JOSEPHUS’ *JEWISH WAR* AND THE CAUSES OF THE JEWISH REVOLT:

RE-EXAMINING INEVITABILITY

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The Jewish revolt against the Romans in 66 CE can be seen as the culmination of years of oppression at the hands of their Roman overlords. The first-century historian Josephus narrates the developments of the war and the events prior. A member of the priestly class and a general in the war, Josephus provides us a detailed account that has long troubled historians. This book was an attempt by Josephus to explain the nature of the war to his primary audience of predominantly angry and grieving Jews. The causes of the war are explained in different terms, ranging from Roman provincial administration, Jewish apocalypticism, and Jewish internal struggles. The Jews eventually reached a tipping point and engaged the Romans in open revolt. Josephus was adamant that the origin of the revolt remained with a few, youthful individuals who were able to persuade the country to rebel. This thesis emphasizes the causes of the war as Josephus saw them and how they are reflected both within *The Jewish War* and the later work *Jewish Antiquities*. By observing the Roman provincial administration spanning 6-66 CE, I argue that Judaea had low moments sprinkled throughout the time but in 66 there was something particularly different, according to Josephus. Josephus presents the governors and other important characters in the war in a very distinct way through rhetoric, narrative, and other methodology. The idea of a beginning to this revolt, no matter how obscure or hidden by Josephus, is the reason I want to examine the works of Josephus the historian.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AJ</td>
<td>Josephus, Antiquitates Judaicae, Jewish Antiquities</td>
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<td>BJ</td>
<td>Josephus, Bellum Judaicum, Jewish War</td>
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<td>JJS</td>
<td>Journal of Jewish Studies</td>
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<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review</td>
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<td>JRS</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Studies</td>
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CHAPTER 1
JOSEPHUS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The Jewish revolt against the Romans of 66-70 CE marked a momentous period for Jewish and Roman history respectively. The Jewish city of Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed and whatever remnants of “autonomy” that had remained were wiped out. Judaea, thereafter, became a province governed by a Roman procurator of senatorial status with permanent troops stationed there. The Romans were dealt heavy blows as well, especially early on in the war, but overcame them and in the end a new dynasty, the Flavians, was established and legitimized through this war. The main source for this time period is the seven-volume work of Josephus Bellum Judaicum, Jewish War, and his later account of the same events Antiquitates Judaicae, Antiquities of the Jews. The story of Josephus is well known but it is worth noting again, especially for what I later discuss. Josephus wrote BJ, in Aramaic, in the comfort of Rome under the patronage of Vespasian and Titus. The purpose of it is a matter of debate; I am not one who believes it was to praise his patrons or an apologetic work for his people’s transgressions. Josephus was writing to come to terms with the fact that God was punishing him and his people for their sins.

Josephus was unabashedly anti-rebellion since he came from an elite priestly family and took the upmost precautions when discussing the very nature of the war, beginning with its causes. Josephus’ manner of representation for the causes of the war naturally leads his readers to believe that the revolt was inevitable. This trend has continued to modern scholarship, which is the reason for this thesis. The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the historiography of Josephus and the Bellum Judaicum. Placed alongside other ancient historians, Josephus is unique, but he still fits within the overall legacy of Greco-Roman historiography. I tackle the issues that
continue to occupy scholars in this rich field but focus primarily on the causes behind the revolt according to Josephus and how he expresses them using classical historiography. Chapter 2 offers a necessary narrative from the Maccabees down to Herod. Chapter 3 discusses the role of governors prior to the revolt, while chapter 4 similarly deals with the external forces closely before the outbreak of the revolt. Finally, in chapter 5 I address the concern of internal strife and how Josephus concealed it.

Josephus’ historiography is extensive. This portion of the chapter begins with the nineteenth and twentieth-century scholars and their interpretations of the man Josephus and his works. Historians have long struggled with the usage of Josephus and how to interpret the causes of the war. Jonathan J. Price discussing the problem that plagues historians in this field says, “This is a work of history, but also a perforce of historiography, for any account or interpretation of the Jewish rebellion is necessarily an interpretation of Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum.*”

The causes of the war range and the studies on them are varied but my focus primarily is the causes and the narrative from 6 - 66 CE. The year 66 CE is very important. After 60 years of skirmishes and incidents, both major and minor, the Jews made open war a realization. This thesis started with the concept of “inevitability” as the cause for the war. Long-term and short-term causes were all synthesized as a broad answer to the why the war was started. The notion of

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3 Josephus historiography ranges depending on the field. For the most up to date, thorough bibliography see S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, Volume 1b: Judean War 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2008)
“inevitability” permeates the scholarship because it seems the whole war was an escalating set of events that gave way in 66 CE. However, that approach presents its own problems and my attention immediately turns to what makes the revolt happen in 66 CE.

James S. McLaren’s outlook, and other scholars, on the causes of the war is based on the Temple priests ceasing to make sacrifices for the emperor, thus signaling the end of Roman control over the Temple. As McLaren notes, “What had taken place in Jerusalem in the summer of 66 CE was not a minor incident or simply a protest that had escalated. It was a full-scale war where the necessary preparations to defend against Roman efforts to reassert control over the temple cult were undertaken.” Eleazar ben Ananias, the Temple captain, was the one who decided to stop the sacrifices. It is interesting that Josephus equates this ceasing of sacrifices as a sign of war declaration.

In *BJ* 2.284, Josephus’ phrasing indicates that there are additional beginnings to the war. Mason sees προσελάμβανεν τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁ πόλεμος (the war took its beginning) as perhaps anticipating a later incident in *BJ* 2.409 in which Mason argues that the inclusion of the definite articles in both these examples points to a definite cause of the war. Going back to *BJ* 2.197, we

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5 *BJ* 2.409-17.


see the beginning of the sacrifices made by the Jews on behalf of the emperor and his family.\textsuperscript{8}

The imperial cult and the notion of sacrifices on behalf of the emperor are important yet confusing ideas. Josephus no doubt acknowledged this by adding other reasons to the origins of the revolt.

The correlation, however, between the origin of the revolt and Eleazar’s decision to stop the sacrifices were influential in progressing the events which ultimately led to revolt. The importance of this sacrifice is found within Josephus but Philo expresses a different viewpoint. According to Philo (\textit{Legat.} 157, 317, 357) Augustus instituted the sacrifices at his own expense, though it makes more sense that the Jews took care of all expenses and matters.\textsuperscript{9}

Price notes, “Every historian investigating matters for which Josephus is the only source is forced to make subjective decisions, and this is the case for even the most apparently clear-cut questions and objective answers.”\textsuperscript{10} When considering the causes for the revolt how has scholarship evolved?

