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COVENANT AND *PAX DEORUM*: POLYVALENT PRODIGIES IN JOSEPHUS' *JEWISH WAR*[*]

Abstract: This paper considers the question of culturally-directed doublespeak in Josephus' *Jewish War*, of the possibility of Josephus sending different messages to Gentile and Jewish readers in the same text. It offers two readings of a passage in *Jewish War* 6 which describes the portents which prefigure the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and explores how Josephus expresses his narrative in a way which simultaneously evokes parallels with both Roman religion and biblical prophecy and historiography, resulting in a passage which resonates radically differently depending on the parallels which the reader can bring to bear, and which inverts the cultural power-dynamic of Roman imperialism by offering greater interpretative power to those readers who come from an unprivileged provincial culture. It offers a fruitful approach to considering an author who is marked above all by hybridity, and by a mastery of more than one literary tradition.

Keywords: Josephus, Judaism, Roman religion, hybridity, biblical historiography, doublespeak

Where was the Centre of Flavius Josephus' World? Josephus was a Roman citizen, resident at Rome during the period of his life when he was active as an author, and so by both citizenship and residence he can fairly be described as a 'Roman historian'. The centre of the Roman world, geographically and figuratively, was the city of Rome itself. Within Rome, as Nicholas Purcell has discussed, there were multiple, overlapping 'centres', but one centre which was perhaps particularly, authoritatively central was the Capitol, site of tokens which guaranteed Roman world-centrality like the Capitoline Head and the temple of immovable Terminus, but above all the home of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, a cosmic god with a local attachment, whose divine providence guaranteed Rome's predestined world-rule.[1] But in the wider empire there were other conceptions of centrality, and rival locations of the centre. Flavius Josephus was also Yosef ben Mattityahu, Jerusalem priest and descendant of Judaean kings, and one rival conception of centrality he must have encountered was the sacred geography of Jerusalem,

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[1] Purcell (2012). On the centrality of both Jupiter and his Capitoline temple to Roman ideology, see Fears (1981), esp. 12–41. On the Capitoline Head, see D. Hal. *AR* 4.59–61; Livy 1.55.5–6; Plin. *Nat.* 28.13. On Terminus, see Serv. *A.* 9.446. On Terminus and the Head, see Fears (1981) 41.

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which placed at the centre not the Capitol but Temple Mount. This conception is best expressed by the view of the Jerusalem Temple as a series of concentric zones of holiness, getting holier as one approaches the inner parts. At the very centre, in the Holy of Holies, was the presence of Yahweh himself; radiating out from here were, in decreasing order of numinosity, the other parts of the Temple building, the Court of the Priests, the Court of the Israelites, the Court of the Women, and the Court of the Gentiles. But this conception did not end at the edge of the *temenos*; Jerusalem itself was a uniquely holy city, at the centre of a uniquely holy territory, the land promised by God to Moses.[2] On this reading, the people who lived outside of Judaea in the territory of *haggoyim*, including in Rome itself, were occupants of the profane periphery of a theocentric cartography of numinosity. This ideology of centrality need make no concession to the transient realities of geopolitical power; regardless of who ruled the world, the centre could be nowhere other than Jerusalem, and its centrality, like that of the Capitol, was manifested in the presence of a cosmic god with a local attachment.

Josephus' 'inbetweenness' has come to the fore in much recent scholarship on his work, and this focus has resulted in some sophisticated readings focusing on questions of hybridity, the confluence of elements of different literary, cultural, and intellectual traditions which make Josephus' texts comprehensible within either tradition, but also unique in themselves, assimilated but not the same, Anglicised but not English, so to speak.[3] What I discuss in this paper does relate to some models of hybridity, particularly to Homi Bhabha's notion of colonial mimicry which is menacing in its imperfections, which restates and reaffirms difference even as it elides it and subverts the fixity of colonialist discriminatory categories.[4] But thinking about hybridity in Josephus can carry with it a danger, the danger of wholly eliding distinctiveness, of reducing everything to a sort of Romano-Judaic mush; in short, of losing sight of irreducible questions such as the one with which I began this paper. Here I want to try to parse literary hybridity in Josephus, and in one passage in particular, by (counter-intuitively) breaking it down into its constituent parts, in a way which honours the awkward and difficult aspects of the impulse to hybridisation and which does not lose sight of that fertile opening question: where was the centre of Flavius Josephus' world?

In pursuit of this objective, I apply the concept of 'doublespeak', made famous in classics in *Actors in the Audience,* Shadi Bartsch's study of political expression from Nero to Hadrian.[5] Doublespeak, the communication of

[2] Sanders (1994) 70–2.

[3] E.g. Barclay (2005); Mason (2005); Kaden (2011); Ferda (2013).

[4] Bhabha (1994) 121–31.

