Temple cult, the government, and the kingship.⁸ Despite their many new insights, both authors primarily rely on Josephus to recount the major events of the Hasmonean state.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are the focus of several important books that deal extensively with the Hasmonean state, and which contain new historical information derived from the Qumran texts. One, the proceedings of the fourth international symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, contains several essays that explore Jewish history and the religion of the Hasmonean period in light of the Qumran documents.⁹ Hanan Eshel's book on the Hasmonean state is the first monograph dedicated solely to the question how we can learn political history from the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, he acknowledges his great dependence on the works of Josephus since the Dead Sea Scrolls lack narrative accounts of the Hasmoneans.¹⁰ James H. Charlesworth has written a unique volume that explores the Qumran *pesharim* as a historical source for reconstructing Second Temple period history.¹¹ Unlike other works on the Hasmonean period, Charlesworth focuses on how the Jewish sectarians at Qumran read and applied Scripture to explain events of their time not only in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but also in conjunction with the writings of Josephus, paleography, archaeology, and other relevant Jewish texts. Although devoted to reconstructing Qumran history, Charlesworth's

6. Schürer et al. 1973–87. Grabbe's (1992, xxxix) past comments on the problems of this book are still relevant: "It covers many aspects of Judaism in this period, including the history and literature, and should remain the standard detailed reference work for many years to come. However, in the last fifteen years scholarship has rendered parts of the new Schürer out-of-date. Moreover, initial editorial uncertainty as to how far to revise Schürer's text resulted in notes that sometimes contradict the text!"

7. Dąbrowa 2010a. See also Dąbrowa 2010b.

8. Regev 2013.

9. Goodblatt, Pinnick, and Schwartz 2001.

10.H. Eshel 2008, esp. 5–12. A considerable portion of this book consists of lengthy quotations from Josephus’s *War* and *Antiquities*.

11. Charlesworth 2002.

investigation represents an innovative model for understanding the Second Temple period that sheds considerable new light on the history of the Hasmonean state.¹²

Josephus the Historian and His Works

Josephus is the only historian whose extant works cover the entire history of the Hasmonean state. He documents this period in his two major books, the *War* and the *Antiquities*. The *War* is his first book.¹³ It primarily describes the events of the First Jewish Revolt of 66–73/4 C.E., but also recounts the history of the Jews beginning with the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Studying the *War* is complicated because Josephus was both its author and one of its major characters. The opening paragraph of his book states that its subject matter is “the war of the Jews against the Romans” (Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον; *War* 1.1). This preface shows that Josephus was greatly influenced by the *Histories* of Polybius and the *Gallic War* of Julius Caesar. This should not be surprising since Polybius and Caesar wrote their histories for similar purposes as Josephus, namely to defend Rome, their homelands, as well as their reputations.¹⁴ When reading these three writers, we must remember that their personal ambitions often affected their narratives. This is especially true of Josephus. He simultaneously sought to praise the Romans, himself, his ancestral faith, as well as condemn some of his fellow Jewish rebels. The events of his later life often shaped his accounts of the Hasmonean state; his works often justify his actions during the First Jewish Revolt.

Josephus was a controversial figure during his lifetime. This is largely because of his unusual background. Although his *War* is similar to the histories of Caesar and Polybius, it is truly a unique work because of Josephus’s status. The emperor Vespasian gave him Roman citizenship, a pension, and a home in the city of Rome even though he had fought against him and his son, the future emperor Titus.¹⁵ This patronage not

12. Many Dead Sea Scrolls have never been used to reconstruct Hasmonean history. These texts will be the focus of a companion volume to the present study that will use them to recount unknown historical episodes that involved the Hasmonean rulers and shaped Second Temple Judaism.

13. See Attridge 1984; Bilde 1988, 192–93; Schürer et al. 1973–87, 1:47–48.

14. See further Bilde 1988, 27–60; Sterling 2000; M. Stern 1974–80, 1:71–80. Cf. Feldman 1984, 772–77. For Polybius’s works and relevant Hellenistic literature, see Walbank 1972, 1–31; 1993, 13–29.

15. *Life* 422–23. He lived in Vespasian’s former residence. See Mason 2001, 168–69.

only provided him with ample leisure time to write his books, but it also gave him access to the Flavian *Commentarii*.¹⁶ Despite his influential connections, Josephus had powerful enemies. He had to defend his *War* against several Jewish critics, especially the historian Justus of Tiberius. Justus not only had been one of his opponents in the Galilee in 66–67 C.E., but he also wrote an account of the First Jewish Revolt that contradicted Josephus’s *War*. Josephus claimed that Justus’s book was incorrect since it contradicted the *Commentarii* of Caesar, presumably those of Titus that he, and purportedly not Justus, had read.¹⁷

Josephus had many advantages that were unavailable to his Jewish contemporaries such as Justin, which contributed to his success as a historian. He had access to libraries and official Roman accounts of the First Jewish Revolt. He also knew many Jews and Romans who had participated in this conflict; he interviewed some of them. He even sent copies of the *War* to Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa II—all purportedly testified to its truthfulness.¹⁸ Titus even signed a copy, which effectively give the *War* the royal imprimatur.¹⁹ This endorsement for many readers meant that any effort to dispute the *War*’s content could potentially be viewed as a challenge to Titus’s credibility.

16. *Life* 342, 358. Cf. *Apion* 1.56. For Josephus’s dependence on this source, see Thackeray 1929, 38–40.

17. *Life* 340–42. Justus’s patron, Agrippa II, not only acknowledged that Josephus was a trustworthy historian, but he even contributed material to help him write the *War* (*Life* 5.364–67). Justus presumably waited until Agrippa II had died before he disputed the accuracy of Josephus’s account of the First Jewish Revolt. See further Rajak 1973.

18. *Apion* 1.50–52. The relationship between Josephus and the emperors Vespasian and Titus should not be understood as indicating that he was closely associated with them or with those in the inner circles of power. Vespasian encouraged the arts and paid the salaries of some teachers of Latin and Greek rhetoric. Although Josephus had more contact with Vespasian and Titus than many of his contemporaries during and after the First Jewish Revolt, it is doubtful that the imperial family had any actual role in the writing of his works. For these issues, see further Suetonius, *Vesp.* 17–18; Hollander 2014. Josephus claims in *Life* 361–62 that he gave copies of the *War* to “many” Romans who had fought alongside Vespasian and Titus.