First, I take note of Greg Woolf’s stance on using such terms as “revolt” and “rebellion”\textsuperscript{11} to explain the nature of the revolt. Greg Woolf brings the discussion in terms of terminology. This is important because the notion of using these terms automatically demonizes...

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{BJ} 2.197: καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ μὲν Καίσαρος καὶ τοῦ δήμου τῶν ‘Ρωμαίων. Loeb translation reads: The Jews replied that they offered sacrifice twice daily for Caesar and the Roman people. Cf. Mason, Flavius Josephus, 164, translates the passage: The Judeans declared that they offered sacrifice twice a day for Caesar and the Roman people.

\textsuperscript{9} Mason, Flavius Josephus, 164 n.1240. An interesting digression presented in this footnote by Mason on M. Bernett, \textit{Der Kaiserkult in Judäa unter den Herodiern und Römern}, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). This work, according to Mason, challenges the consensus with these points: Herod knew the importance of offering cult to the imperial family, Herod was able to find a balance between the temple cult of Caesar and the Jewish population, Herod’s death exposed the increasing concern to Augustus, Caligula “was only the clearest exponent of a general demand from the ruling side”, but the major point he presents is that imperial cult was a point of contention on both the Jewish and Roman sides.

\textsuperscript{10} Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 182.

\textsuperscript{11} Greg Woolf, “Provincial Revolts in the Early Roman Empire,” \textit{The Jewish Revolt against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives} (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 27 - 44. Woolf touches on the revolts ranging from Tacfarinas in Africa, Florus and Sacrovir in Gaul, the Frisii, Boudica; all of these found in \textit{Annales} by Tacitus.
those rebellions. Rebellions were a break in the order Rome had on its provinces and they were ultimately doomed to fail.

The ancient historians writing accounts of revolts or rebellions had the benefit of hindsight and were more inclined to write according to their own bias. The ancient audiences may have seen past this bias but they also understood that the nature of rebellions were futile in nature. Woolf argues how “No one would today accept naïve realist interpretations of accounts like his [Tacitus] of the Boudican revolt.”12 Historians have to scratch beneath the surface to extract what we consider the intention of these revolts, which can be extremely difficult considering we have our own prejudices and predetermined ideas of what we should have.

Josephus’ writings were carefully composed and the events surrounding them were written down so that certain extrapolations were guaranteed.

They must be reviewed in a manner that acknowledges they have been presented to us by Josephus within his own interpretative framework, but at the same time acknowledge that we should not feel compelled or required to retain that framework.13

The cause of the revolt according to Josephus is just one manner in which scholars such as Tessa Rajak, Steve Mason, E. Mary Smallwood, David Rhoads, and James S. McLaren frame their respected works. It is actually in James S. McLaren’s work Turbulent Times? Josephus and Scholarship on Judaea in the First Century CE where one can best reference scholarship’s stance

12 Woolf, “Provincial Revolts,” 34. Although he does not provide a bibliography due to the immense amount it would require; Woolf does point directly to the work on Tacitus A. J. Woodman Tacitus Reviewed (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) and The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

13 McLaren, “Going to War against Rome,” 134. McLaren is discussing ten actions early in the war relevant to his idea that Josephus was an active supporter of the war. They are: ceasing to accept sacrifices and gifts from foreigners (BJ 2.409); the appointment of generals and related military preparations (BJ 2.562-582, 647-651; Vita 28-29); the capture of the fortresses (BJ 2.408, 484-486); the burning of the archives (BJ 2.427); Menahem’s attempt to seize power (BJ 2.433-448); the annihilation of Roman troops (BJ 2.430, 449-456); the attacks on Syrian villages and cities (BJ 2.458-460); the attack on Simon bar Giora (BJ 2.652-653); the destruction of Agrippa II’s palace at Tiberias (Vita 65-69); the attack on Ascalon (BJ 3.9-28). A full account on McLaren’s account will be discussed later in following chapter.
from the past to the present.\textsuperscript{14} Most of the important works in this field fall into two categories according to McLaren, but they are not to be held as absolutes: a general survey text, such as works by Schürer or Smallwood, and a single-issue study. These single issues include causes of the 66-70 CE revolt, the popular movements, historical Jesus and early Christianity, Galilee, Josephus, and the revolt itself. An important part about these studies is their attention to detail to one aspect of the revolt.

Compare Martin Goodman’s “four areas” of single-issue studies which are the value of Josephus’s narrative as a historical source; the status in Jewish society of the leaders of the rebellion, the ideology of the rebels; and the aftermath of the war.\textsuperscript{15} Goodman does seem to ask an important question, and one I hope to answer with this thesis: “whether Josephus’s perspective is helpful.”\textsuperscript{16}

Tessa Rajak sees the origins of the revolt in three ways: the lack of adequate governors to rule, Jewish rebels, and the failing of a ruling class in Judaea to mediate between the two parties.\textsuperscript{17} P. A. Brunt sees it is a rebellion of the masses and that the aristocracy or ruling class was not on board.\textsuperscript{18} What makes P. A. Brunt’s argument stand out is that he asserts this division between the commoners and the aristocracy arising in 6 CE, the year Judaea became an imperial province. Between this article, and an updated one in 1990, Brunt stresses the unique element that the revolt had because it was sixty years later. However, while others view it as an inevitable revolt, Brunt does not address that issue. P. Bilde’s view, however, is centered on the causes as

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. Martin Goodman’s “Current Scholarship on the First Revolt” in The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology edited by Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman (London: Routledge, 2002) 15-24. Goodman notes, “despite considerable progress in each of these areas, no consensus has been reached, so that it is not yet really time for a new synthesis to be attempted.”
\textsuperscript{15} Goodman, The Ruling Class, 15.
\textsuperscript{16} Goodman, The Ruling Class, 16.
\textsuperscript{17} Rajak, Josephus, 107.
\textsuperscript{18} P. A. Brunt. “Josephus on Social Conflicts in Roman Judaea,” Klio 59 (1977), 149-153.
Josephus saw them and not modern scholarship. What Bilde sees as inevitable is the destruction of the Temple and how it affected the psyche of Jews and Josephus afterwards.

McLaren then leaves us with U. Rappaport’s article boldly claiming that the revolt was in fact inevitable. I disagree with his assertion that religious ideology, in messianic form or otherwise, “agrarian conflict,” and the inadequacy of the government were not collectively the cause of the revolt. However, Rappaport does tend to emphasize this growing “agrarian conflict.”