[5] Bartsch (1994).

multiple possible messages through the same text, depends, as Bartsch puts it, 'on the existence of one element of the audience who will suspect the presence of double meaning and understand its strategic value'.[6] This focus on different messages for different readerships offers a tool for thinking about what we may term culturally-directed polysemy in Josephus, aspects of his works which may send one message to Jewish readers and another to Romans. I propose to read one passage of Josephus first against the background of Roman literary traditions and expectations, and then against Jewish literary traditions and expectations, and probe the similarities and the differences that emerge from such readings. This approach, to begin with at least, requires a certain degree of oversimplification. In particular, it assumes something like 'pure' Roman and 'pure' Jewish traditions, and consequently pure Roman and pure Jewish readerships, an altogether more straightforward situation than was really the case. Consequently, at the end of this article I will complicate what has gone before by considering the question of hybridity in Josephus' audience, and how that might enrich our thinking about hybridity in Josephus' text.

The passage I will consider, *Jewish War* 6.293–9, describes some of the signs foreshadowing the fall of the Jerusalem Temple in 70. There are several reasons for choosing to focus on this passage. In the first place (as will be discussed in detail below), it offers a particularly clear example of Josephus operating simultaneously within two different traditions, Jewish and Graeco-Roman. However, the clarity of the passage is not the only reason for taking it as the subject of a case-study; this passage merits close study because of its central importance to one of the fundamental notions which animates the entire *Jewish War*, that God has transferred his favour from the Jewish side to the Roman during the First Revolt. This understanding of events is prominent in numerous parts of the *Jewish War*: for instance, in Josephus' own prophetic discernment of the outcome of the Revolt and of God's support for Rome; repeatedly in the speech which Josephus puts in his own mouth when negotiating with the rebels; in King Agrippa II's claim that Roman success indicated divine support for Roman rule; in the rueful *anagnorisis* of Eleazar ben Yair, the Sicarian leader on Masada who belatedly acknowledges that the will of God, all along, had been to crush the rebels; and in numerous passing references throughout the work.[7] The 'prophecy' which Josephus himself delivers to Vespasian after his capture at Jotapata in 67 knits together the theme of God's abandonment of the Jews with broader patterns in world-

[6] Bartsch (1994) 116.

[7] Josephus' prophecy: *BJ* 3.351–4; Josephus' speech: *BJ* 5.362–419 (see esp. 367–8, 413); Agrippa's speech: *BJ* 2.345–401 (esp. 390–4); Eleazar: *BJ* 7.323–36 and 341–88 (esp. 327–32 and 358–60); passing references: e.g. *BJ* 4.323, 361–2; 6.99–110 (fuller list at Mader (2000) 13).

history, with Rome's (present) success as a world-empire, and especially with the rise of Vespasian to the office of *princeps*, elected by God and elevated to fulfil a special role in Jewish and world history (*BJ* 3.351–4). Thus Josephus' core conception of the failure of the Jewish Revolt seems to have been that the Jews (and particularly the Jewish rebels) have, through their multiple atrocities and sacrileges, lost the favour of God, who has left Jerusalem and brought the Romans against the city, elevating Vespasian and Titus in particular to be his special instruments of vengeance against his disobedient people.[8] This transfer of divine allegiance explains and justifies the outcome of the Revolt (as well as Josephus' own change of sides), and is at the heart of the *Jewish War*'s historical logic.

There is probably no clearer or more direct illustration of this historical theology in the entire work than the passage in question, which offers us concrete earthly signs of God's withdrawal of protection from Jerusalem and the rebels who controlled it. It is of fundamental importance to a reading of the *Jewish War*, therefore, to appreciate that this idea, the transference of God's favour, can be read in multiple ways by different audiences, and that the concept of God supporting Rome during the Revolt is likely to have resonated very differently for readers, depending on whether or not they were versed in Jewish scripture. Thus a close examination of this passage, which emphasises this notion in an unusually direct and concrete way, can offer us interpretative cues for many other parts of the work, and a richer understanding of Josephus' historical theology throughout the *Jewish War*.

The passage in question runs as follows:

> ἡ δ' ἀνατολικὴ πύλη τοῦ ἐνδοτέρω ναοῦ χαλκῆ μὲν οὖσα καὶ στιβαρωτάτη, κλειομένη δὲ περὶ δείλην μόλις ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων εἴκοσι, καὶ μοχλοῖς μὲν ἐπερειδομένη σιδηροδέτοις, κατάπηγας δὲ ἔχουσα βαθυτάτους εἰς τὸν οὐδὸν ὄντα διηνεκοῦς λίθου καθιεμένους, ὤφθη κατὰ νυκτὸς ὥραν ἔκτην αὐτομάτως ἠνοιγμένη. δραμόντες δὲ οἱ τοῦ ἱεροῦ φύλακες ἤγγειλαν τῷ στρατηγῷ, κἀκεῖνος ἀναβὰς μόλις αὐτὴν ἴσχυσεν κλεῖσαι. πάλιν τοῦτο τοῖς μὲν ἰδιώταις κάλλιστον ἐδόκει τέρας· ἀνοῖξαι γὰρ τὸν θεὸν αὐτοῖς τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν πύλην· οἱ λόγιοι δὲ λυομένην αὐτομάτως τοῦ ναοῦ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν ἐνενόουν, καὶ πολεμίοις δῶρον ἀνοίγεσθαι τὴν πύλην, δηλωτικόν τε ἐρημίας ἀπέφαινον ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ σημεῖον. μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἑορτὴν οὐ πολλαῖς ἡμέραις ὕστερον, μιᾷ καὶ εἰκάδι Ἀρτεμισίου μηνός, φάσμα τι δαιμόνιον ὤφθη μεῖζον πίστεως· τερατεία δὲ ἂν ἔδοξεν οἶμαι τὸ ῥηθησόμενον, εἰ μὴ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεασαμένοις ἱστόρητο καὶ τὰ ἐπακολουθήσαντα πάθη τῶν σημείων ἦν ἄξια· πρὸ γὰρ ἡλίου δύσεως ὤφθη μετέωρα

[8] Spilsbury (2003) 13–14; Kelly (2004).