Several prominent legionary legates from this conflict were alive at this time and could have verified its accuracy, including Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis (*Legio V Macedonica*), M. Titius Frugi (*Legio XV Apollinaris*), the tribune Nicanor (*War* 3.344–46), and Masada’s conqueror L. Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus. See further, Mason 2009, 57; Cotton and Eck 2005.

19. *Life* 363.

Josephus’s use of imperial publicity to support the veracity of his accounts of the First Jewish Revolt suggests that many of his contemporaries doubted the truthfulness of his *War*. This skepticism has not diminished with the passage of time, for questioning Josephus’s accuracy has become a major academic enterprise. Recent scholarship, largely beginning in the 1990s, has rejected the positivistic tradition that treated Josephus’s works as discrete pieces of historical information that could be used to reconstruct the past. Josephus studies in recent decades has focused on more sophisticated modes of inquiry that seek to explore his literary context, his use of language, his rhetorical artifice, as well as the historical accuracy of his accounts in light of archaeological discoveries.²⁰

It is fortunate for scholars interested in the Second Temple period that Josephus later wrote a more detailed work that includes a lengthy account of the Hasmonean state, which also contains additional materials pertaining to the development of Jewish sectarianism. Known as the *Antiquities*, this book recounts history from the creation of the world up to 66 C.E. when the First Jewish Revolt began. It is largely a retelling of biblical history that was written to educate Gentiles about Judaism’s past. In this book Josephus offers a more detailed account of the Hasmonean state that sometimes corrects errors, and clarifies confusing sections, in his *War*. He also includes several lengthy descriptions about the favorable relations between the Roman Republic and the Hasmonean monarchs.²¹ His purpose in including such material was to show that the First Jewish Revolt was an aberration, and the Jews had long enjoyed favorable relations with the Romans. The rulers of the Hasmonean state figure prominently in these sections.

Josephus intended the *Antiquities* to be his first work. He abandoned the project to compose the *War*. One of his goals in writing the *Antiquities* was to rebut Jewish attacks on his integrity that began around 71 C.E. when he arrived in Rome. He wrote the book primarily for Roman readers. However, he also intended it for subjects of the Roman Empire; this appears to be the same group for whom he later wrote the *Antiquities*.²²

20. See further Bond 2000; Chapman and Rodgers 2016, 1–13; Pastor, Stern, and Mor 2011; Rodgers 2006b; D. Schwartz 2013.

21. See further Mason 1998.

22. *War* 1.1–4, 10–12, 23, 31, 183, 187, 216, 218–19, 359–60, 370, 386–92; 2.204–13, 250–51; 4.491–96; 7.360. Cf. *Life* 361–62; *Apion* 1.50–51. See Bilde 1988, 102–31; Mader 2000, 155–56; Mason 1998, 96. In *War* 1.17 Josephus imitates the classical historians by beginning his *War* where Jewish Scripture ended to produce a continuous historical record of the Jewish people to the present. See further Walbank 1993, 19.

Josephus resumed writing the *Antiquities* following the publication of the Greek edition of the *War*, which appeared before the death of Vespasian in 79 C.E.²³ He encountered some delays. The *Antiquities* was not published until approximately fifteen years later, in 93–94 C.E., during the thirteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Domitian (93/4 C.E.).²⁴ This was a time of distress. Domitian was beginning his purge of Rome's intellectuals for their unflattering representations of him. He executed Hermogenes of Tarsus for including allusions to him in his history.²⁵ Domitian also ordered the death of Helvidius Priscus for a farce that supposedly criticized his divorce.²⁶ He did not restrict his persecution to those who wrote about him, but he also punished those who criticized the monarchy. He had Rusticus Arulenus and Herennius Senecio executed because they praised some deceased critics of Nero and Vespasian.²⁷ These imperial sentences show that Josephus lived during a dangerous age even for those who had received imperial patronage.

Jews like Josephus were in potential danger during the reign of Domitian because of their supposed loyalty to Judea and its priests. Many pagans were also suspicious of Jews because the First Jewish Revolt had been a long and costly war. Although a Roman citizen, Josephus expressed fear for his safety even though Vespasian had favored him.²⁸ He and other Jews

23. Josephus mentions (*Life* 361) that he presented a completed copy of the *War* to Vespasian. The book is generally dated between 75 C.E., when Vespasian dedicated the Temple of Peace (*War* 7.158, 79), and 79 C.E., the year of his death. See further Attridge 1984, 192–93; Bilde 1988, 79; Laqueur 1920, 6; Weber 1973, 56–58; Rajak 1983, 195; Smallwood and Rajak 2012. Some scholars have noted a marked difference in Josephus's attitude towards Titus and Vespasian within the narrative, suggesting a publication date under Titus, 79–81 C.E. See S. Cohen 1979, 87; Price 2001, 223; Barnes 2005, 139–40; S. Schwartz 1990b, 13–15. It has further been suggested that *War* 7 was a later addition under Domitian. This thesis is primarily based on the more pronounced role of the third Flavian emperor in this book and its inferior style compared to *War* 1–6. See further S. Cohen 1979, 87; Thackeray 1929, 31–35; Barnes 2005, 139–40. See, summatively, Mason 2001, 148 n. 1493; C. Jones 2002, 113–14; D. Schwartz 2011a.

24. Josephus provides this date in *Ant.* 20.267. For discussion, see Attridge 1984, 185–92; Bilde 1988, 103–4. If he completed the book in 93/4 C.E., then his claim (*Ant.* 3.218) that the Urim and the Thummim ceased to function 200 years earlier would date its cessation just before the death of John Hyrcanus.

25. Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.1.

26. Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.4.

27. Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.3–4; Tacitus *Agr.* 2.1; Pliny, *Ep.* 7.19.4; Cass. Dio, *Hist.* 67.13.2. See further Mason 2009, 76.

