

JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF MOSES

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ABSTRACT

Because Moses was the one figure in the Jewish tradition who was well known to the pagan world and because he had been reviled by several anti-Jewish writers, Josephus can be assumed to have felt a special need to paint a favorable picture of him. Several events in Moses' life presented a particular problem to Josephus. Despite his promise in his proem to add nothing to, and to subtract nothing from, the biblical text, in almost all of these cases Josephus simply omits the embarrassing episodes. On the other hand, he is careful to avoid the undue aggrandizement and near deification of Moses found in the Samaritan tradition and, to a lesser degree, in the rabbinic tradition, with which there is good reason to believe he was well acquainted. Likewise, because his sophisticated audience would undoubtedly have found the biblical miracles hardly credible, he tends to downgrade or rationalize them, or, as in the case of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, he makes a point of noting as a parallel the crossing of the Pamphylian Sea by Alexander the Great.

Because the Antiquities is an apologetic work directed primarily to non-Jews, Josephus portrays Moses as embodying the qualities of the great heroes of the Greeks and Romans, notably the external qualities of good birth and handsome stature, precociousness in youth, and the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, as supplemented by what was, in effect, a fifth cardinal virtue, piety. Moses' appeal to this audience is particularly effective because he is depicted as the ideal leader, especially in meeting the test of sedition and in coping with the unruly mob. Josephus' tone here is highly reminiscent of Thucydides' portrait of Pericles, of Plato's description of the philosopher-king, of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas, and of the traditional Stoic sage; and concurrently, the role of Aaron as his spokesman is considerably downgraded. It is particularly as an educator, a legislator, a poet, and above all as a general and a prophet that Moses excels. In stressing these achievements Josephus shifts the focus from God to Moses.

Josephus' modifications of the biblical narrative of Moses are occasioned by his apologetic concern to defend the Jews against the charges of their critics, particularly cowardice, provincialism, and intolerance, and by his positive desire to portray a personality fully comparable to such great leaders, whether historical or legendary, as Heracles, Lycurgus, Aeneas, and Pericles. Finally, Josephus has included several motifs—notably irony and suspense—from the Greek tragedians in order to render his narrative more dramatic.

* All references to Josephus, unless otherwise noted, are to the *Antiquities*. Abbreviations and bibliography of works cited in this article are found on pp. 327-328.

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1. *Introduction: Issues*

The one figure in Jewish tradition who was well known to the pagan world was Moses.¹ His connection with Egypt undoubtedly gave him a certain notoriety, especially during the Hellenistic period. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.1–2), writing within the Alexandrian milieu, asserts that while the fame of his laws had spread throughout the world, not many knew him as he really was, since Greek authors had not wanted to accord him honor, in part out of envy and in part because the ordinances of local lawgivers were often opposed to him. Similarly, Josephus (*Ap* 2.145) declares that Apollonius Molon, Lysimachus, and others, partly out of ignorance and partly out of ill will, had cast aspersions upon Moses and his code, maligning him as a charlatan (γόητα) and as an impostor (ἄπατεῶνα). The opponents of the Jews, according to Josephus (*Ap* 2.290), had apparently reviled Moses as utterly unimportant (φαυλότατος). Braun² has pointed out the significance of the omission of Moses' name from the list of oriental

¹ See Gager, *Moses*.

² Martin Braun, *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* (Oxford, 1938), p. 68.

national heroes cited by Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris* 24.360B), otherwise a relatively impartial authority. We may see a sample of this attempt to denigrate Moses in the remarkable comment of Alexander Polyhistor (Suidas, s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μιλήσιος) that the laws of the Hebrews had been composed by a Hebrew woman, Moso.³ Indeed, in an age and place in which grammarians and Homeric scholars were the leaders of the intellectual community, one of the important figures on the intellectual scene in Alexandria in the first half of the first century CE, Apion, known for his glosses on Homer,⁴ and Philo's counterpart as a leader of the Alexandrian non-Jewish delegation to the emperor Gaius Caligula, was a major figure in the revisionist view of Moses.

And yet, if we may put any stock in the admittedly questionable reference to Moses in Pseudo-Justin (*Cohortatio ad Gentiles* 9), the historians Hellanicus (fifth century BCE) and Philochorus (third century BCE) mention Moses as a very ancient leader of the Jews. Likewise, Hecataeus (ca. 300 BCE; Diodorus 40.3.3) introduces Moses as outstanding for his practical wisdom (φρόνησις, a distinctively political virtue) and for his courage (ἀνδρεία), two of the four cardinal virtues. This helps to give Moses a rank among the greatest lawgivers, since similar phraseology is used by Diodorus (1.94.1–5) to describe three Egyptian lawgivers. Indeed, the very Egyptians who maligned Moses apparently regarded him as remarkable (θαυμαστόν) and even divine (θεῖον), and indeed as one of their very own priests (*Ap* 1.279) who, to be sure, had been expelled because of his alleged leprosy. The fact that in the earliest extended mention of Moses, that by Hecataeus, it is he who is responsible for all the major institutions of the Jews, including especially those that set them apart from other people, indicates

³ Heinemann ("Moses," p. 360) has described the tradition as malevolent and cites as parallels the transformation of the name Cleomenes to Cleomene in Aristophanes, *Clouds* 680; and Chrysippus to Chrysippa in Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.34.93.

⁴ I have found some of Apion's glosses on Homer in a papyrus fragment (P. Rylands 1.26) dating from the first century CE, as well as a few first-century scholia on Homer's *Odyssey* (P. Lit. London 30; British Museum inv. 271), mentioning his name among other commentators. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was apparently Philo's counterpart as a leader of the Alexandrian non-Jews, since he was a member of the three-man delegation sent by the Alexandrians to the emperor Gaius Caligula (Josephus 18.257). See also Feldman, "Pro-Jewish," pp. 238–239.

that a tradition had developed, apparently in Alexandria, protecting the reputation of Moses, while actually imputing the alleged Jewish misanthropy to his successors.

Apparently Moses was so well known that pseudo-Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.9), in the first half of the first century CE, refers to him as the lawgiver (θεσμοθέτης) of the Jews, no chance person (οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ)—a phrase used about him also in Strabo (16.2.36.761)—since he understood and gave expression to the power of the divinity as it deserved. Apparently “Longinus” felt that Moses was sufficiently well known so that he did not have to refer to him by name. At the end of the century, Josephus’ contemporary, Quintilian (3.7.21), like “Longinus,” did not deem it necessary to name him, but rather referred to him merely as “the founder of the Jewish superstition.” Likewise, the *Historia Augusta, Vita Claudii* 25.2.4–5, mentions Moses by name as having lived 125 years, without bothering to introduce him further to the reader, as if he was well known.

And yet, in his portrayal of Moses, Josephus was faced with a number of problems. On the one hand, the Bible itself (Deut 34:10) indicates that since his time there had not arisen a prophet equal to him; and indeed Maimonides, in his classic formulation of the thirteen principles of faith, includes this as one of those fundamentals. Nevertheless, the rabbis themselves debated whether the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the founders of the Jewish nation, may not have been greater in humility (*SifNum* 101, bHul 89a), the greatest of Moses’ qualities. Moreover, they found it possible to relate the entire story of the Exodus in the lengthy narrative compiled for the Passover seder while mentioning the name of Moses only once, and that only because his name was included in a biblical verse which they quoted.

Josephus, like the rabbis, was particularly concerned that the figure of Moses should not be aggrandized to the point of deification. He was, perhaps, especially careful to do so because the Samaritans, the bitter enemies of the Jews at this time, had built up the figure of Moses to the point where their religion was almost a Mosaism.⁵ Perhaps too, he was reacting against Philo’s near deification of Moses as a “man of God” and as the most perfect of

⁵ See John MacDonald, “The Samaritan Doctrine of Moses,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 3 (1960): 149–162.

men (*De vita Mosis* 1.1.1), as well as against the aggrandizement shown by the rabbinic tradition, which spoke of him (*SifNum* 101) as "very much above all the men that were upon the face of the earth."⁶

On the other hand, because Moses was so closely identified as the founder and lawgiver of the Jewish nation, Josephus felt it necessary to defend his character and achievements. And indeed there were a number of events in Moses' life, and aspects of his character that confronted any apologist (and Josephus is clearly an apologist in all his works, and there is ample evidence that in *Antiquities* he is writing primary for Gentiles):⁷ his murder of an Egyptian overseer, his marriage to a non-Jewish woman, Zipporah, his lowly occupation as a shepherd, his failure to circumcise his sons and God's subsequent attempt to kill him, his speech defect, his need to turn to his father-in-law Jethro for advice on how to govern his people, his anger in smashing the first set of tablets which he brought down from Mount Sinai, his abandonment of his wife Zipporah, his marriage to an Ethiopian woman, his inability to answer the complaint of the daughters of Zelophehad, and his disobedience to God in striking, rather than speaking to, the rock. Moreover, inasmuch as the career of Moses is so closely

⁶ Cf. *Midrash Tanna'im* 2:186, ed. David Hoffmann, on Deut 32:3: "Moses, than whom there has not been one greater in the world." See also the citations given by Ginzberg (*Legends*, 5:398, n. 47) who remarks that rabbinic tradition declared that the angels had conversed with God about the fate of Moses.

⁷ That Josephus' intended audience is primarily that of non-Jews is clear from the citation in the proem to his *Antiquities* (1.10) of the translation of the Torah into Greek for King Ptolemy Philadelphus, as a precedent for his work. Furthermore, the fact that he asks (1.9) whether any of the Greeks have been curious to learn "our" history and that he specifically declares (1.5) that his work was undertaken in the belief that the whole Greek world would find it worthy of attention indicates that he is directing the *Antiquities* to pagans. Another such indication is Josephus' statement (3.143) that after seven days the loaves in the Tabernacle were replaced by others "on the day which we call Sabbath, that being our name for the seventh day," an explanation Josephus would surely not have had to make to a Jewish audience. Finally, the fact that at the end of the work (20.262) he boasts that no one else would have been equal to the task of issuing so accurate a treatise for the Greeks (εις Ἑλληνας) indicates that he directed the work to the non-Jewish world, inasmuch as the term "Greeks" for Josephus is used in contrast to Jews. See Paul Krüger (*Philo und Josephus als Apologeten des Judentums* [Leipzig, 1906]), who argues that all of Josephus' works are clearly apologetic; and Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 470–471.

intertwined with the constitution which he gave to the Jewish nation, Josephus takes advantage of the opportunity to defend his people against the canards which had spread about their laws and customs.

Although the personality of Moses is clearly dominant in three books of *Antiquities* (2–4), no thorough and systematic attempt has been made to analyze Josephus' account.⁸ An attempt will be made here to examine Josephus' version systematically in order to see how he viewed the various claims that had been made for Moses—that he was a lawgiver, prophet, priest, king, and even God—to consider what factors governed Josephus' modifications of the biblical narrative, and to see whether all this is consistent with the other portraits of biblical characters in Josephus.

2. *Moses' Personal Qualities*

The fact that the Jews had been charged by so influential a rhetorician as Apion (*Ap* 2.135) with failing to produce any inventors in the arts or eminent sages led Josephus to stress that the Jews had, indeed, produced great men, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Saul, David, and Solomon.⁹ Josephus' contemporary Plutarch had attempted to differentiate between history and biography by stressing that the former describes in detail what its personages do, whereas the latter is more concerned with what sort of persons they are.¹⁰ This line of defense was in accordance with the Peripatetic tradition which shifted the interest from history to biography and which used biographical details as offensive and defensive weapons.¹¹ Indeed, Josephus

⁸ For a list of books and articles dealing with individual aspects of Josephus' portrait of Moses see the bibliography at the end of this article.

⁹ See Feldman, "Abraham," pp. 143–156; "Abraham the General in Josephus," in Frederick E. Greenspahn et al., eds., *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (Chico, CA, 1984), pp. 43–49; "Aqedah," pp. 212–252; "Jacob," pp. 101–151; "Josephus' Portrait of Joshua," *HTR* 82 (1989): 351–376; "Josephus' Version of Samson," *JSJ* 19 (1988): 171–214; "Saul," pp. 45–99; "David," pp. 129–174; "Solomon," pp. 69–98.

¹⁰ So E. T. McQueen, "Quintus Curtius Rufus," in Thomas A. Dorey, *Latin Biography* (New York, 1967), p. 18.

¹¹ See Feldman, "Saul," p. 47. As I noted there (p. 48), it is significant that Nicolaus of Damascus, a major source for a large part of Josephus' *Antiquities*, was a follower of the Aristotelian school who wrote a biography of Augustus.

himself (*Ap* 2.136), in obvious response to Apion, states that "our own famous men are deserving of winning no less praise than the Greek wise men and are familiar to readers of our *Antiquities*."¹²

Isocrates, in his *Evagoras* (71), one of the earliest of biographies, lists six items as crucial to happiness: a noble lineage beyond compare, unequalled physical and mental gifts, sovereignty gloriously achieved and coextensive with life, immortal fame, a life prolonged to old age but immune from the ills that afflict old age, and offspring both numerous and goodly. Xenophon, in his *Agesilaus* (10.4), likewise one of the earliest of biographies, calls his hero blessed because he had realized most completely of all men of his time his youthful passion for renown, because never throughout his reign was he balked in his high ambitions, and because, having attained the farthest limit of human life, he died without having offended either those whom he led or those against whom he made war. Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis historia* 7.43.139), in his encomium of Lucius Caecilius Metellus, reports that he achieved the ten greatest and most excellent things in the quest on which men of wisdom spend their lives: to be a champion warrior, the best orator, the bravest general, the commander in the greatest undertakings, the recipient of the highest official preferment, a leader in wisdom, the leading senator, the possessor of great wealth acquired by honest methods, a father of many children, and the most distinguished man of the state. All of these qualities, with the sole exception of great wealth¹³ and numerous and goodly offspring, are present in outstanding degree in Josephus' portrait of Moses.

¹² This same tendency to build up biblical heroes, Moses in particular, is seen in other Hellenistic Jewish writers, notably Aristeas, Artapanus, Ezekiel the tragedian, Philo the Elder, and Philo the philosopher.

¹³ The rabbinic tradition (see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 3:141) declares that a prophet must possess the qualities of wealth, strength, humility, and wisdom. Moses is said to have achieved wealth from the chips that fell from the precious stone that God pointed out to him and that he used in forming the second tables of the Law. The only allusion in Josephus to Moses' wealth is in Korah's statement (4.19) that he, Korah, was superior to Moses in wealth. We may assume that Josephus chose not to stress Moses' wealth because the philosopher-king in Plato's ideal state has no private wealth. Similarly, Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.27.152) remarks that in "solitary contrast to those who had hitherto held the same authority, [Moses] did not treasure up gold and silver, did not levy tributes, did not possess houses, or chattels, or livestock, or slaves, or revenues, or any other accompaniment of costly and opulent living, though he might have had all in abundance."

When we examine the key figures in Josephus' paraphrase of the biblical narrative, we see that in almost every case he places stress on their external qualities of good birth and handsome stature, and on the four cardinal virtues of character—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—and on the spiritual quality of piety,¹⁴ such as Xenophon described in his biography of Agesilaus.¹⁵ In general, the hero must be a Platonic-like philosopher-king, a high priest, a prophet, and a veritable Pericles as described by Thucydides.¹⁶ In the case of an outstanding hero such as Moses, his very birth must be accompanied by extraordinary signs. Moreover, since Josephus is addressing a predominantly non-Jewish audience,¹⁷ his hero must fulfill the qualifications ascribed by Tacitus to his revered father-in-law Agricola (Tacitus, *Agricola* 44–45): a life ended in its prime but rich in glory, attainment of the true blessings of virtue, consular and triumphal honors, wealth sufficient for his desires, death before that of his wife and his child, integrity of position and reputation, unsevered links of relationship and friendship, and immunity from the massacres that followed on his death.

Indeed, Josephus' treatment of Moses is a veritable *aretalogy*, such as would be appreciated especially by a Roman society which admired the portrait of the ideal Stoic sage. In fact, on no fewer than twenty-one occasions¹⁸ the word ἀρετή is used with reference to Moses. What is particularly effective is that at the very beginning of his long narrative of Moses, one of the Egyptian sacred scribes,¹⁹ a non-Jew who, as Josephus (2.205) remarks, possessed considerable skill in accurately predicting the future, foretells the birth of a

¹⁴ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 485–494.

¹⁵ Xenophon, *Agesilaus* 3–6.

¹⁶ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 485–494.

¹⁷ Ibid., especially pp. 470–471.

¹⁸ 2.205, 238, 243, 257, 262; 3.12, 65, 67, 69, 74, 97, 187, 188, 192, 317, 322; 4.196, 320, 321, 326, 331.

¹⁹ It is significant that Josephus here (2.205) refers to the Egyptian prophet as a "sacred scribe" (ἐπογραμματοῦς) rather than as a soothsayer (μάντις). Josephus, as I have noted elsewhere ("Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus," *JTS* 41 [1990]: 386–422), like the Septuagint, uses the word μάντις and its cognates when referring to heathen soothsayers. The μάντις, as Herbert J. Rose remarks ("Divination [Greek]" in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* [New York, 1914], 4:796), is not an inspired prophet but a craftsman (δημιουργός), coupled with physicians and carpenters in Homer (*Odyssey* 17.384). Thus Josephus uses the term μάντις with reference to Balaam (4.104 [bis], 112, 157) or to Egyptian seers in general (2.241; *Ap* 1.236, 256, 257, 258 [bis], 267, 306).

child who will surpass all men in virtue (ἀρετῇ) and will win everlasting renown. In fact, Josephus (3.187) declares that his subject, the history of the Jewish people, will afford him frequent and ample occasions to discourse upon the merits (ἀρετήν) of Moses the lawgiver. In an introductory editorial statement about his sojourn in Midian, Josephus (2.257) declares that here Moses was destined to play a part which exhibited his merits (ἀρετήν). In an extra-biblical addition (2.268) the voice from the burning bush predicts the glory (δόξαν) and honor (τιμήν) which Moses will win from men under God's auspices.

It is particularly effective that when the Israelites arrive at Mount Sinai, Raguel (Jethro), Moses' father-in-law, another non-Jew, praises Moses (3.65), since he (Raguel) knew that the salvation of the Israelites had been due to the ἀρετή of Moses. So outstanding was Moses in his virtue, we are told (3.96–97), that when he did not return from his ascent of Mount Sinai, even the sober-minded of the Israelites considered the possibility that he had returned to God because of his inherent virtue. It was through the agency of Moses and of his merits (ἀρετῆς) that the constitution of the Israelites was established by God (3.322). Finally, when Josephus describes the impact of Moses' death (4.331), he presents the extra-biblical comment that his passing was lamented not only by those who had known him directly, but also by the very readers of his laws who deduced from them the superlative quality of his virtue (ἀρετή).

a. *Genealogy*

The first of the thirty-six stages in praising a person was, according to the Greek rhetorician Theon,²⁰ to laud his ancestry. Indeed, the *Hippias Maior* (285D), ascribed to Plato, notes, as one of the particular concerns of an "archaeology" (the very title of Josephus' *magnum opus*), the genealogies of heroes and of men. Josephus' Greek readers would have thought of the importance attached to genealogy in Homer, as, for example, in the scene where Glaucus meets Diomedes (*Iliad* 6.123–231) and where they first exchange genealogies when they are at the point of engaging in battle.²¹

²⁰ See Leonardus Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci* (Leipzig, 1854), 2:60–130.

²¹ Likewise, readers might have thought of the importance attached to genealogies in Herodotus (7.204), who makes a special point of tracing the family tree of King Leonidas of Sparta twenty generations back to Heracles.

Moreover, the Egyptians, if we may judge from Plato (*Timaeus* 22B), had sneered at the genealogies of the Greeks as being little better than nursery tales.²²

Similarly, Josephus adds to the biblical narrative in reporting that Abraham was the tenth generation after Noah (1.148).²³ Josephus himself likewise characteristically begins his autobiography (*Life* 1–6) with a detailed account of his pedigree, tracing back both his priestly and his royal ancestry. He also stresses (*Ap* 1.31–32) that before marrying a woman, a priest must investigate her pedigree, “obtaining the genealogy from the archives and producing a number of witnesses.” This emphasis on genealogy, he adds, is true not merely in Judaea but also wherever Jews are settled.

When Josephus first introduces us to Moses’ father, Amram, his initial remark (2.210) is that he was a Hebrew “of noble birth” (εὖ γεγονότων).²⁴ Like Demetrius (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.29.2), Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.2.7), and the rabbis (*GenR* 19.7, *SongR* 5.1, *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2.343–344), Josephus presents the extra-biblical addition (2.229)²⁵ that Moses was the seventh generation after Abraham,²⁶ and, like the rabbis, he actually mentions Moses’ ancestors by name.

²² We may also note that when Cornelius Nepos (*Epaminondas* 1) begins his *Life of Epaminondas*, he speaks of his family and then goes on to discuss his education and his personal qualities. Similarly, note the genealogies of famous heroes in the following: Plutarch, *Theseus* 3; *Fabius Maximus* 1; *Brutus* 1–2; *Pyrrhus* 1; *Lycurgus* 1; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.4; *Historia Augusta*, *Hadrian* 1.1–2; *Antoninus Pius* 1.1–7, cited by Talbert, “Prophecies of Future Greatness: The Contribution of Greco-Roman Biographies to an understanding of Luke 1:5–4:15” in James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel, eds., *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God’s Control of Human Events Presented to Lou H. Silberman* (New York, 1980), p. 135.

²³ Likewise, when Jacob first meets Rachel, he gives his genealogy at some length (1.288–290). Furthermore, in extrabiblical additions, Josephus cites the good birth of Rebekah (1.247), Aaron (4.26), Gideon (5.213), Jephthah (5.257), Samson (5.276), Saul (6.45), Shallum (10.59), Gedaliah (10.155), and Mordecai (11.185). Also note the importance given to genealogies of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew (1:2–16) and Luke (3:23–28).

²⁴ So also in rabbinic tradition (*SifNum* 67, *ExodR* 1.8).

²⁵ On this passage, Thackeray (Loeb, p. 264, n. a) remarks that the sentence stating that Moses was the seventh generation after Abraham and enumerating these seven generations has been condemned by some editors as an interruption of the narrative, and that it may be a postscript of the author; but in view of Josephus’ emphasis elsewhere on genealogy, as we have noted, the greater likelihood is that it is authentic.

²⁶ Gaster (*Moses*, p. 74) notes that the fact that Moses is the seventh generation from Abraham is a distinct feature of Samaritan chronology.

In another addition to the Bible (2.267), we are told that the fire at the burning bush admonished Moses to withdraw from the flame as far as possible and to be content with what he, as a man of virtue, sprung from illustrious ancestors, had seen, and pry no further. And when Josephus (*Ap* 1.316) attacks Lysimachus' account of the Exodus, he makes a point of stressing that Lysimachus should not have been content with mentioning Moses by name, but should have indicated his descent and his parentage. Indeed, when Korah protests against the authority of Moses, his rebellion assumes greater seriousness when Josephus at three points (4.14, 19, 26) adds to the biblical narrative a reference to the lofty genealogy of Korah.

b. *The Birth of the Hero*

There are many parallels to the predictions and wondrous events attending the birth of both the mythological and the historical hero,²⁷ including the motifs of the prediction of his greatness, of his abandonment by his mother, and of his overcoming the ruler of the land. Josephus' additions may best be appreciated when his account is compared with parallels in classical literature,²⁸ both mythological and historical, which were undoubtedly well known to many of Josephus' literate readers, as well as with rabbinic midrashim²⁹ and Samaritan tradition.

²⁷ For numerous references in various mythologies, see Otto Rank, *Der Mythos von der Geburt des Helden: Versuch einer psychologischen Mythendeutung* (Wien, 1909), in English translation by F. Robbins and Smith E. Jelliffe, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Interpretation of Mythology* (New York, 1914); Eduard Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes: Geschichte einer religiösen Idee* (Leipzig, 1924); and Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington, 1957), 5:50, M 311, s.v. "Prophecy, future greatness of unborn child."

²⁸ On Josephus' knowledge of Greek literature, see my *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (Berlin, 1984), pp. 392–419, 819–822, and 935–937. On his knowledge of Latin literature, see Thackeray, *Josephus*, pp. 119–120; Benjamin Nadel, "Josephus Flavius and the Terminology of Roman Political Invective" [Polish], *Eos* 56 (1966): 256–272; and David Daube, "Three Legal Notes on Josephus after His Surrender," *Law Quarterly Review* 93 (London, 1977): 191–194.

²⁹ As to whether Josephus might have been acquainted with traditions which are found in later rabbinic literature, we may note that Josephus himself remarks on his excellent education (*Life*, 8–9), presumably in the legal and aggadic traditions of Judaism, which he received in his native city of Jerusalem, which was then the center of Jewish learning; on the reputation which he achieved for his excellent memory and understanding (μνήμη τε καὶ σύνεσις); and on the fact that while he was only fourteen years of age he had already won universal applause for his love of learning (φιλογράμματον). While it is probably true that Josephus was not averse

As to mythological parallels, one is reminded of the story, so central in Aeschylus' *Prometheus* trilogy, of the threatened overthrow of Zeus, since Thetis, whom he is courting, is destined to have a son more powerful than the father. Again, one thinks of the oracle that had declared that Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, the king of Argos, would give birth to a son who would kill his grandfather, and of the vain attempt of Acrisius to keep his daughter shut up in a subterranean chamber (or tower).³⁰ One thinks furthermore of Oedipus, whose father Laius had been warned by an oracle that if he begat a son he would be slain by him. Here, too, the infant was exposed but was saved and eventually did slay his father. Other such parallels in Greek mythology may be cited: Achilles, Paris, Telephus, and Heracles.

to boasting, he had so many enemies that it seems unlikely that he would have made such broad claims unless there were some substance to them. See, moreover, Bernard J. Bamberger ("The Dating of Aggadic Materials," *JBL* 68 [1949]: 115–123) who has argued convincingly that the Talmud and midrashim are compilations of traditional material which had existed orally for a considerable time before they were written down. He notes that extra-rabbinic sources, notably the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic Jewish writings, and the New Testament—all apparently older than rabbinic works in the present form—contain innumerable parallels to the rabbinic aggadah. For example, inasmuch as the second-century Rabbi Meir states (bMeg 13a), as does the Septuagint (Esth 2:7), that Mordecai had married Esther, it is more likely that the translators of the Septuagint were acquainted with this ancient tradition than that Rabbi Meir consulted the Septuagint (if he consulted a Greek translation, it would surely have been Aquila's, which does not have this tradition). Similarly, the plague of *ʿarob* is understood by the second-century Rabbi Nehemiah to consist of stinging insects (*ExodR* 11.3), whereas the Hebrew is generally understood to refer to varied wild beasts; again, this is the explanation of the Septuagint (*Exod* 8:17). Moreover, one of the paintings of the third-century CE Dura Europos synagogue depicts Hiel (1 Kgs 16:34), a confederate of the priests of Baal, crouching beneath the altar while a snake approaches to bite him; but such a story is not mentioned in a Hebrew source until much later (*ExodR* 15.15; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 4:13a), and not fully until the thirteenth-century *Yalquṭ* (on 1 Kings 18:26). Hence that tradition must have been more ancient. For further examples, see Rappaport, *Agada*.

³⁰ Nevertheless, Danae became the mother of the hero Perseus through her uncle or through Zeus, who visited her in the form of a shower of gold. Acrisius ordered the mother and her son to be exposed at sea in a chest (so reminiscent of the one in which Moses was exposed), but they were rescued. Eventually the prophecy was fulfilled when during funeral games for Polydectes (the king of Seriphos, where the chest landed), the disc thrown by Perseus was carried by the wind against the head of Acrisius and killed him.

From Roman mythology or history the births of Romulus and Remus may be cited;³¹ in their case King Amulius of Alba Longa not only forcibly deprived his older brother Numitor of the throne that was rightfully his, but also plotted to prevent Numitor's descendants from seeking revenge by making Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, a Vestal virgin, thus precluding her from marrying; but this plot was foiled when she became the mother, by the war god Mars, of twins, who, though thrown into the Tiber River (thus paralleling Pharaoh's orders that male children be drowned), were washed ashore, were suckled by a she-wolf, were then brought up by the royal herdsman Faustulus, and eventually overthrew Amulius and restored Numitor to the throne.

As to parallels in classical literature, we find a similar annunciation from the Pythian priestess at Delphi to the father of Pythagoras that there would be born to him a son of extraordinary beauty and wisdom (Iamblichus 5.7). Again, there is a legend in connection with Plato (Diogenes Laertius 3.2) of the child who would overcome a ruler. Likewise, as Hadas³² has pointed out, the apocalyptic technique is seen in Dido's prediction (Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.625) of the birth of one who would avenge her being jilted, namely Hannibal.

There are similar historical parallels that were conceivably well known to Josephus and his readers. Thus Herodotus (1.107), one of Josephus' favorite authors,³³ tells of the dream of Astyages, king of the Medes, that his daughter Mandane would have a son who would conquer Asia. When the son, Cyrus, was born, Astyages, like Pharaoh, ordered that he be killed; but a herdsman saved him and reared him. The son ultimately became king of Persia and defeated Astyages in battle. Moses would thus be equated with Cyrus, the great national hero of the Persians.³⁴

³¹ See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 1.76.1). On Josephus' knowledge of Dionysius, see Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, pp. 407–408, 935–936.

³² Moses Hadas, "Aeneas and the Tradition of the National Hero," *American Journal of Philology* 69 (1948): 413.

³³ See Feldman, "Aqedah," p. 224, n. 38.