The concentration of land ownership in the hands of an ever dwindling group caused “tremendous social changes” and the landless populace became “easy prey” for those “proclaiming justice” through a messianic kingdom (p. 83). To these circumstances could be added corruption and incompetence on the part of the Roman procurators. Rappaport’s argument is still that all these factors, religious or social, were not acting as individual catalyst or a primary cause to the revolt. Rappaport’s argument takes a turn and he argues that Rome and Judaea were in a dilemma that “could not resolve” itself and therefore revolt was inevitable. While P. A. Brunt and U. Rappaport see it this way, other scholars such as P. Bilde do not. I do not agree with Rappaport’s account that Rome was trying to appease both Greeks and Jews. Why were the governors “drawn into supporting the pagans in the various ethnic conflicts that broke out” during this time period? Rome, or at least her governors, answered to no one (limited power in practice) and they had the army and structure to hold down any other province.

Popular movements during this time period include Zealots, bandits, and religious. Relevant studies include Martin Hengel’s *The Zealots*, David M. Rhoads’s *Israel in Revolution*, Thomas Grünewald’s *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and Reality*, R. A. Horsley and J. S.

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Hanson’s *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*. The religious movement behind the revolt cannot be understated.

Another work that examines the revolt is Jonathan J. Price’s *Jerusalem under Siege: The Collapse of the Jewish State 66 - 70 C.E*. Price’s work is based on the thesis that internal collapse (strife) of the Jewish nation in Jerusalem was the main cause of the revolt in 66. Price also takes exception to scholars who accept “everything Josephus wrote unless decisively disprovable.”

Price breaks up the interpretation of Josephus as a historical source into individual sections. I want to closely observe what falls under the heading of “Contradictions.” Josephus contradicted himself between works and sometimes within the same work and it comes as no surprise that his contradictions when concerning the beginning of the revolt became blurred. Works such as Shaye J. D. Cohen’s *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* provide the best example of an evolving historian.

In particular we need to examine how scholars interpreted Josephus’ works and his context and intentions behind writing, especially the nature of the revolt. James S. McLaren finds the “deficiencies of these three approaches” as “apparent when they are placed within the context of the sources and in their appropriate chronological time frame, and when an awareness of the encompassing nature of Josephus’s interpretative framework is acknowledged.”

The approaches, discussed earlier, are mentioned here in again because I discuss the framework McLaren uses to categorize these works. McLaren uses the relationship between action and interpretation when analyzing Josephus specifically. In three steps, McLaren breaks down how to interpret historical events in terms of time frames: the event itself, description of the event by

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21 Price, *Jerusalem under Siege*, 183. The scholars Price has in mind are Tessa Rajak and R. J. H. Shutt. This extreme is countered by the other extreme; in which everything is rejected or does not fit the initial theme of the person writing their work.
“near contemporaries,” and then finally the events examined through the eyes of later historians.24 In the first approach, McLaren sees Tessa Rajak and Peter Bilde as failing to recognize the relationship between the source and the event. While Rajak and Bilde see this as a second time frame, where the “near contemporary” account is Josephus, McLaren demonstrates it to be built in the third frame. Josephus cannot be trusted as a “near contemporary” because of his involvement in and after the war there is a clear bias. However, for Rajak and Bilde, Josephus is the source of the events and is completely believable when it comes to describing the motives and causes of the war. This is how Tessa Rajak or Peter Bilde would interpret the events because they acknowledge Josephus’ involvement in these events and therefore should be given some level of trust.

The second approach, is a complete rejection of the “near contemporary” accounts, specifically Josephus, by scholars such as Moehring.25 McLaren represents Moehring as the other end of the spectrum. The idea that Josephus could be used to describe any event, beyond the bare minimum, is ludicrous to Moehring.26 This approach would be more along the lines of the third frame, where the historian of a later era is trying to interpret and analyze the works of Josephus. McLaren is in favor, at one point, because it seems to be the best possible answer to the question of how to properly use or interpret Josephus.

The third approach is where the bulk of scholarship rests and McLaren sees it as similar to the first approach. In this third approach, Jonathan Price, Martin Goodman, Urial Rappaport and others see the bias and the “purpose of every word” and try to move past that. I find this

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24 McLaren, Turbulent Times, 220.
26 Moehring, “Joseph ben Matthia…,” 229. The idea of “every word had a purpose” is strong in this work and it is Moehring’s personal crusade, according to him, to “eradicate” the “belief in the hard core of historical facts in relation to the study of Josephus.”
approach the most admirable and while I am still skeptical, there is not a better approach to understanding Josephus. I do not agree with McLaren in his view that, “To siphon out the bias is to remove the entire narrative.” It is possible, if done correctly as with Goodman and Price, to remove the bias because it is clear when Josephus has an agenda or a clear goal. For an example, Josephus’ bias towards the priestly class is clear because of the way he treats the rebels. James McLaren takes the approach that taking out the bias would be wrong because it is the “life blood” of the text. However, I am in agreement with McLaren that all “preconceived notions of how the first century functioned should be avoided” because they do not help further the scholarship and can get in the way. Some scholars have taken for granted the idea that Judaea was in turmoil and that the war was inevitable, a point I have discussed and firmly disagree with. The events leading up to the revolt and the causes that lead to it are the main concerns of this thesis.

Raising the issue concerning the causes of unrest and why it did not occur in the Diaspora as frequently, Millar notes,

The consequence was not merely that the wide area ruled by Archelaus (Idumaea, Judaea, and Samaria) became provincial territory, but that the evidence allows us to follow the installation of a quite new type of province: that is to say, a second-rank province with auxiliary units but no legions, and governed by a praefectus of equestrian rank, not by a senator...But Judaea, whether or not it was actually the first, is the only one where we can see this new aspect of the Roman Imperial state coming into existence.

The idea of unrest in Judaea is built primarily on the writings of Josephus and the secondary sources, from Schürer up to Steve Mason and other modern Josephus scholars. The

28 McLaren, *Turbulent Times*, 237. The relevance of Josephus and his work are important because it helps establish the correct framework.
intended audience of his works and whether it was an apologetic work in the truest form are important aspects of Josephus that went unnoticed for years. If not apologetic, then perhaps it was a piece of propaganda for Judaism veiled under false pretenses of admiration for Vespasian, Titus, and Rome.