28. *Life* 425; Goodman 2007, 440–42.

living in Rome were constantly reminded of the First Jewish Revolt since the Flavians had transformed its Forum to commemorate their victory over the Jews. Some Romans even publically expressed their disgust at Jews like Josephus who resided there. The poet Martial was among the most prominent of the opponents of the Jews at this time. His *Liber spectaculorum* not only celebrates the construction of the Flavian amphitheater, where Romans came to watch gladiators and *bestiarii* engage in a bloody orgy of death, but he portrays Jews as anthropomorphized animals like those killed in it.²⁹ This unflattering portrait of Jews reflects the type of hostility Josephus encountered as a citizen in Rome.

Josephus's economic situation became worse when Domitian ended the pension that Vespasian had granted him. This forced Josephus to earn his living from sales of his *War* and money supplied by his new patron Epaphroditus.³⁰ It was this loss of imperial support, and the accusations of his critics, that eroded confidence in the *War*. The increasing public disapproval of this book hampered Josephus's ability to secure support for his future writing projects.³¹ It is possible that he even postponed publication

29. Mart. *Spect.* 2.2; 4.4; 7.30, 35, 55, 82; 10.50; 11.94; 12.57. For references to the Flavians and Jews in this work, see further H. Chapman 2012.

30. *Life* 430. This man is the only literary patron Josephus mentions in his works (*Ant.* 1.8–9; *Apion* 1.1; 2.278). The extant references to him supports the thesis of Laqueur (1920, 23–36) that he should be identified with the freedman M. Mettius Epaphroditus, whom the *Sudas* states was a *grammaticus* and former tutor to the son of the Egyptian prefect Marcus Mettius Modestus. Epaphroditus was manumitted in Rome and possessed a library of over 30,000 scrolls. He purportedly died at the age of seventy-three. He was recognized with a statue that bears his name (*CIL* 6.9454). His position suggests that he had some contacts with Rome's aristocratic families, but was not among the elites. Others identify Epaphroditus with the imperial freedman, Ti. Claudius Aug(usti) lib(ertus) Epaphroditus who served under Nero as a *libellis* and was involved in uncovering the Pisonian conspiracy against the emperor in 65 C.E. See Hollander 2014, 279–93; Mason 2001, 172; Rajak 1983, 223–24; S.

Schwartz 1990b, 16–17; Sterling 1992, 239–40. Recently, C. Jones (2002, 114–15) has suggested that Josephus’s patron was actually a freedman named Epaphroditus, who served in the office of the *ab epistulis* under one or more Flavian emperors and was commemorated at Rome with a large funerary altar.

31. In *Ant.* 20.267–68 Josephus appears to acknowledge that there are inaccuracies in his *War* and states he wanted to publish a new version of it. This not only suggests that he faced public criticism over his *War*, but that he intended the *Antiquities* to be a more accurate work that also corrected errors in his first book. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.266) also mentions that he wrote *Life* to affirm his qualifications as a historian of the First Jewish Revolt and to defend his character. See further, S. Cohen 1979, 128–29; P. Stern 2010, 91.

of his *Antiquities* until after the death of Agrippa II to avoid angering this leading Jewish supporter of his writing who also resided in the city of Rome.³² Even while he was alive, Josephus appears to have gone to great lengths to avoid any overt criticism of Agrippa II. In his books he portrays Agrippa II positively as a mediator between the Jews and the Romans. Josephus never describes him as taking part in direct military action against Jews. Because Agrippa II was awarded the *ornamenta praetoria* around 75 C.E. for his service in the First Jewish Revolt, he certainly fought in this war alongside Vespasian and Titus despite Josephus’s implication otherwise.³³ It is probable that Josephus did not want to put Agrippa II in a difficult position by highlighting his past military service to the Roman Empire during the First Jewish Revolt, which could have eroded Jewish support for him in his homeland. Because it was not his intent to document everything that occurred during the First Jewish Revolt, it is important to go beyond Josephus’s books to gain a full understanding of the Second Temple period. This is especially true of his historical accounts of the Hasmonean state. He sometimes changed them to make them more accurate, and to comment upon recent incidents in the city of Rome that affected him and other Jews.

A look at Josephus’s books reveals that he updated his works to reflect later historical events and concerns of the Jewish community of the first century C.E. This is especially true of the *War*. Josephus’s treatment of Aulus Alienus Caecina in *War* 4.634–44, and the lack of references to much of book 7 in the ancient summary of the *War*’s content, suggests

32. It is doubtful that Agrippa II was alive when the *Antiquities* was published since Book 20 is critical of him. The death of Agrippa II has been the subject of much academic debate since it bears on the dating of *Life*. This book appears to presuppose that he is no longer alive (*Life* 359). Phot. (*Bibl.* 33 s.v. “Ioustos” PG 103:66) writes that he died after 100 C.E. in the third year of Trajan. This would extend the gap

between the *Antiquities* and the *Life* even though Josephus (*Life* 430; *Ant.* 20.266–67) closely connects the writing of the two works. The extant evidence from coins and other sources suggest that Photius is mistaken. It is probable that he conflated two passages from chs. 13 and 15 of Jerome's *De Vir. ill.* (PL 629–54) in which a reference to Josephus appears in connection with a description of Clement of Rome, whom he states died in the third year of Trajan. Josephus wrote *Life* and *Ant.* 17–20 during the reign of Domitian (before September 96 C.E.) and after the death of Agrippa II (perhaps in or before 93/4 C.E.). See further Attridge 1984, 210–11; Bilde 1988, 103–6; S. Cohen 1979, 170–80; Mason 2009, 147; S. Schwartz 1990b, 19–20.