³⁴ Similarly, prior to the birth of Alexander the Great, his father Philip (Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.5) dreamed that he was putting a seal in the figure of a lion in his wife's womb; and the seer Aristander of Telmessus interpreted this to mean that Philip's wife Olympias was pregnant with a son who would some day prove as stout and courageous as a lion. Cf. Quintus Curtius (*History of Alexander* 1), who notes a

In order to heighten expectations for Moses, whereas the Bible (Exod 1:22) merely notes Pharaoh's decree ordering that every newborn Israelite son be cast into the Nile, Josephus (2.210–216) adds that Amram was afraid that the whole Israelite race would be extinguished through lack of a succeeding generation, and was in grievous perplexity because his wife was pregnant. Josephus then recounts Amram's prayer to God beseeching him to grant deliver-

portent plus an interpretive prophecy; Vernon K. Robbins ("Laudation Stories in the Gospel of Luke and Plutarch's *Alexander*," in Kent H. Richards, ed., *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1981 [Chico, CA, 1981], pp. 295–296) compares this passage to Luke 1:31–33, where the angel Gabriel predicts to Mary the forthcoming birth of a child who will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Konradin Ferrari d'Occhieppo (*Der Stern der Weisen: Geschichte oder Legende?* 2d ed. [Wien, 1977], p. 13) comments on the affinity between Josephus' version of the birth of Moses (2.205–209) after an Egyptian sacred scribe has predicted the birth of an Israelite child who will abase Egyptian sovereignty, and the orders given by the Egyptian Pharaoh to destroy all male children born to the Israelites, on the one hand, and the story of the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the innocents, on the other hand. Likewise, in his *Life of Augustus* 94, Suetonius gives an account of the omens which occurred before Augustus was born, as well as those that appeared on the day of his birth and afterwards, from which, he concludes, it was possible to anticipate his future greatness and uninterrupted good fortune. In particular he relates (94.4) that Augustus' mother fell asleep in the temple of Apollo, and that the birth of Augustus nine months later suggested a divine paternity. Similarly, Dio Cassius (45.1) reports the belief that Apollo engendered Augustus. He includes three dreams among fourteen such items; for example, a man dreamed of the savior of the Roman people, and then on meeting Augustus for the first time declared that he was the boy about whom he had dreamed. Similarly, Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 1.5) tells of a portent at the birth of the philosopher Apollonius; "no doubt," he remarks, "the gods were giving a revelation—an omen of his brilliance, his exaltation above earthly things, his closeness to heaven." See Charles H. Talbert, "Prophecies of Future Greatness" (above, n. 22), pp. 129–141. Talbert cites similar examples from Suetonius' lives of the emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Titus, as well as from Plutarch's lives of Pericles (6.2–3), Marius (3.3–4.1), and Lycurgus (5), and from the lives of the emperors Hadrian (2.4, 8.9), Severus (1.7–8), and Antoninus Pius (3.1–5) in the *Historia Augusta*. The convention, as Talbert remarks, being subject to perversion, could be ridiculed in satire, as in Lucian's *Alexander the False Prophet*. Such analogies might support the arguments of Hugo Gressmann (*Mose und seine Zeit: Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen* [Göttingen, 1913]) and of Sigmund Freud (*Moses and Monotheism* [London, 1939]) that Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and that the real intention of Pharaoh's command was not to drown the Hebrew children, but rather to secure the death of his daughter's child. But neither Josephus nor any of the Jew-baiters whom he cites in *Against Apion* make such a statement, and it is hazardous to conjecture. Another analogy would be with Oedipus.

ance to the Israelites from their tribulations, and God's response to him in a dream that he should not despair and that just as God had aided his forefathers Abraham and Jacob, so would he enable this child to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. He predicts (2.216) that this child would "be remembered so long as the universe shall endure" (τὰ σύμπαντα τεύξεται),³⁵ and then in an obvious attempt to impress his non-Jewish audience, Josephus adds the divine prediction that this child would be remembered not only by Hebrews but also by alien nations.

It is significant that though Josephus closely parallels the rabbinic tradition with regard to the predictions of Moses' birth,³⁶ as in so many other respects,³⁷ he does not do so with regard to the prediction (*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 26, *Sefer ha-Yashar*, *Seder Eliyahu Zuṭa* 25) by King Nimrod by observing the stars that the coming child, Abraham, would overthrow the thrones of powerful princes and take possession of their lands. Nor does he parallel the story that Abraham's father Terah hid him until the third or the tenth year of his life when Nimrod sought to kill him. Apparently Josephus sought to aggrandize the character of Moses to a greater degree than that of Abraham because in the eyes of the Gentiles it was Moses who was most closely identified with the Jewish people. Hence in Josephus (2.205) it is an Egyptian sacred scribe, surely a more impressive figure to his audience than King Nimrod, who makes the prediction of Moses' future greatness; and it is to Amram (2.212–216) in a dream—an element unique in Josephus—that God appears with the promise that the child to be born will deliver the Hebrews from bondage. On the other hand, in rabbinic tradition³⁸ it is Moses' sister Miriam who has the prophetic dream predicting that Moses will be cast into the waters, and that through

³⁵ Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.607–609, where Aeneas expresses his gratitude to Queen Dido of Carthage for her hospitality: "So long as rivers will run into seas, so long as shadows will traverse the slopes on mountains, so long as the sky will feed the stars, always will your honor and name and praises remain."

³⁶ See Hendrik W. Obbink, "On the Legends of Moses in the Haggadah," in Willem C. van Unnik and Adam S. van der Woude, eds., *Studia Biblica et Semitica: Theodoro Christiano Vriezen . . . dedicata* (Wageningen, 1966), pp. 252–253; Charles Perrot, "Les Recits d'enfance dans la Haggada antérieure au II^e siècle de notre ère," *Recherches de science religieuse* 55 (1967): 497–504.

³⁷ See Rappaport, *Agada*.

³⁸ *ExodR* 1.22; cf. bMeg 14a, bSoṭ 12b, *Mekhilta*, Be-shallah 10.

him the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea, as well as other miracles, will be accomplished.³⁹

Apparently Josephus, for misogynistic reasons,⁴⁰ preferred to build up the character of Moses' father rather than Moses' sister. Similarly, we may note that it is Amram, rather than his wife Jochebed (Exod 2:2), who, according to Josephus (2.219), hides the infant Moses, thus taking upon himself the tremendous risk of incurring the wrath of Pharaoh, and thus also winning for himself the reputation for courage which in the Bible is attributed to Jochebed. Moreover, in an extrabiblical detail which has no rabbinic parallel, Josephus explains why Amram (again, rather than Jochebed) chose to put the baby in a basket upon the river, thus committing the salvation of the child to God and thus not bringing to nought the promise which God had given him in a dream. This is particularly effective inasmuch as generally, as we have noted,⁴¹ Josephus de-emphasizes the role of God, presumably in order to win the favor of his rationalist readers.⁴²

The Samaritan tradition,⁴³ which often parallels that of Josephus and of the rabbis in midrashic details, has a passage in the *Book of Asatir* in almost the very words of Josephus (2.207) in which an Egyptian scribe foretells that from the loins of Levi "will come one who will be mighty in faith and in knowledge, that the heaven and the earth will hearken to his word, and that by his hands will come the destruction of Egypt." The Samaritans also have a tradition which, though it is found in a fourteenth-century poem, is most likely based on a much earlier tradition, according to Gaster and

³⁹ Similarly, in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (9.10), which so often parallels Josephus, the birth of Moses is predicted in Miriam's dream. See Louis H. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," in reprint of M. R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (New York, 1971), pp. lviii-lxvi.

⁴⁰ See Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Deborah," in André Caquot et al., *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky* (Leuven-Paris, 1986), pp. 115-120. *pace* Rajak (*Josephus*, p. 267) who says that Josephus would probably have had nothing to gain by altering the story.

⁴¹ Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 503-507.

⁴² Although, as we have noted, he often closely parallels the rabbinic midrashic tradition, Josephus significantly does not have the tradition (bSot 12a-b; *Tanḥuma*, ed. Buber, 2:122; *Tanḥuma*, Wa-yaqhel 4; *ExodR* 1.18) that the astrologers told Pharaoh the exact day when the redeemer of Israel would be born, though they could not tell whether he would be an Egyptian or a Hebrew.

⁴³ See MacDonald, *Theology*, p. 151.

MacDonald,⁴⁴ that when God had decided that Moses was to be born he sent an angel to Amram, and that during Amram's intercourse with his wife the Lord (that is, the angel) was with him. As a result of the divine will, Amram's wife gave birth to a son named "the Man" (i.e., "Son of Man"). When he was born, men joyfully gathered together proclaiming that the "Lord of the world," "the faithful one of the Godhead," "the man of God" had come, about whom God says "This is the one whom I have chosen." Josephus, on theological grounds, clearly could not accept such a view of Moses, which is almost christological in its language. Moreover, Josephus, as always, has apologetic intentions, and the key phrase in his prediction about Moses, which is conspicuously absent from the much embellished Samaritan account, is that Moses would be remembered even by foreign peoples; and indeed in his essay, *Against Apion*, Moses is the great example of the cultured Jew who had profound influence upon the statesmen and philosophers of other nations.

Among the wondrous circumstances accompanying the birth of the great hero is that the pregnancy that preceded it was painless. Indeed the talmudic tradition (bSoṭ 12a, *Exod R* 1.20) goes so far as to say that Jochebed, Moses' mother, gave birth without any pain—proof, according to the second-century Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, that righteous women are not included in the decree which penalized Eve. Josephus, however, obviously aware that his readers would be skeptical of such a statement, is much more restrained in declaring that Jochebed gave birth "with gentleness" (ἐπιείκειαν) and without any violent throes (2.218).⁴⁵ Moreover, again because he sought to minimize miraculous details, he does not mention the rabbinic tradition (bBB 120a, *ExodR* 1.19) that Jochebed was 130 years old when she gave birth to Moses, "that the marks of youth came back to her, her flesh was again smooth, the wrinkles were straightened out, and her beauty returned."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Gaster, *Asatir*, p. 73; MacDonald, *Theology*, p. 160.

⁴⁵ von Ranke (*Weltgeschichte*, 3:2, 25, 30ff.) theorizes that it was from Josephus that the rabbis derived their tradition that Jochebed gave birth without labor pains; but aside from the fact, noted above, that Josephus avoids exaggeration and rationalizes for his non-Jewish audience, the rabbis never mention Josephus, and there is no indication that they knew his works.

⁴⁶ Josephus likewise does not have the traditions (*ExodR* 11.20, *DeutR* 11.10) that when Moses came out of his mother's womb he was already circumcised, that when he was only three days old he not only walked but even talked with his

Josephus likewise lacks the rabbinic tradition (bSot 12b, *ExodR* 1.24) that when Moses was exposed in the basket on the river, the angels appeared before God and asked how he could allow Moses to die in the sea when Moses was destined to sing a song of praise to God because of the miracle of crossing the Red Sea. Josephus (2.220), seeking to diminish the miraculous, finds it much more credible to have Amram express confidence that God would provide complete security and that nothing should be falsified of that which he was promised in his dream. Josephus, realizing that his readers would be aware of the many cases in mythology and history where the fates could not be thwarted, could editorialize (2.222): "Then once again [presumably in addition to the cases of Perseus, Oedipus, Romulus, Cyrus, and all the other instances cited above] did God plainly show that human intelligence is worth nothing, but that all that he wills to accomplish reaches its perfect end, and that they who, to save themselves, condemn others to destruction utterly fail, whatever diligence they may employ, while those are saved by a miracle and attain success almost from the very jaws of disaster who hazard all by divine decree." Normally Josephus has high regard for intelligence (σύνεσις, "understanding"), as we can see, for example, in his eulogy of Moses (4.328) as one who surpassed in understanding (σύνεσις) all men who have ever lived; but that not even such understanding can stand in the way of fate seems to be Josephus' message.

Likewise, the rabbinic tradition seemed much too exaggerated for credibility when it declared (bSot 12b, *ExodR* 1.25) that Pharaoh's daughter, Thermuthis, handed the infant Moses to all the Egyptian women but that he would not take their breasts. *Exod* 2:7 declares that Pharaoh's daughter immediately recognized that the baby was a Hebrew and took pity on him, and says nothing of any attempt to get him to nurse from an Egyptian woman. The text then declares that Miriam asked her whether she might summon one of the Hebrew women to nurse him. Josephus

parents, and that he actually refused to drink milk from his mother's breasts until she had received her payment from Pharaoh's daughter. Likewise, presumably because his readers would find such a miracle hard to believe, he lacks the tradition (*ExodR* 1.20) that at the moment of the child's appearance the whole house was flooded with light, and that this was the light which God had created at the beginning of creation but which he had hidden, anticipating the wickedness of the generation of the deluge and of the Tower of Babel, who were unworthy of enjoying it.

(2.225–226), while building on the same extrabiblical tradition as the rabbis,⁴⁷ avoids the rabbinic exaggeration and states that Thermuthis ordered a woman to be brought to suckle the infant, and that when it again spurned the woman's breast, she repeated this action with many other women, whereupon Miriam offered to summon one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child. Again, the rabbinic tradition has the infant Moses⁴⁸ exclaim "Shall a mouth which will speak with the Shekhinah suck what is unclean?" A similar remarkable utterance is found in the Samaritan *Book of Asatir* (9.13), which declares that Moses would drink only of undefiled milk, the implication being that he had refused the milk of Egyptian nurses. That a newly born infant would have been able to speak thus would have been too much for Josephus' readers to believe; and so in Josephus (2.226) it is Miriam who tells Thermuthis that "it is lost labor to summon these women to feed the child who have no ties of kinship with it."

c. *The Upbringing of the Hero*

One of the common typical motifs of the Hellenistic, Roman, Christian, and rabbinic⁴⁹ biography of a hero was his exceptional physical development, beauty, self-control, and precocious intellectual development as a child.⁵⁰ Indeed in the case of a hero such

⁴⁷ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.15–16) adds only that Pharaoh's daughter, after opening the basket, realized that it would not be safe to take the infant to the palace and debated what to do, whereupon Miriam guessed her difficulty and offered to find a Hebrew nurse.

⁴⁸ The text reads "He said," and some commentators identify the speaker as God; but the nearest noun in the previous sentence is Moses; and indeed God is not mentioned at all.

⁴⁹ See Charles Perrot (above, n. 36, pp. 481–518), who has collected the haggadic materials relating to the childhood of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Samson, Samuel, and Elijah. Thus we hear, for example, that Abraham, in his third year (*GenR* 38, Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen 11:28), recognized that all the idols of his father were naught and destroyed them.

⁵⁰ One may note the examples cited by Charles H. Talbert ("Prophecies of Future Greatness," p. 135) of Plutarch's *Theseus* (6.4), *Solon* (2), *Themistocles* (2.1), *Dion* (4.2), *Alexander* (5.1), *Romulus* (8), and *Cicero* (2.2); Quintus Curtius' *History of Alexander* (1); Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (1.7.11); Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*; 1 Enoch 106.11 (where Noah blesses God while still in the hands of a midwife); Philo's *De vita Mosis* (1.5.20–24, 1.6.25–29); and Jubilees 11–12 (Abraham as a child prodigy). See Ludwig Bieler,

as Romulus it is his superiority of stature and strength of body which impress his grandfather Numitor when his identity is not yet known (Plutarch, *Romulus* 7.3–4). Again, it is while still a boy that Alexander (Plutarch, *Alexander* 4.8) shows remarkable self-restraint when it comes to pleasures of the body, and keeps his spirit serious and lofty in advance of his years, despite his tendency to impetuosity and violence in other matters.

As for Moses, according to Josephus (2.230), it was already in his third year, presumably after he had completed the standard nursing period of two years,⁵¹ that God gave wondrous increase to his stature.⁵² Josephus (2.230) states that his growth in understanding far outran the measure of his years, and his more mature excellence was displayed even in his very games, “and his actions then gave promise of the greater deeds to be wrought by him on reaching manhood.”⁵³ The rabbis (bBekh 44a) have a similar tradi-

Θεῖος ἀνὴρ, das Bild des “göttlichen Menschen” in *Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Wien, 1935), 1:34–38; Hermann K. Usener, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig, 1912), 4:127–128. The latter cites the examples of Evangelos of Miletus (Conon, *Narrationes* 44), Amphoteos and Akarnan the son of Callirhoe (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.7.4). Cf., Luke 2:40, 52, where we are told that the child Jesus “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” See Hans Scherb, *Das Motif vom starken Knaben in den Märchen der Weltliteratur: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung und Entwicklung* (Stuttgart, 1930), cited by Isidore Lévy, *La Légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine* (Paris, 1927), p. 141, n. 4.

⁵¹ Cf. mNed 2.1 and bKet 60a.

⁵² Such a wondrous increase, far from making the whole story of Moses less credible, might well have been viewed by Josephus’ audience as a fulfillment of the advice given by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 3.14.7.1415a–b) that one should (presumably, up to a point) include the marvelous in one’s discourse, inasmuch as this will draw attention to one’s subject. On the other hand, the rabbinic tradition indulges in exaggeration that stretches the bounds of credibility; thus we are told (*Tanḥuma*, Exod 8.9) that since the biblical text (Exod 2:6) says not that the infant but that the lad was crying, the child, though an infant, had a lad’s voice. Furthermore, we read (*DeutR* 11.10) that when he was only three months old he prophesied and declared that he was destined to receive the law amid flames of fire. Again, we are informed (*Tanḥuma*, Wa-²era 171; cf. *Yalqut* 1:166) that when Moses was but five years old he appeared as though he were eleven years of age.

⁵³ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.5.18–24) discourses at even greater length than does Josephus on the physical and mental precociousness of the child Moses. Philo is more eager to present Moses as the prototype of the philosopher-king, and hence stresses that even as an infant he did not engage in fun, frolic, and sport but rather applied himself to learning and seeing what was sure to profit the soul.

tion of Moses' remarkable growth—indeed to a height of ten cubits, that is, fifteen feet. And the detail that the child showed his excellence in his games is paralleled by the anecdote of Cyrus, the king of Persia, who as a child played at being king, and ordered one of the village boys to be beaten because he had disobeyed his command (Herodotus 1.114).

Josephus (2.232–236) recounts the tale, which has its clear parallel in the rabbinic tradition,⁵⁴ of the infant Moses who is brought to Pharaoh and tramples upon Pharaoh's crown.⁵⁵ But the differences between the Josephan and rabbinic versions are instructive. In the midrash it is Moses who takes the crown from Pharaoh's head and places it upon his own as a clear prediction that he would some day displace Pharaoh. In Josephus, who was well aware that such an aggressive attitude would not find favor among his readers, it is Pharaoh's daughter who takes the initiative (2.232) of bringing the infant Moses to him because she is "mindful for the succession" and because, having no child of her own, she seeks to adopt Moses as heir apparent. Far from having Moses seize the crown and place it upon his own head, as in the rabbinic tradition, it is Pharaoh who takes the initiative of placing the crown upon Moses' head. It is only then that we have the parallel of Moses flinging the crown to the ground and trampling upon it. Likewise, Josephus does not have the scene (*Sefer ha-Yashar*, Exodus 131b–132b) that follows, wherein Moses is then put to the test to see whether he is truly going to seize the throne, by having a burning coal and an onyx stone placed before him to see which he will choose. Such an incident would have reinforced the view that the Jews are aggressive, since, according to the midrash, Moses actually stretched forth his little hand toward the onyx stone but was pushed by the angel Gabriel toward the live coal, whereupon he burnt his hand,

⁵⁴ *Tanḥuma* Exod 8, *ExodR* 1.26, *DeutR* 11.10, *Yashar* Exod 131b–132b.

⁵⁵ Flusser ("Palaea historica," pp. 48–79) notes a similar narrative in a Byzantine work dating from not before the ninth century (in Afanasiï Vassiliev, *Anecdota graeco-byzantina* [Moscow, 1893], pp. 227–228). There it is Moses who takes Pharaoh's crown (as in the rabbinic tradition) and tramples upon it. Thereupon one of the noblemen who advise Pharaoh suggests that gold and a burning torch (rather than an onyx stone and a burning coal, as in the rabbinic tradition) be placed before Moses, whereupon Moses chooses the torch and puts it into his mouth (and there is no mention of the role of the angel Gabriel in saving Moses, as in the rabbinic tradition).

lifted it to his mouth, burnt part of his lips and part of his tongue, and thus incurred the speech impediment mentioned in Exod 4:10.

If Josephus had reproduced the rabbinic tradition of having Moses seize Pharaoh's crown, the parallel (Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 6.269 and 27.228) with Zagreus—that is, Dionysus—who, soon after his birth, ascended the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked him by brandishing lightning in his little hand, might well have suggested itself to his pagan audience. Josephus may have been particularly sensitive to this charge of Jewish aggressiveness because the Jews had been twice expelled from Rome because of bold missionary tactics, first in 139 BCE (Valerius Maximus 1.3.3) and then in 19 CE (Dio Cassius 57.18.5a). Hence, even when Moses removes from his head the crown that Pharaoh had placed upon it, Josephus is careful to add that he does so out of childishness (νηπιότητα). And when the sacred scribe who had foretold that the child's birth would lead to the abasement of the Egyptian Empire rushed forward to kill Moses after he had trampled upon the crown, the king, we are informed (2.236), was induced by God to spare Moses, whose providence (πρόνοια)—a key Stoic term which would have been appreciated by his audience—watched over Moses' life.

The Bible is extraordinarily brief about Moses' education during his youth, content to state merely that "the child grew up" (Exod 2:10). Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.5.21), clearly concerned to portray the legislator of the Jewish people as a kind of philosopher-king in the Platonic tradition, declares that in order to educate him teachers, some unbidden, arrived from various countries and from the provinces of Egypt, while others were summoned from Greece with the promise of high reward. We are then told that in a short time Moses advanced beyond their capacity to teach him and that, in true Platonic fashion, he exemplified the principle of ἀνάμνησις, as described in Plato's *Meno*, inasmuch as "his seemed a case rather of recollection (ἀνάμνησιν) than of learning; and, indeed, he himself devised and propounded problems which [his teachers] could not easily solve." Philo then (*De vita Mosis* 1.5.23) proceeds to enumerate the subjects—arithmetic, geometry, and music, as well as hieroglyphics and religion (notably their regard for animals, to which they paid divine honors)—which the Egyptian teachers taught him, and informs the reader that the Greeks taught him the rest of the liberal arts, while others taught him Assyrian letters (presumably Aramaic) and the Chaldean science of astronomy.

Though Josephus mentions Philo (18.259–260) as “no novice in philosophy” and as the head of the Jewish delegation to the emperor Gaius Caligula, and though there is reason to think that he knew his works,⁵⁶ he is content with the briefest of comments (2.236) about Moses’ upbringing (he does not specify Moses’ education),⁵⁷ namely, that he was raised (ἐτρέφετο) “with the utmost care (ἐπιμελείας), the Hebrews resting their highest hopes upon him for their future, while the Egyptians viewed his upbringing with misgiving.” One might well assume that Josephus would have recorded with pride the liberal education which Moses received; but he may have found it embarrassing to state that Moses, who insisted on a monotheism with no representation of the divine, had been taught hieroglyphics and the details of the Egyptian worship of animals.⁵⁸

d. *Handsomeness*

In his constant emphasis upon the handsomeness of his heroes⁵⁹ Josephus was clearly appealing to his readers, who were aware of the importance of physical beauty, as we see, for example, in the scene (*Iliad* 22.370) where the Greeks run to gaze upon the stature and admirable form of Hector after he has been slain by Achilles. They would likewise have been reminded of Plato’s famous comment (*Republic* 7.535A 11–12) that in seeking out the guardians of the state, “we shall prefer the sturdiest, the bravest, and so far as possible the handsomest (εὐειδεστάτους) persons.” We may perceive the importance of beauty for Josephus and his audience in the remark that Og “had a stature and beauty such as few could boast,” which he adds (4.98) to the biblical account (Deut 3:11).

⁵⁶ See Feldman, “Use, Authority,” pp. 474–475.

⁵⁷ To be sure, Étienne Nodet (ed., *Flavius Josèphe: Les Antiquités juives* (Paris, 1990), 1:91, on *Ant* 2.230) reads παιδείας with some of the manuscripts in place of παιδίαῖς, the reading of one manuscript which has been adopted by all other editors, including Niese, Naber, and Thackeray. If so, the meaning would be that Moses showed his maturer excellence in his educational activities rather than in his childish games. But the sixth-century Latin version ascribed to Cassiodorus, reading *infantia*, clearly favors the other editors, as does the context, which speaks of Moses’ extraordinary precociousness in his early years.

⁵⁸ We may presume that this may have led Josephus to his silence about such Hellenistic Jewish historians as Artapanus (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.4), who proudly boasts of the fact that Moses invented hieroglyphic writing and taught religion to the Egyptians, assigning as gods cats, dogs, and ibises.

⁵⁹ See Feldman, “Use, Authority,” pp. 486–488.

In particular, we may note a recurring motif in biographies of famous men indicating their handsomeness from their earliest years. Thus, we are told (Apollonius-Iamblichus 10, p. 11, lines 6–7; cf. Apuleius, *Florida* 15) that the child Pythagoras attracted the attention of everyone because of his beauty. Moreover, in the very earliest of biographies, Isocrates (*Evagoras* 22–23) reports that Evagoras was endowed from his youth with beauty and bodily strength, and that these increased as he grew older. Similarly we read (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 1.79.10) that when the twins Romulus and Remus reached manhood they showed themselves both in dignity of aspect (μορφῆς) and elevation of mind “not like swineherds and neatherds, but such as we might expect those to be who are born of royal race and are looked to be the offspring of the gods.”

Just as he does in the case of a number of other biblical heroes,⁶⁰ Josephus emphasizes Moses' beauty. Indeed, almost at the very beginning of his portrait, Moses' beauty plays a key role. Thus, in the Bible (Exod 2:6) Pharaoh's daughter saves the baby in the floating ark because it is crying, but in Josephus (2.224) her motive is that she is enchanted by his size (μεγέθους) and beauty (κάλλους). Indeed, when she brings the child Moses to her father (2.232) with the intention of adopting him and of making him heir to the kingdom, she describes him as being of divine beauty (μορφῇ . . . θεῖον). This is all the more effective coming, as it does, from a non-Jew, inasmuch as in the Bible (Exod 2:2) it is Moses' mother Jochebed who is said to have seen that her child was goodly (τον)—a word which the Septuagint renders as ἀστεῖον (“townbred, polite, good, pretty, graceful, charming”). Apparently this tradition of Moses' beauty had even reached the non-Jewish world, inasmuch as we find in Pompeius Trogus (Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36; *Epitome* 2.11), who lived at the end of the first century BCE and at the beginning of the first century CE, the statement that Moses' beauty of appearance (*formae pulchritudo*) recommended him.

Moreover, we are told (2.231) that none was so indifferent to beauty (κάλλος) as not to be amazed at seeing Moses' comeliness (εὐμορφίας). Josephus adds that “it often happened that persons meeting him as he was borne along the highway. . . neglected their

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 486–488.

serious affairs to gaze at leisure upon him; indeed, childish charm so perfect and pure as his held the beholders spellbound.”⁶¹ Josephus uses the same nouns (μορφή and φρόνημα) in the description by Pharaoh's daughter (2.232) of the infant Moses that are used by Dionysius (*Antiquitates Romanae* 1.79.10) in describing Romulus and Remus. Finally, Moses' stature and beauty are all the greater because, as mentioned above, Josephus exaggerates the stature and beauty of his great opponent Og (4.98).

A leader, to be effective, must also impress his people by his appearance. This is illustrated in Josephus (3.82–83) by the fact that when Moses descended from Mount Sinai, his radiant (γαῦρος, “exulting, splendid”) and high-hearted appearance served to dispel their dismayed and dispirited mood. Whereas Exod 19:25 simply states that Moses went down to the people and spoke to them, Josephus (3.83) adds that the mere sight of Moses rid them of their terrors and instilled in them brighter hopes for the future. Indeed, the very air, he says, became serene and purged of its recent disturbance once Moses arrived.

Josephus is particularly eager to answer the canard circulated by Manetho (*Ap* 1.279) among others,⁶² that Moses' appearance was marred by leprosy and that he was in fact expelled from Egypt because of this. As Hata⁶³ has suggested, Josephus, in his elaboration, may have sought to counter Manetho's statement that Moses was a leper, as well as the statement of Lysimachus (*Ap* 1.305–311)

⁶¹ Similarly, the Midrash (*ExodR* 1.26 on 2:10, *Tanhuma* Exod 8.9; cf. Ecclesiasticus 44:22–45:1) states that because Moses was so beautiful everyone wished to look upon him, and whoever saw him could not turn away from him. Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.2.9, 1.4.15, 1.4.18) stresses his beauty in a number of places. Rabbinic tradition (*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 38) has a similar remark in connection with Joseph, to the effect that when he traveled through Egypt as viceroy, maidens threw gifts at him to make him turn his eyes in their direction so as to give them an opportunity to gaze upon his beauty. Josephus, however, in his appeal to his rationalistic readers, avoids the exaggeration of the rabbis (*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* 48.21), who compare his beauty to that of an angel.

⁶² This canard is repeated by Nicarchus (Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. ἄλφα) in the first century CE, by Ptolemy Chennos (Photius, *Lexicon*, 190) in the early second century CE, and by Helladius (Photius, *Lexicon* 190) in the early fourth century. Here we learn that Moses the legislator was called ἄλφα by the Jews because he had much dull-white leprosy (ἀλφούς) on his body. Inasmuch as Moses is nowhere else called ἄλφα in the extant literature, Heinemann (“Moses,” p. 361) has suggested that its source is the Alexandrian anti-Jewish account of the Exodus.

⁶³ Hata, “Moses,” p. 183.

that the ancestors of the Jews were lepers and diseased people who had been banished from Egypt for that reason. That Josephus was sensitive to this charge is clear from his treatment of Exod 4:6 in which God tells Moses, as a sign to help convince the Israelites that he had indeed appeared to him, to put his hand into his bosom. Thereupon his hand became leprous; but when he put it back into his bosom and took it out again it was restored. In Josephus' version (2.273) there is no mention of leprosy; instead we are told that when Moses drew forth his hand it was "white, of a color resembling chalk."⁶⁴ Moreover, Josephus (*Ap* 1.279) points out the inherent contradiction on the part of the anti-Jewish Egyptian writers in claiming Moses, on the one hand, as an Egyptian priest and asserting that he was remarkable (θαυμαστόν) and even divine (θεῖον), and on the other hand, claiming that he was expelled because of leprosy. Josephus, recalling this charge of leprosy, refutes it (3.265–268) by remarking that if this were true Moses would not have humiliated himself by issuing statutes banishing lepers, especially since there were nations that actually honor lepers. In fact—in a significant change, as noted by Hata⁶⁵—according to Josephus (3.261, *Ap* 1.281), Moses banished lepers not merely from the camp, as is stated in Lev 13:46 and 14:3, but also from the city, the implication being that there were no lepers in Jerusalem in Josephus' own day. Furthermore, Josephus deliberately omits the lengthy discussion of the symptoms of leprosy found in the Bible, inasmuch as this would presumably indicate to the reader that this malady was common among Jews. On these matters, Josephus graciously but confidently leaves the decision to the reader. However, just as Plato had declared that a philosopher-king should, if at all possible, be handsome, so Josephus (*Ap* 1.284–285) recalls Moses's ruling that even the slightest mutilation of the person was reason enough for disqualification for the priesthood, and that a priest who during the course of his service met with such an accident was deprived of his position. Josephus then asks whether it is likely that Moses would have enacted such a stringent law if he himself had been affected by such an affliction.

⁶⁴ Similarly the Septuagint avoids the mention of leprosy and declares that his hand became as snow. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.14.79) abstains from mentioning that Moses' hand became leprous, and instead asserts that the hand appeared to be whiter than snow.

⁶⁵ Hata, "Moses," p. 190.

e. *The Qualities of Leadership*

Josephus is at every point eager to underline Moses' importance as a leader, especially since he believed (3.23) that the race of mankind is by nature morose (δυσαρέστου, "discontent, grumbling, irritable") and censorious (φιλαίτιου, "fond of having reproaches at hand").⁶⁶ He stresses the importance of Moses' leadership by noting that the Israelites had endured hardships in Egypt for four hundred years, and that the contest was between the Egyptians, striving to kill off the Israelites with drudgery, and the Israelites, eager to show themselves superior to their tasks (2.204). The details which Josephus (2.203) adds to the biblical account (Exod 1:11) of the hard labor imposed by the Egyptians upon the Israelites serve to emphasize the crucial role played by Moses in leading his people out of slavery. In particular, whereas Exod 4:27 declares that God told Aaron to meet Moses on his way back from Midian to Egypt, and whereas Moses and Aaron then gathered together all of the elders of the children of Israel, Josephus, eager to emphasize Moses' importance, arranges to have him met by a delegation of the most distinguished Israelites (2.279).