The intents behind Josephus writing *BJ* in defense of Judaism, or at least those of the peace party, were clear to him. The Roman governors were easy to target for blame because it made the situation black and white. The peace party and the war party were the ones that divided Judaism at the time of the revolt. Josephus was ready to blame the governors because he was afraid to call out Vespasian or Titus for the destruction of the Temple. Tacitus has similar feelings towards the governors, so Josephus was not entirely falsifying history.\(^\text{31}\) Josephus saw the Roman emperors with some faults, even though Josephus himself had the favor of the emperors Vespasian and Titus. The derision or subtle jabs at the expense of Titus might show the true nature of Josephus.

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\(^{31}\) Tacitus, *Annals* 12.54; *Hist.* 5.9, 5.10, 5.12.
CHAPTER 2
ROME AND JUDAEA’S TUMULTOUS HISTORY UP TO 6 CE

This chapter is intended to be a brief but helpful narrative, which deals with the history of Jewish and Roman relations beginning with Pompey, quickly moving to Herod, and finally to the death of Herod and subsequent rule by his sons. This concise narrative serves as a chronological foundation for the analysis in the following chapters. Showing the establishment and administration Pompey tried to install in the eastern part of the empire and how it led to client kings, this narrative magnifies Rome’s provincial administration in its early stages. A brief description of Roman administration in Judaea is necessary because Roman-Judaean relations seemed to be strenuous from the beginning. The narrative moves quickly past Pompey to Herod and then focus on the death of Herod. Augustus’ decision to split Herod’s kingdom among his three sons was an interesting mark in the history between the two nations. Herod’s three sons Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip were all given parts of the kingdom to govern but Archelaus was the one better known because of Josephus. However, Rome and Judaean relationships began many years before Herod and his sons.

Roman and Jewish relations go back to the time of the Maccabees, when a supposed letter from the Romans was sent in support of the new regime under the Hasmonaeans. 1 It was Judas who “heard of the fame of the Romans” and “that they pledged friendship to those who came to them.” 2 Recent scholarship disputes the authenticity of the letter but it nevertheless represents how powerful the Romans were and that the Jewish people knew of them. 3

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1 1 Macc. 8:22. It is interesting to note that this letter was written on bronze tablets. According to Michael Coogan et al., eds., The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 important documents like this letter were often inscribed on bronze tablets.
2 1 Macc. 8:1-2. The author emphasizes this relationship with Rome because the hold of the Seleucids on Judaea was starting to falter according to The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha.
3 Gruen, The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome. 2 vols. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984. See my Appendix II. Gruen seems to belong under the camp that disputes the authenticity of
importance of the letter is on the relationship between the Jews and their faltering rulers the Seleucids. Pompey’s journey through the eastern part of the Mediterranean, in the 60s BCE roughly one hundred years after the Maccabean revolt and the treaty with the Romans, is our next step.

Pompey’s contact with Jerusalem and the Temple was significant as he played a direct role in settling the dispute between the Jewish priestly classes. The High Priest was a sacred position but it was sold to the highest bidder. The Hellenization of this post is a source of controversy for scholars more concerned with the relationship between Hellenism and Judaism. The position of the High Priest was highly religious but with uncertain political power and that represented a confusion Rome would later regret. The revolt of the Maccabees first set the precedent for a High Priest to be named not of the traditional Zadokite family. By allowing Pompey to announce the new High Priest it set an even more dangerous precedent. The action of announcing a priest allowed for outside interference in matters that should have been handled within their own community. One way to examine this case is a case of Jewish internal sparring allowed for Pompey to settle disputes. It would be difficult, however, to see it in this light because there were numerous other factors in this event.

The legitimacy of the Maccabees, or Hasmonaean dynasty, was disputed but still accepted in the end by most of the Jews. However, during the later periods, the ruling priestly class submitted to the prefect or procurator, as it was on their goodwill that the power of the ruling class depended.4 Tying back with the earlier paragraph on the ruling class, it seems that no ruling class, elite or priestly, was capable of ruling on its own. Roman interference in deciding a High Priest was something that was offensive to the Jewish faithful. Having Hellenes and

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Romans define their religious leader further undermined what the ruling class was trying to uphold. This internal conflict was a sign of things to come.

Pompey created an administration in the east that was able to sustain itself temporarily with the help of Rome and that was his lasting impact according to Robin Seager. Later, however, Seager states that Pompey did not have the lasting power to sustain the administration of such a vast area for a prolonged period of time. Lasting success depended on effectively ruling difficult provinces such as Judaea, which was harder to administer because it was different in terms of religion and class structure. The continuation of the system set up by Pompey proved to be an ultimate failure. Still, this kind of strong character is difficult to find when examining the provincial governors of Judaea; in fact the only person comparable was Herod, as we soon see.

Pompey’s interaction with the Temple is a source of interest if we are to understand the full difficulties of using Josephus as a source. Josephus states that Pompey entered the Temple and the Holy of Holies but touched nothing. It is hard to imagine that this would have been the case. In fact an argument could be made that Josephus was trying to write the history to be in favor of the Romans, his patrons. John Leach states that because of his “treatment of Judaea, his regard for the sanctity of the temple, and the fact that he allowed the religious basis of Jewish society to remain undisturbed” Pompey was able to win the goodwill of Judaea according to Josephus. Pompey’s insistence on entering the Temple is a clear indication that he had little regard for the sanctity of the Temple. Perhaps it is a bit surprising that there was not an open rebellion brewing against Pompey for his actions, especially considering what would happen the next time a Roman figure entered the Temple.

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6 AJ 14.69.
7 Leach, Pompey the Great, 78-101.
The effect Pompey had on Judaea was tremendous even though he was there a short time. Compared to Pompey, Herod’s period of influence on the area was much longer, and his impact on the province was greater. Herod’s lengthy rule (37 – 4 BCE) was marred with murder, deception, and hostility. The situation with Herod, and his father Antipater, set the stage for a complex relationship between the Jews and the Romans. Just as Pompey intervened on behalf of the Jews supporting Hyrcanus II, Antipater also threw his support for Hyrcanus II against the rightful heir to the High Priesthood, his brother Aristobulus. Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus were the sons of Queen Salome Alexandra (76 – 67 BCE). The politicizing of the High Priesthood, as mentioned above, was something that Antipater knew could be used to his political advantage. The purpose was not to favor the one who was most popular or politically strong, Aristobulus, but to favor the weaker one whom Antipater could control and manipulate. Antipater’s plan came together in 63 CE when Pompey conferred the High Priesthood on Hyrcanus, effectively ending the civil war. Antipater prepared his sons to become effective rulers as he was setting the pieces in motion.

This development further enhanced the notion that the Jewish priestly class was losing control of the land and that it took outside influences to settle disputes. Perhaps it was because, as Goodman and others have noted, there was not strong ruling class that Judaea could fall back on. This default ruling class was made up of some priestly members but also members of a rich aristocracy. However, these events seem more like exceptions to the rule or norm.

The situation was acceptable because the Jewish people had Hyrcanus, the legitimate High Priest candidate, as their religious leader. The Jewish population of Judaea, specifically in Jerusalem, was fervent about the Temple and city and quick to defend the sanctity of both. Lurking in the background was Antipater and his son, Herod. Antipater was a shrewd politician
and a wealthy Idumaean with ties to the Nabataeans. The Idumaeans were a people south of Judaea but were not recognized as full Jews. The Edomites settled this area around the eighth and sixth century BCE because of the Nabatean conquest of the land. The Nabateans were an Arab people centered on Petra but shared similar traits with the nearby Semitic people.8 The forcible conversion to Judaism in 129 BCE made Antipater and his descendants “quasi-Jews.”

As Maurice Sartre observed, “Thus, within his own realm a king played the same role as the governor in a province. What better proof is there that the client state was simply one way of governing what amounted, in any event, to Rome’s empire.”9 Later, “when Augustus removed Alexander (Jannaeus) from his principate of Emesa in 30 BCE and restored the principate to Iamblichos ten years later, he was clearly signaling that he had the power to make and unmake kings.”10 This stroke of power by Augustus is used as a signal to all other client kings and governors that were uncertain of where their power derived. The best example for this type of client king was found in Herod the Great.

The relationship between Herod and his Jewish subjects was always tenuous and the major reason behind it was his favoritism towards the Romans. Herod was flexible in how presented himself to different subject communities (Jews and gentiles), and considering his Idumean background, he may not have thought of himself as fully Jewish. At his best, Herod was an efficient ruler for the Romans but unbearable for the Jews in Judaea. Finding this stark contrast in the other parts of the empire would be difficult.

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9 Sartre, The Middle East under Rome, 72. The comparison made by Sartre is later “but while the governor of Syria had to act as Rome’s agent in carrying out the imperial policy in Palmyra (which was integrated into the province in 19 C.E.), in Bostra the policy was carried out by King Rabbell II (71-106), who had made the city a sort of capital of the northern part of his kingdom.
10 Ibid, 72. The dynasty that Augustus restored is the Sampsigeramos, which had been in place when Pompey arrived according to Sartre.
Herod attempted to win favor with a building program that included the renovation of the Temple, and military strongholds as well. Some of the strongholds would later become a necessity for the Jewish rebels fighting the Romans. The necessary ruthlessness with which he held to power was what made Herod outlast most of his rivals and establish his legacy, for better or worse. Herod sought favor with Rome just as his father had and this would be a source of contention with his Jewish subjects.

The relationship between Herod and the Jews was always hostile and the tensions boiled over after his death in 4 BCE. The assistance, both financial and military, Antipater gave to Julius Caesar during Caesar’s civil war with Pompey was rewarded by becoming the governor of Judaea and a Roman citizen. Julius Caesar’s support was not toward the Hasmonaean king, but to Antipater. Antipater’s sons Phasael and Herod inherited the Rome’s confidence. The Roman tendency to rely on a strong local figure or a small powerful group was partly due to the large number of complex territories under their sway.

David Braund in his work *Rome and the Friendly King* uses Herod as prime example of a client king Rome favored. The middleman between Rome and its frontier province was now solved. Herod, much like his father, was able to use his knowledge of politics and awareness to survive and rule for such a long time. Before the eventual civil wars between Octavian and Antony, Herod was able to get the support of both men. The recognition of a king during this time was by the Roman Senate, which described a client kings as *rex sociusque et amicus* (king

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11 Duane Roller. *The Building Program of Herod the Great*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. In Chapter 8, Roller deals with the catalogue of Herod’s building program that includes the sites of Masada, Caesarea, Jericho, Jerusalem, and Sebaste. Masada is perhaps the most famous as this was the last holdout of the war and has earned legendary status in the eyes of modern Jewish history.

12 Goodman, *The Ruling Class*, 32. Herod was able to survive the civil wars in Rome after Caesar’s death. Herod collected taxes for Cassius and was appointed tetrarch, along with his brother Phasael, of the territory ruled over by Hyrcanus.
and ally and friend); and the process of *appellatio* (addressing) and conferring this were laid out by Josephus.  

Rome and client kings went hand in hand when it came to provincial administration. Herod was similar to other client kings. Historians are fortunate to have Josephus’ account of Herod because it provides a very detailed account of a client king. Herod’s reign was not popular with the inhabitants of Judaea but it allowed for Rome to finally have a central figure that was able to handle crises more efficiently, if not brutally. The death of Herod threw the central authority into chaos, as Archelaus was incapable of holding the territory of Judaea. Herod’s description in *BJ* by Josephus portrays Herod as a near tragic figure in the Greek mold. Herod’s ability to rule through fear made his rule impressive but we must scrutinize Nicolaus of Damascus, whom Josephus used as a source when writing his Herod narratives. Nicolaus of Damascus was the historian of Herod’s court, whose works are lost, but we are able to piece some of it through Josephus’ own writings.

The tension between the Romans and the Parthians was a concern to the empire. The Parthians were the nearest power in the Near East and Syria-Judaea played a vital role. The geographic location of Judaea was important, and grew in importance because of the Parthians. When Augustus looked into making Judaea a province, he realized the crucial land link between Egypt and Syria. Josephus has Herod receiving recognition as king and portrays Antony as having preferred him because it was to Rome’s advantage.

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14 Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*, 27. The geographic location of Judaea was important, and grew in importance in the later empire. The Parthians were the biggest threat to the Romans on the eastern front and had previously conquered Judaea for a short period, 40-37 BCE.


16 *AJ* 14.386-7. Josephus makes it clear that Herod did not expect to be named king; in fact Josephus hints that it was not Herod’s intention to ask for the kingship. This may have just been a clever ploy by Herod. However, Josephus was probably against Herod being named king, as Braund states, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 24.
David and Moshe Aberbach perceive Herod as a successful agent of Roman culture in Judaea. Herod’s building program was inspired, for the most part, by Roman architecture and design. Caesarea Maritima was the provincial capital and the Roman subjects that followed the governor of Judaea stayed there and not Jerusalem. The constant remainder to the Jews of their subjugation to the Romans was clear because the governor was not readily available. Herod also “helped create conditions for revolt” according to David and Moshe Aberbach. Herod created havoc and hostility through his killings and rule, perhaps a necessary skill in a monarchy.

The relationship between the province of Syria and Judaea was important. “At Caesarea Archelaus met the procurator of Syria, Sabinus, a shining example of the self-important minor official, who was to give an unfortunate foretaste of the tactless and high-handed behavior of the later equestrian governors of the country.” Smallwood, as Steve Mason notes, is just taking Josephus literally. The history of using Josephus remains divisive. Though most scholars now agree that Josephus must be taken with some caution, it remains the best source available on some of the minor governors. In BJ the governors, then referred to as prefect from 6 to 26 CE, are unknown to Josephus or perhaps intentionally left unnamed. The significance of this silence is that Pilate is the last governor referred to as prefect, afterwards the term becomes procurator.

E. Mary Smallwood had no way of knowing exactly how these governors were aside from Josephus. The problem lies with the understanding of what Josephus wanted his audience to understand. It is the kind of reasoning and logic Smallwood provides that I argue against in this thesis. The works of Josephus, his rhetoric, word choice, and style were all formalized to fit a very specific idea: the Romans were not to blame for the revolt (even though they provided the

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20 Rajak, *Josephus*, 67. See also *AJ* for the names of the governors.
governors) and that it was the bandits and rebels who were to blame. I favor the approach by Steve Mason when it comes to the use of Josephus. The intended audience would have understood the underlying message of his works, or at least seen the larger picture. The governors, both of Syria and Judaea, were a representation of a wider problem. Laying the blame squarely on their shoulders would be a huge misrepresentation. The Roman government could not get a handle of the province and as events escalated it was in no rush to mollify the situation.

The administration for this area rested with Augustus as he inherited the situation from Herod. “Augustus undoubtedly believed that he had settled the question for good, but in fact Archelaos’s incompetence would force the emperor to deal with the issue again sooner than he expected.” 21 Augustus finally gave in and deposed Archelaus and exiled (or relegated) him to Gaul. 22 Augustus perhaps felt that the best way to handle the situation was to break up the kingdom of Herod among his sons. No clear reason is found in the sources but perhaps it was due to the nature of the area, one large province would be more difficult for one person to govern than three smaller parts.

Archelaus’ inability to govern the province forced Augustus to take decisive action. “Again Archelaus could only promise action in due course, and his attempts to calm the mounting hostility by an appeal to reason merely heightened the tension.” 23 Archelaus’ attempt to appease his Jewish subjects failed because the lack of communication and clarity between Rome and their provinces. Archelaus knew taking rash action without the consent of Rome was asking for trouble and that he had not received the full approval of Rome. Archelaus’ power rested with the emperor.

21 Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, 94.
22 BJ 2.111; AJ 17.344, 355.
23 AJ 17.206-12; BJ 2.5-9.
Another example of the misadministration presented by Smallwood: “A second meeting of Augustus’ *consilium* was then held, at which the main formal business was the hearing of the anti-monarchical Jewish delegation, whose request for “autonomy” (presumably meaning a return to the pre-Herodian theocracy, government of a purely Jewish character by the high priest) under the general oversight of the legate of Syria.” The Jews were hoping to avoid any more Herod-type rulers and go back to governing themselves. Even the Jewish people knew that this autonomy was false because they would still be under the control by someone not of their choosing. However, they despised Herod and Archelaus so greatly that even this faux autonomy was ideal. The reign of Herod and Archelaus soured the population on Roman-appointed client kings. The area of Judaea and its surrounding vicinity were now in the hands of the Roman Emperor.

Even Herod, though hated, could not keep his province from rebellion. Perhaps this was a sign that Roman administration was flawed. Herod’s death was a cause for celebration in the city Jerusalem, but they could not foresee what was to happen over the following years. Herod’s son Archelaus was incapable of ruling the province of Judaea even though the province was broken up into smaller parts among his brothers Herod Antipas and Philip. Rhoads writes as though Josephus was using the narrative prior to the revolt as the case for progressive deterioration in the relationship between Rome and Judaea. This is an invaluable piece of insight. Josephus provided the narrative in such a manner that it became obvious the nature of the revolt was just the result of a progressive deterioration in the relationship between Rome and Judaea.

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David Rhoads begins his analysis of this deterioration in 6 CE, during the revolt of Judas the Galilean. The cause for celebration of Herod’s death among the Jewish people degenerated into revolts and David Rhoads lists them out according to Josephus. The conclusion is that besides being political and social in nature, these revolts may have been motivated by various factors such as religious and messianic movements or even eschatological expectations. Josephus rarely saw this as an acceptable form of expression. The messianic movements, false prophets, and religious fanatics were not credible sources according to Josephus. According to Tessa Rajak Josephus “will not allow the enemy to occupy even an inch of ground” in order to keep the dichotomy of rebels and prophets and priestly and peaceful party intact. Although, Josephus was discussing the false prophets when Rajak made this conclusion, it is easy to see how Josephus could carry this type of antagonism towards other rebellious groups.

Finally, in 6 CE, Judaea became a proper province. The description of how Judaea became a proper province after the death of Herod is important. Herod died in 4 BCE but Judaea was not made a full province until 6 CE. This gap in time is significant because Archelaus was given many opportunities by Augustus to succeed. Millar notes that “Perhaps the most striking of the roles inherited by these Roman praefecti from Herod and Archelaus was the appointment and dismissal of the High Priest.” The governors were now in control of this very sensitive matter and would prove to be oblivious to its implications as a whole to the Jewish community.

Millar discusses the annexation of Judaea in 6 CE and the different aspects involved “Whether we see this change from the point of view of the structure of the Roman Empire or of

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27 The term proper province is used to describe a procuratorial province. Before 6 CE Judaea was considered a minor province and ruled by a prefect with no legions. See *Oxford Classical Dictionary* 4th Edition for more detailed information on the history of provinces.
its effects on the Jewish community and the temple, or of the origins of Christianity, its significance can hardly be exaggerated.” There is a consensus among scholars that point to this year as the beginning of direct Roman rule over Judaea and a sort of underlying buildup to the year 66 CE.

The embodiment of Roman administration is found in the provincial relationship between Syria and Judaea. A senator governed the former while an equestrian official governed the latter. As Smallwood argued, “If the province of Judaea had been under the direct rule of men of their caliber [i.e. senators], its history during the first century A.D. might well have been very different.” The administration was different depending on the province.

Whether it was autonomy, a client king, or direct Roman rule, the province of Judaea proved difficult to govern and understand because it lacked any real benefit or resources for Rome. Its religion set Judaea apart socially but geographically it was also so far east. The strong point was Syria, to the north. This quote by Sartre captures the potential of the Syrian command:

Gabinius’s governorship shows the strategic importance of Syria in a striking way. During his two years there, Gabinius not only had to administer the province and intervene in Syria’s own client states (notably in Judaea), but also had to lead Roman armies simultaneously into eastern Anatolia, against Parthia and into Egypt. This was not simply from a desire for glory and riches, as Cicero, who was particularly hostile toward Gabinius, would have us believe; it was also to fulfill the duties assigned to him.

Millar further stresses that Rome’s situation in the east would be particularly precarious if rebellions in Parthia or Commagene occurred simultaneously. As discussed earlier the threat of revolt or open rebellion was bad but having it reinforced or possibly funded by the Parthians must have been a real fear for the Roman Empire at the time.

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30 Millar, The Roman Near East, 44.
32 Sartre, The Middle East under Rome, 47. Here Sartre is citing Cicero De provinciis consularibus who has a vendetta against Gabinius because he had received the province of Syria from the tribune Clodius, who exiled Cicero in 59 BCE (45-47).
33 Millar, The Roman Near East, 42. The lack of solid control was somewhat aided by allied forces nearby, in the case of Judaea it was always Syria.
In fact, not all provinces were treated equally. Discussing the *legati* (governor) of Syria, in particular Petronius and Vitellius, Smallwood brings up an excellent point; had the Romans installed a proper government, as in Egypt or Syria, then perhaps a rebellion was not an inevitable outcome as some have come to see it. The stark contrast between Judaea and Syria was a representation of the administration of provinces in the Roman Empire and at the forefront were the governors. The next chapter deals extensively with the governors in chronological order.
CHAPTER 3
SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL? JOSEPHUS’ DEPICTION OF THE GOVERNORS

Judaism at this time was fractured and different sects believed different ideas of what was in store for the future of Judaea.\(^1\) The governors handled religious movements every year because of all the religious festivities that took place in Jerusalem and at the Temple. The Romans were afraid of large gatherings because they did not have enough soldiers stationed in Judaea to handle any potential outbreak. Troops stationed in Syria would come down and keep everything in order if necessary.\(^2\)

The extensive history of casting too much blame on the governors of Judaea, both on a personal and civic level, began with Josephus and was passed down by early scholars. Steve Mason is one modern scholar leading the crusade to reevaluate the causes of the revolt using Josephus. While the governors and the administration played an important role in the degradation of the situation between Rome and Judaea, the causes of the revolt were something Josephus purposefully eluded because they were so complex. Josephus developed an attitude of anti-rebellion and pro-Roman on the surface to his audience. The nature of the revolt led Josephus to denounce it, even though he was an active participant early on in the war.

Josephus wrote the history of the Jewish war\(^3\) against the Romans to explain the causes of the war in a manner fit for his gentile audience. Josephus was a Jewish priest from an elite family.\(^4\) He attempted to defend the actions of his people against critics. Josephus received favor from the Flavian dynasty and tried to absolve some of the blame from the Romans. Josephus kept the patronage of Vespasian and Titus by rewriting the events. Josephus instead blamed the

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1 BJ 2.119-66; AJ 18.11-31.
2 BJ 2.224-27 (cf. 2.10-13); AJ 20.105-12. Also see Sanders, Judaism Practice and Belief, 138.
3 Bellum Judaicum, or the Jewish War was originally written in Aramaic with an eastern audience in mind.
4 See Vita for a full account of Josephus’ background.
bandits for causing the revolt that led to the nation’s destruction. Placing significant blame on the bandits included an attempt by Josephus to place partial blame on the governors of Judaea, who allowed these bandits to remain active. Roman governors of Judaea are still a source of blame among scholars.5 Their inability to govern the province effectively was what ultimately led to the revolt; at least that is how certain scholars view the causes. The culmination of bad governors fueled the rebellious factions pre-66 CE. Rebellious factions were around before the revolt and only manifested in the text when Josephus felt it was appropriate to name them.6 It is unlikely that these factions and rebels all of a sudden became known when rebellion was underway. Bad governors alone are not responsible for causing the revolt; rather, it was the combination of poor Roman administration, and divisive Jewish factions and social movements in Judaea (some of which Josephus would label “bandits.”)

First, what did it mean when one spoke of Judaea as a “proper province”? The province of Judaea was “not typical” according to Fergus Millar in his work The Emperor in the Roman World.7 The province’s volatile history leading up to the first Jewish revolt was a result of poor administration by the Romans, but also a lack of one governing, ruling body of Jews who could stifle rebellious tendencies. However, when considering the broader spectrum of the Roman provincial administration it seemed as though Judaea was typical in more ways than not. Judaea was taxed like the other provinces and performed sacrifices on behalf of the emperor, of which the latter would later become a point of contention. The biggest item it shared in common with other provinces was its governor. In Egypt, as in Judaea, an equestrian ruled over the province.

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5 McLaren, *Power and Politics*, 10-27, providing a survey of the main scholarship on Josephus and administrative affairs. According to McLaren, studies in administrative affairs fall into three fields: studies in self-government, observations regarding the administration made within the context of another interest, and studies on one aspect or issue concerning administration in Palestine.


7 Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, 79, argues the same thing as Millar that Judaea had too many exceptional characteristics in comparison with the other client kingdoms.
The importance of this fact becomes clear when examining the final years leading up to revolt. The province’s history demonstrated a series of events regardless of the ruling establishment.

An example of poor administration was when Quintilius Varus, the legate of Syria, came down with troops to Judaea after the death of Herod in 4 BCE.\(^8\) The governor of Judaea was in command of auxiliary troops but no legions, so the Syrian governor would come down and handle major rebellions. Rome made Judaea an official province, centered on Jerusalem in 6 CE.\(^9\) Rhoads argues that after Judaea became an official province, the High Priest became “the primary political head of state.”\(^10\) The High Priest was from a very proud lineage. The union of politics and religion was so well blended that it was easy to forget the High Priest held little political power himself. Rhoads just assumes the High Priest only garnered so much power and that it was the procurator who was above him and the governor of Syria was above both of them. The hierarchy was more ideal than reality.

This section of the chapter covers the Roman governors of Judaea and their inability to sustain peace and order, according to Josephus. The situation in Syria was more stable. On some occasions, the Jews of Judaea sought help against the governors in their own province.\(^11\) This approach is important in understanding the causes of the revolt because much has been made of the role governors had in the outbreak of the war. Josephus understood the ideal situation was to blame the Romans for the current woes but it was a delicate matter since he did not want to appear too anti-Roman.

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\(^8\) *BJ* 2.66-79; *AJ* 17.286-98.
\(^9\) *BJ* 2.117.
\(^10\) Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*, 28. However, David Rhoads barely touches on the fact that the High Priest was chosen by the procurator; this is done by mentioning that the procurator picks from a small number of priestly families, thus keeping the hereditary line. The lineage was broken during the Hasmonean Dynasty but it remained fairly intact from then on.
Our main source on the first Jewish revolt has numerous problems. Josephus is a polarizing figure for modern historians attempting to understand the first Jewish revolt and first-century Judaism in general. Without Josephus history is almost entirely blind to this event and time period. Other than a few remarks by Tacitus on the Roman governors of Judaea and the first revolt, historians are completely dependent on Josephus. This dependence on Josephus presents a problem for historians because the main source was clearly biased and the level of trust historians place in it is complex.

The Roman governors’ direct involvement with the population of Judaea occurred only during the times of festivals or tenuous moments but this was enough to sour the people on the governors. Rome’s treatment of this province demonstrated a lack of understanding on the part of the empire to effectively deal with its holdings. Judaea, as Millar has pointed out, was a special case due to the distinctions that set Judaea apart from the rest of the Mediterranean world.

The procurators, or prefects as they were known earlier, have a long history of bearing the blame, beginning with Josephus and continuing on to modern scholarship. Especially, the ones that ruled from 52 to 66 CE: Antonius Felix, Porcius Festus, Lucceius Albinus, and Gessius Florus. This occurred in the interval after the death of King (Herod) Agrippa I, who died in 44 CE, so the Jewish population of Judaea had no real representative, no single leader to speak out against the crimes of the governor. Even the governors of Syria at this time, Ummidius Quadratus, Domitius Corbulo, and Cestius Gallus, were incapable of pacifying the province. The latter in fact would be the leader of the first Roman movement towards squashing the revolt in its infant stages.
It seemed as though the governors of Judaea were steering the Jewish population to open revolt because Josephus lays the rhetoric and condemnation on them.\textsuperscript{12} Josephus placed a substantial part of the blame on Jews themselves, as referenced earlier because it was their movement that led the nation into revolt. Zealots, Sicarii, and other groups tore Judaism apart according to Josephus, with their anti-Roman sentiments and actions.\textsuperscript{13} According to Josephus, it was the Sicarii who “first began these transgressions” and one of their most notable assassinations carried out was of the High Priest Jonathan.\textsuperscript{14} The actions of these men, along with false prophets and messianic figures only drove tension between the two sides of Judaism even more. The false hope created by these figures fed the people of Judaea and was an easy escape for Josephus. Josephus was a member of the priestly class and detested these groups for propelling Judaea into war against the Romans; more importantly Josephus could place the blame on them and not towards the Romans. Smallwood makes note of the steady decline,

The edges of the picture become blurred as the province declines inexorably into anarchy, with conflicts of Jew against Jew as well as Jew against Roman and a continuous deterioration of conditions at least partially independent of the personalities of the individual procurators.\textsuperscript{15}

While I agree with scholars such as Smallwood and Schürer that the procurators had a major role in the tensions between Rome and Judaea, it must not be forgotten that these governors did not have a clear understanding of what their purpose was.\textsuperscript{16} The Roman situation in Judaea was becoming more complex and required someone very capable to restore order.

\textsuperscript{12} AJ 20.257. Florus, the Roman governor of Judaea, pushed the Jewish people toward war with Rome.
\textsuperscript{13} BJ 7.260-1.
\textsuperscript{14} BJ 2.254-257.
\textsuperscript{15} Smallwood, \textit{The Jews under Roman Rule}, 269. The last four procurators play a vital role in the events leading up to the revolt and Smallwood sees it “convenient to study the developments of the fourteen years leading up to the outbreak of the revolt as a whole, rather than to divide them chronologically among the four procurators, whose efforts and failures to maintain or restore order show a dreary and repetitive monotony.”
\textsuperscript{16} Smallwood, \textit{The Jews under Roman Rule}, 156-174; 256-269.
Governors were to maintain the peace and oversee the process of collecting taxes, but other than that there were no clear guidelines that helped them solve their provincial problems.

While the governor of Syria held the real power, the prefect or procurator of Judaea was more visible to the province. Both terms for governor “prefect” and “procurator” are mentioned because it seems most of the older scholarship uses these terms at their own discretion. Smallwood’s work sheds some insight on this matter and concludes that the term “procurator” should only be used for the governors of Judaea after 44 CE. Smallwood, along with many scholars, reports that these governors were inept. The governors were eventually housed in Herod’s port city, Caesarea, and Smallwood notes this was the “Roman administrative capital and military headquarters,” and that the former palace of Herod was “taken over as the governor’s residence.”

The list of prefect governors begins with Coponius (6-9 CE), Marcus Ambibilus (9-12 CE), Annius Rufus (12-15 CE), Valerius Gratus (15-26 CE), Pontius Pilate (26-36 CE), Marcellus (36 or 37 CE), and Marullus (37-41 CE). Only the important events that occurred during the reign of each governor are noted.

**Coponius (6-9 CE) and Revolutionaries**

Coponius held a census of both people and property (perhaps for Roman taxation) according to Josephus. The main event that occurred under the watch of Coponius was the revolt led by Judas of Galilee in retaliation to the census. Sicker argues “the Romans were unable to stamp out the nationalist teachings of the Zealots, which would inspire a far greater and more

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19 Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*, 61. Rhoads also notes that during this time period, from Judas to the death of Agrippa, most of the governors were of Italian origin.
20 *AJ* 18.2. This census is not mentioned in *BJ*. Cotton, “Some Aspects of the Roman Administration,” 78.
serious challenge to Rome a half-century later.”21 This first episode of disorder is relevant to the
great revolt later, but how significantly the two are connected is debatable. In any case,
governors were presented with difficult, unpredictable situations such as these, but had no real
charter or guidebook to use.

The revolt of 6 CE was very religious in nature and gained more followers. Josephus was
quick to brand the later rebels as brigands and place harsh words of blame on them.22 However,
with Judas23 Josephus saw a teacher who believed in his divine visions and teachings. Josephus
used people such as Agrippa II in BJ to get across his take on the war and the causes, but he
rarely allowed religion to be used as a valid motivator.24 One such figure was simply known as
the Egyptian.25 Josephus did not shy from labeling the brigands and rebels as the instigators of
the war and the cause for their current dilemma.

Of great importance to the topic of bandits is Ezekias because his son, