

THE CONTINUING ENIGMA OF JOSEPHUS'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS¹

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I am honoured to give the Manson Memorial Lecture for 1984. While the work of Manson has greatly influenced my thinking about the life of Jesus (as was inevitable for a student of my generation), I lack the privilege of personal contact with him. Yet my *curriculum vitae* has been greatly affected by a famous review from his hand;² it was his review of Legg's edition of an apparatus criticus to the gospel of Matthew, which led to the abandonment of that work conceived as a one-man enterprise and to the reorganization of it. This was eventually achieved under the joint British and American Committees, whose work is known as the International Greek New Testament project.³ Of that committee, as its work came to fruit, I was appointed Executive Editor in 1971 and continued in that role for over six years, an experience which not only alerted me to the many pitfalls upon which Manson's review needed to dwell, but gave me far more sympathy for Legg in his lonely task than most scholars are probably able to gain.

Our topic today is the short paragraph in the eighteenth book of Josephus's *Antiquities*, generally called the "Testimonium Flavianum". It is most conveniently consulted in the Loeb edition of the works of Josephus,⁴ brought to completion in succession to

¹ The Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in the University of Manchester on 8 November 1984.

² *Journal of Theological Studies*, xliii (1942), 83-92.

³ See *The New Testament in Greek. The Gospel according to St. Luke*. Part One. Chapters 1-12 edited by the American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984), p. v.

⁴ *Loeb Classical Library. Josephus IX. Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII-XX*, with an English translation by Louis H. Feldman (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 48-51 (paragraphs 63,64).

Henry St. John Thackeray and Ralph Marcus by Louis Feldman. Reference to this edition will facilitate the following of my discussion, since Feldman provides not only an English translation but also gives in his notes the essentials of the reconstruction of Josephus's putative original text made by Robert Eisler, a reconstruction which greatly influenced the thinking of Thackeray and of many others.

The works of Josephus, together with those of the Alexandrian Philo, are the only works of Hellenistic Judaism which have survived in any substantial extent. A reminiscence of my childhood may indicate why this was so in the case of Josephus. My father was a lay preacher amongst the Baptists, and, like many other working men of such allegiance and calling, he sought to extend his education by reading and evening study. On his shelves was a copy of Whiston's translation of Josephus. I remember my mother telling me that "this is the book which proves that Jesus really lived". While there were no doubt additional reasons for the survival of Josephus's works (for example, the provision of a continuous background history for the first century of the Christian era which his work provided), the "testimony about Jesus" with which we are concerned will have provided an even stronger incentive to preserve his work. It is found in all manuscripts with little variation of text, and is attested by quotation from the time of Eusebius, who quotes it both in the *Ecclesiastical History* and in the *Demonstration of the Gospel*. But since the rise of critical scholarship, the question of its authenticity has been a centre of debate. There are three categories of opinion: namely, that it is authentic as it stands; that the text we have received is a Christian reworking of the original; and that it is spurious, the work of an interpolator who sought to transform Josephus into a witness to Jesus and his ministry. I hope briefly to review some significant contributions to this debated question, both old and new, and to leave you with an overview of the *status quaestionis*. Whether by the end I shall have left you with more than that, I leave it to your judgement to decide.

In the Loeb volume, to which attention has been directed, there are to be found a number of bibliographies⁵ on specific topics, amongst them the "Testimonium". In this there is indicated as a good introductory survey of the question a paper by the

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 573-575, Appendix K.

Cambridge scholar of the early part of this century Francis Crawford Burkitt; it is entitled "Josephus and Christ" and appeared in the journal *Theologisch Tijdschrift* (unfortunately rarely to be found in British libraries).⁶ It was stimulated by criticisms of statements made by Burkitt in his well-known and still significant work *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, first published in 1906. There Burkitt had intimated, to the astonishment and scandal of some reviewers, his acceptance of the "Testimonium" as an authentic paragraph of the Jewish historian's work.⁷ The article in the Dutch journal defends his opinion. It is basically the argument which may be found in the first of the dissertations which the translator William Whiston in 1737 appended to his rendering of Josephus. Those who reject the "Testimonium" as the work of Josephus on the grounds that a first-century Jew, not a Christian, could not have acknowledged exalted teaching and wonderful works as done by Jesus, nor have given without further qualification the title of "the Christ" to him, are thinking in anachronistic categories appropriate only to later centuries when, on the one hand, antagonism between the two groups of Jews and Christians had become intensified and embittered, and, on the other, the state had begun to take cognizance of the growing sect and to treat it with suspicion. In the first century, the Christian movement had not assumed proportions which rendered it in the eyes of its contemporaries a danger to the state or to morality. Josephus, then, could write an account, such as this, neither hot nor cold, simply adverting to the traditions of Christians as he had heard them. He was no sceptic about miracles and prodigies, and a believer in the fulfilment of prophecy. Burkitt rejects Whiston's notion that Josephus was an Ebionite Christian accepting the Messianic status of Jesus, but he does consider that Josephus (no doubt as part of the propaganda aims of his work, although Burkitt does not say so) is saying to his contemporaries, especially his fellow Jews, that Jesus was the one in whom Messianic expectations had been fulfilled. His destruction should be taken as an indication that any further continuation of Messianic expectations would be erroneous and misplaced.⁸ The article of Burkitt convinced Harnack and con-

⁶ *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, xlvii (1913), 130-154.

⁷ *Op. cit.* (3rd edn., Edinburgh, 1911), p. 325.

⁸ Louis Feldman, in his recent *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (Berlin and New York, 1984), asserts that Burkitt anticipated the view of Laqueur that

verted him to acceptance of the "Testimonium" as an authentic work of Josephus, a view which he expressed shortly afterwards in a lengthier article.

This defence of the authenticity of the "Testimonium" is fairly well known and depends, as my summary shows, largely on arguments of plausibility and historical likelihood. Another defence appeared some twenty years later from a scholar of the same generation whose life and scholarly work had links at different times with those of Burkitt. This was the Quaker scholar James Rendel Harris: by the date of the essay to which I refer, he had, however, long left Cambridge and was at Woodbrooke Settlement in Birmingham. His article has escaped all but the most exhaustive of bibliographers, and yet it is, like all his work, stimulating, provocative and ingenious. It is entitled "Josephus and his Testimony", and appeared as the second of a series of brochures or papers, called *Evergreen Essays*.⁹

The occasion of Rendel Harris' entry into these lists was the interest and controversy surrounding the theories of the erudite Robert Eisler. In the book entitled in its German original *IHCOYC BACIAEYC OY BACIAEYCAC*,¹⁰ but in its English version *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, Eisler had presented a picture of Jesus as a political figure of the time; at first a pacifist in his teaching, he later became associated with the movements of revolt and met his end in this connection. It should be noted that, in building his theory and reconstruction, Eisler emended every text on which he claimed to rely, as his critics were not slow to point out. The basis of his work was an Old Russian version of Josephus's early work, *The Jewish War*; this had been brought to light at the beginning of the century by Alexander Berendts, a professor at the University of Dorpat in Estonia, at that time part of the Russian Empire. He published excerpts, in translation, of passages relevant to the beginnings of Christian-

Josephus was currying favour with the Christians, since he had offended the Jews (p. 692, *ad num.* 2777). Burkitt says no such thing.

⁹ *Evergreen Essays. Number Two. Josephus and his Testimony*, by Rendel Harris (Cambridge, 1931).

¹⁰ *IHCOYC BACIAEYC OY BACIAEYCAC*, (*Religionswissenschaftliche Bibliothek, Neunter Band*) Heidelberg, vol. 1 (1929), vol. 2 (1930). *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, tr. Alexander Haggerty Krappe (London and New York, 1931).

ity¹² but it was not until the 1920s that a translation in full appeared, and that lacked the fifth, sixth and seventh books of the *War*. It, too, was Berendt's work, published by his pupil Konrad Grass.¹² Eisler's work appeared in German in 1929-1930, and in English in 1931: there was still no critical text of the Old Russian Josephus available even to those few scholars who knew any Slavonic language. For that we waited until 1934, when a text established by the Russian scholar V. Istrin began to appear in France with a French translation;¹³ on this the student without Russian must still rely, although a second critical edition by N.A. Meshcherskii appeared in Moscow in 1958.¹⁴ For the passages which Eisler laid under contribution and of which we are to consider Rendel Harris's discussion, the translation by Pierre Pascal, given with Istrin's text, is our best guide; but in his day Harris had to rely on the translation of Berendts. This is most readily accessible to us in the appendix to volume 3 of the *Loeb Josephus*, which was the work of Thackeray;¹⁵ he has translated from Berendts' German, with the help of Robert Eisler. We thus have some contact with the Russian original, but the later editions and translation are indispensable to the serious student of this source.

Harris, as I have intimated, took the stimulus for his discussion from the work of Eisler, who relied upon his own interpretation of the data of the Old Russian; it is for this reason that we have had to introduce reference to that version here. It is, remember, a version not of the *Antiquities* but of the *Jewish War*, but has striking additions by comparison with the Greek text of that work.

¹¹ A. Berendts, *Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im slavischen 'De Bello Judaico' des Josephus*, Leipzig, 1906.

¹² Flavius Josephus, *Vom jüdischen Kriege, Buch I-IV nach der slavischen Uebersetzung deutsch herausgegeben ...*, von Alexander Berendts und Konrad Grass. Dorpat, 1924 (*Acta et commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis (Dorpatensis)*, Abt. B., Bd. V, IX, XI), repr. Hildesheim, 1979.

¹³ *La prise de Jérusalem de Josèphe le juif. Texte vieux-russe publié intégralement par V. Istrin, imprimé sous la direction de André Vaillant. traduit en français par Pierre Pascal (Textes publiés par l'Institut d'Études slaves — II)*, Vol. I, Paris, 1934. Vol. 2, Paris, 1938. This work is still in print.

¹⁴ N.A. Meshcherskii, *Istoriya iudeiskoj voiny Josifa Flaviya v drevnerusskom perevode*. Moscow, Leningrad, 1958.

¹⁵ *Loeb Classical Library. Josephus III. The Jewish War, Books IV-VII*, with an English translation by H.St.J. Thackeray, 1928 (repr. 1957), pp. 635-658. Appendix: "The principal additional passages in the Slavonic version."

(It also has omissions, which have not been so thoroughly studied). Amongst these additions are passages describing "the wild man" (i.e. John the Baptist)¹⁶ and "the wonderworker" (i.e. Jesus).¹⁷ These passages stand in some relationship or other to the passages in the *Antiquities*¹⁸ about John and about Jesus (i.e. the "Testimonium"); in the work of Eisler they enable us to know the original form of the statements of Josephus, and this is the view entertained by Harris in his use of them. The immediately relevant sentences are as follows: "At that time there appeared a man, if it is permissible to call him a man. His nature and his exterior form were those of a man, but his appearance more than human and his works were divine. He performed miracles wonderful and mighty. Thus I cannot call him a man; but on the other hand, if I look at the nature which he shared with all, I will not call him an angel".

In discussing this passage, and the similar words in the Greek tradition of the "Testimonium" ("there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man"), Harris entertained another presupposition. This was his own work, possibly the most influential hypothesis propounded by him, on the collection of proof-texts from the Old Testament, or "Testimonia", as they are generally called, which he believed was drawn up very early in the history of the Christian movement, so early in fact that evangelists and apostles drew upon it in controversy and in building up their new theology. The clearest traces of this "Testimony Book" as he called it, were however to be found in later patristic collections of such texts, often in works directed against the Jews, by Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa, and others. This is not the occasion to discuss it further.¹⁹ It had great vogue for a while as an explanation of features of the New Testament; it then fell into disfavour but seems to be coming back into fashion, at least in a modified form, as a result of some data from Qumran and investigations of the arguments and thought-forms of early

¹⁶ Thackeray op. cit., pp. 644-5, 646-8; Istrin, op. cit., i. 134-7, 146-9; Meshcherskii op. cit., pp. 250-1, 257-8.

¹⁷ Thackeray op. cit., pp. 648-650; Istrin, op. cit., pp. 148-151; Meshcherskii, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

¹⁸ *Antiquities*, XVIII, 116-119 (ed. cit., pp. 80-85).

¹⁹ *Testimonies*, by Rendel Harris, with the assistance of Vacher Burch. Part I Cambridge, 1916; Part II, Cambridge 1920.; J.A. Fitzmyer. "IV Q Testimonia and the N.T." *Theological Studies*, xviii, 4 (1957), pp. 513-537 (repr. *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London, 1971), pp. 59-89).

Christian writers such as Melito, Justin and Hippolytus. In Harris's form of the theory, these proof-texts are envisaged as being grouped together under headings which are words which the texts have in common, such as "Man" (both *ἄνθρωπος* and *ἄνθρωπος*) and "Angel". These are understood to be terms which have a constant reference when they are found in scripture, the reference in these cases being the applicability of the texts where they are found, to Jesus in whom they are fulfilled.

Harris sees the purpose of Josephus as a contradiction of the claims made for Jesus in this collection of testimonies. On this hypothesis the phrase in the Greek text of the *Antiquities* "if indeed one ought to call him a man", is not a grudging acknowledgement of Jesus's superhuman quality, but a rather ironical expression of doubt whether the application to him of the Old Testament term "Man" by the Christians is justified. The argument is furthered by the Old Russian version in the *Jewish War*. If this is related in any way to the authentic words of Josephus, he is to be understood as denying not only the applicability of the term "Man" to Jesus, but also that of the term "Angel". Harris further considered that he could consolidate the case for the authenticity of the "Testimonium" by his understanding of a passage in the first apology of Justin Martyr²⁰ in which he considered that one could discern a direct counter to the "Testimonium" and the implications which he saw in it. *Apology*, 1.30 reads "so that no one should say in opposition to us. What should prevent our so-called Christ (τὸν παρ' ἡμῶν λεγόμενον χριστόν), who was a man of human origins, from having by magic art performed the miracles alleged by us and seeming for this reason to be the son of God? We will now make our demonstration, basing it not on those who merely talk, but on those who prophesy before the event, for we are necessarily convinced by seeing plainly that things have happened and things are happening as they were prophesied". In the phrase "our so-called Christ" ("the one called Christ amongst us"), Justin picks up Josephus's "the so-called Christ" and in the course of his programme, here announced, follows the heads of the "Testimonium", Jesus's παράδοξα ἔργα, men's belief in him, and the foretelling of his deeds and destiny by the prophets. (Harris saw the phrase in the "Testimonium",

²⁰ *Die ältesten Apologeten.*; ed. Edgar J. Goodspeed, (Göttingen, 1914), p. 45f.

ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια, as an ironical reference to the lists of prophecies assembled in the “Testimony Book”). Justin, in fact, is addressing a Roman audience whose minds have been indoctrinated by Josephan scorn.

In summarizing Harris’s arguments we have necessarily moved to the consideration of the second option of opinion which has been taken up by recent scholars, namely that the text as we have received it is a Christian reworking of the original. Such a view — and not that exemplified in Burkitt — has been the critical orthodoxy of my generation. In the form in which we received it, it derived from the work of Thackeray, who had been greatly influenced by the erudite *tour-de-force* of Eisler. Thackeray, gave his views expression in the Hilda Strook lectures, delivered in the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1928, entitled *Josephus the Man and the Historian*.²¹ Eisler’s reconstruction is given by Feldman in a footnote to the text of the “Testimonium” in the Loeb edition, at the end of which the editor himself intimates his adherence to such a theory. This is to the effect that Josephus indeed wrote about Jesus at this point in his *Antiquities*, but what he wrote was derogatory to the reputation of Jesus. Christian emendation has achieved a very subtle adaptation of the original words of Josephus, which gives us the received text. In restoring the original from the received text two main methods were used. Firstly, the text was examined to see if its vocabulary coincided with the general usage of Josephus; if not, the critic, using his knowledge of Josephan usage, sought to perceive the subtle changes whereby the changes from an inimical to a mild but witnessing text could have been effected. Secondly, deletions believed to have been made from the text of the “Testimonium” were supplied from other sources. Amongst those which Eisler believed to contain authentic material ultimately derived from Josephus were the *Acts of Pilate* and the Old Russian version of the *Jewish War*. Thackeray never committed himself entirely to Eisler’s view and left himself a way of retreat in the opinion that there was room for further research. It is significant that the suggestions for the restitution of Josephus’s putative original made by Thackeray in *Josephus the Man and the Historian*,²² follow Eisler generally only in those points where the vocabulary

²¹ Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus. The Man and The Historian*. (New York, 1929).

²² Op. cit., pp. 142-148.

and usage of Josephus were the focus of discussion and not in those where the Josephan passages recovered from other works were inserted. The notes and version of Eisler's restitution in the Loeb edition follow Thackeray in this respect.

Thackeray was not the only emendator of the text of Josephus. Bienert (1936),²³ Martin (1941)²⁴ and Bammel (1974)²⁵ are amongst others who have made suggestions, to whom in this lecture we cannot do justice. Recently, a different line of approach has been pursued by Shlomo Pines.²⁶ He draws attention to the account of Josephus's testimony to be found in the *Universal History* of the Christian Arab Agapius of Mabbug (A.D. 942).²⁷ Here we find a rather different form of words from the received Greek text. "At that time there was a wise man ... called Jesus. His conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders".

Pines gives a lengthy discussion, not always perhaps of the clearest, and introduces the main sources ranging from other Syriac and Arabic authors to Jerome. It is not my purpose today to go into the detail of his argument; it is perhaps significant that he concludes on a Laodicean note. "We are left with two possibilities: either the version of Agapius is the product of Christian censorship applied to the original text in a less

²³ Walther Bienert, *Die älteste nichtchristliche Jesusbericht. Josephus über Jesus*, Halle, 1936.

²⁴ Ch. Martin, S.J., "Le 'testimonium flavianum': vers une solution définitive?", *Révue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, xx (1941), 409-465

²⁵ Ernst Bammel, "Zum Testimonium Flavianum", in *Josephus-Studien. Untersuchungen zu Josephus, dem antiken Judentum und dem Neuen Testament, Otto Michel zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 9-22.

²⁶ Shlomo Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications*, Jerusalem, 1971.

²⁷ Twice recently edited: *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis: Historia Universalis (Corpus scriptorum orientalium christianorum: scriptores arabici. X)*, ed. L. Cheikho, Louvain, 1912, esp. pp. 239-240, and *Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj (Patrologia orientalis, vol. vii, fasc. 4)*, ed. A. Vasiliev, Paris, 1912, esp. pp. 471-473.

thorough-going form than in the case of the Vulgate recension, or it did not undergo censorship at all. ... The first hypothesis seems to me to be the more probable one but for no very conclusive reason. At the moment it is anybody's guess."

It seems to me that an enquiry where everyone claims to be pursuing the same method, but where everyone achieves different results, must be based on unsound premises. I turn, then, to the third option, namely that the passage is spurious. The main objective reasons why scholars have suggested this third possibility are as follows. Origen in three places²⁸ refers to the passage in *Antiquities*, 20.200 where the martyrdom of James of Jerusalem is recounted and where he is called ἀδελφὸς τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ. In two of his three references²⁹ to this passage Origen says that Josephus did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. This has been interpreted in two ways; either Origen knew such a non-Christian or anti-Christian text of the "Testimonium" as Thackeray and the rest have attempted to restore, or he knew no "Testimonium" at all and judged Josephus's attitude on the basis of the phrase τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ alone. Again, an ancient table of contents of the *Antiquities*, known in several manuscripts and in the Latin version, omits any reference to the "Testimonium". Admittedly it omits mention of other passages as well, e.g. of the story of the seduction of Paulina which follows the "Testimonium" in the received text; nevertheless, its omission of the "Testimonium" is surely significant in the light of the undisputed fact that the transmission of Josephus was almost entirely at Christian hands, and all the manuscripts are late, giving plenty of time for an entry to be inserted.

I come to the development of my own thinking. I received for review the first volume of the concordance to the works of Josephus edited by K.H. Rengstorf³⁰ and wondered how I might review it. It seemed interesting to look at the text of the "Testimonium" as received and as reconstructed at Thackeray's hands, in the light of the Josephan usage to which the concordance now gave the key. The first volume ran to *delta*, which enabled me

²⁸ *Contra Celsum*, 1.47 (GCS 2. 96 f.); *ibid.*, 2.13 (*ibid.*, 143); *Commentarius in Matthaeum*, 10.17 (GCS 40. 22).

²⁹ *Contra Celsum*, 1.47; *Comm. in Matt.*

³⁰ *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, 4 vols., Leiden, 1973-1983.

to make a beginning, and this investigation I continued as the successive volumes appeared.

A number of words could be dealt with from the start: διδάσκαλος and ἡδονῆ δέχομαι, which occur both in the received text and in the Eisler/Thackeray version; and the adjectives ἀληθής of the received text, and the ἀηθής which replaces it in the restitution. The succeeding volumes gave coverage for πάβομαι and ποιητής, while σοφός, σοφιστής and φύλον awaited the final volume.

Διδάσκαλος is used seventeen times and in about half the cases has the pejorative sense of a teacher of something bad; but in all but one case, when a genitive is found following the word, it defines the content of the teaching and not the recipients, as the phrase “teacher of those who accept the truth gladly” demands. The remaining case has two genitives following διδάσκαλος, one of the content and the other of the recipients (*Jewish War*, 7.444; διδάσκαλος τῶν σικαρίων τῆς ψευδολογίας). Eisler had this fact in mind when he linked διδάσκαλος with παραδόξων ἔργων. But this is an improbable phrase, even though Eisler adduced a parallel (*Antiquities*, 20.41): “he instructed the king in unseemly deeds”. If the phrase παραδόξων ἔργων διδάσκαλος had stood, it must have meant that Jesus taught his followers to perform amazing deeds.

Eisler was right however in omitting ποιητής; elsewhere in Josephus the word always means “poet”, never “one who does (something).” A crucial case in his reconstruction, however, can be examined; taking his starting point in the fact (which the concordance confirms) that the phrase ἡδονῆ δέχομαι is generally used of accepting gladly something evil — the one exception is the acceptance of death gladly by the Jewish petitioners before Pilate demanding the removal of the Roman standards from the Holy City³¹ — Eisler argued that the phrase “those who accept the truth gladly” (τῶν ἡδονῆ τᾶληθῆ δεχομένων) could not be authentically Josephan. He considered that, by a change easily made whether by intention or accident, an original ἀηθῆ had been transformed, into ἀληθῆ ((ΑΛΗΘΗ > ΑΗΘΗ). This emendation demands that we understand the substituted ἀηθῆ as meaning “abnormal” or “bizarre”. The adjective ἀηθής, however, does not quite mean that in Josephus. In two instances it describes unlawful

³¹ *Antiquities XVIII*, 59 (ed. cit. p. 44 f.)

food eaten during famine, but in all other cases it describes not things but people, who are "unaccustomed" to certain sights or sounds and thus are astonished or distressed by them. It never carries the sense required by the suggested emendation.

But when we look at the adjective ἀληθής in the received text in the light of usage, we find that it scarcely fares any better. The plural with the definite article is found five times; only once does it carry the abstract sense of "the truth"; usually it refers to the concrete or objective truth of a statement or of a report about a man's character.

Παύομαι is not found in the received text in accordance with Josephan usage; from the subject οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες must be supplied the action from which they desisted. While such a construction is known, it is not found in the works of Josephus. It is in any case apparently relatively rare.³²

Eisler, then, was correct in many instances: the usage of the "Testimonium" is not as a rule to be paralleled in Josephus, but is close to Josephan usage. In his celebrated emendation ἀθηῆ, however, his reconstruction, too, is found wanting by the same criteria. In another instance, which the last volume of the concordance reveals, the received text has the better of it. Eisler took exception to the phrase σοφὸς ἀνὴρ: it is, however, a Josephan phrase, though rare. One instance is taken from the Egyptian historian Manetho, but the two original occurrences describe Solomon and Daniel, respectively. The similar phrase σοφὸς καὶ συνετός is used of Zorobabel. It could, then, have been used of Jesus, perhaps with very specific connotations. Σοφιστής was Eisler's substitute and is, indeed, a Josephan word. But it is always used of instigators of direct action in furtherance of their cause. If it had been used here, I think that reference to violent deeds ensuing upon Jesus's teaching would have been found.

Some doubt has been cast upon the term φῦλον τῶν χριστιανῶν, "tribe of Christians", by the American-Jewish scholar Solomon Zeitlin. He may well have been right to do so. Φῦλον is used once of a swarm of locusts, once of the female sex of which Queen Alexandra was a member. Otherwise its reference is to specific Gentile nations or to the Jewish nation. It carries, then, the sense of Christians as a specific tribe or nation, which reminds one of the notion in some apologetic writings that Christians are

³² Cf. Hermas, *Similitude*, 9.4.4; *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, 4.

a third race (γένος however, is the word used in the cases in mind).³³ Zeitlin, in fact, alleged that the phrase φῶλον τῶν χριστιανῶν is first found in Eusebius.³⁴ But I have found no way yet to ascertain if this is so.

I have given instances where the concordance permits us to assess by the full evidence the arguments of Eisler which Thackeray accepted. It is true that the language of the received text of the "Testimonium" is usually not strictly in accordance with Josephan usage elsewhere in his works. But a number of the proposed restitutions of Eisler leading to a text derogatory to Jesus, prove by the same criteria to be equally non-Josephan, even if near-Josephan (as the received text is too). We need no doubt to extend such an examination to Bienert, Martin and the retroverted Greek of Agapius. Nevertheless, I believe that as a net result of this investigation we have a prima facie case that the passage cannot be restored to Josephus in any guise but is the work of a forger, who knew the favourite phrases of Josephus, from wide acquaintance with his work but showed *himself* at work, and not Josephus, by using these phrases in senses which are not those customary in the rest of Josephus's works. An extended search in early Christian writings might enable us to locate and date the work better; as the first quotations appear in Eusebius a date before his *floruit* must be presumed (unless, as Zeitlin thought, Eusebius is the villain of the piece, an opinion at least unproven). The notion of a distinct tribe or nation of Christians suggests an origin in the period of the Apologists.

The scholar and story-teller J.R.R. Tolkien gives to his hero Frodo Baggins a proverb "Go not to the elves for counsel, for they will say both No and Yes"³⁵ Coming from Birmingham, and not too far from where Tolkien first dreamed his dreams, I come with an elvish answer to the continuing enigma of the testimony of Josephus to Jesus. The question must be declared open, although it is not, as Pines put it, "anybody's guess". The argument of Burkitt seems to me worthy of reconsideration; that it convinced

³³ *Epistle to Diognetus*, I: *Aristides Apology*, ch. 2: *Kerygma of Peter* (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, VI. 5. 41,6).

³⁴ Solomon Zeitlin "The Christ Passage in Josephus", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, xviii (1927-28), 231-255. The argument turns on Eusebius's rendering of Tertullian (*Apology*, II. 6) in *Ecclesiastical History*, III. 33.3.

³⁵ J.R.R. Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 1, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, (5th impression, London, 1956), p. 93.

Harnack is some testimony to its force. Since the question of *testimonia*-lists may again be open, Harris's views might be looked at afresh, although I cannot perceive the close verbal links which he claimed to see in the passages of Justin which he brought into the debate. Of one thing I do feel sure: that the knowledge of Josephan usage which the new concordance places at our disposal puts Eisler's reconstruction out of consideration, and, furthermore, as I have said, provides a *prima facie* case against the received text of the "Testimonium" too.

As to the Russian Josephus, "that, my dears, is another story". I have studied it for many years. It is fascinating; but, with others, I incline to think that it has more to tell us about early Russia, and perhaps Byzantium, than it has about Jesus and early Christianity. In this regard, I direct your attention to the valuable essay of Elias Bickermann in the *Mélanges Franz Cumont*, of 1936, "Sur la version vieux-russe de Flavius-Josèphe".³⁶ But from time to time some new datum comes before the eyes of scholars which makes them wonder again about a possible earlier origin for this or that feature unique to Russian text. Harris's discussion of the references to "Man" and "Angel" have made me think again about that curious work.

The reference may well be to the heads of *Testimonia* collections, for this category of theological literature went on reproducing itself throughout the Middle Ages in both East and West, especially in anti-Judaic, and later, anti-Muslim writings. While I cannot trace Slavonic or Russian versions of such literature, there are many examples from Byzantium, and if, as a number of scholars have concluded, the additional material in the Old Russian Josephus originated in Greek circles, the presence of such a note in the expansion of the "Testimonium" would readily find an explanation quite unconnected with Josephus or the origins of a *Testimony Book* in the first century.

³⁶ *Université de Bruxelles. Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves*, vol. IV (1936), *Mélanges Franz Cumont*, pp. 53-84.