In establishing the importance of Moses, Josephus downgrades the role of Aaron as Moses' spokesman. Thus, Exod 4:30 states that Aaron performed the miracles in the presence of the people in order to convince them, but according to Josephus (2.280) it is Moses who, after at first failing to convince the most distinguished Israelites by a mere description of the miracles, proceeds to perform them before their eyes. Likewise, when, at the beginning of his mission (2.281), Moses first consolidates his backing among his own people, Exod 5:1 states that he and Aaron then went to see

⁶⁶ Even Tacitus (*Histories* 5.3.1), despite his bitter attack upon the Jews, stresses more than any of his predecessors the role of Moses in inspiring the Israelites in the desert. He adds that Moses urged them to rely on themselves rather than on men and gods, perhaps an allusion to the biblical query (Exod 14:15) of God to Moses when the Israelites complained about being pursued by the Egyptian troops, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward." Again, in Tacitus (*Histories* 5.3.2), Moses is the leader who enables the Israelites to be free of their misery by finding water for them. Lord Fitz R. R. S. Raglan ("The Hero of Tradition," *Folklore* 45 [1934]: 212-231), in listing twenty-two characteristic features of the hero in folklore, notes that the Moses of the Bible has more of them (twenty-one) than any other hero. We may note that in Josephus these twenty-one points are emphasized even further.

Pharaoh; in Josephus' account Moses goes to Pharaoh alone after he is assured of the allegiance of the Israelites, of their agreement to follow his orders, and of their love of liberty. Again, it is Moses rather than Aaron (Exod 7:10) who performs miracles with his rod in the presence of Pharaoh (2.284, 287); and Moses' role is all the more impressive because, according to Josephus' addition, the king had ridiculed him. Again, whereas Exod 7:19 says that it was Aaron who with his staff produced the plague of blood, Josephus, though he generally avoids attributing miracles to God, says that the plague was produced at God's command and does not indicate who actually performed it (2.294). Likewise, in Exod 8:2, 13 it is Aaron who brought on the plagues of frogs and lice, whereas Josephus declares that it was God who produced them (2.296, 300). Exod 28:1 and Lev 8:1 seem to give no reason for the choice by God of Aaron to be high priest, but in Josephus (3.192) the selection, far from being arbitrary, is due not only to Aaron's virtues but also to the excellence (ἀρετήν) of Moses. Finally, when God instructs Moses (Num 17:3) to tell the Israelites to inscribe each man's name upon a rod and to write the name of Aaron upon the rod of Levi in order to determine whose rod shall sprout by divine will, Josephus (4.64), apparently realizing that this would give more prominence to Aaron than to Moses, who likewise came from the tribe of Levi, states that the word "Levite" was inscribed upon Aaron's staff.

The choice of Aaron to be high priest exposed Moses to the charge of nepotism, as we see in the implied objection of Korah (4.18–19). The Bible (Exod 28:1), as we have noted, gives no reason for God's choice of Aaron. Josephus (3.188–190), however, explains that God instructed Moses to confer the high priesthood upon Aaron based on his virtues.⁶⁷

Even when it comes to the food sent by God, Moses, according to Exod 16:15, tells the Israelites that this is the bread which God has sent them to eat, whereas Josephus (3.26), realizing that people

⁶⁷ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 2.28.142), like Josephus, stresses that Moses chose Aaron to be high priest on his merits rather than because he was his brother. He then adds (*De vita Mosis* 1.27.150), in order to emphasize that Moses was not guilty of nepotism, the fact that he did not advance his own sons to positions of power. It is interesting that Josephus does not make this point (2.277–278), perhaps because it would have been regarded as a criticism of the Roman emperor Vespasian for choosing Titus as his successor.

would be reluctant to eat a food which they had previously never seen, has Moses take the role of leader in tasting it.

A great leader must be a psychologist, and Moses, in Josephus' portrait, excels in this respect. Thus, while Num 21:24 states merely that the Israelites defeated the Amorites, Josephus' Moses (4.87) finds a good reason, besides the hostile attitude of the Amorites, for getting the Israelites to attack, namely, "to deliver [them] from that inactivity (*ἀπραξίας*) and consequent indigence (*ἀπορίας*) which had produced their previous mutiny and their present discontent."

Furthermore, an appreciation of Moses' importance to the Israelites as a leader may be seen in Josephus' remark (3.98), missing in the biblical account (Exod 32:1), that while Moses was absent for forty days on Mount Sinai, the people in their distress imagined that they were "bereft of a patron (*προστάτου*, 'one who stands out in front as a champion, leader, chief, ruler, guardian') and protector (*κηδεμόνος*, 'guardian'), the like of which they could never meet again."

Indeed, Josephus remarks (3.317–318) that admiration for Moses' marvelous power to inspire faith in his people was not confined to his lifetime but that even in Josephus' own day "there is not a Hebrew who does not, just as if he were still there and ready to punish him for any breach of discipline, obey the laws laid down by Moses, even though in violating them he could escape detection." He recalls that only recently, when certain non-Jews from Mesopotamia came to venerate the Temple in Jerusalem, they could not partake of the sacrifices that they had offered, because Moses had forbidden this to those who are not governed by the laws of the Torah.

In his encomium of Pericles, Thucydides (2.65.4) points out the truism that the way of the multitude is fickle, as seen by the fact that the Athenians, in their anger at the terrible losses suffered during the great plague, fined their leader Pericles, only to reverse themselves shortly thereafter and to choose him again as general. The ideal government, as Thucydides (2.65.9) stresses, is a government ruled by its foremost citizen rather than a true democracy, which surrenders to the majority's whim. Like Thucydides, Josephus as a low opinion of mankind (3.23). Even more than Pericles, however, Moses, during the sojourn in the desert, was under constant criticism and the threat of rebellion. Thus, after the

spies came back with their pessimistic report about the possibility of conquering Canaan, the people blame Moses and heap abuse on him and Aaron, pouring vituperations (βλασφημιῶν) upon them with the intent to stone them and to return to Egypt (3.307). The Bible, on the other hand, declares merely that all the congregation expressed the desire to stone them (Num 14:10). Despite this ugly mood, Moses and Aaron, we are told by Josephus (3.310), instead of panicking, showed their compassion for the people, their ability to analyze the cause of the people's depression, and their own true leadership by entreating God to rid the people of their ignorance and to calm their spirits. Here again, Num 14:19 simply states that Moses prayed that God would pardon them for complaining against him. Furthermore, when Moses tells them not to fight the Canaanites, they accuse him of scheming to keep them without resources so that they would be dependent upon him. They refer to Moses as a tyrant (τύραννον), and declare that they are strong enough to defeat the Canaanites even if Moses should desire to alienate God from them (4.3). They insist that not only Moses but all of them are descendants of Abraham and scorn what they term the arrogance (ἀλαζονείας) of Moses (4.4). They assemble (4.1–4) in disorderly fashion (ἄκόσμως) and with tumult and uproar; and in a great elaboration on Num 16:3, they shout, "Away with the tyrant, and let the people be rid of their bondage!" The fickle mob, in a scene highly reminiscent of the description in Thucydides of the attitude of the Athenians toward Pericles after the plague, exhibit in a tumultuous (θορυβώδη) assembly their "innate delight in decrying those in authority," and in their shallowness, are swayed by what anyone said (4.22–23, 36).

One is reminded of the way in which, according to Thucydides (3.36, 6.19), the Athenian masses were swayed by demagogues like Cleon and Alcibiades, as well as of the technique by which the gullible captain of the ship, representing the masses in Plato's parable (*Republic* 6.488A–489A), instead of listening to the true navigator, is won over by the fawning sailors. Indeed, even after Moses is apparently vindicated in his dispute with Korah by the swallowing up of the rebels by the earth, the skeptical mob concludes that the severity of the punishment inflicted upon the rebels is due not so much to the iniquity of those who perished as to the machinations of Moses (4.60–62). Again, thereafter, Zambrias (Zimri), the Israelite who has relations with a Midianite woman,

accuses Moses of tyranny because he attempts to interfere with his free choice (4.149). And yet Josephus is careful to point out that Moses did not, like such Greek philosophers as Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and Plato, show disdain for the masses, but rather addressed his teachings to the many, and indeed "so firmly implanted his theology in their descendants that it could not be moved" (*Ap* 2.169).

Another characteristic of the true leader is his willingness to undergo toil on behalf of his people. This is, indeed, one of the major characteristics of Plato's philosopher-king (*Republic* 7.519–520) who, though obviously less than eager to rule, since ruling involves abuse by the citizens, must descend into the cave even though life would be much more pleasant in an ivory tower, inasmuch as his first and sole concern must be the well-being of the commonwealth, and inasmuch as the penalty for not governing is to be ruled by those inferior to oneself. One is also reminded of the glorification of toil in the Cynic-Stoic diatribes, and especially in Virgil's *Aeneid* (1.9–10), where, we are told, Aeneas, the founder of Rome, was forced to undergo "so many misfortunes, so many toils."⁶⁸ One thinks, furthermore, of the whole array of heroes in early Roman history, such as Lucius Titus Quinctius Cincinnatus (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 10.17.1), who left his plough in 458 BCE when called, and worked for the general welfare.

Indeed, in his first editorial comment about Moses, Josephus (2.229), after describing the rescue of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, remarks that there is general agreement that there were two respects in which Moses surpassed all others, namely in "grandeur of intellect and in contempt of toils" (πόνων καταφρονήσει). Moreover, when dealing with the revolt led by Dathan and Abiram (4.42), Moses remarks that though he could have secured for himself a life of ease (ἀπράγμονα), he had chosen to devote himself to sharing the tribulations of his people. "Great," he says, "are the toils (πόνοις) that I have undergone, opposing to every peril all the ardor of my soul." Tacitus (*Histories* 5.4.1) cynically remarks that Moses' purpose in introducing new religious practices that were so different from those of other peoples, was to establish his influence

⁶⁸ On the comparison of Aeneas and Moses as leaders of their peoples, see Hadas, "Aeneas" (above, n. 32), pp. 408–414.

over the Israelites for all time. Josephus' Moses is utterly selfless, without ulterior motives. Indeed, in his apologetic treatise *Against Apion*, Josephus stresses that though Moses succeeded in making the whole people dependent upon himself, he did not use his influence for any personal aggrandizement. Further, when summarizing the work of Moses as a general and as a religious educator, Josephus stresses the selflessness of Moses in that he never took advantage of his position of authority to play the despot, but sought rather to live piously, since he believed that this was the most effective way to provide for the lasting welfare of those who had made him their leader. (*Ap* 2.158–159)⁶⁹

And yet, despite this complete altruism, Moses, like Pericles, is unappreciated by his people (4.42–43). Whereas they owe the fact that they are yet alive to his exertions (καμάτων, “fatigue, exhaustion, labor, effort”), they nevertheless suspect him of knavery. When Moses selects Joshua as his successor, the qualities in him which he singles out (3.49) include valor in enduring toils (πόνους). Indeed, one of the achievements of a great leader is his ability to inculcate into others a readiness to undergo toil, as we see, for example, in the assiduousness in toil (πονεῖν) which the Hebrews felt after they defeated Amalek, convinced that all things are attainable by it (3.58). Finally, when Moses announces that he must die, he declares that he was not about to renounce his zeal for the peoples' welfare, but to labor to secure for them the everlasting enjoyment of good things (4.178). Whereas in Deut 1:11 Moses prays that God may multiply the people and bless them, in Josephus (4.179) Moses is not satisfied to leave the matter in God's hands, but rather takes the initiative to plan ways in which the people may attain prosperity.

The greatest test of leadership comes when sedition arises. It is precisely here, when confronted with the great rebellion (στάσι-άζειν) of Korah (4.13), that Moses shows his true foresight (προενόησε). Indeed, civil strife (στάσις), as Thucydides stresses (3.82–84), is the great enemy of stability; and Josephus frequently⁷⁰ comments on this theme. A good portion of Book 4 (11–66, 141–155) of *Antiquities* is devoted to accounts that illustrate the degree

⁶⁹ So also Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.27.151) stresses that Moses' constant aim was to benefit his subjects, “and, in all that he said or did, to further their interests and neglect no opportunity which would forward the common well-being.”

⁷⁰ See Feldman, “Use, Authority,” pp. 496–497.

to which στάσις is the mortal enemy of political states;⁷¹ indeed, as Attridge⁷² has remarked, the two revolts, that of Korah and that of Zambrias, comprise, between them, more than half of the narrative material in Book 4.

Moses' stature is increased in *Antiquities*, which dramatizes, to a much greater degree than does the Bible, the murmuring against him. Thus, while in Num 11:2 the people cry out to Moses about their misfortunes in the desert, in Josephus (3.297) this lament has become a torrent of abuse, whereupon an unnamed individual admonishes them to remember what Moses had suffered on their behalf. Thereafter, we are told, in another unscriptural addition, that the multitude became even more aroused and uproarious and protested even more fiercely against Moses.

Again, at Rephidim, when the Israelites find themselves in an absolutely waterless region and vent their wrath on their leader, Moses, according to Exod 17:4, cries out to God, fearfully exclaiming that the people are on the verge of stoning him. God instructs Moses (Exod 17:5) to take with him some of the elders and to pass before the people. Josephus' Moses avoids the onset of the crowd and instead turns to God in prayer, asking him to provide drinking water (3.34). When God then promises that he will answer the prayer, Moses fearlessly and alone, without the company of the elders, approaches the people and tells them that God will deliver them from their distress. Immediately and in the most dramatic fashion, Moses strikes the rock and water gushes forth.

A great leader must be able to encourage his people. Thus Moses is described as cheering up (παρορμῶντα, "speeding on, stimulating, encouraging") the Israelites and promising them salvation (2.327). Likewise, he must be able to console his people. Thus, when the infamous Amalek is approaching to attack them, the biblical narrative (Exod 17:9) declares that it is Joshua whom Moses approaches, bidding him to go out to fight Amalek, whereas in Josephus (3.47) it is Moses who exhorts the people to obey their elders, and these latter to listen to him, their general, whereupon they urge Moses to lead them instantly against the enemy. Again, when the Israelites are suffering from thirst during their march

⁷¹ When discussing the biblical prohibition of removing one's neighbor's landmark (Deut 19:14 and 27:17), Josephus adds (4.225) that the reason for this prohibition is to avoid wars and seditions (στάσεων).

⁷² Attridge, *Interpretation*, p. 128.

through the desert, Moses, the true leader, empathizes with his people to such a degree that he makes the sufferings of all the Israelites his own (3.5). All the people look to him as their leader in their despondency when they have no water in the desert (3.6). Finally, in 3.44–46 Moses consoles the people and encourages them to trust in God, remembering the past. The scene is highly reminiscent of the one in which Aeneas (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.198–207) consoles his men after they have landed on the coast of Africa, reminding them that they have endured more grievous obstacles and bidding them to persevere. Similarly, after Moses has told the Israelites that he was soon to die, and they are in tears, he consoles them and, diverting their minds from his impending death, he exhorts them to put their constitution into practice (4.195).

Furthermore, in his treatment of the rebellion of Korah, Josephus remarks (4.12) that it was a sedition (στάσις) “for which we know of no parallel, whether among Greeks or barbarians,” clearly implying that information about past rebellions was familiar to his readers, as it surely was to readers of Thucydides. The fact that Korah was of the same tribe as Moses and indeed was his kinsman, that he was richer than Moses, and that he was very effective in addressing a crowd (4.14–15), made him a truly formidable opponent for Moses.

Moses shows his mettle by taking the initiative to go to the rebels Dathan and Abiram. In Josephus (4.32) Moses implores Korah to put an end to his rebellion and the turbulence (ταραχῆς) that it was causing. In fact, Moses goes so far in seeking to avoid civil strife that when Korah charges that Moses is guilty of nepotism in selecting his brother Aaron to be high priest, he replies that Aaron is ready to lay down his high priesthood “as an open prize to be sued for by any who will” (4.29). Even after the earthquake has swallowed up Korah and his followers, the sedition does not end. But while Num 17:6 says merely that the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, charging them with having caused the deaths of so many, Josephus exaggerates the seditiousness of the people by stating that the revolt “assumed far larger proportions and grew more grievous; indeed it found an occasion for proceeding from bad to worse, such that the trouble seemed likely never to cease but to become chronic” (4.59). By thus exaggerating the rebellion of the people, Josephus correspondingly increases the stature of Moses in controlling them, just as Thu-

cydides does in the case of Pericles. Finally, in summing up his lengthy account of the Jewish constitution, Moses (4.292) declares that "God in his mercy will keep its shapely order (κόσμον) unmarred by strife (ἄστασίαστον)." Josephus then puts an extra-biblical prayer into the mouth of Moses (4.294–295), in which he asks that after they have conquered the land which God had given them, the Israelites not be overcome by civil strife (στάσεως ἐμφυλίου) "whereby ye shall be led to actions contrary to those of your fathers and destroy the institutions which they established."

Moses' effectiveness as a leader is especially well illustrated in his tactics in handling the unruly mob when the Israelite youths consort with the Midianite women. In Num 25:5 Moses sternly instructs the judges of Israel, "Every one of you, slay his men who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor [the major deity of the Midianites]." Josephus' Moses, far from commanding that the transgressors be killed, first shows his democratic impulse and his high regard for the people by convening them in assembly (4.142).⁷³ He then very carefully avoids accusing anyone by name, since he does not wish "to reduce to desperation any who . . . might be brought to repentance" by gentler means, but seeks rather with mild words to win back the transgressors. His patience in trying to convince them to mend their ways is indicated particularly by Josephus' use of the imperfect tense (4.144), ἐπειῶτο, "he kept on trying."

And yet, despite all the difficulties caused by the crowd, he does not complain. According to Deut 1:12, Moses cries out in despair to his people, "How can I bear alone the weight and burden of you and your strife?" This sentiment is not to be found in the parallel passage in Josephus (4.179).

Moses likewise shows his effectiveness in handling an angry crowd in his treatment of Zambrias (Zimri), who was consorting with a Midianite woman (4.150–151). Here Moses adopts the tactic of not provoking Zambrias' frenzy by direct controversy, inasmuch as he realizes that to do so might well escalate the disobedience. He accordingly dissolves the meeting.

⁷³ Van Unnik ("Midian," pp. 252–253) indicates that such a tactic is often found in the works of Greek historians, notably Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his *Antiquitates Romanae*, who remarks that when there is civil strife among the Romans they are called into assembly, where the matter is discussed.

A leader must be decisive—he cannot afford to be depicted as lacking in self-confidence. In the biblical passage where God commissions Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage (Exod 3:13), he timidly tells God that when he informs the Israelites that God has sent him to them, they will ask him what God's name is, and he consequently turns to God to seek an answer. In Josephus (2.275) Moses likewise asks God what his name is, but the question shows no lack of self-confidence; rather, the reason Moses asks for God's name is so that he may address him properly when he sacrifices to him.

Another embarrassing passage is found in the story (Num 27:1–11) of the daughters of Zelophehad, who ask for the inheritance of their father because he has died without leaving sons. In the Bible (Num 27:5) Moses is unable to decide their case and presents it to God, who decides in their favor. Josephus' Moses (4.174–175) does not hesitate to give his answer without consulting God; he tells them that if they marry within their tribe they will carry the inheritance with them, but if they do not, the inheritance is to be left in their father's tribe.⁷⁴

The dignity of a leader is crucial to his success. Hence, we find that the Septuagint (Exod 4:20) avoids stating that Moses put his wife and his sons upon an ass and sent them back to the land of Egypt; instead, presumably because the ass was such a lowly animal,⁷⁵ it states that Moses mounted them upon "beasts," without indicating the type of animal.⁷⁶ Josephus goes one step further and says that Moses took his wife and sons and hastened away, without mentioning the means (2.277). We see a similar avoidance of the association of Moses with asses in Josephus' rendering of Num 16:15, in which Moses protests that he has not taken one ass from the assembly. Here the Septuagint⁷⁷ has Moses say that he

⁷⁴ Philo's Moses (*De vita Mosis* 2.43.237) follows the biblical text in having Moses refer the case to God.

⁷⁵ Cf., e.g., the clear disdain for the ass implicit in the fact that when Midas is punished for challenging the verdict of Tmolus that Apollo was superior to Pan as a musician, his ears are lengthened into the form of those of an ass (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.172–193).

⁷⁶ This is one of the changes noted by the Talmud (bMeg 9a) as instituted by the translators under divine inspiration.

⁷⁷ The rabbinic version (bMeg 9a) of the change indicates that the translators read *hemed*, 'valuable' for *hamor*, 'ass.'

has not taken away the desire (ἐπιθύμημα, "dear possession") of any of the Israelites; and likewise Josephus (4.46) has Moses declare that he has not accepted a present from a single Hebrew to pervert justice. Perhaps a further reason for these changes is that Josephus was sensitive to the charge that the Jews keep the head of an ass in the Temple and worship it (*Ap* 2.80–88).

Josephus also apparently felt apologetic about the fact that Moses was a shepherd, perhaps because shepherds were disqualified as judges or witnesses in Palestine, according to the rabbis (bSanh 25b), presumably because they sometimes appropriated the sheep of other people. Hence, *Exod* 3:1 states merely that Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, while Josephus adds the explanation (2.263) that in those days the wealth (κτῆσις) of barbarian races consisted of sheep.

Another of the qualities of the great statesman, as we see in Thucydides' portrait of Pericles (2.60.6), is his refusal to accept bribes. In *Num* 16:15, when confronted with the revolt of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Moses bitterly protests to God that he has not taken so much as an ass from any of them and that he has not wronged any of them. In Josephus' elaboration of this passage (4.46), Moses indicates that the charge against him is that he has accepted bribes to pervert justice, and he calls God himself to witness that this is not true.

The great leader must also excel as an educator, as we see from the tremendous amount of attention given by the philosopher-kings in Plato's *Republic* to the education of the inhabitants of the ideal state. Thus we find, at the very beginning of *Antiquities* (1.6), when Moses is first mentioned, he is called the great lawgiver (νομοθέτη) under whom the Jews were educated (παιδευθέντες) in piety and the exercise of the other virtues. The relationship between legislation and παιδεία is, as Meeks⁷⁸ points out, distinctively Greek. What marks the superiority of Moses over other systems of law is that his educational system combined precept and practical training (*Ap* 2.171–174). Plato had argued repeatedly in his dialogues that no one errs knowingly, and that hence the function of the ruler is to teach the citizens. By this standard, according to Josephus (*Ap* 2.175), Moses was supreme, since he left no pretext

⁷⁸ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 133.

for ignorance, ordaining uniquely the reading of the law every week—a practice which other legislators had neglected. Consequently Josephus is able to boast (*Ap* 2.178) that “should anyone of our nation be questioned about the laws, he would repeat them more readily than his own name.” Indeed, the reason for Moses’ success in ordering his own life aright and also legislating for others, according to Josephus in his proem (1.19), was that he was, in effect, a philosopher who studied the nature of God and contemplated his works with the eye of reason (νῦς, “mind”). Time, says Josephus (*Ap* 2.279), which is the most truthful judge of worth, has demonstrated the virtue of Moses’ philosophy, that is, the revelation of God.

A great leader must be able to choose and train a successor who will carry on his work. In the Bible (Num 27:18) it is God who takes the initiative in telling Moses to choose Joshua as his successor. In Josephus (4.165) we are told that before choosing Joshua, Moses had already indoctrinated him by a thorough training in the laws and in divine lore.

And yet, as great a leader as Moses was, Josephus takes great pains to make sure that he would not be worshiped as a god. This was particularly necessary in view of the frequency among the Greeks of the apotheosis of heroes, such as Dionysus, Heracles (cf. Diodorus 4.38.3–5, 39.1–2), and Asclepius.⁷⁹ Josephus may also have been reacting to Sophocles’ account of the mysterious disappearance of Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*, which bears a striking resemblance to that of Moses.⁸⁰ Even after death the hero was thought to have power to bring good fortune. In particular, founders of cities were objects of religious devotion, as we see in

⁷⁹ See Lucian, *Cynic* 13, where Heracles is called a divine man (θεῖον ἄνδρα). Cf. Friedrich Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum* (Giessen, 1909–12); and Lewis R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921).

⁸⁰ This is particularly significant, inasmuch as Josephus is definitely indebted to Sophocles elsewhere. See Thackeray, *Josephus*, pp. 116–117; and Feldman, “Solomon,” pp. 69–98. It is also possible that Josephus is reacting against the Christian tradition of the apotheosis of Jesus (Luke 24, Acts 1). See Pierpaolo Fornaro, “Il cristianesimo oggetto di polemica indiretta in Flavio Giuseppe (Ant. Jud. IV 326),” *Rivista di studi classici* 27 (1979): 431–460; and André Paul, “Flavius Josephus’ ‘Antiquities of the Jews’: An Anti-Christian Manifesto,” *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 473–480.

Pausanias (10.4.10).⁸¹ Moreover, stories were told about Alexander the Great's attempt to throw himself into the Euphrates River so that it might be thought that he had passed directly to the gods.⁸²

To be sure, in Josephus' account of Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai, he hints that Moses ate heavenly food, whereas Exod 34:28 states that Moses neither ate bread nor drank water during the forty days that he was on the mountain. Josephus says that he tasted no food of the kinds designated for mankind (3.99). The implication, as Meeks suggests,⁸³ is that Moses partook of heavenly food, that is, he drank nectar and ate ambrosia. Moreover, Josephus himself notes (3.317) that Moses was held in such great admiration for his virtues and his charismatic ability to inspire faith in all his utterances that his words are alive to this day. Indeed, he remarks that Moses' legislation, "believed to come from God, caused this man to be ranked higher than his own (human) nature (3.320)." Even a pagan such as Celsus (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.21) says that Moses acquired a reputation for divine power, presumably through his abilities as a magician. But in the very passages (3.317, 320) where Josephus refers to Moses as inspiring and ranking higher than his own nature, he is careful to refer to him as a man (ἄνθρωπος). Moreover, he is careful to omit

⁸¹ See Charles Bradford Wellès, "The Hellenistic Orient," in Robert C. Dentan, ed., *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1955), p. 157; and Charles H. Talbert, "The Concept of the Immortals in Mediterranean Antiquity," *JBL* 94 (1975): 428.

⁸² Likewise, it was told of the philosopher Empedocles (Heracleides of Pontus, in Diogenes Laertius 8.68) that after an evening party he disappeared and was nowhere to be found, and that one of those present at the party claimed to have heard a voice from heaven declaring that he was now a god. Apollonius of Tyana (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 1.2, 2.17, 2.40, 5.24, 7.21, 7.38, 8.5, 8.7) is depicted as a god-like man (θεῖος ἄνθρωπος), whose divinity is manifest in his wisdom and virtue. Again, when speaking of the death of Apollonius, Philostratus adds (8.29), "if he did actually die," and then declares that no one ventured to dispute that he was immortal. Furthermore, a certain senator named Numerius Atticus (Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4) swore that he had seen Augustus ascend to heaven after his death like Romulus and Proculus. Indeed, the motif of apotheosis of rulers and philosophers became so widespread that it became the subject of satire in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and in Lucian's *Parliament of the Gods* and *The Passing of Peregrinus*.

⁸³ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 141.

God's statements that Moses was to be to Aaron as God (Exod 4:16), and that God was making him as God to Pharaoh (Exod 7:1). He is careful to dispel the view held by some (3.95–96) that when Moses tarried on Mount Sinai for forty days, it was because he had been taken back to the divinity. If he refers to Moses as a "man of God" (3.180; θεῖον ἄνδρα), it is not to assert Moses' divinity but rather to refute those enemies of the Jews who had charged them with slighting the divinity whom they themselves professed to venerate (3.179). Indeed, that Josephus has no intention here of asserting that Moses was actually divine is clear from the proof that Moses was a "man of God," namely that the construction of the Tabernacle and the appearance of the vestments and vessels of the priests show that Moses was concerned with piety.

Josephus is particularly explicit in stressing that Moses died and in refuting the notion that he was somehow elevated to divine status. Thus, while Deut 34:5 says simply that Moses died in the land of Moab, Josephus (4.326) explains why Scripture says this, stressing that Moses "has written of himself in the sacred books that he died, for fear lest they should venture to say that by reason of his surpassing virtue he had gone back to the Deity."⁸⁴ Moreover, very significantly, as Tabor⁸⁵ has remarked, Josephus does not include the biblical remarks (Deut 34:6) that God himself had buried Moses and that no one knows to this day where he is buried, presumably because he realized that his skeptical readers might have considerable difficulty accepting such statements. He also attempts, more or less scientifically, to give further details of Moses' disappearance, noting that while Moses was bidding farewell to Eleazar and Joshua, a cloud suddenly descended upon him and he disappeared into a ravine (4.326). Such an account might well have reminded the reader of the traditional version of the deaths of the two founders of the Romans, Aeneas and Romulus, as described, for example, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.⁸⁶ In the

⁸⁴ Similarly Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical antiquities* (19.16) and *Assumption of Moses* (1.15) express the view that Moses' death took place in public and that God buried him.

⁸⁵ James D. Tabor, "'Returning to the Divinity': Josephus's Portrayal of the Disappearances of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses," *JBL* 108 (1989): 237.

⁸⁶ See Thackeray, *Josephus*, p. 57.

case of Aeneas, Dionysius (*Antiquitates Romanae* 1.64.4) says that his body could nowhere be found, and some conjectured that he had been translated to the gods. As for Romulus, he remarks (*Ant Rom* 2.56.2) that "the more mythical writers"⁸⁷ say that as he was holding an assembly in the camp, darkness descended upon him from a clear sky and he disappeared, and they believe that he was caught up by his father Ares." Josephus would thus seem to be replying to those who equated Moses with these Roman forefathers.

Indeed, the elevation of Moses to divine status seems to be implied in Philo, who remarks (*De vita Mosis* 1.6.27; cf. 2.51.291) that Moses' associates, struck by his utter asceticism and by the fact that he was so utterly unlike all men, pondered whether he was human, or divine, or a mixture of both. Josephus, who had received an excellent Jewish education (*Life* 8–9), may also be responding to that element in the rabbinic tradition⁸⁸ which maintained that Moses did not die, but rather continued to administer from above.⁸⁹ Quite clearly, as Tabor⁹⁰ insightfully remarks, Josephus wished to have it both ways: on the one hand, he strongly resisted such contemporary evaluations that deified Moses, or Jesus, or Aeneas, or Romulus; but on the other hand, the actual scene that he describes—the tears and the weeping, the withdrawal, the cloud descending upon Moses, and his disappearance, with nothing said of the burial itself—is strikingly reminiscent of the parallels cited above.

And yet, Josephus was careful to avoid deifying Moses. This may have been a deliberate reaction against the Samaritans, who looked upon Moses as the most perfect of men, without any blemish at all, either physical or moral, a priest among angels, one

⁸⁷ One of these is Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 14.805–885), who has a scene in which Jupiter fulfills the promise that he had made to lift up Romulus to heaven. Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 2.481–509; and Livy 1.16.

⁸⁸ bSot 13b; *SifDeut* 357; *Midrash Tanna'im* 224.

⁸⁹ See Ginzberg, *Legends* 6:163–164, n. 452. The *Palaea historica* (Vassiliev, pp. 257–258; see Flusser, "Palaea historica," p. 72) recounts a tradition that when Moses died alone on the mountain, Samael the devil tried to bring down the body of Moses to the people so that they might worship him as a god. God then commanded the archangel Michael to take Moses' body away. Samael objected and they quarreled, whereupon Michael was vexed and rebuked the devil.

⁹⁰ Tabor, "Returning to the Divinity," pp. 237–238.

for whose sake the very world had been created.⁹¹ Indeed, this exaltation of Moses, as MacDonald⁹² has remarked, is a unique Samaritan doctrine unmatched in Jewish, Christian, or Moslem belief.

To be continued

⁹¹ See Gaster, *Asatir*, p. 75. Far from being the amanuensis that he seems to be in the rabbinic tradition, Moses is termed by the Samaritans "the light of knowledge and understanding" (see MacDonald, *Theology*, pp. 153-154); and when he ascended Mount Sinai he is said to have gone to the very heart of heaven. In addition to the laws intended for ordinary mankind, he received esoteric knowledge to be restricted in its transmission solely to men of deep spiritual insight. It is he who, on God's behalf or acting as spokesman for God, said the creative words, "Let there be light." He, unlike all other creatures, is said to have been in existence before at the initial creation process; and indeed, like the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, he was created in order to bring creation to pass. He is the great intercessor, and only through him can prayer be accepted.

Moreover, Moses is for the Samaritans the *Taheb*, "Restorer," the expected Messiah-like eschatological figure who will bring about a golden age and will pray for the guilty and save them. It is among the Samaritans alone that the title "man of God" receives prominence as applied to Moses; and indeed, the Samaritan depiction of Moses is highly reminiscent of the New Testament's description of Jesus as the first begotten being, materialized from his pre-existent bodiless state. Moses is a second God, God's vice-regent upon earth (*Memar Marqah* 1.2), whose very name includes the title ³*Elohim*, "God" (*Memar Marqah* 5.4), and of whom it is said that he who believes in him believes in his Lord (*Memar Marqah* 4.7). See Holladay (*Theios Aner*, p. 101, n. 344) who cites the Samaritan *Memar Marqah* 6.6. So prominent is Moses for the Samaritans that Josephus tells us (18.85) that an unnamed man was able to gather a large following by promising that he would show them the sacred implements buried by Moses on Mount Gerizim. What is particularly striking is that Moses could not possibly have buried them there, inasmuch as he never entered the Promised Land (cf. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 248).

⁹² MacDonald, "Samaritan Doctrine" (above, n. 5), pp. 149-162.

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JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF MOSES

*Part Two**

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f. *The Virtues of Moses: Wisdom*

Josephus consistently stresses the virtue of wisdom in his biblical heroes,⁹³ especially since the anti-Jewish Apion had charged that the Jews had not produced any illustrious men, such as men distinguished in wisdom, who were comparable to Socrates, the Stoics Zeno and Cleanthes, or Apion himself (*Ap* 2.135). In reply, Abraham is portrayed in extrabiblical additions to *Antiquities* as a philosopher whose logic is impeccable, who is clever in understanding, and who is able to arrive at an original and unique proof of the existence of God from the irregularity of heavenly phenomena (1.154, 156).⁹⁴

Similarly, Josephus, in his final encomium of Moses (4.328), states that he surpassed in understanding (συνέσει) all men that ever lived and put to noblest use the fruit of his reflections (νοηθεῖσιν). Moses exhibits ingenuity particularly in his military campaigns, as we can discern from the admiration that the Ethiopian princess Tharbis shows at the sagacity (ἐπινοίας, "conception, thought, insight, inventiveness, craftiness, artifice") of his maneuvers (2.252). Again, when the Israelites complain against Moses because of lack of water and stand ready to stone him, Josephus, in an editorial comment, singles out Moses' virtue (ἀρετῆς) and sagacity (συνέσεως) as the two qualities which they had completely forgotten (3.12).⁹⁵

* Continued from *JQR* 82 (1992): 285-328. Bibliographic abbreviations are found on pp. 48-50.

⁹³ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 488-490.

⁹⁴ See Feldman, "Abraham," pp. 143-156. All references to Josephus are to *Antiquities* unless otherwise stated.

⁹⁵ Likewise, Moses' hand-picked successor, Joshua, is described (3.49) as "highly gifted in intellect (νοῆαι);" and again, in his final appraisal of Joshua, Josephus remarks (5.118) that he was not wanting in intelligence (συνέσεως).

The greatest compliment that could be given to a person so far as wisdom is concerned is to call him a philosopher, as we see, for example, in Aristotle's account of the Jew whom he met in Asia Minor and who led him to generalize that the Jews are descended from Indian philosophers (*Ap* 1.179). That Josephus looked upon Moses as a profound philosopher is to be inferred from the fact that he states (1.25) that if anyone should desire to consider the reasons for every article in the creed transmitted by Moses, "he would find the inquiry profound and highly philosophical (φιλόσοφος)." Moreover, Josephus clearly implies that the profound symbolism attached to the Tabernacle and to the vestments of the high priests is due to Moses and that it illustrates his virtue (3.179–187). Indeed, according to Josephus, the wisest of the Greeks, including such celebrated philosophers as Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Stoics, learned their conceptions of God from principles which Moses supplied to them (*Ap* 2.168).⁹⁶ Plato, in particular, he notes, imitated Moses in ordaining that citizens should study their laws, and in preventing foreigners from mixing with citizens (*Ap* 2.257).

According to Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, whoever is to be the best lawgiver must possess all the virtues in the highest degree.⁹⁷ Moreover, the excellence of the laws is measured by wisdom, as we can see in Josephus' editorial remark that the laws of the Torah are "excellent beyond the standard of human wisdom" (3.223). Pericles, in his Funeral Oration (Thucydides 2.37.3), praises the Athenians for their obedience to the laws, and Socrates in Plato's *Crito* refuses to escape from prison because he regards obedience to the laws of the state as fundamental to its existence. But, as Thucydides (2.53.4) notes, during the plague the Athenians were restrained neither by fear of the gods nor by the laws of men. On the contrary, according to Josephus the Hebrews transgressed none of Moses' laws "in peace, through luxury, nor in war, under constraint" (3.223). The very fact that Josephus summarizes the Mosaic code at such length in a work that is ostensibly a history shows how important law was for him. Indeed, in large part Josephus' emphasis upon Moses as a lawgiver is a reply to those opponents of the Jews, such as Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus,

⁹⁶ Philo (*De specialibus legibus* 4.10.61) also asserts that Greek legislators copied from the laws of Moses.

⁹⁷ So also Philo, *De vita Mosi* 2.1.3.

who, whether from ignorance or ill will, had maligned Moses the lawgiver as a charlatan and impostor (*Ap* 2.101, 145). Josephus stresses that Moses exhibited his wisdom particularly as a lawgiver, and the constitution which he gave to the Israelites was consonant with the reputation which he had for virtue (ἀρετή; *Ap* 2.147). Indeed, we are told that Moses provided for his people an abundance of good laws in the belief that this was the best means of displaying his own virtue and of ensuring the lasting welfare of those who had made him their leader (*Ap* 2.159). The very fact that Josephus uses the term “lawgiver” (νομοθέτης)⁹⁸ with regard to Moses,⁹⁹ sixteen times in the first four books of the *Antiquities*, referring to him usually merely as “the lawgiver,” without explicitly naming him as Moses,¹⁰⁰ is an indication that to Josephus Moses is *the* wise man *par excellence*, to be bracketed with the revered Spartan Lycurgus, the Athenian Solon, and the Roman Numa Pompilius, although, strictly speaking, it is God alone who is the lawgiver.¹⁰¹ We may also note that on only five occasions do we hear of the laws given by God through Moses, whereas on twenty-three occasions we hear of the laws of Moses. Moreover, it is his

⁹⁸ So also in Philo the most common title for Moses is “the lawgiver.” See Francis H. Colson, ed., *Philo*, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1962), 10:386. On the usage of this term in pagan and Hellenistic Jewish literature, see Walter Gutbrod in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, s.v. “νομοθέτης,” 4:1089. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.28.162) speaks of Moses as the “reasonable and living impersonation of law,” but Josephus avoids such a representation.

⁹⁹ In addition, Moses is the subject of the verb νομοθετέω three times (3.266, 268, 317); and the noun νομοθεσία is applied to him twice (3.287, 320).

¹⁰⁰ Pseudo-Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.9) refers to Moses as θεομοθέτης, “lawgiver,” and as “no chance person,” without deeming it necessary to name him, presumably because Moses was so well known to his audience. The “lawgiver,” he says, deserved this title because he understood and gave expression to the power of the divinity as it deserved. “Longinus,” as Gager has remarked (*Moses*, p. 59), is the first author, whether pagan, Jewish, or Christian, to use the archaic term θεομοθέτης. It may be that Josephus does not use the term θεομοθέτης because this term represents a deliberate attempt to underline Moses’ theological excellence, which Josephus does not wish to emphasize; Cf. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.1.1), who declares that he proposes to write the life of Moses “whom some describe as the legislator (νομοθέτης) of the Jews, others as interpreter of the holy laws.”

¹⁰¹ The rabbis, as Heinrich Bloch (*Die Quellen des Flavius Josephus in seiner Archäologie* [Leipzig, 1879], pp. 139–140) correctly points out, do not refer to Moses as “lawgiver” but rather as “our teacher.” Josephus himself (3.322) is careful to state ultimately that the constitution of the Jews was established by God himself, through the agency of Moses.

legislation, according to 3.320, which has caused Moses to be ranked higher than his own human nature. But Moses is said to have given the Israelites more than laws: he gave them a πολιτεία, a constitution comparable to that found in the Greek πόλεις (4.194, 196, 302). Indeed, the Jewish king, remarks Josephus, must concede to the laws the possession of superior wisdom (τοῦ πλείονα τοῦ φρονεῖν; 4.224).

Furthermore, in a world in which the antiquity of a nation or a person meant so much,¹⁰² Moses, as Josephus contends, is the most ancient legislator who ever lived,¹⁰³ next to whom such famous lawgivers as Lycurgus of Sparta, Solon of Athens, and Zaleucus of Locris "appear to have been born yesterday" (*Ap* 2.154). Indeed, the very word "law" (νόμος) is not to be found in Homer or in other early Greek literature. He adds that "an infinity of time has passed since Moses, if one compares the age in which he lived with those of other legislators" (*Ap* 2.279). Moreover, the permanence of a code is a measure of its excellence; and by that standard Moses' constitution is the very best, inasmuch as it was promulgated for all time (εἰς αἰεὶ; *Ap* 2.156), a phrase found in Thucydides 1.22.4, where it is stated that his history has been composed not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment but as a possession for all time. Furthermore, as Josephus stresses, the proof of the excellent draftsmanship of these laws is that (like those of Sparta) they have not required any amendment (*Ap* 2.183).¹⁰⁴ In fact, these laws have excited the emulation of the whole world (*Ap* 2.280).¹⁰⁵ Indeed, though the laws in Plato's

¹⁰² The importance that the Romans attached to establishing their antiquity may be seen from the determined attempt of Virgil in his *Aeneid* to trace the ancestry of the Romans back to the famed Trojans and specifically to Aeneas, the son of Venus, the daughter of Jupiter. Likewise, we may recall Livy's famous comment in his preface (7) that if any nation deserves the privilege of claiming a divine ancestry, that nation is Rome. On the other hand, in the Greek world, says Josephus (*Ap* 1.7), "everything will be found to be modern and dating, so to speak, from yesterday or the day before." See Feldman, "Pro-Jewish," pp. 199–206.

¹⁰³ So also Eupolemus, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.26.1.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 2.3.12–14), who contrasts the permanence of Moses' laws with the fact that the laws of other nations have been unsettled by countless causes—such as wars, tyrannies, and luxury—which fortune has lavished upon them.

¹⁰⁵ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 2.4.17–18) had used very similar language in stating that almost every other people, particularly those which take more account of virtue, had valued and honored the laws of the Jews.

Republic would appear to represent an ideal, they are actually inferior to those of Moses, since they more closely approximate the practice of the masses (*Ap* 2.224). Even Lycurgus' laws, so justly admired, have hardly endured as long as those promulgated by Moses (*Ap* 2.225–226). Actually, says Josephus, as compared with other legislators, Moses issued his laws infinitely earlier (*Ap* 2.279).

Connected with wisdom, as we see in Thucydides' portrait of the ideal statesman, Pericles (2.60), is the ability to persuade the masses.¹⁰⁶ In the case of Moses, Josephus was confronted with an obvious problem, inasmuch as *Exod* 4:10 and 6:12 note that Moses had a speech impediment. Significantly, Josephus omits both of these biblical references. Indeed, while in *Exod* 5:1 Moses and Aaron go jointly to Pharaoh, with Aaron presumably as the spokesman, to ask him to free the Israelites, in Josephus Moses goes alone, reminds Pharaoh of the services that he had rendered to the Egyptians in the campaign against Ethiopia, and requests the deliverance of his people (2.281). In fact, in his final encomium of Moses, Josephus goes out of his way to declare that Moses found favor in every way in speech (εἰπεῖν) and in public addresses (ὁμιλεῖν; 4.328).

Moses shows his particular skill in speech in his handling of the Israelite masses. Thus, when the people are excited and embittered against him at Elim because of their lack of water, and are ready to stone him, Moses confronts them fearlessly and by sheer charisma, deriving from his "extraordinary influence in addressing a crowd," succeeds, after delivering a long speech, in pacifying their wrath. Again, while in the Bible (*Exod* 16:6) Moses and Aaron merely promise the Israelites food, in Josephus it is Moses alone who confronts the unruly mob and exhorts them not to be obsessed by their present discomforts and to have confidence in God's solicitude. He thus calms them, restraining their impulse to stone him (3.13–15, 22). The scene again is reminiscent of the passage in Virgil (*Aeneid* 1.124–147) in which Neptune calms the seas that have been made turbulent by Aeolus and in which Virgil presents, as a simile (*Aeneid* 1.148–156), the effect upon a turbulent crowd

¹⁰⁶ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," p. 490. Note that Korah (4.14) also is singled out as a capable speaker (ἱκανὸς . . . εἰπεῖν) and very effective in addressing a crowd (δῆμοις ὁμιλεῖν πιθανώτατος).

when a great leader (Virgil probably intends to have his readers think of Augustus) assuages their feelings.

To the classical Greeks music was, as Henderson¹⁰⁷ remarks, “a second language” of divine origin (Pseudo-Plutarch, *De musica* 3.1131F–1132A). Indeed, it was a god—Hermes—who was said to have invented the lyre, and a goddess—Athena—who was believed to have invented the *aulos* (flute, or rather, oboe). Furthermore, we are told that Heracles, the greatest hero of the Greeks, was instructed by his tutor Chiron in music no less than in the other arts. Music was an integral part of education, as we learn from Plato (*Republic* 376E), who goes so far as to assert that anyone who cannot take his place in a choir (whether as a singer or as a dancer) is not truly educated. We are even informed (Cicero, *Tusculan disputations* 1.4) that Themistocles disgraced himself by being unable to play the lyre when his turn came at a banquet.

Hence, we should not be surprised that Josephus makes a point of mentioning, in reference to Moses’ song upon crossing the Red Sea (Exod 15:1–21), that Moses himself composed a hymn to God “to enshrine his praises and the thankfulness [of the Israelites] for his gracious favor.”¹⁰⁸ Josephus, however, realizing the importance attached to poetry, adds to the biblical narrative in order to make more of an impression upon his non-Jewish audience. Thus, he asserts, without any biblical basis, that Moses composed his song in hexameter verse, thereby indicating that it was in the same epic meter as the great poems of Homer (2.346). Similarly, in referring to Moses’ final message to the Israelites, he asserts that Moses recited to them a poem in hexameter verse (4.303).¹⁰⁹ But in Josephus Moses is not merely a poet and a singer; he is also, on his own initiative, the inventor of a musical instrument, a silver

¹⁰⁷ Isobel Henderson, “Ancient Greek Music,” in Jack A. Westrup et al., *New Oxford History of Music* (London, 1957), 1:385.

¹⁰⁸ That Josephus does not quote or paraphrase the song itself is in line with his similar omission of the Song of Miriam (Exod 15:21) and the Song of Deborah (Judg 5), the reason being, presumably, because Josephus is writing a history and not a book of poetry, though the fact that the latter two songs are not even referred to may reflect Josephus’ misogyny. See Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Deborah” (above, n. 40), pp. 115–128; and Betsy H. Amaru, “Portraits of Biblical Women in Josephus’ *Antiquities*,” *JJS* 39 (1988): 143–170.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Josephus’ addition (7.305) to the Bible (2 Sam 22:1 and 1 Chronicles 16:7), that David composed songs and hymns to God in various meters, some in trimeters and others in pentameters.

trumpet (βυκάνη), thus making him comparable to Hermes and Athena in this respect. Josephus then proceeds to describe the trumpet at some length, noting its length, its mouthpiece, and its extremity (3.291). In contrast, the Bible (Num 10:1–2) declares that it is God who bade Moses to make two silver trumpets, and there is no further description of them.

g. The Virtues of Moses: Courage

The attention of the historian, says Lucian (*The Way to Write History* 49), should be turned to the generals first of all. Record should be made of their exhortations, of the dispositions which they make, and of the motives and plans that prompted them. Generalship, as Hengel¹¹⁰ has reminded us, was the key factor in the superiority of the Greeks and Macedonians over the “barbarians”; and this superiority began with premilitary training in the gymnasium and progressed through tactics and strategy to the technique of laying siege. And finally, his constant reelection to the position of στρατηγός was the means which enabled Pericles, the idol of Josephus’ model Thucydides, to dominate Athens for three decades. Lucian, to be sure, warns against focussing attention on generals alone; but he makes an exception in the cases of Brasidas and Demosthenes, where the leaders were outstandingly inspiring; and it would therefore seem that Josephus was justified in similarly making an exception of Moses.

It is significant that while in the Septuagint Moses is never called στρατηγός, “general,” or even ἡγεμών, “leader,” in *Antiquities* he is referred to fifteen times (2.241, 268; 3.2, 11, 12, 28, 47, 65, 67, 78, 102, 105; 4.82, 194, 329) and once in *Against Apion* (2.158) as a στρατηγός; in addition, the verb στρατηγέω, “to be a field-commander, to lead an army,” is used of him once (2.243); and the noun στρατηγία, “army command, office of supreme commander,” is used of him twice (2.255, 282). Furthermore, the noun ἡγεμών is used with reference to him six times (2.268, 4.11; *Ap* 1.238, 261; 2.156, 159).¹¹¹ Indeed, it was not as teacher or legislator that the voice from the burning bush bids Moses to act (2.268) but rather as general (στρατηγόν) and leader (ἡγεμόνα).

¹¹⁰ Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia, 1974), 1:13.

¹¹¹ We should also note, as Meeks (*Prophet-King*, p. 134) remarks, that in the Hellenistic and Roman world ἡγεμών also connoted a provincial governor.

It is significant that when Josephus enumerates the main topics of the Bible he lists "all sorts of surprising reverses, many fortunes of war, heroic exploits of generals, and political revolutions" (1.13). One is thus struck by his emphasis on military matters. Indeed, in his final encomium of Moses, he remarks that as a general he had few to equal him and that as a prophet he had no rivals (4.329). His listing of Moses' achievement as a general before he mentions his role as a prophet would seem to indicate an order of importance, and in any case Josephus' attitude is clearly to be contrasted with that of the Bible, which speaks only of Moses' supremacy as a prophet (Deut 34:7-12). Furthermore, in his apologetic treatise *Against Apion* (2.157-163), in summarizing Moses' achievements, the first point that he makes is that it was he who took command of the multitudes who left Egypt, guided them safely through a huge desert, and defeated their enemies. Throughout this, says Josephus, he proved to be the best of generals. Similarly, the offices in which Joshua succeeds Moses (4.165) are those of prophet and general, whereas in the corresponding biblical passage (Num 27:18) Joshua is described as a man in whom there is spirit, but there is no mention of his military abilities. Finally, after Moses announces to the Israelites that he is to die and proceeds to exhort them to obey the laws which he had given them, it is his role as general which they indicate that they will miss most. At such an emotional point in the history of the nation, Josephus tells us that what they remember is his bravery, namely the risks which he had run on their behalf and his ardent zeal for their salvation (4.194-195).

Indeed, stress on Moses' military achievements is in line with Lucian's singling out of military knowledge and experience as qualifications necessary for the historian (*The Way to Write History* 37)—qualifications which Josephus possessed in considerable measure through his generalship in Galilee in the early stages of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the year 66.

Not only are we given in Josephus an extended portrait of Moses as a general, but his people are presented as soldiers. This is especially clear in the exhortation which Moses gives to the Israelites before his death, where he addresses them as "comrades in arms (συστρατιῶται) and partners in this long tribulation" (4.177).

Moses' first great exploit as a general, according to Josephus, in an extensive extrabiblical addition, is his campaign on behalf of

the Egyptians against the Ethiopians (2.238–253).¹¹² The biblical basis for this lengthy episode is a single verse in the Bible, Num 12:1: “And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.”¹¹³

¹¹² In the *Palaea historica*, as Flusser (“*Palaea historica*,” pp. 67–68) points out, Moses leads an expedition against the people of India and carries 3000 storks to overcome the immense number of serpents that are to be found along the way. This is clearly a variant of the version in Josephus. The substitution of India for Ethiopia may be due to the fact that India, at the time of the composition of the *Palaea historica*, was relatively more prominent than Ethiopia. One view, found in *Yelammedenu in Yalqut* 1.738, *ExodR* 1.27, and *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* 39, is that the Cushite woman is Zipporah the Midianite, Moses’ first wife; this would be supported by Demetrius (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.29.3) and Ezekiel the Tragedian (59–64) who identify Midian with Ethiopia. That a single word, *Kushit*, “Ethiopian,” could have given rise to so far-reaching a legend is the assumption of Abraham Geiger, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der inneren Entwicklung des Judenthums* (Breslau, 1857), p. 199; and Halévy, *Moïse*, p. 114. Rappaport (*Agada*, p. 117, n. 141) disputes this and contends rather that the legend merely leaned on this word. But midrashic exegesis is full of just such lengthy explanations.

This is hardly the place to enter into the discussion of Josephus’ source for this episode, the literature on which is considerable; see, in particular, the following, cited in the bibliography below: Braun, Flusser, Halévy, Lévy, Rajak (1978), Rappaport, Runnalls, Shinan, and Silver. Alfred Wiedemann (“Zu den Felsgraffiti in der Gegend des ersten Katarakts,” *Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung* 3 [1900]: 171–175) mentions a graffito from which we learn that under the Nineteenth Dynasty, in the time of Rameses II, Ethiopia, then an Egyptian province, had an Egyptian governor named Mesui, whose identification with Moses has been proposed; Wiedemann thinks that the two were interchanged in an Egyptian half-historical tale. This may be the historical basis of Josephus’ tale, though Lévy (“*Moïse*,” p. 205) objects on chronological and other grounds to the identification of Mesui with Moses. Nevertheless, he postulates (p. 206) that Artapanus’ account reflects a historic conquest of the Upper Nile.

¹¹³ As to Josephus’ source there are four major theories: (1) Josephus derived it from a now lost midrashic source. This is the view of von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte* 3.2:18; Bernhard Heller, review of Meyer A. Halévy, *MGWJ* 72 (1928): 631; Rappaport, *Agada*, pp. 28–29 and 117, n. 143; Abraham Schalit, trans. and ed., *Qadmoniyot ha-Yehudim* (Jerusalem, 1955), 1:1xxi. The fact that a parallel for the marriage with the Ethiopian princess is not found in Artapanus but does appear only in midrashim would argue for this explanation. As to why it is not found in the older midrashim and, indeed, does not appear in rabbinic literature (*Targum Yerushalmi* Num 12:1, *Sefer ha-Yashar*, *Shalshet ha-Qabbalah*, *Divre ha-Yamim shel Mosheh*, *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* 45–56) until the eleventh century, Rappaport (*Agada*, p. 117, n. 143) suggests that perhaps Moses, the Levite and the war hero, was expunged by the opponents of the war-leading Levite Hasmoneans; but the Hasmoneans looked upon themselves as priests (*kohanim*) rather than as

Josephus may have resorted to this extraordinary expansion for several reasons. In the first place, he and the Jews generally must have felt considerable embarrassment over the fact that, according to the Bible, Moses, the great leader of the Jewish people, was actually a murderer who was guilty of having taken the law into his

Levites, from whom the Levites sprang; and in any case, Moses was such a national hero that such censorship seems unlikely. Another possible view is that it was expunged at a time when there was opposition to a Jew leading a war in foreign service, but we know of no such opposition. Another problem with this theory is that these rabbinic sources depict Moses as fighting on the side of the Ethiopians, whereas Josephus presents him as attacking them; still other problems are that in these sources Moses marries the widow of the Ethiopian king, that he refrains from having relations with her, and that he reigns as king of Ethiopia for forty years and then separates from her, whereas in Josephus he marries the daughter of the king and there is no mention of the other details. On the other hand, Zacharias Frankel (*Ueber den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig, 1851), p. 119, n. k), far from suggesting that Josephus borrowed it from midrashim, conjectures that the Ethiopian episode in the late midrashim was borrowed from Josephus through Josippon; but Josippon, as we have it, does not have any such episode. The assignment of a seemingly impossible task to the hero, in the hope that he will meet his death along the way is paralleled in the stories of Heracles, Bellerophon, Jason, and Psyche. (2) Josephus had an Alexandrian Jewish source, which was, as Braun (*History and Romance* [above, n. 2], pp. 26–27) postulates, a pro-Jewish reply to an anti-Jewish Egyptian account, such as is found in (pseudo-)Manetho. This is usually said to be Artapanus (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.432d); so Bloch, *Die Quellen* (above, n. 101), pp. 60–62; Jacob Freudenthal, *Hellenistische Studien* (Breslau, 1874), pp. 169–170; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:409–410, n. 80; Heinemann, “Moses,” p. 372. Incidentally, both Artapanus and Josephus are silent about Moses’ slaying of the Egyptian overseer. But Artapanus omits the crucial story of Moses’ marriage to the Ethiopian princess. Halévy (*Moïse*, p. 115) endeavors to explain this omission by asserting that he did so for apologetic reasons, inasmuch as he did not want to ascribe a love story to Moses; but in view of the fact that he attributes to Moses such un-Jewish concepts as the introduction of the worship of cats, dogs, and ibises (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.4), we may assume that Artapanus was seeking to impress his pagan audience; and such a love story as that of Moses with Tharbis would certainly impress them. Moreover, he attributes to Moses the foundation of Meroe, so named from Merris, his adoptive mother, whereas Josephus (2.249) says that Meroe drew its name from the sister of Cambyses. Josephus never mentions Artapanus or for that matter any other Hellenistic Jewish historian, though he surely had ample opportunity to do so, particularly in his apologetic treatise *Against Apion*. Lévy (“Moïse,” p. 201) postulates that both Artapanus and Josephus borrowed from Pseudo-Hecataeus, who tells (Diodorus 1.54) of the campaign of Sesostris against the Ethiopians. Braun (*History and Romance* [above, n. 2], pp. 99–100) on the other hand, in an extensive survey, agrees that Josephus’ story of Tharbis originates from a pre-Artapanean version, and that the omissions in Artapanus can be explained by noting that it was Artapanus’ habit to be selective

own hands in slaying an Egyptian (Exod 2:11–12).¹¹⁴ Artapanus, in his version (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.18), seeks to defend Moses by presenting a scenario in which Moses, in self-defense, slays a certain Chanethothes, who had been hired by Pharaoh, who was jealous of Moses' fame, to kill him. Josephus,

in abbreviating his sources by citing only religious and cultural data rather than warlike and erotic events. Hugo Willrich (*Juden und Griechen vor der makka-bäischen Erhebung* [Göttingen, 1895], pp. 168–169) adopted this view, but retracted it in his *Judaica: Forschungen zur hellenistisch-jüdischen Geschichte und Litteratur* (Göttingen, 1900), pp. 111–114. Gustav Hölscher ("Josephus," in August Pauly and Georg Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* 18 [1916], p. 1959) postulates a lost Alexandrian midrash as Josephus' source both for this addition and for many other changes in his paraphrase of the Bible. Schalit *Qadmoniyot ha-Yehudim*, 1: xlvi–xlix) concludes that both Artapanus and Josephus derive from a common source (he suggests Alexander Polyhistor), but that Josephus shows a later stage of development. Ben Zion Wacholder (*Nicolaus of Damascus* [Berkeley, 1962], p. 58) suggests that the source was Nicolaus of Damascus, since the interweaving of romance and warfare and an anti-Egyptian bias are salient characteristics of Nicolaus' style. The view that Josephus had an Alexandrian Jewish source has plausibility, inasmuch as a story about a war between Egypt and Ethiopia would be of particular relevance to the Egyptians, to whom the Ethiopians were a perpetual foe, never conquered. Still, we may wonder, though admittedly the *argumentum ex silentio* is hardly conclusive, why Philo, who writes at such length apologetically about Moses in his *De vita Mosis*, and is particularly concerned to answer the charges of Jew baiters, does not repeat this story, which would have served to answer so many of their contentions. The romantic motif may have come from the Ninus Romance, which, according to Robert M. Raffenberg ("Romance: Traces of Lost Greek Novels," in *New Chapters in the History of Greek Literature*, 3d ser., ed. John U. Powell [Oxford, 1933], pp. 211–257) and Braun (*History and Romance*, p. 9), dates from the first century BCE. (3) Josephus modelled it, or at least the Tharbis episode, on one or more popular stories drawn from mythology or legend: Salia, the Etruscan princess who was abducted by Cathetus, who was madly in love with her (Alexander Polyhistor, in Plutarch, *Parallela Graeca et Romana* 40B [315E–F]); the Amazon Antiope, who falls in love with Theseus and surrenders the city to him (Pausanias 1.2.1); the Roman Tarpeia, who opened the gate of the Roman fortress to the Sabine Titus Tatius, whom she loved (Livy 1.11; Ovid, *Fasti* 1.261ff.; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.38; Propertius 4.4); Scylla, who pulled out the purple hair which grew on her father's head and on which his life depended, so that Minos, whom she loved, might capture her city of Megara (Apollodorus 3.15.8); Polycrita, who (in direct reversal of the story of Moses and Tharbis) saved her country by taking advantage of the love for her of the general who was besieging her city (Parthenius 9.18; Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes* 17; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 3.15; Polyaeus 8.36); Peisidice, who betrayed her city because of her love for Achilles, who was besieging it (Parthenius 21); Leucophrye, who betrayed her father to her lover (Parthenius 5); Nanis, the daughter of Croesus, who betrayed her father to her lover Cyrus, king of the Persians (Parthenius 22); Demonice, who betrayed her city

clearly for apologetic reasons, omits both the Bible's and Artapanus' narrative of the slaying committed by Moses.

In the second place, the episode supplies a case history both in the causes of Jew-hatred and in the benefits that the Jews have given to society. On the one hand, it admirably illustrates Josephus' contention (*Ap* 1.224) that the two basic feelings of those prejudiced against Jews are hatred (μῖσος) and envy (φθόνος), as indicated by the fact that the Egyptians, by appointing him as their general in the extremely dangerous campaign against the Ethiopians, hoped, like Proetus with Bellerophon or like David with Uriah, to do away with Moses by guile. On the other hand, the episode shows how much the Egyptians actually owed to the Israelite leader Moses (2.281–282), inasmuch as he was able, through his successful campaign, to save the Egyptians from the peril of their most dangerous foe. And after the Egyptians were thus saved by Moses, Pharaoh, motivated by envy of Moses' skill as a general and by fear of seeing himself abased (2.255), decided to murder him. By thus shifting the reason for Pharaoh's wrath from his umbrage against Moses' murder of the Egyptian to envy of his military ability, Josephus may well be answering here such anti-Jewish writers as Manetho by saying that the Egyptians, far

because of her love for Brennus, king of the Galatians, who was besieging it (Plutarch, *Parallela minora* 15); Comaitho (Apollodorus 2.4.7); Pieria (Erwin Rohde, *Kleine Schriften* [Tübingen, 1901], 2:43, n. 1), who followed the leader whom she loved on condition that he make peace. (4) Josephus invented it himself. This is the view of Heinemann ("Moses," p. 374). He notes from the way that Josephus has embellished the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife how much such a romance would correspond to Josephus' taste; but as Martin Braun (*Griechischer Roman und hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung* [Frankfurt, 1934]) and Hans Sprödkowsky (*Die Hellenisierung der Geschichte von Joseph in Ägypten bei Flavius Josephus* [diss., Greifswald, 1937]) have shown, Josephus' portrait of Joseph depends largely on older legendary products.

¹¹⁴ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.8.43–44), clearly aware of the problem, adds that the Egyptian overseers were exceedingly harsh and ferocious, comparable in their savagery to venomous animals, and that the Egyptian whom Moses slew was the cruelest of all. Moses killed him, says Philo (1.8.44) "because he not only made no concession but was rendered harsher than ever by his exhortations, beating with breathless promptness those who did not execute his orders, persecuting them to the point of death and subjecting them to every outrage." Philo is conscious of the controversy that surrounded Moses' unilateral action and therefore adds, "Moses considered that his action in killing him was a righteous action. And righteous it was that one who only lived to destroy men should himself be destroyed."

from calumniating the Jews, should be grateful to them for the aid rendered to them by the Jews through Moses, and that Jews actually are patriotic, as is seen in the instance of Moses, who risked his life to save the Egyptians from the Ethiopian threat.

In the third place, the episode disproves the contention that the Jews are cowards and are militarily inept. On the contrary, Moses turns out to be a brilliant strategist who is fearless in battle against the Ethiopians; and the Jewish people can thus look back with pride upon having such a founding father, especially since even so great a military leader as the Persian king Cambyses was unsuccessful in his attempt to conquer Ethiopia, had to make an ignominious retreat to Egypt (Herodotus 3.17–26), and succeeded in conquering only the area immediately adjacent to Egypt (3.97). Indeed, the Ethiopians had a reputation for being invincible (Strabo 16.4.4), and even Alexander the Great had failed to overcome them.¹¹⁵

Fourthly, Josephus sought to provide more flesh and blood to the Israelite leader Moses. If we rely solely upon the biblical text we may well wonder what qualifications a shepherd such as Moses possessed to lead hundreds of thousands of Israelites in a trek through an unknown desert and in military struggles against numerous nations. The Ethiopian episode, in effect, turns out to be a training and proving ground for Moses, inasmuch as here, too, he shows military sagacity (2.244) in leading an army through a desert against a foe renowned for bravery and military excellence. Indeed, we may suggest that to some degree Josephus may have modeled Moses' campaign against the Ethiopians upon the biblical data of his campaign across the Sinai desert.

Fifthly, while the ibis was considered by the Egyptians to be a divine bird, Josephus, confronted with the Egyptian claim that their religion was of extreme antiquity, portrays the ibis as merely very useful as part of Moses' strategy.

Sixthly, the episode, including the love affair of Moses and the Ethiopian princess, which is not present in Artapanus, provides romantic interest for his readers. Indeed, Ethiopia always had a

¹¹⁵ Consequently, as Carl R. Holladay points out (*Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Historians* [Chico, 1983], 1:235, n. 56), victories over the Ethiopians became a frequent motif in enhancing the standing of heroes, e.g., Osiris (Diodorus 1.17.1, 18.3–4), Sesostris (Diodorus 1.55.1, 1.94.4; Herodotus 2.110; Strabo 16.4.4), and Semiramis (Diodorus 2.14.4).

romantic interest for the Greeks and the Romans,¹¹⁶ inaccessible as it was, and hence, as seen for example in the later novel by Heliodorus, was associated with all sorts of marvels in the Greek and Roman mind. But here, too, there is an apologetic strain, in that Moses abides by his agreement and marries the Ethiopian princess, whereas in the parallel stories in the Graeco-Roman legendary and historical traditions, the hero systematically betrays the traitress.

A major quality of a military leader, as we see, for example, in the portrait of Aeneas in Virgil, is sheer endurance in the face of adversity. Moses exhibits this quality when, for a second time, he must traverse a desert, this time as he is fleeing from Pharaoh, who, in his envy, is trying to kill him after the successful campaign against the Ethiopians. While Exod 2:15 states simply that Moses fled from Pharaoh and came to the land of Midian, Josephus (2.256) adds a number of details, namely that he was able to escape despite the fact that the roads were guarded, that he once again adopted the stratagem of going by way of the desert since he felt that his foes would be less likely to catch him there, that he left without provisions, and that he was, nevertheless, confident (καταφρονῶν, "indifferent, fearless, trusting firmly, having extreme confidence") of his powers of endurance (καρτερία, "perseverance, steadfastness").

Again, it is his quality of courage (θάρσος, "hardihood") which leads Moses to approach the burning bush, which, according to Josephus' extrabiblical comment, "no man had penetrated before by reason of its divinity." Furthermore, in the Bible (Exod 3:10) the voice tells Moses that he will be sent to Pharaoh to bring forth the Israelites out of Egypt, whereas in Josephus the role in which Moses is to be cast is military, since the voice bids him return courageously (θαρροῦντα) to Egypt and act as commander and leader (στρατηγὸν καὶ ἡγεμόνα; 2.267-268).

The picture of Moses that emerges from the Bible is sometimes that of timidity. Thus, at the burning bush (Exod 4:3), when God tells Moses to cast his staff on the ground, he flees from it when it becomes a serpent. In Josephus there is no mention of Moses fleeing; indeed, we are not told of Moses' reaction at all. Moses' bravery is further highlighted by virtue of the fact that while in

¹¹⁶ See Frank M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA, 1970).

Exod 4:19 God tells Moses to return to Egypt, "for all the men are dead who sought thy life," there is no such assurance to be found in Josephus, where God tells Moses to hasten without further delay to Egypt, "pressing forward by night and day" (2.272, 274).

Indeed, when Moses appears before the new Pharaoh, he presents himself as a military man. In fact, his first remark to Pharaoh is to remind him of the services that he had rendered to the Egyptians in the campaign against the Ethiopians and of his commanding, laboring, and imperiling himself for the sake of his troops—and all this without due reward (2.282).

Again, in Exod 5:20–23 the Israelites complain to Moses because the Egyptians had increased their oppression of the Israelites by requiring them to gather their own straw for the production of bricks, and Moses, in turn, complains to God. Josephus' Moses, however, refuses to waver either before the king's threats or before the recriminations of the Israelites, and instead is determined in his devotion to seeking his people's liberty (2.290).

Josephus adds to the portrait of Moses' courage by making more vivid Pharaoh's threat after the plague of darkness. In Exod 10:29 Pharaoh is quoted as merely saying to Moses that he should be gone and that if he were ever to look upon his face again Moses would die. Josephus says that Pharaoh was infuriated (ὀργισθεῖς) by Moses' words and that he actually threatened to behead him if he should ever come again and pester (ἐνοχλῶν, "annoy, trouble, be a nuisance to") him on this matter (2.310).

Of course, the greatest military achievement of Moses, as Josephus stresses (*Ap* 2.157–158), was his leadership of the Israelites during the Exodus. Again, the picture that Josephus paints is that of a general who, like Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, takes command of motley troops—indeed, they are referred to as an army (3.4)—and brings them safely to their destination through a host of formidable difficulties, overcoming both their lack of water and hostile tribes. It is particularly effective, in answer to the charge of the anti-Jewish bigots that the Jews are cowards, that Moses is admired for his courage (ἀνδραγαθία, "bravery, manly virtue") by a non-Jew, his father-in-law Raguel/Jethro (3.65). "Throughout all this," says Josephus, "he proved the best of generals, the sagest (συνετώτατος, "most intelligent, sagacious, wise") of counsellors, and the most conscientious of guardians" (*Ap* 2.158). It is significant that Josephus here stresses that a successful general must be intelligent, even as he later notes in a comment not found in the

Bible, that the Amorites, in their battle with the Israelites, showed neither skill in counsel (φρονῆσαι δεινούς) nor valor in action (4.94; cf. Num 21:25).

The high point of Moses' leadership during the Exodus occurs at the Red Sea (2.321–340). Josephus increases the magnitude of Moses' achievement by heightening the drama of the Egyptian chase of the Israelites and the vigor of their pursuit. In particular, Moses' achievement is all the greater, inasmuch as—a point made twice by Josephus—the Israelites were unarmed, whereas in the Bible, at least according to the Hebrew version of Exod 13:18, they were armed. Moreover, in contrast to Exod 14:7, which states that the Egyptians had six hundred chariots but does not indicate the number of horsemen and infantry, Josephus exaggerates the Egyptian threat by giving a round number—fifty thousand—of horsemen and heavy infantry. Furthermore, Josephus adds to the danger confronting the Israelites by noting that the Egyptians, by confining them between inaccessible cliffs and the sea, had barred all routes by which they might attempt to escape. In a scene which he paints that is reminiscent of Thucydides' portrayal of the Athenian debacle in the Sicilian expedition, Josephus increases the pathos of the situation by remarking on the wailings and lamentations of the women and children, "with death before their eyes, hemmed in by mountains, sea, and enemy." At this point, God (in Exod 14:15) berates Moses for crying out to him instead of telling the people to go forward, and he instructs him to smite the sea. In Josephus there is no rebuking of Moses; on the contrary, Moses, we are told, firmly trusts in God; he takes the initiative in an extended speech to exhort the people, and without any instructions from God smites the sea.

Significantly, Josephus paints the encounter at the Red Sea as a battle. As Josephus puts it, it was only because they were exhausted from the pursuit that the Egyptians deferred the battle. Again, while in Exod 14:16 the miracle is at God's initiative, in Josephus it is Moses who suggests the miracle to God, on the grounds that the sea is God's and that consequently he can make the deep become dry land.¹¹⁷ Finally, it is significant that in seeking a parallel for the

¹¹⁷ Even though Josephus generally downgrades or rationalizes miracles, here, while Exod 14:21 declares that it took all that night for God to drive back the sea, in Josephus (2.338) we are told that the miracle was instantaneous and that the sea recoiled at Moses' very stroke. Additionally and very uncharacteristically, Josephus

supernatural intervention at the Red Sea, Josephus (2.348) cites the crossing of the Pamphylian Sea, which retired before the army of Alexander the Great. He thus implicitly compares Moses to the greatest of conquerors, while also making the miracle itself more credible by indicating that it was not without precedent. But perhaps most important of all, Josephus introduces a totally new element when he states that it was Moses who bravely led the way in entering the sea. With such a leader we are not surprised to find Josephus' additional remark that the Israelites sped into the sea with zest, assured of God's attendant presence, so that the Egyptians watching this considered them to be mad.

One of the gnawing questions which any reader of the biblical narrative of the Exodus might ask is why, if Moses was such a great leader, he chose to lead the Israelites by such a roundabout route to the Promised Land. The Bible's answer (Exod 13:17) is that God chose this route lest the people should repent when they meet armed resistance from the Philistines and attempt to return to Egypt. Josephus, seeking to heighten the role of Moses, asserts that it was Moses who chose this route. Moreover, Josephus is clearly dissatisfied with the Bible's explanation, presumably because he realized that the alternative roundabout route likewise presented enormous military obstacles, and in addition, the lack of water in a trackless desert was a serious problem. Hence a sound leader would surely have chosen the nearer route along the sea-coast. Josephus, keenly aware of this problem, presents, in addition to the biblical answer, two further explanations: first, if the Egyptians should change their minds and wish to pursue the Jews they would be punished for this breach of their own pact, and second, so that the Israelites might come to Mount Sinai, where God had commanded them to offer sacrifice (2.322–323).¹¹⁸

(2.343) adds to the miracle by remarking that "rain fell in torrents from heaven" and that crashing thunder accompanied the flash of lightning. Furthermore, he heightens the miracle by stating (2.346) that the Egyptians were "punished in such wise as within men's memory no others had ever been before." See Horst R. Moehring, "Rationalization of Miracles in the Writings of Flavius Josephus," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alchristlichen Literatur* 112 (1973): 376–383.

¹¹⁸ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.29.164) gives, in addition to the biblical reason, a factor unmentioned by Josephus, namely that Moses sought, by leading the Israelites through a long stretch of desert, to test the extent of their loyalty when supplies were not abundant.

By amplifying the sufferings of the Israelites in the desert Josephus increases the stature of their leader Moses (3.1–12). In the first place, it is to his credit that he orders them to take water with them; and when this is exhausted and the water is so bitter that—in an extrabiblical addition—not even beasts of burden find it tolerable, and the Israelite rabble (ὄχλος) are incapable of “meeting the stress of necessity with manly fortitude (τὸ ἀνδρεῖον),” it is to Moses that they turn for salvation. By exaggerating the description of the Israelites’ misery because of their lack of water, in contrast to the brief statement in the Bible (Exod 15:27), and by likewise expanding on the Israelites’ indignation at Moses and their readiness to stone him, their general (στρατηγόν), as Josephus significantly terms him, Moses’ leadership role is heightened.

Indeed, in the face of imminent stoning by the Israelite mob, Moses fearlessly stands up to his critics and tells them that he has no fear for his own safety, inasmuch as “it would be no misfortune for him to be unjustly done to death” (3.21).

In the crucial encounter with Amalek (3.47–65), where in Exod 17:9, as we have noted, it is to Joshua that Moses entrusts the leadership in battle, in Josephus it is Moses who takes the lead in calling up the heads of the tribes and the other officers and exhorting these subordinates to obey him, their general. Moses then exhibits one of the crucial qualities of a great general, namely the ability to select subordinates. In this case, while Exodus says simply that Moses told Joshua to select men for the battle, Josephus tells us that Moses selected Joshua, and enumerates the qualities which the latter possessed, the first of which was extreme courage and the second valiance in endurance of toil. Again, while in Exod 17:11 all that Moses does in the encounter with Amalek is to hold up his hand, in Josephus he plays a much more active role, posting a small force of armed men around the water as a protection for the women and children and for the camp in general. Moses himself stays up all night instructing Joshua how to marshal his forces. Furthermore, at the first streak of dawn he, in Aeneas-like fashion, exhorts both Joshua and his men one by one and finally addresses stirring words to the whole army.

Josephus then exaggerates the Hebrew victory over Amalek by remarking that all the Amalekites would have perished had not night intervened to stop the carnage. He adds further details, thus adding to the praise of Moses as a conquering general: the

Israelites, with their most noble (καλλίστην) and most timely (καιριωτάτην) victory, terrified the neighboring nations and in the process acquired vast booty, which Josephus describes at length. Moreover, they enslaved not only the persons but also the spirits (φρονήματα) of the Amalekites. So inspiring was Moses to his men that after defeating Amalek they began to plume themselves on their valor and to have high aspirations for heroism. Furthermore, although Exodus gives no casualty figures, Josephus reports that not a single one of the Israelites was slain, whereas the enemy's dead were past numbering. Finally, presumably because he realized that a good general knows how to cheer up his troops with festivities, Moses, after the victory, regales his forces with festivity (εὐωχίας), as he similarly does after the victory over Og (4.101). And in another addition to the biblical text (Exod 16:6), Josephus states that Moses then rested the Israelites for a few days, presumably so that they might refresh themselves. That the credit for the victory is to be given to Moses is clear from Josephus' comment, that after the battle Aaron and Jethro/Raguel sang the praises of Moses, "to whose merit (ἀρετήν) it was due that all had befallen to their hearts' content."

Even when he looks upon Moses as a judge, Josephus refers to him in military language as a general (στρατηγοῦ; 3.67–71). Indeed, while Exod 18:25 delineates Moses' choice of subordinate judges, the advice given to him by his father-in-law Raguel (Jethro) is to review his army diligently, to divide it into groups, to marshal (διακοσμήσουσι, "divide, muster"; a military term) them not, as in the Bible, into sections of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, but rather in groups of thousands, five hundreds, hundreds, fifties, thirties, twenties, and tens.¹¹⁹ This organization, says Raguel, again adopting military terminology, will render God more propitious to the army (στρατῶ). Indeed, even when Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the Law he is depicted by Josephus (3.78) as a

¹¹⁹ Judith R. Baskin (*Pharaoh's Counsellors: Job, Jethro, and Balaam in Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition* [Chico, 1983], p. 66) remarks that the reorganization of Moses' forces is strikingly close to the formation of Roman troops, where each officer took his title from the number of men whom he commanded. Similarly, when Josephus describes the Israelite camp (3.289), he follows the pattern of the Roman camp, with the Tabernacle, as Thackeray remarks (LCL 4:459, n. a), replacing the *praetorium*.

military leader (στρατηγόν). And when Moses returns with the Law and lists the rewards that the people will receive if they follow the commandments, he urges them to engage in battle (περμαχητότεροι) for them more jealously than for children and wives, and he points out (3.88) that they will be redoubtable (φοβεροί) to their foes.¹²⁰

A major quality of a general, as we have already noted, is his ability to inspire his troops. In Num 13:17–20, when Moses arrives at the borders of Canaan, he does not speak to the Israelites generally but merely gives direct instructions to the scouts who are to spy out the land. The Josephan Moses, in an inspiring speech to the entire people (3.300–301), reminds them of the blessing of liberty which God has already granted them and of the possession of the Promised Land which is soon to be theirs. He then tells his people to prepare for the task of conquering the land; in an Aeneas-like pose, he reminds them that the task will not be easy. While in the Bible (Num 13:2) it is God's idea to send scouts, Josephus (3.302),¹²¹ ever seeking to build up the stature of Moses as a military planner, puts it into Moses' mouth.

Again, Josephus stresses that without Moses' military leadership, the Israelites are doomed to defeat. Thus when, after the report of the spies, the Israelites (Num 14:40–45, Deut 1:42) seek to go up to the top of a mountain without Moses' guidance, they suffer a massive defeat, the details of which are expanded considerably by Josephus (4.7–8), who thereby underlines the indispensability of Moses' generalship. While in the Bible (Num 14:25) God at this point takes the initiative in telling Moses to divert his route into the wilderness, it is Moses who in Josephus' extra-

¹²⁰ One of the embarrassing questions that readers might well have asked is why the Levites—Moses among them—were exempt from military service. The Bible (Num 1:47) gives no reason; but Josephus (3.287) gives a very plausible explanation, namely that the Levites were a holy tribe. As to why certain classes of people were exempt from military service, namely those who have recently built houses, those who have not yet partaken of the fruits of their plantings, and those who have recently been betrothed and married, the Bible (Deut 20:5–8) gives as the reason “lest he die in battle and another man enjoy what he has started.” Josephus (4.298) formulates the reason in terms of their likelihood to be less brave and shirk danger because of regret for these things.

¹²¹ So also Philo, *De vita Mosis* 1.40.221. On this point Pseudo-Philo (*Biblical Antiquities* 15.1) agrees with the biblical text.

biblical addition (4.9–10) takes the initiative in showing the importance of leading a good retreat.

One of the crucial qualities of a general is his ability to inculcate into his troops a lust for battle. This quality is seen in Moses in an extrabiblical detail (Num 21:23–24) in which Josephus states that before the battle with the Amorites Moses roused the ardor of his soldiers, urging them to gratify their lust for battle. So effective is Moses that immediately thereafter they proceed into action. It is not surprising that faced with such spirit the Amorites prove positively fearful. The rout that follows is put very simply in the Bible: "Israel put them [the Amorites] to the sword." This becomes in Josephus' version an elaborate description of a panic, which draws heavily on Thucydides' account¹²² of the Athenian debacle at Syracuse. Likewise, Josephus elaborates on the biblical account of the spoil of the Amorites taken by the Hebrews. The victory is all the greater and the credit to be given to Moses the general all the more extraordinary in view of Josephus' comment that by the time Og had come to the aid of his friend Sihon, the latter had already been slain, even though, according to rabbinic tradition (*SongR* 4.8 and *Midrash Tannaim* 4), Og was only one day's distance from him (4.88–96).

The battle with Og is a further test of Moses' mettle (4.97–98). That Og was a giant is clear from Deut 3:11, which states that his bedstead was nine cubits (13½ feet) in length and four cubits (6 feet) in width. Josephus, realizing that such dimensions would impugn his credibility, omits them, while stressing Og's huge size in more general terms by stating, as we have noted, that he had a stature and beauty such as few could boast. Moreover, while Deut 3:4–5 says simply that the Israelites conquered all of Og's cities and that they were fortified, Josephus exaggerates the achievement by remarking that the inhabitants of the realm of Og surpassed in riches all the occupants of that area, thanks to the excellence of the soil and an abundance of commodities.

In his last testament to the Israelites Moses (4.297), in a passage that has no parallel in the Bible (Deut 20:10–14), gives military advice to the people, namely, that when going to war they

¹²² See the comments of Thackeray (LCL 4:521, nn. b and c) who cites the parallel with Thucydides' account (7.83–84) of the retreat of the Athenians from Syracuse.

should select as their commander and as God's lieutenant the one man who is preeminent for valor (ἀρετῇ) and they should avoid divided control.¹²³

h. *The Virtues of Moses: Temperance*

One of the two famous mottoes inscribed at Delphi was μηδὲν ἄγαν, "nothing in excess." Indeed, one of the divisions of the ethics of the Stoics, the most influential of the philosophical schools in Josephus' own day, was, as noted by Diogenes Laertius (7.84), περὶ παθῶν.¹²⁴ As Goodenough¹²⁵ has remarked, Hellenistic theorists, such as Ecphantus, insisted that if a ruler was to be truly such he had to begin with self-discipline, since otherwise he would never be able to teach self-control to his subjects. Indeed, modesty is a key virtue in Josephus' portrayal of many of his biblical heroes, notably Saul.¹²⁶

It is in the possession of the virtue of temperance that Moses most clearly emerges as the Stoic-like sage. In particular, we may call attention to Josephus' final eulogy for Moses, where he is described (4.328–329) as having found favor in every way, but chiefly through his command of his passions (τῶν παθῶν αὐτοκράτωρ).¹²⁷

¹²³ Here, too, as Thackeray points out (LCL, 4:619, nn. a and b), Josephus is indebted for his language to Thucydides (6.72).

¹²⁴ See Attridge, *Interpretation*, pp. 165–166.

¹²⁵ Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928): 95.

¹²⁶ See Feldman, "Saul," pp. 79–82.

¹²⁷ Similarly Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.6.25) praises Moses for his temperance, noting that, though having been brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, he had abundant opportunities to submit to the temptations of lust; "he kept a tight hold on them [the lusts of adolescence] with the reins, as it were, of temperance (σωφοσύνη) and self-control (κατερίγ)." He adds (1.6.29) that he made a special practice of frugal contentment and had an unparalleled scorn for a life of luxury. His enumeration of the virtues to which he devoted particular attention (1.27.154) starts with self-restraint (ἐγκράτεια), continence (κατερίαι), and temperance (σωφοσύνη). Moses' moderation reaches the point of asceticism, as we can see from Philo's comment (2.14.68) that he abstained from food, drink, and sexual relations in order to hold himself ready at all times to receive oracular messages. So also Philo (*Legum allegoria* 3.44.129, 46.134) declares that Moses cut off all passions everywhere, in contrast to Aaron (3.44.128) who attempted rather to control them. Philo (3.45.131) considers that only such a man as Moses was able, through a special grace of God, to suppress his emotions completely.

The opposite of the Stoic sage, in that he does not have command of his passions, is Pharaoh (2.296, 299–307); and it is this unwillingness to be moderate (σωφρονεῖν, “to be sound of mind, to be temperate”), according to Josephus, which justifies the infliction of plagues upon the Egyptians. It is this intemperance, coupled with Pharaoh’s lack of wisdom, which impels him to prevent the Israelites from departing; and it is only fear which leads this un-Stoic fool, who is oblivious to Divine providence, to submit temporarily.¹²⁸ Even when, as after the third plague, Pharaoh is forced (ἡναγκάζεται) to listen to reason (σωφρονεῖν, “to be moderate”), he does so, we are told, only in half measure. Again, in connection with the seventh plague, that of hail, Josephus stresses the contrast between the sobriety of Moses and the lack of this quality (σωφρονιζομένου) on the part of Pharaoh.

The Egyptians are depicted by Josephus, in a considerable addition to the biblical text (2.201), as lacking this quality and indeed as being a voluptuous (τρυφεροῖς, “luxurious, effeminate”) people, slaves to pleasure in general and to a love of lucre, slack to labor, and consequently jealous of the prosperity of the Hebrews. In contrast, the biblical text (Exod 1:9–10) says nothing about the excesses of the Egyptians but rather gives as the cause of the Egyptian enslavement of the Israelites the fact that the Israelites were more numerous and mightier than the Egyptians and the latter’s fear that they would join an enemy in fighting against them. Apparently Josephus, self-conscious about the vast increase in the number of Jews in his own day largely through proselytism,¹²⁹ preferred not to remind his readers of the population explosion of

¹²⁸ See Holladay, *Theios Aner*, p. 96.

¹²⁹ Cf. Josephus, *Ap* 2.282: “The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, . . . to which our customs have not spread.” The fact that Josephus speaks of the masses (πλήθυσιν) and that he refers to their zeal (ζήλος) indicates that we are dealing with a mass movement. Further evidence of the spread of the Torah throughout the world may be seen in Josephus’ analogy (*Ap* 2.284) comparing the spread of the Law, that is of Judaism, to the degree to which God permeates the universe. He comments (*Ap* 2.210) on the gracious welcome extended by Jews to all who wish to adopt their laws. He states (*Ap* 2.123) that many of the Greeks have agreed to adopt the laws of Jews. On the success of Jews in winning proselytes during the Hellenistic-Roman period, see Louis H. Feldman, “Proselytism and Syncretism” [Hebrew], in Menahem Stern and Zvi Baras, eds., *World History of the Jewish People. First Series: The Diaspora in the Hellenistic-Roman World* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 265–285, 361–365, 383–384.

the Jews and the Romans' fear that their pagan religion would be overwhelmed by the Jews.

One episode in the Bible which seems to contradict this picture of Moses as self-controlled is the scene in which, while descending from Mount Sinai, he sees the people dancing around the golden calf (Exod 32:15–20). At this point Moses' anger, we are told, burns hot, and in utter exasperation he throws the tablets of the Law to the ground, grinds the calf to a powder, scatters it over water, and forces the Israelites to drink it. Josephus (3.95–102), most significantly, omits this whole incident, not only because it reflected badly upon the Israelites as a people so fickle that they quickly forgot all the miracles which God had performed for them, but also because it cast Moses himself in a bad light as a hot-tempered leader. As to the former reason, Josephus tries to explain that the people were seized by great anxiety about Moses because of his delay in returning and by the fear that he might have been devoured by a wild beast or had died a natural death. Josephus combines the two ascents of Moses on Mount Sinai, and instead of the scene in which Moses smashes the tablets, we have a description of Moses displaying them to the rejoicing multitude.¹³⁰

Josephus, in an editorial comment (4.49) not found in the Bible (Num 16:30), emphasizes that the chief lesson to be learned from the key challenge to Moses' authority, that of Korah, is the necessity of moderation (σωφροσύνης). Similarly, when the Israelite men consort with the Midianite women, Moses, in a speech not paralleled in the Bible (Num 25:16–18), in effect equates moderation with obedience to authority,¹³¹ stressing that "courage (ἀνδρείαν) consisted not in violating the laws but in resisting the passions (ἐπιθυμίας)." He then adds that it was not "reasonable after their sobriety (σωφρονήσαντας) in the desert to relapse now in their prosperity into drunken riot" (4.143–144). Indeed, in his farewell address to the Israelites before his death (4.184–186), Moses indicates that the purpose of the laws which he has conveyed to his people is to teach them moderation (σωφροσύνη). "Those who know well how to obey," he remarks, "will also know how to rule."

¹³⁰ See the discussion by Levy Smolar and Moshe Aberbach, "The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature," *HUCA* 39 (1968): 91–116.

¹³¹ We may note that when Josephus enumerates his canon of the cardinal virtues (6.160) he lists obedience (πειθοί) as one of them.

A similar equation of sobriety (σωφρονεῖν) with obedience may be seen in Josephus' editorial comment about the rebellious son (4.264). The same point is made in Josephus' discussion of individual responsibility (4.289), namely, that one should not impute to the fathers the sins of the sons, inasmuch as the young, in their disdain for discipline, break the law in many areas. The lesson which he hopes the Israelites will learn for the future from their many complaints to, and revolts against, him is moderation (σωφρονήσειν; 4.189).

Again, in setting forth the code of laws given at Sinai, Josephus' Moses gives an explanation (4.244) not found in the biblical statement (Lev 21:7 and Deut 22:22) about the prohibition of marrying a female slave, namely that "however strongly some may be constrained thereto by love, such passion must be mastered by regard for decorum (τὸ εὐπρεπές)."

In particular, Josephus identifies moderation with modesty (6.63). In Num 12:3 humility is cited as the crowning virtue of Moses: "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth." Indeed, the Josephan Moses refers to himself (4.317) as merely God's sub-general (ὁπὸ στρατήγῳ) and underling (ὑπηρέτῃ, "subordinate"). Josephus (3.74) highlights Moses' modesty in his willingness to take advice from his father-in-law and in his readiness to acknowledge this assistance. Similarly, Moses (4.157) is said to have modestly recorded the prophecies of Balaam, even though he could just as easily have appropriated them for himself, inasmuch as there were no witnesses to convict him.¹³²

Another indication of Moses' humility is the fact that in an era in which clothing was even more important than it is today as a sign of one's standing, Moses dressed like any ordinary person (ἰδιωτεύων) and "in all else bore himself as a simple commoner (δημοτικώτερον)" who did not seek to stand out from the crowd (τῶν πολλῶν; 3.212).

And yet, Josephus was well aware that the pagans frowned upon modesty and that Aristotle in particular (*Nicomachean ethics* 4.1125B7–27) was critical of the unduly humble man who, though

¹³² Thus Moses avoids the charge of plagiarism, so frequently practiced in antiquity. See Feldman, "Use, Authority," p. 492, n. 140. Josephus' statement is to be compared with that of the baraita quoted in the Talmud (bBB 14b) that Moses wrote his own book (that is, the Torah) and the section of Balaam.

worthy of good things, robs himself of what he deserves. Indeed, Josephus' Moses, in an extrabiblical comment (3.188–190), when he announces the appointment of his brother Aaron as high priest, very candidly and unashamedly, and in a way that would have appealed to Aristotle (whose ideal was the *μεγαλόφυχος*; *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.1123A33–1125A35), recounts his own merits (*ἀρετήν*), his benevolence (*εὐνοίαν*), and the perils which he had sustained on the people's behalf. Furthermore, he says that if the choice had been left to him, "I would have adjudged myself worthy of the dignity alike from that self-love that is innate in all, as also because I am conscious of having labored abundantly for your salvation." He reiterates this point when he is challenged by Korah (4.27) for his apparent nepotism. Here he argues that he is a nearer kinsman to himself than is his brother, and hence would never have passed over himself in bestowing this dignity if kinship were the force guiding him. Finally, he, like Horace (*Odes* 3.30.1), is not ashamed to say (4.179) that he has built by his labors an everlasting memorial for the public welfare.

i. *The Virtues of Moses: Justice*

The crown of the cardinal virtues, as we see from the fact that it is the subject of Plato's most famous dialogue, *The Republic*, is justice; and indeed, this is the most inclusive term for virtue in general. Here, too, Josephus emphasizes this quality in his major heroes.¹³³ Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1.9, 1366B) states that men honor most the just and the courageous, and he clearly implies that justice is superior even to courage, since courage is useful to others in war, whereas justice is useful both in war and in peace. Plutarch (*Cato the Younger*) gives still another reason why justice is superior to courage, namely that some courageous people have a start or advantage supplied by the generosity of nature, whereas all men start at the same point in their quest for justice. Plutarch (*Aristeides* 6.2), moreover, describes the term "just" as the most royal and divine of titles. That it is a title of great praise is clear from its having been applied to the famous Athenian statesman

¹³³ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 492–493. Attridge (*Interpretation*, p. 115) states that the quality of justice is ascribed by Josephus to almost every positively evaluated figure in his *Antiquities*; but when he then proceeds to cite eight biblical figures, he omits Moses.

Aristeides. He then goes on to remark that men envy the gods because of their incorruptibility. We fear their power, but we love and honor them for their justice.

Plutarch (*Demetrius* 42.5–9) remarks that justice is the most becoming function that a king has to carry out. Indeed, says Josephus (4.223), a king should have a perpetual care for justice and virtue in every other form. It is, however, as rare as it is useful (Plutarch, *Titus* 11.4–5). The reason for its rarity, according to Plutarch (*Cato the Younger* 44.11–14), is that even though it wins the confidence of the many, it provokes the envy of one's peers, as we also see in the case of Moses, who was envied by Korah. But the greatest achievement of the just man, as we see in Plutarch's discussion of Pericles (*Precepts on Public Life*), is that he never uses his position to destroy his political enemies, as we deduce from the forbearance with which Moses dealt with his great rivals, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And yet, great as justice is, the question arises (Plutarch, *Comparison of Aristeides and Cato* 3–4) whether the just man is useful only to others and not to himself.

Similarly Josephus (4.217), expanding on the biblical statement (Deut 16:20) "Justice, only justice shalt thou pursue," gives a theological reason why a judge must show no favoritism, namely, that otherwise God would appear to be weaker than those to whom, out of fear of their rank, the judge shows favor. God's strength, he says, is justice, and one who gives this away out of favor to persons of rank makes them appear more powerful than God himself. Justice, he concludes, is the sole attribute of God which is within the power of man to attain. What higher justice is there, exclaims Josephus in his peroration at the end of the essay *Against Apion* (2.293), than obedience to the laws?

The supreme compliment to Moses' justice is seen in Josephus' addition to Exod 18:13, when he declares (3.66–67) that all who came to Moses did so because they were convinced that they would obtain justice; and even those who lost their cases before him left satisfied that it was justice and not greed that had determined their fate.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ So also Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.60.328) remarks that when Moses reproached the tribes of Reuben and Manasseh, they knew that he spoke not out of arrogance but out of solicitude for them all and out of respect for justice and equality, and that his detestation of evil was never meant to cast reproach but always to bring those capable of improvement to a better mind.

Josephus must have been embarrassed by Moses' apparent lack of respect for judicial procedure in his impulsive slaying of the Egyptian overseer (Exod 2:12), and as we have noted, Josephus, when confronted with such embarrassing material, simply omits the incident.¹³⁵

Moses' sense of justice may be seen in his statement to God on the occasion of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram. In the biblical version (Num 16:22), when God wishes to annihilate the congregation for associating with them, it is the people who fall on their faces and ask God whether if one man sins God ought to be angry with the whole congregation. In Josephus (4.50) it is Moses who takes the lead and, appealing to God's sense of justice, asks him to exact justice from the sinners but to save the multitude who follow his commandments, on the ground that it is not just that all should pay the penalty for the infractions of a few.

Josephus is particularly eager to note (4.296) that the Mosaic code requires that every effort be made to avoid war, and that when wars are necessary they be conducted justly. Deut 20:10 reads simply, "When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace." Josephus, in view of his close contacts with the Romans, their ideals, and their methods of warfare, was presumably aware of their laws of war, as stated, for example, in Cicero (*De officiis* 1.11, 34–36 and *De re publica* 3.23.34–35). As Cicero puts it, the one object in making war is to live in peace unmolested; moreover, he says, international law teaches that a war is just only if it is duly declared after a formal demand for satisfaction has been made and rejected. One is reminded also of Virgil's famous statement (*Aeneid* 6.852–853) of the mission of the Romans, "to impose the way of peace, to spare subdued peoples, and to humble haughty ones." Josephus, in his considerable expansion of the biblical passage, is in accord with these ideals and methods. He declares that when the Israelites are on the verge of war, they should send an embassy to the enemy to make it clear that though they have a vast army and armaments, nevertheless, they do not desire to make war and to gain unwanted profit.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Philo (*Legum allegoria* 3.12.37) does not suppress the passage but interprets it allegorically.

¹³⁶ Cf. Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.43.243), who similarly notes, in an expansion of the biblical passage (Num 20:14–21), Moses' efforts to persuade the king of the Edomites to allow the Israelites to pass through their land peacefully.

If, indeed, God is the model of justice, he is also the model of the related virtue of forgiveness, and we see both of these in Moses. Thus, when he exhorts the Israelites just before his death (4.188–189) and reminds them that he was more often imperiled by them than by the enemy, he adds immediately that he said this with no intent to reproach them, since he did not wish to leave them distressed by reminding them of these things.

Connected with the virtue of justice, as we see here, is the quality of mercy. Indeed Josephus was confronted with what would seem to be an embarrassing call for nothing less than genocide in God's statement (Exod 17:14–16) that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and that (Deut 25:19) the Israelites are to blot out the remembrance of him. Aware of the embarrassment of such a command, Josephus (3.39–43) strives to paint the Amalekites in the darkest colors; it is their kings who take the initiative in sending messages to the neighboring peoples urging them to make war against the Israelites and actually to destroy (διαφθεῖρειν) them. Josephus depicts Moses as expecting no hostility at all, inasmuch as the Israelites had done nothing to provoke it, and he is consequently perplexed, especially since his people are destitute of arms and of all else. Josephus then adopts (3.60) the version of Exodus, which indicates that God will utterly blot out the Amalekites, rather than the version of Deuteronomy, which states that the Israelites are to do so. Thus, according to Josephus' version, Moses predicted (προεφήτευσε) that the Amalekites would be utterly exterminated. He does not say by whom or when; indeed, this prediction was actually fulfilled, inasmuch as by the time of Josephus they had disappeared.

That Josephus is sensitive to the importance of mercy as a constituent element of justice is clear from his omission (4.163) of Moses' anger against the commander of his army for sparing the Midianite women who had been guilty of leading Israelite men astray (Num 31:14–17). There would, however, seem to be a contradiction to this admiration for mercy in Josephus' account (4.191), unparalleled in the Bible, of the advice given by Moses to the Israelites just before his death, that they should leave not one of their enemies alive after defeating them. But here Josephus supplies a justification for his extreme attitude, namely that if the Israelites have but a taste of any of the ways of their enemies, they would corrupt the constitution of their ancestors. Any admirer of the Spartan constitution or of Plato's ideal in the *Republic*, and of

the care which they took to preserve the *status quo*, would appreciate such counsel. This will likewise explain Josephus' variation (4.300) of the biblical injunction (Deut 20:13–14) that in battle the Israelites are to slay the men but take women, children, and cattle as booty. Josephus enjoins slaying only those who have resisted, reminding one again of Virgil's "parcere subjectis et debellare superbos" (*Aeneid* 6.853). The Canaanites, however, presumably because of their threat to the very constitution of the Israelites, are to be exterminated wholesale.

It was particularly important for Josephus to answer the recurring charge of such Jew-baiters as Manetho, Apollonius Molon, Lysimachus, and Apion (*Ap* 1.249, 261, 264, 309; 2.309; 2.258; 1.309, 2.148; 2.121), as repeated somewhat later by Josephus' contemporary, Tacitus (*Histories* 5.5.1), that Jews, in their provincialism, hated the rest of mankind, that they are taught to show good will to no one other than their own people, to offer not the best but the worst advice to others, and to overthrow the temples and altars of the gods of foreigners. Furthermore, Josephus' contemporary, Quintilian (3.7.21), cites Moses, the creator of the Jewish "superstition," as an example to illustrate his statement that it is notorious for founders of cities to bring together a people which is bent on the destruction of others. Indeed, Manetho states (*Ap* 1.239) that by his very first law, Osarsiph, whom he identifies with Moses (*Ap* 1.250), ordained that the Israelites should have no connection with anyone except members of their own people. Josephus' contemporary, Juvenal, in a typically bitter remark, says (14.103) that the Mosaic law forbids Jews to point out the way to any non-Jew. Even Hecataeus (Diodorus 40.3.4), who is otherwise very positively disposed toward the Jews and highly laudatory of Moses, says that Moses introduced a certain unsocial and intolerant (ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον) way of life. Moreover, the Moabite women (4.137–138) point out that the Israelites have a mode of life wholly alien to all mankind, and they invite the Israelite men either to fall in with the beliefs of all other men or to look for another world where they can live alone in accordance with their peculiar laws.

In reply Josephus (*Ap* 2.237) follows the Septuagint of Exod 22:27 in reading "Thou shalt not revile gods," and deduces therefrom that "our legislator has expressly forbidden us to deride or blaspheme the gods recognized by others, out of respect for the

very word 'God'."¹³⁷ He emphasizes (4.207) that the law forbids blaspheming the gods which other cities revere, or robbing foreign temples, or taking treasures which have been dedicated in the name of any god. Indeed, Josephus, in his paraphrase in the *Antiquities*, significantly omits Deut 12:2–3, where God instructs Moses that when the Israelites enter the land of Canaan they should destroy all statues and devastate all high places. Josephus (2.304) has also discreetly omitted any reference to Exod 8:21–23, where Moses appears to show intolerance when he declares that the Israelites sacrifice to God what is untouchable to the Egyptians. Furthermore, while Lev 24:15–16 declares that anyone, whether Israelite or foreigner, who curses God is subject to the death penalty, Josephus (4.202), in paraphrasing the passage, omits mention of the applicability of this penalty also to foreigners.

Likewise connected with justice is the virtue of humanity (φιλανθρωπί), as we see in Philo and Macrobius.¹³⁸ In his reply to the anti-Jewish critics, Josephus stresses that the Mosaic code was designed to promote humanity towards the world at large (*Ap* 2.146), that "our legislator," that is Moses, instilled into the Jews the duty of sharing with others, and that not only must the Jew furnish food and supplies to those who ask for them, but he must also show consideration even for declared enemies (*Ap* 2.211–213). He even adds unscriptural provisions, such as that Jews are

¹³⁷ So also Philo (*De vita Mosi* 2.38.205, *De specialibus legibus* 1.7.53, and *Quaestiones in Exodum* 2.5). Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.27.149) says that the Jews are "a nation destined to be consecrated above all others to offer prayers forever on behalf of the human race that it may be delivered from evil and participate in what is good." Josephus (8.117) not only repeats Solomon's prayer to God at the dedication of the temple that he listen to non-Jews when they come to pray in his temple, but he adds his hope that God will do so in order to prove that Jews are "not inhumane by nature nor unfriendly to those who are not of our country but wish that all men equally should receive aid from thee and enjoy thy blessings." Strabo (16.2.36–37) says that Moses and his immediate successors acted righteously and piously toward God, but that later superstitious men introduced various laws and customs which served to separate the Jews from other peoples. As late as the fourth century CE the emperor Julian (*Contra Galilaeos* 238C) asserts that though Moses taught the Israelites to worship only one God, he was tolerant toward other religions, but that later generations had the shamelessness and audacity to insult other religions.

¹³⁸ Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 40:225; *De vita Mosi* 2.2.9; *De Decalogo* 30.164; Macrobius on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (*De re publica*, Book 6, cited by Wolfson, *Philo* 2:220, n. 146. See Feldman, "Use, Authority," p. 493.

forbidden to burn up the country of their enemies and to despoil fallen combatants.¹³⁹ This gentleness (ἡμερότητα) and humanity (φιλανθρωπίαν) extend even to animals, authorizing their use only in accordance with the law. When he declares that the Mosaic law requires the Jew to point out the road to others, it is almost as if he is replying to Juvenal's charge (14.103) that Moses' secret book forbids pointing out the way to anyone who does not worship the same God as the Jews. Moreover, says Josephus in an addition (4.276) to the Bible (Lev 19:14), one is not permitted the pleasure of laughing at the expense of impeding another's business by misleading him. The Mosaic law, he says (*Ap* 2.291), teaches men not to hate their fellows but to share their possessions. Furthermore, in *Antiquities*, Moses, far from hating mankind, is depicted (4.11–12) as bearing no malice even toward Korah and his followers, who had rebelled against his authority and who were on the verge of stoning him to death.

Likewise, Balak is concerned with the growing power of the Israelites, but he has not learned (4.102) that the Hebrews are not for interfering (πολυπραγμονεῖν) with other countries and that in fact they are forbidden by God to do so. Josephus also omits any reference to Num 12:1 where Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; such murmuring would surely have been regarded as prejudice against the highly respected Ethiopians. Moreover, in contrast to such people as the Spartans, who made a practice of expelling foreigners, and even the Athenians (*Ap* 2.259, 262–268), who persecuted those who held views at variance with those of the state, Moses (*Ap* 2.209–210) most liberally and ungrudgingly welcomed into the Jewish fold anyone who elected to share the ways of the Jews, basing himself on the principle that relationships should be

¹³⁹ The latter remark would appear to be contradicted by the fact that before leaving Egypt, the Israelites despoiled the Egyptians (Exod 12:36) and also by the fact that, after the victory over the Amalekites, Moses ordered the corpses of the enemies to be stripped (3.59). So also after the victory over the Amorites (4.93), and after the defeat of the Midianites (4.162). Likewise Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.44.249) emphasizes the humanity (φιλανθρωπίας) shown by Moses in not even having the will to take revenge against the Canaanites, since they were his kinsmen. Inasmuch as Moses is depicted as the greatest of legislators, Philo's discussion of the virtues of the legislator (*De vita Mosis* 2.2.8–11) is particularly relevant. There he enumerates four: love of humanity (φιάνθρωπον), of justice, and of goodness, and hatred of evil.

based not only on family ties but also on agreement in matters of conduct.

That Moses himself, according to Josephus, was not prejudiced against Gentiles is clear from the fact that he differentiated between Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as Josephus carefully notes in an extrabiblical addition (2.315) that when the Israelites departed from Egypt the Egyptians lamented and regretted the harsh treatment that they had given to the Israelites. His lack of prejudice is likewise displayed in the respect shown to Raguel (Jethro), his father-in-law, who is described as a priest held in high veneration by the people of the country (2.258). Indeed, while Exod 2:21 states merely that Moses was content to dwell with Jethro, Josephus (2.263) emphasizes his lack of bias against non-Jews when he says that Raguel actually adopted him as his son. To show the warm feeling that existed between father-in-law and son-in-law Josephus (3.63) emphasizes the gladness (*ἁσμένως*) with which Raguel went to meet Moses after the victory over Amalek and the joy which in turn Moses felt at the visit. In the biblical account Jethro brings back his daughter Zipporah and the children to Moses after a temporary separation; in Josephus the family had never been parted (cf. Exod 4:20). For his part, Jethro is depicted as showing consideration in not embarrassing Moses (3.67) for his inefficient administration of justice; only when he is alone with Moses does he discreetly advise him what to do.

The charge of provincialism and intolerance was probably not confined to the Jew-haters. As Van Unnik¹⁴⁰ has remarked, the words of Zambrias (Zimri) (4.145–149) would appear to be those of Jewish contemporaries who broke away from the ancestral religion as obscurantist and too confining, indeed as opposing universal opinion.¹⁴¹ This rebellion objected not merely to Moses' authoritarianism but also to the refusal of Judaism to be open to other religious views. This will explain why Josephus (4.140) regarded this rebellion as far more grave than that of Korah, inasmuch as the latter was directed merely against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, whereas this one attacked the very roots of Judaism.

¹⁴⁰ Van Unnik, "Midian," p. 259.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Ruth Schian, *Untersuchungen über das argumentum e consensu omnium* (Hildesheim, 1973). To form an exception from an opinion that is universally held is ipso facto to be completely wrong.

Generosity and magnanimity (μεγαλογνώμοσύνη) are among the key traits of a great man, as we see in Xenophon's biography of Agesilaus (8.3–4). Indeed, while the Bible (Deut 23:20) simply states the prohibition of charging interest on loans and does not give a reason, Josephus (4.266) uses the occasion to explain the reason, namely that "it is not just to draw a revenue from the misfortunes of a fellow-countryman," and that, on the contrary, one "should reckon as gain the gratitude of such persons and the recompense which God has in store for such an act of generosity." While it is true that this generosity extends only to Jews, the fruit of the field, according to the Mosaic law as interpreted by Josephus (4.234), must be made available to all wayfarers, both Jews and non-Jews alike. Indeed, says Josephus in an extrabiblical addition (4.236–237), one should even invite others, Jews and Gentiles, and entreat them to accept as guests the bounty which God has given him, "for one must not account as expenditure that which out of liberality (χρηστότητα) one lets men take, since God bestows this abundance of good things not for our enjoyment alone, but that we may also share them generously with others; and he is desirous that by these means the special favor that he bears to the people of Israel and the bounty of his gifts may be manifested to others also." In fact, while Deut 25:3 prescribes whipping the guilty without indicating the offense involved, Josephus (4.238–239) applies this penalty to the case of one who has violated these laws pertaining to generosity, because "through slavery to lucre he has outraged his dignity." After their afflictions in Egypt Jews should take thought of those who are in a similar situation.

We see an example of Moses' gallantry toward others in his rescue of the daughters of Jethro from ruffians (2.258–263). Here the Bible (Exod 2:17) says simply that the shepherds came and drove the daughters away, but that Moses helped them and watered their flock. Josephus expands on the charity (εὐποιάν) of this beneficent act (εὐεργετηθεῖσαι) and adds that "Moses, deeming it monstrous (δεινόν) to overlook this injury to the girls and to suffer these men's violence to triumph over the maidens' rights (δικαίου), beat off the arrogant intruders."¹⁴²

¹⁴² Philo (*De mutatione nominum* 22.128–129) also takes the opportunity to remark that Moses earned his title "God's man" through his beneficence (εὐεργετηῖν), which is the peculiar prerogative of a god.

Akin to the quality of gallantry is that of hospitality, a virtue that was very much prized in the entire ancient world, both in the Near East and in Greece and Rome, as we see, for example, in the episode of Glaucus and Diomedes at the beginning of Book 6 of Homer's *Iliad*. We see this trait also in the warm greeting given by Moses (3.63) to his father-in-law when the latter visits him after the encounter with the Amalekites. Exod 18:12 says that Jethro offered sacrifices, and that Aaron and the people joined him in the sacred meal, but nothing is said about a public feast given by Moses. In Josephus it is Moses who offers the sacrifices and makes a feast for the people. Furthermore, to show the respect that Jews have for non-Jews, Josephus has an extended description (3.64) of the banquet given by Moses in honor of his father-in-law, in which an ecumenical spirit prevailed, where "Aaron with his company joined by Raguel [Jethro] chanted hymns to God as the author and dispenser of their salvation and their liberty."

Connected with the quality of φιλανθρωπία is the quality of showing gratitude. Thus Jethro (2.262), in a considerable amplification of Exod 2:20, compliments Moses for his sense of gratitude and for his requiting favors. Furthermore, Moses, in an extra-biblical addition (3.59), shows the way to exhibit gratitude in the manner in which he rewards the valiant soldiers after their victory over Amalek and eulogizes their general Joshua. Finally, in his last speech to the people, Moses (4.315–316), in a supplement to the Bible (Deut 32), renders personal thanks to God for the care which he had bestowed upon them, for the help which he had given him in his struggles, and for the graciousness which he had shown to him.

Likewise associated with the virtue of justice is the responsibility to tell the truth. The Greeks were especially sensitive to their reputation as liars, as we can see from Herodotus' remark (1.136), made in obvious admiration, that the Persians' sons are carefully instructed to speak the truth and that they regard it as the most disgraceful thing in the world to tell a lie (1.139). Hence, it is not surprising that Josephus takes pains to explain instances of apparent deceit in the Bible.¹⁴³ In the case of Moses, Josephus, in an editorial comment (4.303), remarks that he had "in no whit strayed from the truth." And indeed, when exhorting the Israelites just before his death, Moses (4.179) remarks that "souls, when on the

¹⁴³ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," p. 493.

verge of the end, deliver themselves with perfect integrity," that is, with truth. In particular, Josephus commends Moses (3.73–74) for not claiming as his own the advice given to him by his father-in-law, this in obvious contrast to those Greeks who were guilty of plagiarism.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, even though Moses could have ascribed Balaam's prophecies to himself, inasmuch as there would have been no witness to contradict him, he is honest enough, says Josephus (4.157–158), to give credit for them to Balaam.

One of the incidents which would appear to contradict the Israelites' reputation for honesty and presumably Moses' reputation for integrity was Moses' permission to the Israelites to "borrow" jewelry and clothing from the Egyptians. Indeed, a pagan writer, Pompeius Trogus (36.2, 12–13), who is generally friendly to the Jews, states that the Jews carried off by stealth the sacred vessels of the Egyptians. One assumes that the Israelites must have practiced deceit in order to obtain these objects, though such theft might perhaps be justified in view of the way in which the Israelites had been treated by the Egyptians for so long.¹⁴⁵ In Exod 3:21–22 God tells Moses that before leaving Egypt the Israelites are to ask the Egyptians for jewels and clothing, "and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." Indeed, before they actually departed from Egypt God repeated similar instructions to Moses (Exod 11:2–3). Obviously the Israelites had no intention of returning these "gifts." Josephus resolves the problem by omitting any reference to the first passage; and in his paraphrase of the second passage he says (2.314) that the Israelites did not approach the Egyptians but rather it was the Egyptians who took the initiative to shower the Israelites with gifts, some to speed their departure, others to show their neighborly feelings toward old acquaintances.

Plato in his masterwork *The Republic* (4.443C–445E) defines justice, the very subject of the *Republic*, as a harmony of the virtues of wisdom, courage, and temperance. Likewise, Moses, in

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 492, n. 140. Philo, apparently feeling that inclusion of Jethro's visit to Moses and of Moses' acceptance of his advice would detract from the authoritativeness of Moses, omits this incident.

¹⁴⁵ So Philo, *De vita Mosi* 1.25.141; and Jub 48:18. In bBer 9b the rabbis emphasized that the Israelites did not want to "borrow" from the Egyptians and were satisfied merely with regaining their freedom; but God insisted that they do so in order to fulfill the promise that he had made to Abraham (Gen 15:13–14) that they would leave Egypt with great substance.

an extrabiblical addition (4.193), exhorts the Israelites before his death to keep the ordered harmony (κόσμον) of the code of laws which he has given to the Israelites so that they may be accounted the most fortunate of men. Indeed, as Josephus declares in the introduction to his summary of the Jewish constitution (*Ap* 2.179), the admirable harmony (ὁμόνοιαν) and beautiful concord (συμφωνίαν) which characterize the Jewish people are due to their unity of creed.

j. *The Virtues of Moses: Piety*

The fifth of the cardinal virtues is piety, as we see in Plato (*Protagoras* 330B, 349B) and in the Stoics (*Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* 3.64.40 and Diogenes Laertius 7.119). Similarly, Aristotle (*De virtutibus et vitiis* 55.1250B22–23) defines piety as either a part of justice or an accompaniment to it. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (4.778) praises Xenophon for displaying first of all the virtue of piety. Likewise, Diodorus, in his prologue (1.2.2), stresses piety and justice as the two virtues which historians extol in their heroes. The importance of piety, particularly for the Romans, may be seen in the fact that the key quality of Aeneas in Virgil's great national poem is *pietas*.

Likewise, in his very first mention of "the great lawgiver" (1.6), Josephus states that it was in piety (εὐσέβειαν) and in the exercise of the other virtues (the implication being that in the scales of value piety balanced all the other virtues combined) that the Israelites were trained under him. At the very outset of his work (1.15) he entreats his readers to fix their thoughts on God and to test whether Moses was what we might term an orthodox theologian who "had a worthy conception of [God's] nature and has always assigned to him such actions as befit his power, keeping his words concerning him pure of that unseemly mythology current among other lawgivers, albeit that, in dealing with ages so long and so remote, he would have had ample license to invent fictions." The crucial importance of piety is seen in Josephus' remark (1.21) that once Moses "had won their obedience to the dictates of piety (εὐσέβειαν), he had no further difficulty in persuading them of all the rest." Moreover, in answering the anti-Jewish attacks of Apollonius Molon, Lysimachus, and the rest, who had charged that the laws of the Jews teach impiety (ἀσέβειαν; *Ap* 2.291), Josephus emphasizes (*Ap* 2.146) that the first quality which the Mosaic code

is designed to promote is piety. He stresses the centrality of piety when he declares (*Ap* 2.181) that even Jewish women and children agree that piety must be the motive of all one's tasks in life. Indeed, in his peroration at the end of the essay (*Ap* 2.293), Josephus exclaims, "What greater beauty than inviolable piety?" As Holladay¹⁴⁶ has put it, Josephus is basically redefining ἀρετή as εὐσέβεια, which was indeed an integral part of ἀρετή according to the Stoics. In truth, it is the related virtues so important in Stoicism (Epictetus, *Dissertationes* 1.6.28–29)—magnanimity (μεγαλοφυχία), courage (ἀνδρεία), patient endurance (καρτερία), and sagacity (σύνεσις)—that bring about those great dividends so prominent in Moses as well—freedom from perturbation and distress.

Piety is closely related to justice, as Attridge¹⁴⁷ notes, inasmuch as justice applies to relations among men while piety pertains to man's relationship with God. Thus Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae* 2.62.5) remarks that the great Roman law-giver Numa Pompilius introduced two virtues through which the city would be prosperous—justice and piety.¹⁴⁸

That Moses was famous for piety may be seen from the statement in the *Life of Claudius* in *Historia Augusta* (25.2.4–5) that the most learned astrologers had asserted that 120 years was the limit of human life but that Moses alone, "the friend of God," had been given 125 years, presumably because of his piety. The introduction of Moses' name without explanation, as Gager¹⁴⁹ notes, would seem to indicate that the readers of this work would be expected to know who he was.

The importance of piety in Josephus' account of Moses¹⁵⁰ may be seen in the statement that God makes to Moses' father Amram in a dream (2.212–216), found even before the narrative of the

¹⁴⁶ Holladay, *Theios Aner*, p. 98.

¹⁴⁷ Attridge, *Interpretation*, p. 115.

¹⁴⁸ So also the terms are used together by Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 4–8, 11); Dionysius (*Antiquitates Romanae* 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 2.18, 4.92, 6.62, 13.5.3); and Diodorus 1.2.2, cited by Attridge, *Interpretation*, p. 115. Add Diodorus 12.20.1–3.

¹⁴⁹ Gager, *Moses*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ On the importance of piety for the various key figures in Josephus' paraphrase of the Bible, see Feldman, "Pro-Jewish," p. 228, n. 71. Attridge (*Interpretation*, p. 116, n. 2) cites twelve major biblical characters who are said to possess this virtue but does not list Moses. Similarly, for Philo (*De praemiis et poenis* 9.53, and *De vita Mosis* 2.13.66) piety is the key virtue of Moses.

birth of Moses, that he had their piety (εὐσεβείαν) in remembrance and consequently would grant them a reward, as he had given to their forefathers. The reward, he says, will be the birth of a child who will deliver the Israelites from bondage.

The source of Moses' piety, in the broadest sense, was undoubtedly his upbringing as a priest in the palace of Pharaoh, who was regarded as a god. Thus he must have learned the esoteric lore of the Egyptians.¹⁵¹ Moreover, he had sojourned with Jethro—the priest of Midian—whose daughter Zipporah he had married; and he himself was a brother of Aaron, the first of the Israelite high priests. Indeed, several writers—Manetho, Pompeius Trogus, Strabo, Chaeremon, and even the Jewish historian Artapanus—describe him as an Egyptian priest; and the fact that only Manetho and Chaeremon of this list are anti-Jewish indicates that in itself such a statement does not show animosity toward Moses. On the contrary, the Egyptian priests were said to possess esoteric knowledge; and Herodotus, for example, as he stresses throughout the second book of his *Histories*, was very much impressed with them.

Josephus¹⁵² stresses the role of Moses as a prophet, twice¹⁵³ identifying him as a prophet when the biblical text does not. Though he realized that to recount all of the plagues would be boring for his readers, he nonetheless does so (2.293) in order to show that Moses was never wrong in his predictions. But his true greatness as a prophet consisted, as Josephus reminds us (4.329), in the fact that whenever he spoke it seemed that one heard God himself speaking. In his final address to the people (4.303, 320), we are told that he predicted future events, "in accordance with which all has come and is coming to pass, the seer having in no whit strayed from the truth."¹⁵⁴ Josephus (4.307) avers that the reason

¹⁵¹ Philo (*De specialibus legibus* 1.8.41, 2.32.201, 4.34.176; *De virtutibus* 11.75, 32.174) refers to Moses as a hierophant (ιεροφάντης), the technical term which designates the highest officer of the heathen mysteries and the demonstrator of its sacred knowledge. Philo (*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 38.130) also refers to him as high priest. The most essential quality required of a priest, as Philo notes (*De vita Mosi* 2.13.66), is piety; and this, he says, Moses possessed to a very high degree.

¹⁵² See my "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus" (above, n. 19). So also Philo, *Legum allegoria* 2.1.1. See Wolfson, *Philo* 2.16–20.

¹⁵³ *Ant* 2.327 vs. Exod 14:13; *Ant* 4.320 vs. Deut. 33:1.

¹⁵⁴ This statement, that Moses' final song contains a prediction of events to come, agrees with rabbinic tradition; see *SifDeut* 307–333, *Midrash Tannaim* 192–204, and Palestinian Targumim ad loc. cited by Ginzberg (*Legends* 6:155, n. 920).

why Moses recorded the blessings and curses of the Torah was that he wanted to stress that their lesson should never be abolished.

Moses' concern to guard against the impious pretensions of false prophets may be seen in Josephus' comment (3.214) that he, in his piety, left to God, through the medium of the oracular stones on the high priest's robes, the "supreme authority whether to attend the sacred rites . . . or to absent himself [from them].

Moses' piety may be seen in the account at the burning bush (2.270–271), where he displays unshakable faith in God's providence. In an addition to the biblical text (Exod 5 and 7) he shows full confidence in warning Pharaoh of the serious consequences for those who oppose God's commands, including the cessation of offspring (2.292). Likewise, before crossing the Red Sea, Moses, in extrabiblical remarks (2.330–333), exhorts the Israelites, reminding them that God has fulfilled far beyond their expectations everything that he has promised and that he helps especially those who have lost all hope of improving their lot. Furthermore, in a speech that has no parallel in the Bible, Moses reminds the Israelites of God's past miracles and lists the rewards that will accrue to them if they follow the commandments.

Moses' piety may also be seen in the incident when he sends spies to the land of Canaan. In Num 13:17 we read only that Moses sent them to spy out the land. In Josephus (3.302), Moses exhorts the people to be of one mind and to hold God, "who is ever our helper and ally," in lasting honor.

Again, when Moses appeals to God for intervention against the rebellious Korah (4.47), he asks him to prove that all is directed by providence (*προνοία*, a key Stoic word), that nothing happens by accident (*αὐτομάτως*, a key Epicurean word), but that it is God's will that overrules and brings everything to its end. Finally, before his death, Moses, in a mighty profession of faith (4.180), declares that "there is for all mankind but one source of felicity—a gracious God. Indeed, he looks upon himself (4.317), as we have noted, as merely God's subaltern (*ὑπὸ στρατήγῳ*) and subordinate minister (*ὑπηρέτῃ*) of God's blessings upon the Israelites. We are told (*Ap* 2.160) that "having first persuaded himself that God's will governed all his actions and thoughts, [Moses] regarded it as his primary duty to impress that idea upon the community." With an attitude such as this it is not surprising that Moses looked upon God as his guide and counsellor (*ἡγεμόνα καὶ σύμβολον*).

That Moses was the most successful legislator in history, more so than Minos or any of the others, is significantly connected by Josephus (*Ap* 2.163–165) with his attainment of the truest conception of God. Indeed, the Jewish form of government instituted by Moses is unique in being a “theocracy,” a term apparently invented by Josephus to indicate that Moses placed all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God. In particular Josephus (4.200) stresses the effectiveness of Moses in underlining the concept of monotheism by noting the consistency of the injunction that the one God should have one holy city and one holy temple.¹⁵⁵ Truly Moses, says Josephus (*Ap* 2.170), did not make piety (εὐσέβεια) a part of virtue (ἀρετή), but rather made the various virtues departments of piety, so that piety governs all actions, occupations, and speech of the Jews.

That homage to God comes ahead even of personal loss is Moses' point in requiring Aaron, because of his sanctity as high priest, to refrain from any thoughts of grief upon the loss of his two sons. Likewise, Moses himself, in his humility, devoted himself solely to the service of God, declining every honor which the people wanted to confer upon him (3.211–212).

One of the most embarrassing biblical passages with regard to Moses tells of God's attempt to kill him (Exod 4:24), apparently because he had neglected to circumcise his sons.¹⁵⁶ It is then that his wife Zipporah saves his life by circumcising them. It must have troubled Josephus and surely would have amazed his readers that Moses, the greatest Jew who ever lived and God's chosen messenger to deliver his law, should have been so impious as to disobey so fundamental a precept. Hence, here as in so many other apparently embarrassing places,¹⁵⁷ Josephus resolved the problem by simply omitting the incident altogether (2.279).

Another embarrassing detail is the skepticism expressed by Moses when God promises that he will supply the Israelites with

¹⁵⁵ So also Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 1.12.67: “He [Moses] provided that there should not be temples built either in many places or many in the same place, for he judged that since God is one, there should be also only one Temple.”

¹⁵⁶ There is a rabbinic tradition that the reason they were uncircumcised was that Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, had made a condition, when he consented to the marriage of his daughter to Moses, that the first son of their union should be brought up as a Gentile. See Ginzberg, *Legends* 2:328.

¹⁵⁷ See, e.g., Feldman, “David.”

meat. In Num 11:21–22 Moses reminds God that there are 600,000 men to be fed and wonders whether there will be sufficient meat and fish. Josephus (3.298) obviously could not imagine a skeptical Moses; for him Moses is the supreme man of faith, and so it is he, rather than God, and without prompting from God, who promises meat to his people. Moreover, he portrays the Israelites, rather than Moses, as lacking faith and mentions a nameless “someone” (τινος) who asked Moses where he could get sufficient food for so many thousands of people.

Rabbinic tradition¹⁵⁸ looked upon Moses’ striking the rock instead of speaking to it to bring forth water (Num 20:2–12) as his greatest sin, since it showed an apparent lack of faith. It is because of this sin that Moses was told by God that he would not be permitted to enter the promised land. Again Josephus (4.85) resolves the embarrassment by omitting the passage completely.

That Jews, moreover, are not guilty of slighting even the divinity whom non-Jews profess to venerate is proven, according to Josephus (3.179–187), by the symbolism of the Tabernacle and its vessels and by the vestments of the priests, every one of which is intended to recall and represent the universe. The fact that after discussing this symbolism at some length Josephus says that this will suffice for the moment, “since my subject will afford me frequent and ample occasion to discourse upon the merits (ἀρετήν) of the lawgiver,” implies that the items in the Tabernacle and the vestments were Moses’ creation and that the symbolism was likewise his.

To be continued

¹⁵⁸ See Ginzberg, *Legends* 3:319–320.

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JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF MOSES

*Part Three**

LOUIS H. FELDMAN

3. *The Role of God in the Moses Narrative*

As to the role of God in the Moses narrative, we are confronted with an apparent dilemma. On the one hand, in his proem (1.14) Josephus clearly states that the main lesson to be derived from a perusal of his history is that God rewards those who obey his laws and punishes those who do not. And yet, that the *Antiquities* is a historical book rather than a book of theology is clear from Josephus' repeated statements (1.25, 192, 3.143, 4.198, 20.268) that he intends elsewhere, presumably in a separate work which he never lived to write,¹⁵⁹ to discuss such theological matters. In view of the several references to this projected work and of Josephus' own excellent education in such matters (*Life* 8-9), he obviously felt qualified to write such a work; and it had apparently taken a very definite shape in his mind, since he even indicates the number of books (four) in which it would be divided (20.268). But Josephus regarded his history as an inappropriate place for such discussions, at least at length. Ironically, while in the *Jewish War* he says nothing in the preface about his theological aims, he conveys a clear theological lesson in the body of the work. The explanation, as I have suggested elsewhere,¹⁶⁰ would seem to be that in *Antiquities* Josephus is presenting an apologetic for the Bible and consequently for God's deeds; however, he does so not as a theologian but as a historian, noting the consequences of the actions of his most important human characters.

* Continued from *JQR* 83 (1992): 7-50.

¹⁵⁹ Hans Petersen ("Real and Alleged Literary Projects of Josephus," *American Journal of Philology* 79 [1958]: 259-274) contends that the references in *Antiquities* to contemplated works are actually to the treatise *Against Apion*; but while *Against Apion* does contain a discussion of the nature of God (2.180, 188-192, 197) and of the Jewish code of laws (2.145-295), this discussion is relatively brief and in any case is not the central theme of that work, whereas we are told in *Antiquities* (4.198) that the work is to be about these very subjects.

¹⁶⁰ Feldman, "Use, Authority," p. 504.

The de-emphasis on God may be seen in a number of passages in Josephus.¹⁶¹ And yet his treatment of the role of God vis-à-vis Moses would seem to contradict this tendency to de-emphasize the divine. Thus, almost at the very beginning of the story of Moses (2.209), we are told the moral, namely, that no man can defeat the will of God, whatever countless devices he may contrive to that end, the proof being that, despite all the precautions taken by the Pharaoh, the prediction of his sacred scribe that a child would be born to the Israelites who would abase Egyptian sovereignty turned out to be true. But such a theme making Moses the founder of his nation would be readily recognized by Josephus' literate audience as closely parallel to Romulus and Remus (among others), who likewise were exposed at birth and yet managed to survive and become the founders of the Roman nation. The fact,

¹⁶¹ Thus, in his account of the *ʿaqedah* (see Feldman, "*ʿAqedah*," pp. 212–252), Josephus omits the concept that God tested both Abraham and Isaac, a motive that is crucial for the understanding of theodicy. Likewise, in his treatment of Jacob (see Feldman, "Jacob," pp. 137–141), God does not identify himself in Jacob's dream (Gen 28:13 vs. *Ant* 1.280); and while Gen 28:12 speaks of angels ascending and descending in this dream, Josephus, rationalizing, declares that Jacob thought that he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven; and instead of angels Josephus has phantoms of nature. There is a similar de-emphasis in the role of God in Josephus' version of the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Thus in Gen 39:9, in response to the latter's invitation to Joseph to have relations with her, Joseph cries out, "How can I sin against God?" Josephus' Joseph (2.51), however, says nothing about God and only later (2.52) mentions God when he appeals dramatically to her conscience. Again, in his treatment of Samson, particularly as compared with rabbinic accounts (see Feldman, "Josephus' Version of Samson" [above, n. 9], pp. 171–214, especially 204–210), Josephus omits such passages as the statement that the spirit of the Lord began to move him (Judg 13:25, 15:14) and instead stresses Samson the human hero. The most striking instance of the downgrading of God's role is to be seen in Josephus' treatment of Ruth. Despite the fact that the biblical account mentions God no fewer than seventeen times, Josephus nowhere in the entire episode (5.318–336) mentions God, referring to him only at the very end, where he says that he was constrained to relate this narrative in order to demonstrate the power of God and to show how easy it is for him to raise ordinary people to illustrious rank. If, to be sure, the reverse is true in the case of the book of Esther, which in the Hebrew never refers to God, whereas Josephus does mention him in several places, the explanation would seem to be that Josephus was aware of this striking omission in the Hebrew, which raised serious questions as to the appropriateness of this book in the canon; but even here he tones down divine intervention, as we can see when we compare Josephus' version with the apocryphal additions (see Louis H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' Version of Esther," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101 [1970]: 143–170), of which he was clearly aware.

then, that Amram (2.219) decided to entrust his child's fate to Divine Providence makes Moses parallel to these distinguished forefathers of the Romans. It is instructive to compare Josephus' comments (2.222–223) with those of the rabbinic tradition (bSot 12b, *ExodR* 1.24) on the scene in which Moses is exposed on the river in a basket. In the latter, as we have noted, the angels ask God how he can permit Moses to die when he is destined to sing a song of praise to him after crossing the Red Sea. Josephus would have found it difficult to make a scene with angels credible to his sophisticated audience. Instead, therefore, we have his editorial comment that through the rescue of Moses God showed that human intelligence is of no worth in the face of the divine will.

Once Moses is born, however, the emphasis is on his role rather than on God's role in the achievement of freeing the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.¹⁶² While according to *Exod* 13:17, it is God who led the Israelites by the long route through the Sinai desert rather than by the short route through the land of the Philistines, in Josephus (2.322) it is Moses who leads the way.

Josephus has, moreover, instituted subtle differences in his handling of the murmuring of the people in the desert which enhance the role of Moses. In *Exod* 16:1–13, the Israelites in the desert complain against Moses and Aaron because they lack food, whereupon God promises Moses that he will rain bread upon the people. Moses then tells the people that God will give them flesh and bread to eat. God reassures Moses that he will send the people flesh and bread. In the evening quail cover the camp, and in the morning there is manna on the ground. In Josephus (3.23–24), after the people complain, it is Moses who takes the initiative to approach God with supplication, whereupon God promises to relieve their hunger. Moses then reports this to the multitude, and not long afterwards a flock of quail appears, followed by the manna.

Again, Josephus shifts the focus from God to Moses in his description of the gifts which the Israelites gave for the Tabernacle in the wilderness. In *Exod* 25:2 and 35:5 the Israelites bring their gifts with gladness of heart toward God, whereas in Josephus

¹⁶² Contrast Pseudo-Philo (*Biblical Antiquities* 9.7), who, in the predictions of Moses' birth, cites the signs which God will perform through him, with Josephus, who puts the stress on Moses as the deliverer of the Israelites.

(3.102) their rejoicing is focused on Moses, their general. Again, while the Bible (Exod 31:3) states that the architectural skills of Bezalel are due to the Divine Spirit, in Josephus (3.104) it is Moses who sets architects over the project. He diminishes the supernatural element in their choice by saying that the architects were chosen according to divine command but that the choice would have been that of the people in any case (so also bBer 55a).

A difficult passage theologically is Num 14:12 in which, after the Israelites accept the majority report of the spies who had been sent into Canaan, God tells Moses that he will inflict a pestilence upon them and that he will in turn create a greater and mightier nation out of him. Moses answers that when the Egyptians hear of this they will say that the reason God killed these people was that he lacked the power to bring them into their land. God is then persuaded by Moses' argument. To say the least, this seems to reflect badly on God and appears to make Moses more merciful than God. Josephus, apparently aware of the theological problem, simply omits the whole passage.

A theological problem arises when one considers that the Torah, said to have been given by God, seems to contradict itself. The account in Exod 37:1–9 states that Bezalel made the ark of the covenant, whereas the version in Deut 10:1–5 indicates that Moses made it. Even if we attempt to reconcile the two versions by assuming that Moses could be credited with making that which an assistant completed, we are still confronted with another contradiction—in the Exodus version Bezalel made the ark after Moses' second descent from Sinai (Exod 34:29), whereas the account in Deuteronomy indicates that Moses made it before his ascent. Again, Josephus (3.134–138), apparently aware of the problem, skillfully sidesteps it by simply not mentioning who built the ark.

To be sure, Josephus seems to put increased emphasis upon God in the incident with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In the biblical account (Num 16:29) Moses tells the rebels that if they die a common death, it will be a sign that God had not sent him. In Josephus, however (4.47–48), Moses is a more active leader and not merely a passive recipient of miracles; he talks directly to God challenging him to prove, by inflicting an unusual death upon the rebels, that nothing happens by chance (αὐτομάτως). Indeed, it is he who suggests to God the idea of causing an earthquake to swallow up Korah and his company, just as he had suggested to

God the manner of the miracle of causing the Red Sea to become dry land (2.337). The net result of this change is to raise the status of Moses. Moreover, the use of the key word αὐτομάτως, a standard word in Epicureanism which is found also in Josephus' version of the crossing of the Red Sea (2.347) and of Daniel's prophecy (10.277–278), is Josephus' way of answering the Epicureans and of reasserting his agreement with the position of the Stoics, who, it will be recalled, are compared with the Pharisees (*Life* 12) in insisting on Divine Providence in all events.¹⁶³

God's role in the narrative would appear to be more important in the passage (4.87–88) which has no biblical equivalent, in which, before engaging in battle with the Amorites, Moses inquires of God whether he authorizes him to fight. Here, however, it is not God's role that is magnified but rather Moses', in that he is shown to have such a close relationship with God that he consults him at crucial moments. A great leader would indeed be expected to have such a relationship and to show his leadership by not engaging lightly in such a major undertaking without piously consulting the deity.

Similarly, while in Num 17:16–20 it is God who tells Moses to have the Israelites bring staffs so that he may demonstrate whom he has chosen through the staffs that sprout, in Josephus (4.63–64) it is Moses who, to quell the rebels, takes the initiative in directing the tribal chiefs to bring their staffs.

Again, Josephus (4.142) places the emphasis on Moses rather than on God in his handling of the apostasy of Zambrias and the harlotry of the Israelite men with the Moabite women. In Num 25:4 God, in fierce anger, tells Moses to seize the chiefs of the people and to hang them publicly. Josephus' Moses takes the initiative away from God and shows much more patience and diplomacy in convening an assembly of the people and in urging them, after their sobriety in the desert, not to relapse now in their prosperity.

One of the stock charges against the Jews is credulity, as we can see from Horace (*Satires* 1.5.97–103), who cites a proverb "Credat Judaeus Apella," referring to the fact that only the credulous Jew Apella would believe that frankincense can melt without fire. To

¹⁶³ See George W. MacRae, "Miracle in *The Antiquities* of Josephus," in Charles F. D. Moule, *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History* (London, 1965), p. 139; and Attridge, *Interpretation*, p. 98.

the Greeks, as we can see from Herodotus' criticism (1.60) of the ease with which the Athenians allowed themselves to be deceived by Peisistratus' ruse in returning to power, such credulity was hardly admirable. Indeed, it was a standard tenet of the Epicureans that the gods do not intervene in human affairs and thus do not perform miracles.

In dealing with miracles, Josephus was clearly in a dilemma. On the one hand, as a believing Jew, he could hardly deny the centrality of such miracles as the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the revelation at Sinai. On the other hand, he did not wish to expose himself to ridicule for being so credulous, and indeed he insisted (1.24) that Moses wrote nothing that was unreasonable, and that everything in Scripture was in keeping with the nature of the universe.

We can see the delicacy with which Josephus approaches the subject of miracles in his description of the burning bush. The Bible (Exod 3:2) states that an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn-bush. Josephus realizes that his skeptical, largely pagan, audience would have difficulty in accepting the idea that an angel appeared in this manner and might even ridicule the incident. He therefore attempts to introduce the incident by admitting to his readers (2.265) that it was an amazing event. He then omits completely the role of the angel, and describes in more exact detail the appearance of the blazing bush.

It is clear that Josephus was well aware of the fact that people generally are not convinced by miracles. Thus, while the Bible (Exod 4:30–31) declares that Aaron performed the signs before the eyes of the people and that the people believed him, in Josephus (2.280), as we have noted, it is Moses rather than Aaron who performs the miracles; and to add to his achievement Josephus tells us that Moses at first failed to convince the most distinguished of the Israelites by a mere description of the miracles, whereupon he performed them before their very eyes. Anticipating that his audience would have difficulty believing these miracles, he acknowledges that they were amazed at this astonishing spectacle. Indeed, it would seem to be significant, as Tiede¹⁶⁴ remarks, that

¹⁶⁴ Tiede, *Charismatic*, p. 211. As Tiede (p. 237) further remarks, this is in direct contrast to Artapanus, who makes Moses' role as a miracle worker central in his account.

nowhere in the treatise *Against Apion* does Josephus refer to Moses' ability to perform miracles, obviously preferring that he be known simply or primarily as a great leader, lawgiver, and general (2.158).

The ancient world was apparently ready to accept Moses as a magician, as we can see, for example, from the statement of Pompeius Trogus (Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36, *Epitome* 2.7) in the first century CE, that Joseph had mastered the arts of magic, and that Moses, whom he describes as Joseph's son, had inherited his father's knowledge. Later in the first century Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis historia* 30.2,11) mentions that one branch of magic is derived from Moses, Jannes, Lotapes, and the Jews. Likewise, in the second century, when Apuleius (*Apology* 90) enumerates a number of well-known magicians, he speaks of "Moses, whom you know."¹⁶⁵

Josephus, however, must have been troubled by the fact that in the encounter between Moses and the Egyptian magicians (2.284–287) the Egyptians are hardly simpletons and are also able to perform feats of magic comparable to those of Moses; indeed, in an extrabiblical addition to Exod 7:12 Moses magnanimously acknowledges their cunning. However, in the first place, it is not Aaron's rod but Moses' rod that performs the feats of magic; and the contest in fact becomes one between human trickery and divine power. Indeed, Josephus is careful to remark that in the contest between Moses and the Egyptian magicians the Egyptian rods only "looked like pythons." Moreover, realizing that the ability of the Egyptians to duplicate the feat of turning the river of Egypt into

¹⁶⁵ It is possible that Apuleius, who by his own admission (*Apology* 91) took these names from very famous writers (one would guess Pliny the Elder, who has the names of six of the eight magicians mentioned by Apuleius) in public libraries, is simply trying to impress his audience with his erudition; but it is more likely that the phrase "whom you know" is to be taken at face value, since it applies only to Moses. In the second century CE Numenius (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.8) presents a well-disposed and more accurate version, stating that Jannes and Jambres, Egyptian sacred scribes who are mentioned in the Damascus Document (5.17ff.), in the New Testament (2 Tim 3:8), and in rabbinic literature (*Targum Jonathan* on Num 22:22, *Yalqui* Exod 16.8, 171, *Tanhuma*, *Ki tišša* 19), and who were said to be inferior to none in magic, were chosen by the Egyptian people to stand up to Musaeus, the Jewish leader, "a man who was most powerful in prayer to God," and that they were able to avert even the most violent disasters which Musaeus attempted to inflict upon the Egyptians. On Moses' reputation as a magician, see Gager, *Moses*, pp. 134–161.

blood (Exod 7:22) detracted from the miraculous nature of the plague, Josephus (2.295) omits this altogether. Again, it is Moses himself who performs the feats, as a personal authentication of their supernatural origin, seeking to show (2.286) that the miracles proceeded from divine providence (πρόνοιαν) and power (δύναμιν). Indeed, Moses' aim is no less than to make Pharaoh understand that he is dealing not merely with another magician who rivals the Egyptians but with a representative of God.

To be sure, Josephus, in recounting the plagues, does not mention Moses and his rod as the agents of the plagues but rather has God perform them directly; but this is in order not to make Moses appear to be a mere magician, as Tiede¹⁶⁶ has remarked. The fact that Pharaoh refuses to understand the point of these plagues, which are commanded in Josephus' version by God himself (2.302, 309), thus puts the blame squarely on Pharaoh's shoulders. Indeed Josephus (2.293) apologizes for recounting the plagues, which he apparently thought would be monotonous for his readers, by stating that he is doing so first because no nation had ever before experienced plagues of this magnitude, secondly because he sought to show that Moses was not mistaken in any of his predictions when he forecast each of the plagues, and thirdly because he wanted to point out the consequences of offending God. A reason that is not given, as we see, is to show the power of Moses in bringing on these plagues, since he clearly sought to divorce Moses as much as possible from the picture of a magician, inasmuch as this kind of jugglery (2.320, γοητείαν) was sneered at by the Egyptians.

The miracle at the Red Sea, surely the most spectacular of all the miracles performed by God in connection with the Exodus, serves in Josephus' version (2.334–347)¹⁶⁷ to heighten the stature not only of God but also of Moses. Thus, while in Exod 14:13–14 Moses addresses the people urging them to have confidence in God, in Josephus he addresses God directly and shows his supreme faith in him, in his providence (πρόνοια), and in his might. The miracle itself is then heightened by the dramatic fact that the Egyptians

¹⁶⁶ Tiede, *Charismatic*, pp. 221–222.

¹⁶⁷ Howard Jacobson (*The Exagoge of Ezekiel* [Cambridge, 1983], pp. 37–38) notes a number of parallels in the account of the miracle of crossing the Red Sea between Ezekiel the tragedian and Josephus.

actually see the Israelites advancing into the sea, deem them mad, rushing to a certain death, and thereupon speed to pursue them, little dreaming that the Red Sea was reserved for the Hebrews and was no public highway. The miracle itself, however, is presented in dramatic but naturalistic, rather than supernatural terms, with windswept billows descending upon the Egyptians, with rain falling in torrents from heaven, and with crashing thunder accompanying the flashes of lightning. Josephus is clearly apologetic about the incident, inasmuch as he goes out of his way to remark that he has recounted each detail "just as I found it in the sacred books." One recalls in this connection Josephus' statement (*Ap* 1.37) that it is because the prophets alone are responsible for the Holy Scriptures that there is no discrepancy in what is written, their accuracy arising from the fact that their knowledge of ancient history was due to the inspiration which they received from God.

Realizing that his audience would be skeptical of such a miracle,¹⁶⁸ Josephus, despite his constant emphasis on the providence (πρόνοια) of God and despite his exaggeration of the miracle (2.346) as one in which the enemies of the Jews were punished in such a manner as had never before taken place within human memory, seeks to bolster his credibility by seeking a parallel. He thus refers to Alexander the Great's exploits, namely his crossing

¹⁶⁸ In contrast, as Wolfson (*Philo* 1:122-126, 347-356) and Robert M. Grant (*Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* [Amsterdam, 1952], p. 185) have remarked, Philo's attitude toward miracles is essentially affirmative, since, as he says (e.g., *De opificio mundi* 14.46; *De Abrahamo* 22.112, 32.175), all things are possible for God. Hence, as Grant indicates, in connection with the miracles achieved through Moses, Philo can state (*De vita Mosi* 1.14.82) that when God tells Moses that he will turn the river into blood, Moses can readily believe this because of the proofs that he had already been shown in previous miracles of Moses' hand and staff. Likewise, when Aaron's serpent devours the serpents of the Egyptian magicians, the onlookers, who had previously been skeptical, realize that this had been brought about by some more divine power for whom every feat is easy (*De vita Mosi* 1.16.94). Likewise, of the miracle of the Red Sea, Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.31.174) remarks that it is God's special property to find a way where there is no way. Nevertheless, it is striking that in his description of the plague of darkness (2.308), Josephus does not resort to rationalization, whereas Philo (*De vita Mosi* 1.21.123) tries to offer a scientific explanation in his suggestion that the darkness was possibly caused by an eclipse of the sun or by a cutting off of the stream of rays through continuous clouds compressed with great force into masses of unbroken density.

of the Pamphylian Sea (2.347–348), which Plutarch (*Alexander* 17; cf. Appian, *Civil War* 2.149) speaks of as miraculous, and which Arrian (*Anabasis* 1.26) similarly explains as due to a change of wind caused by an act of providence.¹⁶⁹ Even so, Josephus (2.347) covers himself by affecting a noncommittal attitude, stating that the miracle of the Red Sea had been accomplished “whether by the will of God or maybe by accident,” and closing his discussion by an expression of politeness to his readers, namely that “on these matters everyone is welcome to his own opinion.”¹⁷⁰ Familiar as he was with the snide remarks of the Jew-baiters, Josephus might well have been acquainted with the rationalized view of the Memphians as cited by Artapanus (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.35) that Moses, being familiar with the countryside, watched for the ebb tide and then led the Israelite multitudes through the dry part of the sea. Instead he preferred to relate the miracle which, he presumably felt, added to the stature of Moses as a general worthy of comparison, at least by implication, with Alexander the Great, and worthy of such a divine act of providence.¹⁷¹

Josephus similarly is apologetic and resorts to rationalization in his accounts of the sweetening of the bitter waters at Marah (3.5–9), the supplying of the Israelites with quail and manna (3.13–32), and the issuing of water from the rock (3.33–38). In the first case, while the Bible (Exod 15:25) states that God showed Moses a piece of wood which he then threw into the water to sweeten it, in Josephus Moses picks up a piece of wood on his own initiative, splits it in two, and flings it into the well. Josephus then adds to the

¹⁶⁹ Josephus (2.349) similarly remarks that Moses surmised that it was due to the providence of God that the arms of the Egyptians were carried by the tide and the force of the wind up to the camp of the Israelites.

¹⁷⁰ A similar formula is found in 1.108, 3.81, 4.158, 10.281, 17.354. But, as Grant (*Miracle and Natural Law*, p. 183) remarks, the fact that Josephus (4.109), far from omitting the story of Balaam’s talking ass or using this formula in that case, says that it was by the will of God that Balaam’s ass received a human voice shows that he did not, at any rate, look with suspicion at this extraordinary miracle.

¹⁷¹ Philo (*De vita Mosi* 2.45.247–251) recounts the miracle as an illustration of Moses’ prophetic status, in contrast to Josephus, who significantly looks upon it as illustrating Moses’ genius as a leader and as a general. We may also contrast with Josephus the approach of Pseudo-Philo, in his *Biblical Antiquities* (10.5), who, without any apology, stresses the miraculous aspect and the awesome intervention of God. The same is true of the rabbinic tradition, on which see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:11, n. 55.

biblical narrative the rationalizing detail that Moses, likewise on his own initiative, instructed the people to drain off the larger part of the water, assuring them that what would remain would be drinkable.¹⁷²

Again, in connection with the miracle of the quail, Josephus, by adding the statement that quail are a species of bird abundant above all others in that area and that they are accustomed to skim the ground, clearly rationalizes the miracle (Exod 16:13). Furthermore, while the miracle of the manna in Exod 16:13 is due solely to God, Josephus highlights the role of Moses, adding that while Moses raised his hands in prayer, a dew descended and congealed about his hands. Similarly, in the gathering of the manna, Josephus adds that orders were given, presumably by Moses, that each person should collect the same amount. Again, Josephus rationalizes so as to have it appear that the manna was not so exceptional an event, since he notes that "to this very day" that entire region of Arabia is watered by a rain similar to that which the Israelites experienced in the days of Moses.

In connection with the miracle of the water from the rock (Exod 17:7), there is, to be sure, no attempt to rationalize.¹⁷³ Josephus, as in the case of the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea (2.347), seeks support for the divine intervention by stressing that a writing deposited in the Temple attests to it; and as we have noted above, Josephus elsewhere (*Ap* 1.37) is careful to point out that the prophets alone had the privilege of recording and vouching for these ancient records. Again, Josephus (3.38) goes out of his way to say that the miracle led the Israelites to admire Moses, since they realized that the reason why the miracle had been granted them was that God held Moses in such high esteem.

¹⁷² In contrast, Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.33.185) wavers between explaining that the tree which God showed Moses was formed by nature to accomplish this service which had hitherto remained unknown, or postulating that it was created for precisely this occasion. The tannaitic rabbis, as Ginzberg remarks (*Legends* 6:14, n. 82), apparently attempted like Josephus to rationalize the miracle, perhaps in direct opposition to what they conceived as excessive reliance upon miracles in the claims of the first Christians.

¹⁷³ Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.38.211) wavers between explaining the miracle in natural terms (the rock originally contained a spring and now had its artery severed) or suggesting perhaps that then for the first time a body of water collected in it through hidden channels and was forced out by the impact of Moses' staff.

An apparent exception to the general de-emphasis of miracles would seem to be Josephus' account of the battle with the Amalekites (Exod 17:8–13), in which the Israelites are victorious only so long as Moses holds up his hands erect (3.53). But here, too, as Tiede¹⁷⁴ notes, Josephus explains the victory in rational terms by dwelling at length on the military preparations, omitting the fact that Moses held the rod of God in his hands, and adding that Moses withdrew to the mountain, committing the battle to God and to his commander Joshua.

Even in the case of the revelation at Sinai, so central for Jewish beliefs, Josephus, well aware that his pagan readers would be skeptical, repeats his familiar formula, that each of his readers is free to think of it as he will (3.81).¹⁷⁵ But again he is careful to remark here that he has recorded the events as they are written in the sacred books; and thus, as he says in 1.37 and as I have noted above, he can claim the reliability of these statements inasmuch as they are vouched for by the prophets, who guarded these ancient records.

One of the great divine miracles in connection with the Exodus is that, according to the Bible (Exod 13:21), God went before the Israelites, protecting them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire. The magnitude and importance of this miracle is realized by Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.29.165–166), who refers to it as “a prodigy [τεράστιον], a mighty work [μεγαλούργημα] of nature, the like of which none can remember to have been seen in the past,” and suggests that perhaps there was enclosed within the cloud an unseen angel. In view of the importance of this miracle, it is most significant that Josephus (2.323) omits it totally, probably because he feared that his readers would find it incredible.

¹⁷⁴ Tiede, *Charismatic*, p. 227.

¹⁷⁵ It is obvious, as Gerhard Delling remarks (“Josephus und das Wunderbare,” *Novum Testamentum* 2 [1957–58]: 300 and 306), that Josephus himself is not expressing any doubt on the matter, since he would be guilty of blatant self-contradiction if he were to doubt that God was the author of the Law. It is significant that Josephus, though generally well aware of the midrashic tradition, says nothing of the many dangers which that tradition indicates Moses had to overcome when receiving the Torah, or of the way in which he convinced the angels that mankind needed it more than they did, or of the secret remedies and the knowledge of the holy names which they gave him. See the discussion by Ginzberg (*Legends* 3:109–119).

Another miracle which his readers would presumably find difficult to comprehend was the filling of the Tabernacle by the Divine Presence (Exod 40:34–35), which prevented Moses from entering it. Josephus rationalizes this phenomenon by explaining that “a delicious dew was distilled [from the cloud], revealing God’s presence to those who both desired it and believed in it” (3.203).

Still another miracle which presumably would have dumbfounded Josephus’ readers was the Urim and Thummim, the priestly device for obtaining oracles, the exact workings of which remain unexplained in the Bible (Exod 28:30). Josephus tells his readers at some length exactly how they worked and sarcastically remarks that “that alone should be marvel enough for such as have not cultivated a superior wisdom to disparage all religious things” (3.215–217).¹⁷⁶ He remarks further that so brilliant a light flashed from the stones on the high priest’s breastplate that it was evident to everyone that God had come to their aid. Hence, he concludes, “those Greeks who revere our practices, because they can in no way gainsay them,” call the breastplate *logion*, that is “oracle,” the word used in the Septuagint (Exod 28:15) to translate the term *hoshen*, clearly a term which would be readily intelligible to the Greeks, for whom oracles were so vital a part of their religion.

Another enigmatic passage in the Bible (Num 21:8–9) records that God told Moses to fashion a figure of a serpent and to mount it on a standard, so that if anyone who had been bitten would look at it he would recover. Moses faithfully followed these instructions, and the serpent indeed had this miraculous property. Josephus (4.85) clearly understood that such a tale would raise questions about his credibility, and so he omitted it completely.

4. *Josephus as Political Theorist*

Josephus’ interest in politics may be seen in the statement in his proem (1.5) that his history will embrace the political constitution (διτάξις τοῦ πολιτεύματος) of the Jewish people. Like Plato in the *Republic*, with which he was clearly acquainted,¹⁷⁷ Josephus is

¹⁷⁶ This apparent exception to Josephus’ de-emphasis on the role of God may be explained by the fact that Josephus, who is so proud of his status as a priest, emphasizes here the importance of the priestly role.

¹⁷⁷ See *Ap* 2.223–224, 256–257.

much interested in the question of the ideal form of government (*Ap* 2.164), which the lawgiver Moses identifies either as an aristocracy (4.223) or, as noted above, coining a new term (*Ap* 2.165), a theocracy.

The worst form of government, for Josephus as for Plato (*Republic* 566C–580B), is tyranny. The great attack on Moses by Zambrias (Zimri; 4.146) accuses him of acting tyrannically (τυραννικῶς) under the pretext of following the laws and obeying God but actually depriving the Israelites of freedom of action (αὐτεξούσιον, “self-determination”). Zambrias (4.148–149), speaking frankly and as a free (ἐλευθέρου) man, makes a very strong case for independence of judgment when he declares that he prefers “to get at the truth for myself from many persons, and not to live as under a tyranny, hanging all my hopes for my whole life upon one [Moses].” Again, when the Israelites, as they so often do, complain against Moses and decide to defy his leadership, the worst epithet that they can apply to him is that he is a tyrant (4.3). The most effective argument of the most powerful revolutionary that Moses faced, Korah, is that Moses had defied his own laws in acting undemocratically by giving the priesthood to his brother Aaron, not by a majority vote of the people but rather acting in the manner of tyrants (τυράννων . . . τρόπῳ; 4.15–16). And when the multitude, excited by Korah, are bent on stoning Moses, they shout (4.22), “Away with the tyrant, and let the people be rid of their bondage to one who, in the pretended name of God, imposes his despotic orders [βίαια προστάγματα].”¹⁷⁸

It seems surprising, in view of the fact that the Bible, to be sure only once (*Deut* 33:5), refers to Moses as a king, and in view of the further fact that one of Josephus’ favorite authors, Herodotus (3.82), clearly agrees with the Persian opinion that if the king is virtuous the ideal form of government is a monarchy, that

¹⁷⁸ For other expressions of Josephus’ opposition to tyranny, see his attack on the rebel Nimrod for gradually transforming his state into a tyranny, completely dependent upon his own power (1.114); his attack on Abimelech for transforming the government into a tyranny, acting in defiance of the laws and of the principles of justice (5.234); and his criticism of the sons of the high priest Eli, whose behavior is said to differ not at all from that of tyrants in their violation of all the laws (5.339).

Josephus, unlike Philo, nowhere refers to Moses as a king.¹⁷⁹ This is all the more remarkable inasmuch as Moses, in Josephus' description, seems to bear all the qualities of a Hellenistic king—lawgiver, judge, general, and shepherd of his people.¹⁸⁰ The very fact that his opponents call him “tyrant” would seem to indicate that in Josephus' mind he was the counterpart of “tyrant,” namely king.

One reason for this omission may be that Moses was accused of being ambitious to seize the kingship of Egypt—a conclusion that the sacred scribes of Egypt had drawn when, according to Josephus (2.233–234), the infant Moses flung to the ground the crown that Pharaoh had affectionately put on his head.¹⁸¹ Another reason may be (*Ap* 2.154) that Josephus, after enumerating the various forms of government—monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy—contrasts all these forms of government with the unique form promulgated by God through Moses, namely theocracy (*Ap* 2.165). It would, therefore, have been self-contradictory for Josephus to refer to both theocracy and monarchy as ideal. Indeed, in his summary of the Mosaic code, Josephus (4.224; cf. Deut 17:14–20) adds that the king is to do nothing without the approval of the high priest and the counsel of his senators. Perhaps Josephus, himself a priest, was unwilling to give up his role in the ideal state as run by priests, in order to give nonpriestly rulers a place in the

¹⁷⁹ See Meeks, *Prophet-King*, pp. 134–135. Philo (*De vita Mosis* 2.51.292), on the other hand, refers to him on a number of occasions as a king (*De vita Mosis* 1.11.62, 1.27.148–149, 1.28.158, 1.60.334), and declares (2.1.2) that Moses combined in his person, in clear allusion to the Platonic ideal ruler, the philosopher-king, the two faculties of the kingly and the philosophical, and concludes his lengthy biography of Moses by referring to him with his several titles, the first of which is “king.”

¹⁸⁰ See Goodenough, *Political Philosophy* (above, n. 125), p. 57. The description of the ideal king in Dio Chrysostom (*Orations* 1.12–13) would seem to fit the selfless Moses extremely well: “He [the king] receives it [his scepter] on no other title than that he shall plan and study the welfare of his subjects, becoming indeed a guide and shepherd of his people, not, as someone [Plato, *Republic* 4.421b] has said, a caterer and banqueter at their expense. Nay, he ought to be just such a man as to think that he should not sleep at all the whole night through as having no leisure for idleness.” See also Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 1.15–16, 1.21, 1.38, 3.51–54; and Epictetus, *Dissertationes* 2.14.13.

¹⁸¹ A similar conclusion is found in Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.9.46).

government. Perhaps Josephus recognized the popular belief (see Isocrates, *Nicocles* 5) that kings are equal to gods and wanted to avoid, as we have noted, the assertion that Moses was divine. Surely he was not antimonarchic as such,¹⁸² as we can see from the close relations that he had with King Agrippa II (*Life* 364–367, *Ap* 1.51).

In particular, Josephus is much concerned with the question of the relationship between law and freedom. When the Egyptians, beset by the mighty Ethiopians, despair of freedom (2.252), it is ironically Moses who protects it for them; and it is Moses who devotes all his efforts to procuring his people's liberty from the oppressive Egyptians (2.290). On the one hand, the watchword of the Exodus is the liberty that the Israelites have won from Egyptian bondage; and when the people angrily complain against him because of their lack of food and water in the desert, Moses (3.19) answers them by declaring that "it was not from negligence that God thus tarried" in helping them but rather "to test their manhood and their delight in liberty [ἐλευθερίαν]." Again, when confronted with the threat of the Amalekites, Moses (3.44) bids the Israelites to "take courage, trusting in God's decree, through which they have been promoted to liberty [ἐλευθερίαν]." Furthermore, as we have noted, when Moses' father-in-law Jethro visits him, Aaron and his company, together with Jethro, chant hymns to God (3.64) as the author and dispenser of their salvation and their liberty (ἐλευθερίας). Indeed, when Moses addresses his people on the borders of Canaan, just before the spies are sent to scout the land, he reminds them (3.300; cf. 4.2) that God had resolved to grant them two blessings: liberty (ἐλευθερίαν) and the possession of a favored land. Likewise, when confronted with the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (4.42), Moses reminds the people of the great toils that he had undergone for their liberty (ἐλευθερίας). It is significant that when the conspirators to assassinate the emperor Gaius Caligula choose a password (19.54), the word they choose is "liberty" (ἐλευθερίας).

On the other hand, Moses is praised (*Ap* 2.173) because he gave to the Israelites a system of law that is all-embracing, leaving nothing, however insignificant, to the discretion of the individual

¹⁸² Pace Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 136.

(αὐτεξούσιον). As a lawgiver, Moses is lauded for teaching his people to live under the law as under a father and master (*Ap* 2.174). The fact that Josephus does not hesitate here to use the word δεσπότη, "master," which in Herodotus (3.89) and in Thucydides (6.77) has connotations of "despot" or "absolute ruler" and indeed is a synonym for the dreaded τύραννος, shows that he, paradoxically, regarded one tyranny as actually the very best form of government, namely the tyranny of God, a theocracy. Indeed, in his summary of the Mosaic code (4.223), Josephus concludes that aristocracy is the best form of government. He then proceeds to define the essence of aristocracy as being "content with . . . having the laws for your masters [δεσπότης] and governing all your actions by them." This delicate balance of obedience and liberty may be seen at the very beginning of Moses' mission, inasmuch as we are told (2.281) that he goes to Pharaoh only after he is assured of both the agreement of the Israelites to follow his orders and of their love of liberty (ἐλευθερίας). Again, before reading the Decalogue to the Israelites, Moses addresses the people (3.84), declaring that he is bringing them rules for a happy life and an ordered government (πολιτείας κόσμον).¹⁸³

In his farewell address to his people Moses carefully stresses the difference between liberty and license (4.187). Apparently the Israelites had thought, as he says, that freedom of speech consisted of insulting their benefactors; but liberty, he insists, does not lie in resenting the requirements of rulers.

Undoubtedly drawing upon his bitter experience in the war against the Romans of 66–74, Josephus stresses to his politically-minded audience the terrible evil of civil strife (στάσις) so familiar to readers of Thucydides' description (3.82–84) of revolution at Corcyra.¹⁸⁴ Thus, in his treatment of the rebellion of Korah,

¹⁸³ In contrast to Josephus, who emphasizes the portrait of Moses as the agent of God in giving orders, Philo (*De vita Mosi* 2.9.51) seems to be more democratic in stating that in his commands and prohibitions Moses suggested and admonished rather than commanded, and in stressing that the very numerous and necessary instructions which he gave were accompanied by forewords and afterwords in order to exhort rather than to enforce.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Josephus' portrayal (1.117) of the punishment inflicted by God upon the builders of the Tower of Babel as the discord (στάσις, a word not found in the Septuagint version, Gen 11:9) created by having them speak various languages. Likewise, according to Josephus' addition (1.164), God thwarted Pharaoh's unjust

Josephus remarks (4.12) that it was a sedition (στάσις) “for which we know of no parallel, whether among Greeks or barbarians,” implying, as we have noted, that information about seditions was well known. Likewise, in discussing the consequences of the seduction of the Hebrew youth by the Midianite women (4.140), Josephus remarks that the whole army was soon permeated by a sedition (στάσιν) far worse than that of Korah. Indeed, a good portion of Book 4 (11–66, 141–155) of the *Antiquities* is devoted to accounts that illustrate the degree to which στάσις is the mortal enemy of political states, a subject particularly stressed by Josephus as a comment on the warring factions in contemporary Judaism during the war against the Romans.

In particular, unlike the biblical account (Deut 19:14), which merely presents the commandment not to remove one’s neighbor’s landmark, Josephus (4.225) adds a reason, again in political terms, that removal of landmarks leads to wars and seditions (στάσεων). Furthermore, in an extrabiblical prayer put into the mouth of Moses (4.294), he asks that after they have conquered the land of Israel, the Israelites should not be overcome by civil strife (στάσεως), “whereby you will be led to actions contrary to those of your fathers and destroy the institutions which they established.” Indeed, one of the qualities of the ideal ruler, as we can see not only in his portrait of Moses but also in that of David,¹⁸⁵ is that he seeks to prevent dissension.¹⁸⁶

Another political aspect about which Josephus felt strongly was nationalism. He himself had participated in the war against the Romans at the beginning of the revolt in 66, and after surrendering to the Romans had come to the conclusion that resistance was futile and that Rome was divinely destined to rule the world. It is

passion toward Sarah by bringing about an outbreak of disease and of political strife (στάσει).

¹⁸⁵ See Feldman, “David.”

¹⁸⁶ It is significant that while in Exod 2:11–15 it is Moses’ fear that he will be caught for slaying the Egyptian overseer that leads him to escape to Midian, Josephus (2.254–256), as we have noted, omits the whole incident of the slaying of the Egyptian, and instead declares that Moses escaped because he had heard that Pharaoh, envious of his generalship against the Ethiopians and suspecting that he would take advantage of his success to revolutionize (νεωτερίσειε) Egypt, was plotting to murder him.

not surprising, therefore, that while in the Bible God's covenant with Abraham to give his descendants the land of Canaan is constantly mentioned and renewed,¹⁸⁷ Josephus shifts the attention from the covenanted land of Israel, so dear to the revolutionaries, to the biblical personalities themselves and to the role of the Diaspora. In fact, Josephus never uses the word "covenant" (διαθήκη), which is the Septuagint's equivalent of the Hebrew *berit*.¹⁸⁸ Instead of promises that the Jews will have the land of Canaan we have predictions.¹⁸⁹

In Exod 3:8, God tells Moses from the burning bush that he will take the Israelites into a good and broad land, the land of the Canaanites, flowing with milk and honey. A similar statement is found a few verses later (Exod 3:17). The implication is clear: the Israelites are to displace the Canaanites and establish an independent state. In Josephus' version (2.269), however, there is significantly no mention of the Canaanites who are to be displaced and no implication of an independent state; the Israelites are merely to come to the land and settle there.

Similarly, when God gives his charge to Moses (Exod 6:4) telling him to go to Pharaoh and request that he allow the Israelites to leave, he reminds Moses that he had established his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan. A few verses later (Exod 6:8) God tells Moses that he will bring the Israelites into the land which he had sworn to give to their forefathers and that he will give it to them as a possession, clearly another indication that the Israelites are to displace the Canaanite inhabitants and establish an independent state. Josephus (2.292) significantly omits this entire passage.

¹⁸⁷ See Betsy H. Amaru, "Land Theology in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*," *JQR* 71 (1980–81): 201–229.

¹⁸⁸ Paul ("Flavius Josephus," above, n. 80, pp. 473–480) suggests that Josephus' substitution of the word *παύλαν*, "truce" for the word *berit* (Gen 9:9, Septuagint *διαθήκην*) arises from his desire to dissociate himself from the New Testament's emphasis on the doctrine of the "new covenant." But if Josephus were writing an anti-Christian polemic, he would have been more open about it, inasmuch as the Christians were then few in number and were hardly held in favor by Domitian, under whom Josephus wrote his *Antiquities*.

¹⁸⁹ See Feldman, "Jacob," p. 135.

5. *Hellenizations in Josephus' Version*

Vermes¹⁹⁰ has remarked that Josephus' portrait of Moses is identical with that of the Palestinian tradition but that he is sometimes clothed in Greek. Meeks¹⁹¹ is rightly critical of this statement, inasmuch as Josephus' changes go far beyond mere "clothing."¹⁹² Indeed, to Josephus, the writer in Greek, the world was divided into two groups, the Greeks and the barbarians, and the latter quite clearly included, strangely and paradoxically, the Jews.¹⁹³ We may see this terminology in his previously noted statement (4.12) that the civil strife (στάσις) occasioned by Korah was the greatest ever known to have occurred, whether among Greeks or barbarians.

The ancient historian felt that it was not enough merely to present a factual account of events—it was also important for his account to be attractive to his readers.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, one basic reason why Josephus undertook, in effect, in the first half of the *Antiquities*, to rewrite the Septuagint, even though he does not spell this out in the proem to the work, was that he wished to make both the stories in, and the style of, the Bible more attractive to his readers. Because he was writing predominantly for a non-Jewish Greek audience,¹⁹⁵ Josephus felt constrained to formulate distinctively biblical words and concepts in a mold familiar to his audience. Thus, when Moses prepares the Israelites for departure from Egypt (2.312) there is no indication in the Bible (Exod 11–12) as to how they are to be marshalled for the Exodus. Josephus, himself a general in the war against the Romans, knew how important it was for a good general to muster his troops carefully in advance. Hence we are given the extrabiblical detail that Moses arranged them in fraternities (εἰς φρατρίδας), this unit being a subdivision of the

¹⁹⁰ Geza Vermes, "La Figure de Moïse au tournant des deux Testaments," in Henri Cazelles et al., *Moïse, l'homme de l'alliance* (Paris, 1955), p. 88.

¹⁹¹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 132.

¹⁹² On the whole subject of Josephus' hellenization of the Bible, notably in his version of the Joseph narrative, see Martin Braun, *History and Romance* (above, n. 2). Braun (pp. 26–31) is concerned with Moses, but his main interest is in the relationship of Artapanus' and Philo's accounts.

¹⁹³ See Rajak, *Josephus*, p. 259.

¹⁹⁴ See Feldman, "Saul," pp. 46–52.

¹⁹⁵ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 470–471.

Greek tribe (φυλή). A similar hellenization is to be seen in Josephus' statement (2.346) that it was in hexameter verse that Moses composed his song upon the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, as well as in his statement (4.303) that Moses' final song before his death was likewise clad in hexameter verse. Indeed, the very fact that Moses is referred to as a "lawgiver" (νομοθέτης; 3.180) rather than, as he is cited in the rabbinic literature, as "Moses our master" (*Moshe rabbenu*) is, as Meeks¹⁹⁶ remarks, an adaptation of Gentile understanding of his primary role in Jewish history to make him parallel with other great lawgivers, such as Lycurgus of Sparta. We may similarly note that according to Josephus (4.194, 196, 302), Moses gave the Israelites not only laws but also a constitution (πολιτεία), thus making the Jewish state comparable to the Greek city-states.

Inasmuch as Josephus' literate audience was likely to be well versed in philosophy,¹⁹⁷ it should not be surprising that just as Abraham is depicted as a Stoic philosopher who proves the existence of God (1.156),¹⁹⁸ so Moses (2.229), as we have noted, is presented as a Stoic sage, remarkable for his contempt for toils (πόνων καταφρονήσει), a typically Stoic phrase. Moreover, a key Stoic term, πρόνοια, plays a crucial role in Josephus' accounts of Abraham¹⁹⁹ and of Moses. We have already noted Amram's confidence in God's providence as seen in his decision (2.219) to place the infant Moses in an ark in the Nile River rather than to continue to rear him in secret. Similarly Moses, in his speech to the angry Israelites (3.19), exhorts them not to despair of God's providence (πρόνοιαν). The same juxtaposition of God's graciousness (εὐμενῇ) and his providence (προνοίας) which occurs in connection with Abraham is, moreover, found in Moses' last address to his people, where he renders thanks to God for bestowing his concern upon him (4.180, 185). Furthermore, as Holladay²⁰⁰ has remarked, Moses' emphasis on law (νόμος) is in accord with the Stoic view that regarded νόμος as the expression of the cosmos and that

¹⁹⁶ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, p. 132.

¹⁹⁷ For hellenizations to appeal to the philosophic interest of his audience, see Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 498–500.

¹⁹⁸ See Feldman, "Abraham," pp. 145–150.

¹⁹⁹ See Feldman, "*Aqedah*," pp. 229–230.

²⁰⁰ Holladay, *Theios Aner*, p. 102.

viewed man as a κοσμοπολίτης who must arrange his life in accordance with universal law; hence, by allegorically imputing cosmic significance to the Tabernacle, the twelve loaves, the candela-brum, the tapestries, and the high priest's garments (3.181–187), Josephus was appealing to the Stoic view that law must have a cosmic dimension.

Even Moses' description of God (*Ap* 2.167) "as One, uncreated and immutable to all eternity; in beauty surpassing all mortal thought," as Tiede²⁰¹ has pointed out, is clad in Greek philosophical dress. Likewise the simile (*Ap* 2.284) that "as God permeates the universe, so the Law has found its way among all mankind" is taken from the Stoics.

Josephus has included many motifs and phrases from the Greek tragedians, Aeschylus, and especially Sophocles and Euripides.²⁰² We can see the influence of the tragedians in the increased dramatization of the plight of the Israelites (2.208). While Exod 1:22 merely records Pharaoh's decree to kill all male babies, Josephus elaborates with great pathos: "Terrible, then, was the calamity confronting the victims: not only were they to be bereft of their children, not only must the parents themselves be accessories to the destruction of their offspring, but the design of extinguishing their race by the massacre of the infants and their own approaching dissolution rendered their lot cruel and inconsolable."

There is likewise increased drama in the picture of the infant Moses (2.227) who gleefully fastens upon the breast of his mother. The childlessness of Pharaoh's daughter (2.232), unmentioned in the Bible, similarly heightens the interest in her discovery of the infant Moses.²⁰³

There is also heightened dramatization of Moses' leadership. Thus in recounting the miracle of the parting of the waters of the

²⁰¹ Tiede (*Charismatic*, p. 210) compares Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus" (Stobaeus, *Eclogues*, 1.112).

²⁰² On Josephus' introduction of motifs and even language from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, see, in general, Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 500–501. On the influence of Sophocles in particular see Thackeray, *Josephus*, pp. 116–117; and Feldman, "Solomon"; and on the influence of Euripides upon Josephus see Feldman, "*Aqedah*," pp. 219–246.

²⁰³ This detail, also found in Philo (*De vita Mosis* 1.4.13), is likewise found in Artapanus (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27), from whom both Philo and Josephus may have drawn it.

Red Sea (Exod 15:1–21) Josephus (2.343) adds the dramatic touch that the miracle was accompanied by thunder and lightning, such as we find in the allusion in Ps 77:16–20. Furthermore, while Num 11:30–31 states that Moses returned to the camp and a wind came forth and brought quail, Josephus (3.299) adds drama to the situation by declaring that even as Moses spoke the camp was filled with quail.

On a number of occasions Josephus adds vivid touches to his descriptions of battles.²⁰⁴ This is true also in the case of Moses, since such details serve to enhance his military reputation as a general. Thus in his description of the battle with Amalek, Josephus (3.53) adds that “the adversaries met and a hand-to-hand contest ensued, fought with great spirit and with mutual shouts of encouragement.” After the battle, while Exod 17:15 declares that Moses built an altar which he named “The Lord is my banner,” Josephus (3.60) states that he named the altar “Giver of victory” (νικαῖον), clearly recalling the goddess of victory, Νίκη (Hesiod, *Theogony* 384; Pindar, *Isthmian Odes* 2.26) and the epithets of Zeus (νικαῖος; Dio Cassius 47.40) and of Pallas (νικαία; Demosthenes 37.623).

There is likewise increased drama in Moses' reply to the charges of Korah. In the biblical passage (Num 16:15) the angry Moses says very simply to God that he is not guilty of taking anything from the multitude or of harming any of them. Josephus' Moses makes quite a scene (4.40), raising his hands to heaven and speaking in stentorian tones (γεγωνότερον, “louder-sounding, more sonorous”). He delivers a long speech, in the course of which he asks God (4.50) if the accusations against him are true, to keep the rebels free from harm, and to inflict upon him the punishment which he had invoked upon them. The drama is further enhanced by the fact that Moses weeps as he addresses God (4.51).

There is similarly increased drama in the scene in which the earth swallows up Korah's company (Num 16:31–34). Josephus (4.51–52), realizing that his readers might have considerable difficulty believing that the earth could open its mouth and swallow up the rebels, as the Bible describes, presents a more scientific explanation, namely that there was an earthquake, which he then proceeds

²⁰⁴ For examples see my “Abraham the General in Josephus” (above, n. 9), pp. 43–49.

to compare dramatically to a wave tossed by the violence of the wind. He then gives further details—a crash and a burst of booming sound. The drama is heightened by the description of the effect upon the victims, namely that they were obliterated so swiftly that some were even unaware of their fate. The whole incident, he adds, clearly anticipating the skepticism of his readers, was so sudden that there was nothing left to show the onlookers that the earth had actually suffered any such convulsion.

Similarly, when the tribes of Reuben and Gad seek Amorite land for pasturage and decline to join the other tribes in their conquests, the biblical Moses (Num 32:6) berates them for allowing their brethren to go to war while they abstained. Josephus' Moses uses much stronger and more colorful language (4.167), denouncing them as "arrant knaves (κακίστους), who had devised this plausible excuse for their cowardice because they wished to live themselves in luxury and ease" (τρυφᾶν ἀπόνως διάγοντας).

Even in his presentation of the Mosaic code Josephus is more dramatic. Thus in Deut 20:19 we are informed of the law that when engaged in a long siege, the Israelites are not permitted to destroy the trees in the area. Josephus dramatically quotes what the trees would say if they were endowed with voices (4.299), namely they would plead "that they were in no way answerable for the war, that they were being maltreated unjustly and that, had they the power, they would have migrated and moved to another country."

Likewise, Josephus' description of the wailing for Moses' approaching death is much more graphic. In Deut 34:8 it is only after Moses' death that we are told that the Israelites mourned for him for thirty days, but there is no description of the nature of the mourning itself. In Josephus, however (4.320), we have a much more dramatic scene. In the first place, the wailing is more moving because it takes place after Moses has told the Israelites about his approaching death and has given his blessings to the people, but while he is still alive. Secondly, we are told how the multitude burst into tears, with the women beating their breasts. Most moving of all is that the children wailed even more, unable to suppress their grief. Furthermore, Moses' greatness is heightened by the fact that the children, in their lament, understood his virtues and grand achievements despite their tender age. Perhaps most poignant of all, Josephus reminds us, is the fact that even Moses, although obviously aware that one should not despond as the end

approaches because death comes in accordance with the will of God and by a law of nature, was yet reduced to tears when he saw the laments of the people (4.322).

One of the major devices in Greek tragedy is the use of irony, as we see notably in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* (see Aristotle, *Poetics* 11).²⁰⁵ Josephus introduces this motif most effectively at several points in his narrative. Thus, while the Bible simply indicates (Exod 2:5) that Pharaoh's daughter sent her maid to fetch the baby Moses, Josephus (2.225) points out the irony in the situation in that the very persons who by reason of his birth had decreed the destruction of all Hebrew children were forced to condescend to nourish and care for him.

Josephus also attempts to make his narrative more appealing to his Greek readers by introducing romantic motifs reminiscent of Homer, Herodotus' account (*Histories* 1.8–12) of Candaules' wife and Gyges, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, and Hellenistic novels.²⁰⁶ Thus the scene in which Josephus introduces Pharaoh's daughter playing by the river bank (2.224) is reminiscent of a similar scene describing Nausicaa at the shore of Phaeacia in Homer's *Odyssey* (6.100ff.). Of course, the most striking instance of the introduction of a romantic motif is the scene in which the Ethiopian princess Tharbis falls madly in love (εἰς ἔρωτα δεινὸν ὀλισθεν) with the brave enemy general Moses, who is besieging the capital city of the Ethiopians (2.252).

Suspense, as we have noted elsewhere,²⁰⁷ is the hallmark of the Greek romances and is particularly evident in Josephus' version of the Bible.²⁰⁸ A good example of this quality in connection with Josephus' treatment of the Moses narrative may be seen in the account of the water from the rock at Rephidim. According to the biblical account (Exod 17:6), God told Moses that he would stand before him, that he should strike the rock, and that water would come out of it, whereupon Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. Josephus' account is considerably more elaborate and suspenseful: Moses, we are told (3.36), "approached the people, who

²⁰⁵ See Feldman, "*ʿAqedah*," especially p. 219.

²⁰⁶ See Feldman, "Use, Authority," pp. 501–503.

²⁰⁷ See Feldman, "Jacob," p. 142.

²⁰⁸ See my "Hellenizations in Josephus' Version of Esther" (above, n. 161), pp. 157–158.

were expectant and had their eyes fixed upon him, having already observed him hastening from the hill." Josephus adds a step, in that Moses first tells the people that God would deliver them from their distress in an unexpected manner, namely that a river is to flow for them out of the rock. The suspense is increased because the Israelites think that they are going to be forced, in their exhausted state, to cleave the rock. One can imagine the incredulity of the people at this prediction and the tremendous suspense as Moses strikes the rock to see whether the words will come true. The suspense is ended when Moses strikes the rock with his staff, and a copious stream of most pellucid water gushes forth. The mere sight of it, we are told in an extra dramatic touch (3.38), already quenches their tremendous thirst.

In summary, Josephus' portrait of Moses is the most revealing example of his goals and methods in the "rewritten Bible" which comprises the first half of the *Antiquities*. Inasmuch as the reputation of a nation depended so heavily upon the qualities of its leadership, and in view of the slurs against the Jewish people, especially as seen in the essay *Against Apion*, it was particularly effective for Josephus to glorify the personality of Moses for his primary audience, which consisted of non-Jews. Thus Moses, the paragon of the cardinal virtues in Josephus' portrait, emerges as a combination of Thucydides' Pericles, Plato's philosopher-king, Virgil's Aeneas, and Stoic sage. Finally, the whole account is made the more appealing to Josephus' Greek readers through his heightened dramatization of Moses' leadership.

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