περὶ πᾶσαν τὴν χώραν ἅρματα καὶ φάλαγγες ἔνοπλοι διάττουσαι τῶν νεφῶν καὶ κυκλούμεναι τὰς πόλεις. κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἑορτήν, ἣ πεντηκοστὴ καλεῖται, νύκτωρ οἱ ἱερεῖς παρελθόντες εἰς τὸ ἔνδον ἱερόν, ὥσπερ αὐτοῖς ἔθος πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας, πρῶτον μὲν κινήσεως ἔφασαν ἀντιλαβέσθαι καὶ κτύπου, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα φωνῆς ἀθρόας 'μεταβαίνομεν ἐντεῦθεν'.

> Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple—which was bronze, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men in the evening, and was closed in place with iron bars, and had bolts fastened very deep into the threshold, which was made of one entire stone—was seen to open of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. The watchmen of the temple ran to the captain and told him; he came up, and with great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. To the unsophisticated, this seemed to be a very happy prodigy, as if God had opened the gate of good things for them. But the men of learning understood that the security of their holy house was dispersed of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that this sign prefigured the desolation that was coming upon them. Not many days after the feast, on the 21st of the month of Artemisium, a miraculous phenomenon was observed which surpasses belief; I think that what I am about to record would seem like a fiction, if it were not corroborated by eyewitnesses, and if the ensuing sufferings were not worthy of the sign. Before sunset, throughout the whole country, chariots and armed phalanxes, hanging in the air, were seen, speeding through the clouds and encircling the cities. Moreover, at the feast which is called Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple to perform their sacred offices as is customary, they said that first they felt a quaking and heard a great noise, and after that they heard the sound of a multitude saying 'we are leaving this place'.[9]

This passage is eminently comprehensible just from a Roman background, and Roman readers had relevant *comparanda* which could be brought to bear. The opening of the eastern gate and the divine voice in the temple clearly signal the departure of the temple's tutelary deity, a concept familiar from a number of Roman texts, and in a number of guises. Most famously and

[9] Jos. *BJ* 6.293–5, 299. Other omens are also reported in preceding chapters: a star in the shape of a sword was seen, and a comet which stayed in the sky for a year; supernatural light shone from the altar; a heifer gave birth to a lamb; celestial armies fought in the sky above Jerusalem. The whole list of prodigies is strikingly similar to that given by Tacitus at *Hist.* 5.13, and also rather similar to the list given by Cassius Dio (64.8) describing portents which foreshadowed the destruction of the Capitolium in Rome during the civil war of 69.

extensively studied is the practice of *evocatio*, archaic by 70 but still familiar to a number of Greek and Roman authors of the principate.[10] The best-known case was the 'calling out' of Juno Regina from Veii, as described by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but both Servius and Macrobius believed that Scipio Aemilianus had evoked Juno Caelestis from Carthage, and a number of other cases of *evocatio* are either known or suspected.[11] Evoked gods were transported from their old temple to Rome and given a new home there, in return for withdrawing protection from the community in which they had previously resided. Less dramatic and perhaps more common was the *votum* of a new temple on the same site in return for aiding the Roman cause, as revealed by an inscription dating to 75 BCE found at the site of Isaura Vetus in Cilicia, where the (unknown) local deity had a temple constructed for them by the Roman commander P. Servilius Vatia in fulfilment of a pre-battle vow.[12] A further category of imported gods are those foreign deities who, of their own volition, choose to extend their allegiances to Rome, signifying their wishes usually through the Sibylline Books, such as Cybele and Venus Erycina (and while such deities' decisions do reflect well on Rome and emphasise the close connection between Roman success and divine favour, it must be emphasised that, unlike the gods of defeated peoples, such deities were not generally imagined as abandoning their former territories, making them a rather different proposition overall).[13] Such defections (whether through *evocatio* or otherwise) could be attributed to the overwhelming *pietas* of the Romans, a quality mentioned in several Republican epigraphic documents like the famous letter of Messala Corvinus to the Teans, and by both Roman and Greek authors of the Late Republic and Principate.[14] Episodes such as these highlight a potential problem in the Roman 'theology of history'. Just like Rome, other cities and nations claimed protective deities, and what to do with those deities was not a straightforward question. *Evocatio*, Isaura Vetus-style *votum*, and the absorption of foreign cult at the will of the deity represent different ways of attempting to 'win over' the goodwill of potentially hostile deities, or to demonstrate that that goodwill had already been won, to make them a part of the *pax deorum* that existed between Rome and the celestial

[10] Basanoff (1947); Le Bonniec (1969) 101–15; Le Gall (1976); Edlund-Berry (1994); Gustaffson (2000); Ando (2003), esp. 234–9.

[11] Juno Regina: Livy 5.22; D. Hal. *AR* 13.3; also Plut. *Cam.* 7; Gustaffson (2000) 46–55. Juno Caelestis: Macr. 3.9.7–8; Serv. *A.* 12.841.

[12] Le Gall (1976); Gustaffson (2000) 60–2. Note also the *votum* to Bellona of Appius Claudius at Livy 10.19.17.

[13] Venus Erycina: Livy 22.10; 23.31; Cybele: Livy 29.10.5; D. Hal. *AR* 2.20.2; Ov. *Fast.* 4.247–90. On these imported gods, see Orlin (2010) 58–85.

[14] Corvinus: *RDGE* 34. Livy 1.21.2; 44.1.11; Sall. *Jug.* 14.19; Cic. *Har.* 19; D. Hal. *AR* 6.6.2. Brunt (1997) 25–6; Orlin (2010) 24–5, 208.

powers and, provided the cult niceties were observed, guaranteed Rome's ongoing imperial success.[15]

I want to address briefly the question of whether or not there was an actual *evocatio* at Jerusalem, a case which has been positively argued by the New Testament scholar John Kloppenborg.[16] I do not agree with Kloppenborg's argument, for several reasons. Kloppenborg argues that the performance of an actual *evocatio* is suggested by the *evocatio*-like language used in this Josephus passage, but that Josephus has suppressed this core fact out of an unwillingness to admit that Yahweh was susceptible to the enticements of a Roman ritual. This seems unlikely; if an act of suppression lies behind Josephus' passage, why would he configure his account in a way which is so suggestive of *evocatio* to begin with? We may add that Tacitus also reports signs clearly indicating the withdrawal of God from Jerusalem, yet he does not record an actual *evocatio* taking place, and Tacitus would have no comparable reasons for suppressing this information.[17] Moreover, Kloppenborg's case depends on his acceptance of Le Gall's argument that the *votum* at Isaura Vetus is evidence that *evocationes* were common occurrences until much later than is usually assumed, but I see no reason why this has to be the case, and indeed there seems to me to be no evidence that *evocationes*, properly speaking, were performed as late as 70.[18] Furthermore, given what we actually know about the destruction of Jerusalem and its aftermath, I find it hard to see how any form of *evocatio* was even possible; the absence of a cult statue in Jerusalem renders the performance of a full-blown, Veii-type *evocatio* impossible, and one of the most significant and consequential things about 70 was precisely that Vespasian and Titus did *not* rebuild a temple to Yahweh, either on-site at Jerusalem or at Rome. I believe that if Josephus is deploying *evocatio*-type imagery here, this is for literary reasons rather than because it reflects a suppressed event at Jerusalem, and I

[15] For *pax deorum*, see Gell. 1.19.11; D. Hal. *AR* 4.62.5; Weinstock (1960) 50; MacBain (1982) 7; Rosenstein (1990) 54–91; Linderski (1995) 609–10. Other scholarly discussions of these methods of transferring the favour of enemy gods: Scheid (2003) 104–5, 154; Edlund-Berry (1994).

[16] Kloppenborg (2005) 419–44.

[17] Tac. *Hist.* 5.13.

[18] Le Gall (1976). Indeed, the language of Josephus' contemporary Pliny the Elder when discussing *evocatio* strongly seems to imply that it was no longer actively performed. Having described the practice of *evocatio*, Pliny writes *et durat in pontificum disciplina*, 'and it survives in the body of learning of the *pontifices*' (Plin. *N.H.*. 28.18). The verb *durat* would be difficult to explain if Pliny were here describing a contemporary practice, but very comprehensible if he were describing an archaic survival, fossilised in the body of technical knowledge which members of the pontifical college were expected to master. Also the conclusion of Gustaffson (2000) 42–3. Note also Rutledge (2007) 180: 'given the special attention that Livy and Dionysius give to the *evocatio* at Veii the ritual should be understood as an extraordinary event'.

agree with Magness, Schwier, and other scholars that the Roman narrative of 70 was not that the Jewish god was evoked or won over, but actually defeated by the Roman gods, leading to the end of his Temple cult.[19] This explains Vespasian's decision to close down the rogue temple to Yahweh at Leontopolis in Egypt soon after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and it also makes sense of the introduction of the *fiscus Iudaicus*, an empire-wide tax on Jews which resulted in the money which they had once sent as tribute to Yahweh being sent instead to fund the reconstruction of the temple of the conquering god Jupiter Capitolinus; it explains as well the imagery of the eagle of Zeus soaring over the Jerusalem Temple spoils on the Arch of Titus relief; and the display of Yahweh's sacred artefacts in the temple of another deity in Rome.[20]

So Josephus' implied *evocatio* in this passage is, in my view, not indicative of an actual *evocatio* taking place at Jerusalem, and should be approached from a literary perspective. It is important to note that, even when read from a solely Roman point of view, this text contains tendencies of resistance to some hostile Roman ideas about Judaism and the fall of Jerusalem. Josephus is clearly drawing on the language of the foreign deity departing his temple (and more broadly the transference of God's favour to Rome), but he nonetheless gives us a picture of these processes not entirely convergent with the Roman examples sketched above. On the one hand the siege context and the prodigies of the god's departure make the Jewish God look like a *deus evocatus*, but on the other the fact that he was not enticed to desert by a Roman ritual makes him look more like those gods who chose to transfer their favours at their own initiative out of favour to Rome. The crucial fact is that, in Josephus' divine calculus, the Romans are basically extraneous and irrelevant. The Jerusalem God does not transfer his favour to Rome because of the outstanding *virtus* or *pietas* of the Romans, any more than God sided with the Babylonians at the fall of the First Temple because of their excellent moral qualities. The Romans did not win the favour of the God of Jerusalem; the Jews lost it, as Josephus consistently emphasises.[21] Moreover Josephus' deployment of the language of

[19] Schwier (1984) 202–330; Magness (2008); Schmidt (2010).

[20] Jos. *BJ* 7.421–36, 218.

[21] E.g. Jos. *BJ* 4.318; 6.200–13, 433–4; 7.260. See Klawans (2012) 180–209. Josephus is certainly capable of attributing *virtus* and *pietas* to individual Romans, and certainly the Roman leadership, Vespasian and Titus, are consistently more reverential to the Temple than the Jewish rebel leaders whom Josephus consistently reviles, but the same fine moral qualities are clearly not attributable to all Romans, including the soldiers under Flavian command. (Roman leaders' reverence for the Temple: e.g., *BJ* 1.27; 5.334, 444, 456, 519; 6.94–5, 122–4, 214–16, 228. Other Romans' disrespect for the Temple: e.g., 1.152, 179; 2.187–203; 6.239, 252, 258. Roman soldiers behaving disgracefully: *BJ* 5.451, 551–2.) Josephus nowhere attributes Roman success to Roman moral excellence, whereas he frequently expresses a connection between Jewish failure and the immorality or impiety of the Jewish rebels. More broadly, Josephus avoids making blanket positive moral assessments of the

the evoked God runs counter to the 'official view' about the events of 70, that the Jewish God had been defeated by the Roman pantheon, as discussed above. By substituting for the defeat of God the language of the transference of God's favour, Josephus is making a case for the continuing viability of his God, and perhaps even sowing the suggestion that that God's temple, like those of other gods who came over to Rome's side in times of war, ought to be rebuilt by its destroyers.

That will suffice for the Roman side. While educated Jewish readers of the *Jewish War* may have been familiar with many of these classical precedents, they brought to the text a whole different set of possible associations, which Josephus likewise seems to exploit, associations which, it must be emphasised, would have been entirely invisible to most non-Jewish readers. Imagery of the 'defection' of God to Israel's enemies, and even of his abandonment of the Temple, is present in the Hebrew Bible, an alternative lens to that provided by the classical literary tradition through which the text can be read. Such imagery in the Bible is rooted in what is called the Deuteronomistic theory of history, a term which derives from Martin Noth's identification of the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings as forming a unified literary entity, which Noth called the Deuteronomistic History.[22] The details of Noth's model are very controversial in Biblical Studies, but the adjective can suffice as a label to identify a certain theology of history which is central to these books, and to a number of other Biblical texts as well.[23] This understanding of history is covenantal; Israel's political fortunes fluctuate in proportion to the extent of the Jewish people's or their rulers' adherence to the laws of Moses, particularly as laid out in Deuteronomy. The books called the Deuteronomistic History climax with the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE, and the exile of a large part of the population of

Romans, preferring to present both the Jews and the Romans as an ethical mixed bag, far from the blanket superiority assumed by the Roman theology of empire. At *BJ* 5.403–9, Josephus (in a speech placed in his own mouth) does grant that the Romans have behaved more piously than the Assyrians who attacked Jerusalem under Sennacherib, but this is not necessarily a resounding endorsement or a blanket claim of Roman ethnic ethical superiority, and it comes in the middle of a speech whose principal point is not to draw attention to the moral excellence of the Romans, but to the deep moral failings of the Jewish rebels. Other than this, at most Josephus is prepared to grant that the Romans demonstrated excellent military discipline. See Stern (1987).

[22] Noth (1991).

[23] Knopper (2000) surveys a number of scholarly trends which have undermined confidence in Noth's model of authorship, as well as his interpretation of the books he includes in the Deuteronomistic History. Knauf (2000) suggests that there is no real evidence that any such thing as the 'Deuteronomistic History' exists in any meaningful sense, and it is a category of no value to the study of the Hebrew Bible.

the land to Babylon. The preceding history can be read as theodicy, an attempt to explain how a people supposed to be beloved of God could meet with such unmitigated disaster. The answer proposed by the Deuteronomistic books is that the people and their kings failed to live up to their covenant obligations and repeatedly disobeyed God. This state of persistent disobedience led first to the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, and then to the conquests of the two resultant Jewish kingdoms, first Israel by the Assyrians and then Judah by the Babylonians.[24] But (contrary to Noth) the Deuteronomistic theology is not entirely hopeless: God promises his people a right to their land, and he promises David that his seed will rule for ever.[25] The indications are that if the people follow the repeated advice of the Deuteronomistic books and repent during their chastisement in exile, the covenant will be renewed and the good fortunes of Israel will consequently be restored.

It is against this historical theology that the account of the desertion of the Jewish God in Josephus should be read. The most obvious biblical comparative text for our Josephus passage is Ezekiel 10–11, where the prophet witnesses the physical departure of God and his retinue from the Temple prior to its taking by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. There are few close echoes of specific details here, and no close linguistic parallels between Josephus and the Greek version of Ezekiel. However, the broad parallels between this passage and the departure of God as delineated in the Josephus passage are too strong to be dismissed. In both cases, God abandons his people and departs his temple through the East gate during a siege by a foreign power; that departure and defection allows the Temple to be destroyed and the Gentile enemy to prevail over the Jews in the Holy City. Furthermore, the prophecy concerning celestial armies and chariots at *BJ* 6.296–8 is further suggestive of Josephus' conception of 70 as the punishment of God against a recalcitrant people, as the Hebrew Bible contains passages depicting God marshalling his chariots against the rebellious Israelites, including in the context of the Babylonian siege.[26] Given Josephus' frequent implicit and explicit parallels between Rome and Babylon, it seems inconceivable that a reader of Josephus familiar with biblical historiography and prophecy would not be reminded of this striking biblical passage at this key moment of Josephus' narrative.

The logic of the *Jewish War* practically requires these scenes to recur in 70. As many scholars have emphasised, Josephus frequently suggests parallels between the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 and the destruction in 586 BCE,

[24] Cross (1973); Rose (2000); Weippert (2000); Wolff (2000); McKenzie (2002) 37–9; Williamson (2009).

[25] 2 Sam. 7:12–16. For more hopeful readings of the 'Deuteronomistic History', see von Rad (1966); Cross (1973); Wolff (2000).

[26] See, for instance, Isaiah 66:15 and (specifically relevant to the Babylonian siege) Jeremiah 4:13.

some of which are overt and others only detectible to readers versed in Jewish scripture. For instance, he both implicitly and explicitly compares himself to the prophet Jeremiah, who predicted and lived through the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon; he emphasises the coincidence that the fall of Jerusalem to Titus happened on 10th Ab, the same date as its fall to Nebuchadnezzar; and his appalling tale of Cannibal Mary, a starving Jerusalemite mother who kills, cooks, and eats her own baby, picks up on the prophetic lament of Jerusalem on the eve of her destruction in Lamentations 2.20, 'Should women eat their offspring?'[27] A network of associations is being woven here, a network largely invisible to people who do not know the Hebrew Bible, and the focal point of this network is the departure of God in the passage under discussion. History is repeating here: if God left the Temple in 586, he must also leave the Temple in 70. So at one of the moments when he must have appeared to Roman readers to be at his most familiar and conversant with imperial ideology, Josephus' interlinear whispers, audible only to his Jewish readers, are busy signalling something different.

It remains to reflect on the implications of this doublespeak; what is the difference between the implications of this passage as it might have been received by a Roman reader, and its possible implications to a Jewish reader with knowledge of the biblical material discussed above? For all the areas of potential resistance mentioned earlier, to a Roman, the defection of the God of Jerusalem must have seemed broadly in line with familiar ideologies of Roman imperialism. The God of the Jews chooses to abandon his people and transfer his support to Rome, as so many other tutelary deities had done before both in war and in peace. This reaffirms the unique relationship between Rome and the gods, even the gods of its foes. Moreover, and crucially, the defection of the god of Jerusalem may have seemed to spell the final subjection of the Jewish people to Rome. Once a foreign god transfers his allegiance to Rome, that allegiance is solid and lasting.[28] Thus, for all Josephus' peculiarities, a putative Roman reader of the *Jewish War* with a reasonable level of familiarity with Roman historiography may well come to the conclusion that the *Jewish War* is, among other things, *laus imperii*, and that the text indicates that the god of the Jews, like so many 'enemy' gods before him, has abandoned the people he had hitherto protected, recognising that the Roman people were more worthy of his aid than his formerly chosen people. This, in turn, is likely to have seemed like an endorsement of Roman claims of ethnic election, and of the superiority of Romans over others in terms of *virtus* and *pietas*. Although,

[27] For Josephus and Jeremiah, see Cohen (1982) and Ferda (2013). Date: Jos. *BJ* 6.249–50. Cannibal Mary: Jos. *BJ* 6.197–217 (on which see Gleason (2001), Chapman (2007), and Lam. 4:10).

[28] See the comments of the 'imported' god Vertumnus at Prop. 4.2.55–6.

as previously argued, Josephus nowhere explicitly asserts Roman superiority in such stark terms, the defection of the Jewish god would have seemed so familiar from comparable episodes in earlier Roman history, and so consonant with Roman imperial theology, that this would seem, to a Roman reader unversed in Jewish scripture, to be the natural interpretation of such a complex of images. And we need not attribute Josephus' apparent cultivation of such an impression to that old chestnut in Josephan scholarship, Josephus' obsequious flattery of the Romans. If Roman readers take from the *Jewish War* the notion that the god of the Jews defected to the Roman side and voluntarily aided the Romans in their crushing of the Revolt, this would have serious implications for their understanding of recent history. Chiefly, it would give them a perspective radically different from the triumphalist Flavian narrative, which suggested above all the defeat of the Jewish God. And it would further have implications for how the Jewish God ought to be treated. Roman custom clearly established that those gods who transferred their favour from an enemy to Rome in the course of a war should be treated with reverence and respect at Rome, and not with the naked disrespect illustrated by, for instance, refusing to rebuild their temple, or depositing their sacred objects as *spolia* in the temple of a different, Roman deity.[29] Thus even on a purely Roman reading, Josephus' conception of the transference of God's favour can be read as a critique of certain aspects of Flavian post-70 treatment of the Jewish religion.

So far so reassuring, but the menacing imperfection of colonial mimicry is here too. Josephus' rejection of the narrative of the defeat of God, his total disregard for the gods of Rome, his transference of all powers over history to the God of Jerusalem, and that God's complete indifference to Roman *virtus* and *pietas* all strike discordant notes in the theology of empire. But more dramatic still are the insights which familiarity with biblical texts bring to this passage. On a Deuteronomistic reading, the departure of God from his house *cannot* be permanent, because of the Deuteronomistic promises of divine support, of Israel's right to its land, and of the foretold future rule of the line of David. Above all, biblical history presents a compelling precedent for the fall of Jerusalem in 70, and that precedent had a sequel. After exile and chastisement in Babylon, the people repented, their covenantal relationship with God resumed, and they returned to their land and rebuilt their temple; in Roman terms, the Jewish *pax dei* came to be reactivated. Given the repeating nature of Josephus' history and his constant stress on the validity of the Babylonian parallel, it is hard to see how a Jewish reader could not suspect a similar sequel to contemporary events as Josephus relates them. The defection of God was not an irreversible displacement of the centre, or a permanent validation of Roman imperial ideology, but a temporary chastisement of the

[29] Respect for 'defecting' gods: Orlin (2010) 40–1.

Jewish people, the one people whose claims to have a relationship with the divine have true validity.[30]

Thus by appealing to different literary traditions and audiences in the same passage, Josephus is able to send out different messages to different readerships, messages which, in both cases, could be seen to advance the cause of the Jewish people living under Roman and Flavian domination, either by sending to Jewish readers consoling reminders of the temporary nature of God's anger with his people, or by encouraging, among non-Jewish readers, a kinder interpretation of the theological implications of the fall of Jerusalem and the place of the Jewish god in the Roman religious world-order. This, it seems to me, is something quite distinct from models of hybridity or cosmopolitanism, which stress the combination of cultural elements into singular new forms; it also differs from 'code-switching', which emphasises the opportunistic deployment of different cultural forms in different contexts.[31] Although the kind of double

[30] One of *Histos'* anonymous referees has suggested that Josephus does indeed want to suggest the permanent transfer of God's favour to Rome, and consequently the permanent endurance of Roman world-rule, on the grounds that this seems, to the referee, to be the implication of Josephus presenting Vespasian as a 'messiah' (based on Josephus' application of a Jewish oracle about a future world-ruler arising from Judaea to Vespasian at *BJ* 6.312–13, with parallels at Tac. *Hist.* 5.13 and Suet. *Vesp.* 4.5, and perhaps also the implication of Josephus' prophetic vision of the divine election of Vespasian at *BJ* 3.400–2, with parallels at Suet. *Vesp.* 5.6 and Dio 65.1.4). However, this seems to me to be off the mark. If this really *is* an indication of Vespasian as messiah (and Josephus nowhere uses the technical language of messianism with reference to Vespasian), we must remember that Judaism in Josephus' day did not have a single, unitary notion of what a messiah was, and not all attested understandings of the messiah-figure were eschatological or history-ending (see, above all, Collins (2010)). The best attested parallel for a 'Messianic' Vespasian in Jewish tradition would be Cyrus, a Gentile world-ruler specifically identified as God's messiah in Second Isaiah (Isa. 45:1); clearly no reader of Isaiah in Josephus' day would assume that the intended meaning of this ascription was that Persian world-rule would be permanently established (on the Messianic Cyrus, see von Rad (1965) 169–75; Roberts (1992); Hanson (1995); Schaper (2009) 3–14; Collins (2010) 32–4). A broader point is also relevant: if Josephus had reached the point where he believed that God's favour had permanently passed over to the Romans, this would necessitate the belief that the covenant was no longer applicable, and thus Josephus would presumably no longer be Jewish. For scholarship which discusses passages in Josephus which suggest that he anticipated a prophesied end to Roman world-rule, see Nikiprowetzky (1971) 484–8; de Jonge (1974) 207–11; Bilde (1988); Sterling (1992) 292–4; Mason (1994) 181; Bilde (1998) 52–4; Spilsbury (2003) 1–14 and (2005) 224–7.

[31] For cosmopolitanism, see especially Kelly (2004), who argues that Josephus expresses his prophetic and theological stances in a knowingly cosmopolitan way, which draws on both Jewish and Graeco-Roman traditions in order to express the *same* notions in ways comprehensible to different readerships. While sympathetic to Kelly's approach, I hope this article has successfully shown that Josephus' mastery of multiple cultural idioms is not always deployed in service of unitary, cosmopolitan aims, but that it can, from time to time, generate strategic polyvalence. For strategic polyvalence, see also Ash (2014), who argues for the communication of different messages to different readers in Josephus' triumph

resonance achieved in this passage is only made possible by Josephus' cosmopolitan mastery of multiple cultural forms, as well as by the inherent points of contact between the Jewish notion of covenant and the Roman notion of *pax deorum*, the overall effect is quite different from cosmopolitan hybridity, in that the product does not efface the distinction between Jewish and Graeco-Roman by producing a unified amalgam of both but, by instantiating both traditions simultaneously, it achieves a polyvalence which, to those with eyes to see, strongly emphasises the clear distinction between the historical theologies of both traditions. Unlike the code-switcher, Josephus is not being Roman at one moment and Jewish at another; he is, throughout this passage, being both, distinctly and simultaneously. And it must be restated that this strategic polyvalence is not simply a feature of the single passage under discussion. The notion of God's defection to the Romans is, as we have seen, frequently recurring in the *Jewish War*. Thus, though the parallels with both Ezekiel and the Roman tradition of defecting deities might be particularly clear in the passage concerning the Temple portents, this sort of directed polyvalence is in play every time this notion is articulated by Josephus. Thus perhaps the central theological conception in the *Jewish War* can be said to be doubly resonant in this way, persistently communicating different notions to Roman and Jewish readers.

Before concluding, I will address the question of how hybridity in the audience might complicate this picture. To begin with, I think it is entirely reasonable to assume, as I have been so far, that Josephus would assume complete ignorance of biblical material and Jewish history on the part of non-Jewish Roman readers. In support of this assumption, one could cite the *Jewish Antiquities*, a laborious work whose main purpose is to communicate information about Jewish scriptures and history, and which assumes no prior knowledge on the part of its non-Jewish readers. I could also mention the evidence of learned Greeks and Romans who attempted to write the history of Jewish origins, which contain wild misconceptions, such as the idea that Moses built the Jerusalem Temple, or that Moses and Joseph were alive simultaneously.[32] If such learned authorities cannot get Exodus right, there is little hope that anyone knew much about 2 Kings. Finally, I would cite the inscription on the no longer extant arch of Titus in the Circus Maximus, which boasted that no king or general before Titus had captured Jerusalem in war.[33] No-one familiar with the Deuteronomistic History would be able to take that historical

narrative, which could be read either as simple celebration of Flavian spectacle or as communicating a much more nuanced and ambivalent attitude. For arguments in favour of the code-switching model, see Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 3–37.

[32] Tac. *Hist.* 5.3; Jos. *Ap.* 1.288–99, quoting (and mocking) the account of Chaeremon.

[33] *CIL* VI.944 = *ILS* 264.

claim seriously. In sum, it seems that very few non-Jewish Romans seem to have had any idea of the stories that Jews told about their own history, and consequently very few non-Jewish Romans would have been able to detect the *Jewish War*'s surreptitious biblical allusions.

An expectation of hybridity, or at least of cross-cultural understanding, begins to look much more plausible when we consider Josephus' Greek-literate Jewish audience. Knowledge of Roman history and culture had been available in Greek since at least the time of Fabius Pictor, and the imperial Greek texts are often deeply engaged with and informed about Roman affairs.[34] What is in evidence here is an imbalance in cultural power; anybody who wanted to be somebody in the first century needed to be Greek educated, and it often helped to be conversant with Roman history and culture. Conversely, nobody except Jews needed to know anything about Jewish history. This imbalance has an interesting effect: it means that the members of the unprivileged group end up knowing more. An author like Josephus is ideally placed to exploit this expanded range of knowledge and, within the world of the text he creates, to invert the imbalance in power by handing greater interpretative power to his Jewish readership. Educated Jewish readers become the part of Josephus' readership who can fulfil Shadi Bartsch's requirement for doublespeak, the crucial 'element of the audience who will suspect the presence of double meaning and understand its strategic value'.

We have looked briefly at Ezekiel 10–11, the memorable Biblical account of the departure of God from Jerusalem in 586 BCE, but this passage has a sequel. In chapter 43 of the same book, in a vision of the future when Israel had been chastened, repented, and made right with the Lord, we see God returning to the Temple, re-entering through that fateful eastern gate, and making his home in Jerusalem in perpetuity. A Roman reading our Josephus passage would be like a hypothetical Babylonian who only reads Ezekiel as far as chapter 11 verse 12, taking from it broad validation of their nation's conquest of the Jews, but entirely unaware that the prophet has a better future for his people in sight. Like Ezekiel, Jeremiah, the poet of Lamentations, and other biblical authors who discerned the withdrawal of Yahweh in 586 BCE, for Josephus God's absence from the Holy Mountain is a passing phase. The centre of Flavius Josephus' world was never the abode of Jupiter Capitolinus, central space of the Roman *pax deorum*. It was, and always remained, on Temple Mount.

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[34] Amply evidenced by the works of Dio, Appian, Plutarch, Nicolaus of Damascus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Dio Chrysostom.

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