33. Cass. Dio, 65.15.3–4. This honor gave Agrippa II the senatorial rank of praetor. See further Wilker 2011; Hollander 2014, 252–304, esp. 268.

that he inserted additional material in later editions of this book.³⁴ His account of the siege of Masada, contained in Book 7 of the *War*, provides one example of a later updating that is relevant to the examination of Jewish sectarianism.³⁵ There is ample evidence that Josephus revised this section of the *War* to deal with Jewish disturbances of the post-Flavian era. It appears that Book 7 was written in the time of Domitian, and revised during the reign of Nerva or Trajan.³⁶ The end of his account of Masada was apparently the original conclusion of the *War* since he wrote that the entire country was now subdued and no enemies remained (*War* 7.407–9).³⁷

The issue of Josephus's later redactions of his works is also important to consider before using his writings to examine Jewish sectarianism during the period of the Hasmonean state. He actually wrote that there were four major Jewish sects: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Essenes, and the "Fourth Philosophy."³⁸ This latter sect gave rise to the *Sicarii*, which became especially active during the two decades following the death of Agrippa I in 44 C.E.³⁹ Because the *Sicarii* did not emerge until the first century C.E., it is clear that Josephus used his sources regarding the practices of the three major Jewish sects of the Hasmonean period to understand and explain the later development of the *Sicarii*, as well as the Zealots, of his own time.⁴⁰ His account of their failed effort to foment a revolution in Alexandria and Cyrene (*War* 7.409–41) appears to form a distinct unit.⁴¹ It highlights the deeds of those who had escaped from the Romans. In this section Josephus displays a different attitude to the *Sicarii* than elsewhere in the *War*. Instead of portraying these rebels as a group

34. Barnes 2005, 139–40; S. Cohen 1979, 87; Thackeray 1929, 31–35. For the ancient table of contents appended to the *War* that helps us to reconstruct some of the later changes to the book, see McLaren 1998, 79.

35. The archaeological evidence suggests that Josephus modeled his account of Masada after the siege of Gamla. For this reason, it is important to consider the literary quality of Josephus's narratives when using his works to reconstruct history.

See further Atkinson 2006.

36. See further M. Stern 1974–80, 1:72 nn. 8–9.

37. In the beginning of the *War* Josephus mentions the destruction of the local fortresses (*War* 1.29), which suggests that the Masada story was included in the original work. For Masada, see further Atkinson 2006; 2010.

38. *Ant.* 18.10, 23.

39. *Ant.* 20.186–87; *War* 2.254–57.

40. For example, Josephus writes that many beliefs of the Sicarii are similar to those held by the Pharisees (*Ant.* 18.23).

41. Brighton 2009, esp. 93–140.

that does not represent traditional Jewish values, as he does in Books 2–6, he expresses pity for them as they underwent torture and shows some hostility to Rome's policy in Judea.⁴²

The additions concerning the *Sicarii* in Josephus's works reflect his changed attitude toward Roman rule of his former homeland during the post-Titus period. For this reason, it is important to take into consideration Josephus's social situation in Flavian Rome when reading his *War* and *Antiquities*, and how events there shaped his accounts of the Hasmonean period.⁴³ Although Josephus's accounts contain much ancient information about Jewish sectarianism of the first century B.C.E., he often inserts this material in his books to help his non-Jewish readers understand those groups he considered disruptive, as well as to distinguish them from pious and sensible Jews like himself. His descriptions of Jewish sectarianism were primarily intended to help his Gentile readers understand recent Jewish conflicts of the first century C.E. They should not be read as accurate reflections of Jewish sects of the Hasmonean period since they are shaped by later events. For this reason, his accounts of the Hasmonean monarchs and their sectarian affiliations in the *War* and the *Antiquities* are often biased.

The *Antiquities* is a work that must be read in light of Flavian Rome. Josephus also appears to have sometimes redacted his sources to explain or defend his own status as a Roman citizen in Flavian Rome of the late first century C.E. Flavian Rome is a hidden character whose influence can be detected in much of his accounts of the Hasmonean state. He appears to have added material to the *Antiquities*, as well as his *War*, during Domitian's reign. At this time Josephus's prominent Jewish supporters, Agrippa II and Berenice, had left the city of Rome. He apparently underwent a period of self-reflection regarding his status as a Jew. Hanan Eshel suggests that he ended his *War* with the tragic account of the mass

suicide at Masada because he was convinced that Judaism could not survive without the Jerusalem temple. During the fourteen years he spent writing his *Antiquities* he apparently changed his attitude towards Judaism. He realized that it had survived in Judea and the Diaspora without a temple and could exist without a sanctuary. This caused him to become more optimistic about its future in some sections of the *Antiquities*. In this book he also tried to persuade his readers to change

42. *War* 7.417–19.

43. Popović (2011, 3) comments on this problem: “One of the fundamental issues is whether Josephus’ accounts are proper historical sources for understanding pre-70 C.E. Judaea or whether they are instead historical sources for understanding the historical context of Josephus in Flavian Rome.” Cf. Regev 2013, 28–31.

their views about Judaism and support the Pharisees and Jewish leaders such as himself.⁴⁴

One of the most important differences between Josephus’s two major books is the anti-monarchical stance in the *Antiquities*. As Mason notes, Josephus’s account of the Judean constitution is that of a “decidedly antimonarchical, senatorial aristocracy” that led him to introduce a senate into his biblical paraphrase.⁴⁵ In his account of the Mosaic legislation pertaining to kings, Josephus reaffirms aristocracy as the ideal constitution. He emphasizes there is no other necessary form of government since God alone is the lawful ruler. Although he highlights Saul, David, and Solomon as heroic figures, he diminishes their accomplishments by weakening their positions as monarchs.⁴⁶ Josephus does not focus on the eternal promise to David, but emphasizes the authority of Moses and his aristocratic constitution. He does this because any hint of messianic zeal in his writings would have been a particularly sensitive issue for the Romans. Although he downplays messianism in his *War*, he suggests that it was a potent force that contributed to the rebellion against the Romans when he writes that the Jews were incited to war by an ambiguous oracle found in their sacred writings that someone from their land would rule the world.⁴⁷

Josephus cautiously avoided messianism in his history of the Hasmonean period.⁴⁸ He appears to have been reluctant to document any Hasmonean history that involved the violent messianism of the type that had contributed to the outbreak of the First Jewish War. Instead, he stresses that the Hasmonean family’s rule had gone well until they had established a monarchy and allowed sectarian factions to influence politics. Josephus wrote his books partly to support the aristocracy, namely the rule of the Pharisees and their leaders. For Josephus, these groups represented caution and Roman aristocratic values. They were

opposed to the religious zeal of the Zealots and related Jewish groups that had caused the rebellion

44. For this this interpretation, see H. Eshel 1999. Note also the statement in support of the Jews in *Ant.* 14.185–89.

45. Mason 2009, 90–91. For anti-monarchical passages, see *Ant.* 4.223; 6:36; 11:111; 14.91. For the senate, see *Ant.* 5.15, 43, 55, 135.

46. Rodgers 2009, 181.

47. *War* 6.312–13. Cf. *War* 4.388. Josephus notes that there was a debate as to whether this man would be a Jew or if the prophecy referred to Vespasian. He emphasizes that the Jews were wrong to have focused on this oracle, and that messianism brought disaster to them and the destruction of Jerusalem. For this oracle in Roman literature, see Tac. *Hist.* 5.13; Suet. *Vesp.* 4.5.

48. Mendels 1998, 294–313.

against Rome.⁴⁹ For Josephus, the priests and the aristocrats were the only legitimate Jewish leaders. Although they may have participated in the First Jewish Revolt, he emphasizes that they could henceforth be counted upon to support Rome.⁵⁰ Josephus was convinced that the Romans were the masters of the world, and that it was God's plan for them to govern much of it. God, he believed, had vowed to destroy the Jerusalem temple because the Jews had rejected everything that was Roman.⁵¹

The failure to recognize that Josephus revised the *Antiquities* has led to some misunderstandings concerning the development of Jewish sectarianism during the Hasmonean period. Joseph Sievers, for example, shows that that no chronological conclusions can be drawn from his placement of Jewish sectarian divisions to the time of Jonathan. Through a close reading of the sectarian references in the writings of Josephus, and the ancient table of contents appended to his works, Sievers demonstrates that *Ant.* 13.171–73 was inserted into a later edition of this book.⁵² Consequently, the placement of Josephus's description of Jewish sects in his account of Jonathan should no longer be understood to imply that sectarian divisions actually began during his high priesthood.

The *Antiquities* contains a very different depiction of Jewish sectarianism during the period of the Hasmonean state than the *War*.⁵³ In his *War*, Josephus depicts the Pharisees as a religious party that plays a minimal role in politics and emphasizes that they were not closely associated with the

49. H. Eshel 1999, 233; Mason 2001, 7.

50. S. Schwartz (1990b, 15, 69–88) observes that Josephus greatly idealizes the priests in his *War* and *Antiquities*. He accomplished this by emphasizing that the priesthood not only survived as a distinctive class in the post-70 C.E. period, but that

its members were now seeking Roman favor. The priests had financial reasons to court the Romans: they wanted to regain their confiscated property (*War* 7.216–17). S. Schwartz (1990b, 91) also comments that *Ant.* 14.20–28 suggests the temple cult must have continued following 70 C.E. and that the prayers of the priests were still regarded as beneficial. Although Josephus at times mentions examples of his own prophetic abilities (*War* 3.351–53, 399–408), he does not refer to himself as a prophet in his works. It is probable that he does so because he believed that his prophetic abilities derived through his function as a priest, and because his audience may have been suspicious of prophets. For this reason, he emphasizes that only great leaders of the past, such as John Hyrcanus, were prophets. For this interpretation, see Grabbe 2003, 203–4.

51. Josephus stresses *αἰτία* to argue that the Jewish rejection of Rome was the underlying cause of the disastrous revolt. See further Varneda 1986, 7, 12–13, 17–18.

52. Sievers 2001a.

53. See D. Schwartz 1983. D. Schwartz's article was written in part to counter Morton Smith's (1956, 74–78) thesis that Josephus's *War* contains a more historically anti-Roman rebels. However, in his *Antiquities* he portrays the Pharisees as actively involved in politics, especially during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. The *Antiquities* is likely more accurate since he wrote this book at a time when the Jewish rebels were no longer a concern to Rome. Therefore, he could truthfully describe the past political activities of the Pharisees without any fear of offending his Roman patrons.

Because they present different depictions of the Hasmonean rulers, the *Antiquities* and the *War* should not be harmonized. Rather, their divergent portrayals of the same persons and events must be examined individually, in light of other textual, archaeological, and numismatic evidence when available, to determine which, if any, reflects historical reality. Josephus, moreover, did not merely insert additional materials in his *Antiquities*. This book is unique among his writings since he effectively changed its meaning through the addition of an appendix known as *Life* that reflects debates of the Flavian era.

The book known as *Life* recounts the brief time during which Josephus was commander of the Galilee (ca. December 66 C.E. until May–July 67 C.E.). It also contains some historical information of relevance to the present study. Because this book is actually an appendix to the *Antiquities*, it shares its literary origin. Since Josephus intended *Life* to be part of the *Antiquities*, the two works should be read together as a single composition.⁵⁴ The content of *Life* is important to the present study because it occasionally helps in detecting and understanding later changes to the text of the *Antiquities*.⁵⁵

accurate portrayal of the Pharisees than his *Antiquities*. See also S. Cohen 1979, 144–51; Fuks 1990; S. Schwartz 1990b, 172–200. D. Schwartz (2013, 79–82) notes that Josephus downplays strife in the *Antiquities*.

54. Rodgers (2006a) points out that Nicolaus of Damascus appended a now lost autobiography to his universal history. Josephus may have been influenced by Nicolaus, and decided to add an autobiography to his *Antiquities* to update it in light of later historical events and debates concerning his role in the First Jewish Revolt.

55. The *Life* is generally dated to 94–95 C.E., but no later than 96 C.E. See *Ant.* 20.266; *Life* 430. In *Life* 359–60 Josephus appears to presuppose that King Agrippa II is dead. A brief comment by Phot. (*Bibl.*, Codex 3) states that Agrippa II died in the third year of the Emperor Trajan in 100–101 C.E. Although some, such as Laqueur (1920, 247–78), have used this reference to propose a later date for *Life* and *Antiquities*, the earlier dating is preferred. See further Bilde 1988, 103–6; Mason 2009, xxi, and n. 6. There is no evidence that Josephus ever referred to the work as *Life*. It was issued as an appendix to the *Antiquities* and became regarded as part of this book in the manuscript tradition. Because it opens with a connecting particle, it did not need any title. Although it was clearly intended to form part of the *Antiquities*, I will follow scholarly convention and refer to the appendix to this book as *Life*.

Josephus intended *Life* to be a defense of his character and to demonstrate the truthfulness of his previous writings, especially the *War*.⁵⁶ In *Life* he introduces his readers to Jewish sectarianism partly to enhance his own credentials. He claims to have studied the ways of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes during his youth. He even comments that he also spent three years as a devotee of a desert hermit named Bannus.⁵⁷ Josephus describes them as philosophical schools both to imply that he was a lifelong seeker of Jewish wisdom, and to show that Judaism emphasized the pursuit of virtue like the classic Greco-Roman philosophical traditions.⁵⁸

Life contains several contradictions with Josephus's previous works. It sometimes conflicts with the *War* concerning his activities in the Galilee. This is particularly true in *Life* 28–413 and *War* 2.568–646. Perhaps the most significant difference is his inclusion of Justus of Tiberius as a character in *Life*; he is absent in the *War*. Josephus in *Life* portrays his conduct during the First Jewish Revolt and the Jewish sects favorably. He does so in part to argue that priestly Jews like himself were best qualified to represent the Jewish community to the Roman people.⁵⁹ Because Josephus wrote *Life* as an apologetic text, it should not be surprising that its details sometimes differ from the *War*. It is far from a complete description of the career of Josephus; it is instead first and foremost a personal apology regarding specific issues.⁶⁰ Because Josephus appended it to his *Antiquities*, *Life* to some extent should be regarded as a revision of the former work

56. See further, S. Cohen 1979, 114, 126–28; Mason 1997. Rajak (1983, 154, 345–68) emphasizes that even though *Life* was largely intended as a reply to Justus, it still addresses later concerns of the surviving Jewish aristocracy in the Diaspora.

57. *Life* 10. Klawans (2012, esp. 44–91, 137–38) proposes that Josephus’s descriptions of the Pharisees, especially his explanations of their doctrines of fate and free will, support his claim to have adopted the ways of this sect. However, it is important to note the placement of this material in *Life*. Its purpose is to show that Josephus gave up the most rigorous philosophies of his day to pursue a responsible political life. Mason (1991; 2001, 20 n. 87) also suggests that Josephus merely deferred to the Pharisaic majority rule in Jerusalem and never actually became an ardent Pharisee in practice. His view is followed by Siegert, Schreckenberg, and Vogel (2001, 163). Baumbach (2005, 21–50) argues that the Pharisees were the most beneficial party for Josephus’s career.

58. *Life* 2. See Mason 2009, 208–13.

59. For the importance of these features in *Life*, see P. Stern 2010; Rodgers 2006a.

60. McLaren 1988, 69. See also S. Cohen 1979, 109. For further discussion on the apparent (not necessarily real) conflict between *Life* and *War*, see Attridge 1984, 187–92; Rajak 1983, 154–66; Rappaport 1994.

since it reflects his later views on his participation in the First Jewish Revolt and the changed relationship between the Roman Empire and the Jews following this conflict.

It is also important to consider Josephus’s use of literary assistants when reading his works since it is plausible that some of his changed attitudes in his books reflect their activities. He states that he used them to improve his Greek style when he wrote his *War*. The result is a fairly polished narrative that is reminiscent of the best writings of the Greco-Roman historians. But he did not use them when he wrote his *Antiquities*.⁶¹ Consequently, in this book he often copied extensive passages from his Greek sources largely verbatim. This work is especially useful for historical study because it often preserves lengthy quotations from his sources. Unfortunately, these often offer conflicting chronologies. In some sections the origin of the historical material he derived his information from is unknown. Chapter 13 of the *Antiquities*, beginning with paragraph 218 that covers the period from the rise of Jonathan to the death of Queen Shelamzion Alexandra, for example, is unique and of unknown derivation.

Josephus occasionally cites his Greek sources. These references are useful for understanding his methods of research and writing.⁶² For the

61. Thackeray (1929, 18–19) is the greatest proponent of the assistant theory. He adheres to the thesis that Josephus had received considerable help in writing the *Antiquities*, and that only *Ant.* 20 and *Life* were written by Josephus himself, cf.

Josephus's reference to assistants in *Apion* 1.50. Richards (1939) opposes this view, citing consistent literary evidence which assumes that Josephus wrote the entire draft of the *Antiquities* himself, some of which was revised by Greek helpers for a second edition. Rajak (1983, 233–36) offers a comprehensive overview of arguments and counterarguments; she points out a series of methodological flaws in Thackeray's thesis, not least the fact that Josephus does not mention any help in writing the *Antiquities*, and that the various styles that Thackeray believes to have found must be attributed to Josephus's personal reading material at the time of writing. See also Shutt (1961, 29–35), whose own linguistic analysis of the common terms and constructions in *War* and *Antiquities* implies a single authorship. He sees the assistants' presence only in polishing and improving on Josephus's Greek in the *War*. Because Josephus mentions the literary assistance he received when he wrote his *War*, I accept the thesis that assistants helped him improve his style when he wrote this particular book. However, the final product should be viewed as the work of Josephus because he selected and reshaped his sources to emphasize particular historical themes and to portray each Hasmonean ruler favorably or unfavorably.

62. Josephus used 1 Maccabees as a major source for the *Antiquities*, but he also used unknown works to recount additional historical events. See, e.g., *Ant.* 13.35–36, 58–80, 106–21. He also quotes from, or refers readers to, several historians in his *Antiquities* such as Nicolaus of Damascus (13.250–51, 347), Strabo (13.286–87, 319, period between Antiochus IV Epiphanes to the accession of Archelaus (6 C.E.)), Josephus primarily used Nicolaus of Damascus. As Herod the Great's Gentile advisor and envoy, Nicolaus is not the most reliable source for Hasmonean history. In his *Universal History* he glorified Herod, and minimized the achievements of the Hasmonean rulers to legitimize the reign of his patron. This is particularly true of his account of Alexander Jannaeus. It is often polemical and does not preserve an accurate report of his military accomplishments or his expansion of the Hasmonean state. Josephus often portrays Hyrcanus II unfavorably in the *Antiquities*. However, the Roman documents he cites in *Ant.* 14 praise him and show that Julius Caesar favored him more than Herod's father, Antipater. Nicolaus appears to have given Antipater some of the credit for the achievements of Hyrcanus II: he likely did this to justify his benefactor Herod the Great's establishment of a new Jewish monarchy that replaced the Hasmonean dynasty. Josephus occasionally incorporates Nicolaus's prejudices against the Hasmoneans in the *Antiquities*.⁶³ But not all of the unevenness and contradictions in this book should be attributable to Josephus or his sources, but rather to his method of writing history.

Josephus and His Methods of Writing History

It is important to consider the way Josephus produced his books to make sense of his conflicting accounts of the Hasmonean rulers. There were no

firm lines in antiquity between writing and publication. Books were first presented orally in public recitations before they appeared in written form. They were then often distributed in drafts or copies as gifts to a small circle of associates, and periodically revised afterwards. In his

347), and Timagenes (13.344). In one instance he merely refers to “some writers” (13.337) as a source of history for the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. The Christian writer M. Minucius Felix mentions a now-lost work on this period by Antonius Julianus titled *de Judeis*. This is presumably the procurator of Judea during the First Jewish Revolt. Josephus likely consulted this work, and another lost history of the First Jewish Revolt. See further Schürer et al. 1973–87, 1:33–34. It is doubtful that Josephus knew the works of the Hellenistic Jewish historians, with the exception of Artapanus. Rather, he likely obtained this material from Alexander Polyhistor’s *Περὶ Ἰουδαίων*. It is probable that Josephus had access to a Seleucid chronicle. See further *Ant.* 1.240; *Apion* 1.218; Sterling 1992, 263–84. For possible sources used by Josephus, see Attridge 1984, 210–27; Bilde 1988, 80–89; Babota 2014, 9–34; Dąbrowa 2010a, 13–16; D. Schwartz 2013, 6–10, 100–104.

63. See further Regev 2013, 28–29; Wacholder 1962, 4–36; Schürer et al. 1973–87, 1:28–32; T. Landau 2006, 1–68.

apologetic work *Against Apion* (1.47–57), Josephus implies that his *War* was criticized in literary circles during his oral presentations of it before its printed publication. In defending himself he had to be careful of criticizing his enemies, such as Justus of Tiberius, who had powerful patrons. He also had to flatter the rich, some of whom were his actual or potential benefactors.⁶⁴ Because Josephus’s books, like those of his contemporaries, were written for his peers they often reflect the concerns and interests of his readers.

Josephus wrote his works, especially his *War*, for an educated audience in Rome. He was not the only historian of his time to have done so. In *War* 1.1–3 he states that other writers are currently producing histories of the First Jewish Revolt.⁶⁵ He appears to have heard several of them presented orally. Josephus even implies that he has been engaged in an ongoing oral debate with some of these authors. He writes that many of his contemporaries criticized his deficient Greek style, which caused some to question his credibility as a writer.⁶⁶ To make his books more popular, he had to pay attention to their literary style and oral quality.

Josephus suggests that his public presentations forced him to produce books that were entertaining. This accounts for some of his more unusual and interesting digressions that sometimes interrupt his narratives.⁶⁷ Josephus’s concern for the entertainment value of his books also compelled him to include a few sensational stories about some of the Hasmonean monarchs and Jewish sects to interest his audience and attract

new patrons. For this reason, it is important to consider the literary qualities of his accounts of the various Hasmonean rulers, which at times contain many novelistic features that Josephus undoubtedly included for the enjoyment of his listeners and readers.

64. See further Attridge 1984, 200–203. For the oral recitation of historical works in Rome, see further Mason 2009, 7–15, 45–67; Goldsworthy 2006, 186–90.

65. The Greek in this passage suggests that the *War* has been subjected to an extensive scholarly debate and multiple revisions prior to its publication. See further Mason 2009, 58.

66. For his Greek style, see *Ant.* 20.263; *Life* 40; cf. *War* 1.16; *Apion* 23–24.

67. Polyb. (2.56) criticizes the tendency of historians to include such sensationalistic materials. All ancient historians paid careful attention to rhetoric when they wrote their historical accounts. Nevertheless, the criticism of Polybius and other writers suggests that ancient historians considered the pursuit of truth their main goal, and that they often despised those who viewed history as subordinate to rhetoric. See, e.g., Cic. *De or.* 2.15.62.

In his letter to the historian Lucceius, Cicero urged him to produce history that was full of what we would term today romantic sensationalism.⁶⁸ Cicero's approach to history contrasts with that of the standards of Thucydides and Polybius, both of whom stress rational explanation. Josephus tends to follow the chronological approach of Polybius while integrating the dramatic style of Thucydides to convey the story of the Hasmonean period through character studies of prominent individuals. Josephus often measures them by their relationship with the Roman Republic.

Like Polybius, Josephus wanted to explain why the Roman Empire dominated much of the known world. His accounts of the Hasmonean state often emphasize the history of the Roman Republic's involvement in the Egypt and Syria to explain its domination of much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East in his day. Like the historian Appian, Josephus often pays little attention to chronological accuracy. He juxtaposes and transposes events from different times to produce what appears to be a sequential account of the Hasmonean state. The result is a narrative that is often chronologically inaccurate: yet, it met standards of contemporary historiography.⁶⁹ However, it is difficult to determine the extent to which this is the product of Josephus or his sources since, like other Roman historians, he seldom acknowledges the works he consulted. He often merged earlier materials into his narratives without citing them.⁷⁰

His method of writing and documentation was not only common, but it was also the result of ancient research methods.

Josephus made extensive use of Rome's public libraries as well as the private libraries of his patrons and other influential Romans.⁷¹ These libraries certainly included many ancient texts. A recent study of surviving scrolls from fifty literary collections and libraries from the second century B.C.E. to the third century C.E. found that many of these manuscripts were used for 150 to 500 years. The average lifespan of these texts was

68. Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.

69. Atkinson 2011, 7–17.

70. For Josephus's splicing of his sources, particularly 1 Maccabees and Nicolaus of Damascus, and the resulting chronological contradictions in his books, see further D. Schwartz 2013, 96–100.

71. Atticus in the first century B.C.E. was famous for his extensive library. He not only purchased many books, but he copied and loaned them. Josephus borrowed books from his friends and his literary associates. Josephus's patron, Epaphroditus, owned some 30,000 works (*Ant.* 1.8–9; *Life* 430; *Apion* 1.1; 2.1, 296). For the loaning of books, see further, Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3; 1.7.1; 1.10.4; 1.11.3; 2.4.1.

between 200 and 300 years.⁷² The famed physician and philosopher Galen mentions that the libraries on the Palatine hill were between 200 and 450 years old at the time of the fire of 192 C.E.⁷³ Given the great age of some of the scrolls found in ancient libraries, it is probable that Josephus had access to collections that may have included originals or copies of now-lost historical works from the Hasmonean era.

Because the ages of the manuscripts discovered in ancient libraries and literary collections demonstrate that scrolls survived for centuries, this study goes beyond Josephus to use books written by much later writers since it is probable that they consulted works or copies of texts from the Hasmonean period that are no longer extant. Such information is especially important to consider since sometimes, as in the case of George Syncellus, Byzantine authors clearly had access to Jewish historical works that predate the writings of Josephus.⁷⁴ However, these Christian works are only used when their information about the Hasmonean period is supported through textual, epigraphical, numismatic, or archaeological evidence.

Even if Josephus and later historians had access to ancient texts from the Hasmonean era, it is important to consider how their methods of research may have affected their writings. Because books in public libraries did not usually circulate in antiquity, scholars had to make notes or memorize their contents.⁷⁵ Many inconsistencies in the writings of

Josephus are undoubtedly due to his having memorized passages from books in libraries. He did not always check his completed work with his original sources. In some instances he appears not to have actually read the works he cites. Rather, he sometimes appears to have relied on oral knowledge about ancient texts and their contents he acquired from others.⁷⁶

72. See Houston 2009.

73. Gal. *On the Avoidance of Grief* 13. This conflagration destroyed much of his extensive personal library that he had stored in nearby warehouses. The recently discovered text of *Περὶ Ἀλυστίας* documents some of the contents of Galen's literary collection and provides important information about Roman libraries that reflect conditions of the preceding century when Josephus wrote his books. See further Rothschild and Thompson 2011; Nicholls 2011.

74. S. Schwartz 1990a.

75. Ancient writers often relied on their memories and used mnemonic techniques such as those preserved in *Rhet. Her* 3.22 in lieu of taking notes. For the common practice of memorizing extensive passages from books, see Cic. *Tusc.* 1.24.59–64; (Pseudo) Plut. *Mor.* 513B; Paus. 6.19.5; Plin. *HN* 7.24; Quint., *Inst.* 11.2.7; Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.1.55. The compiler of the epitome of Jason of Cyrene's five-volume work into the book known as 2 Macc 2:25 states that he undertook this project to help those who wanted to memorize the entire work.

76. Pucci 2006.

But there is another reason to be doubt the accuracy of those passages in which Josephus cites from a named historian.

In those instances where Josephus mentions his sources, we cannot necessarily conclude that he reproduces them verbatim. Rather, he frequently inserts his own viewpoints into them, which makes it difficult to distinguish materials he copied from his own opinions. For this reason, the accounts of the Hasmoneans in his books, including quotations from other historical works, should be considered to convey thoughts of Josephus. He not only carefully selected his sources, but he is responsible for their redactions and their chronological placement in his narratives. This is especially true of his account of Judah Aristobulus in his *Antiquities*.⁷⁷ This section of the book is largely devoid of historical value, but would have been quite entertaining to recite before a live audience. When reading Josephus's accounts of the Hasmonean period it is important to consider their oral quality as works that were written to be both didactic and entertaining. This was expected of any good historian in antiquity. Josephus was clearly at the top of his craft; while reading his accounts of the Hasmonean state we can easily understand why he was so popular in his day.⁷⁸

Like his contemporary historians, Josephus paid much attention to style. He often imitates the literary structures and forms of his predecessors. For the *War*, he was especially influenced by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In his *Antiquities*, Josephus frequently imitates Thucydides. His presentation of conflict is often reminiscent of the writings of Caesar and Polybius. Josephus was particularly influenced by the understanding of fate as depicted in Polybius. Because Josephus wrote for pagans, he must have adopted these familiar literary models to influence his Gentile audience and his patrons. His books also suggest some dissatisfaction with works on Judaism that were available in his day, such as those of Alexander Polyhistor. He at times attempts to explain Jewish customs and to clarify misperceptions concerning Judaism that were widely held among pagans in the first century C.E. Because Josephus was not satisfied with the writings about Judaism available in his time, neither should we be. And we must also not be content with Josephus's works either. Rather, the contemporary researcher must go beyond his books to seek other sources both to verify the contents of his histories of the Hasmonean state and to uncover events he did not include in his *War* and *Antiquities*.

77. *Ant.* 13.301–19.

78. According to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.9), after Josephus's death a statue of him was erected in Rome. His books were considered so important they were preserved in the city's public library.

The remainder of this book offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the Hasmonean state that goes beyond the writings of Josephus to incorporate all the extent historical, literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence. It begins, in Chapter 2, with a brief history of the Hasmonean family from their revolt against the edict of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to their creation of a state by Simon. It ends here because Simon was the last surviving son of Mattathias who had fought in the rebellion against the Seleucid rulers. Although he technically established a state, it was not until the reign of his son, John Hyrcanus, that the Hasmoneans kingdom actually became independent of the Seleucid Empire. The remaining chapters examine in depth each Hasmonean ruler from John Hyrcanus to the 30 B.C.E. murder of Hyrcanus II. The conclusion explores how Josephus's political and social situation in Flavian Rome affected his accounts of the Hasmonean rulers documented in this study, as well as the extent to which the Parthians of the first century C.E. influenced his perceptions of the Hasmonean rulers and his telling of their stories.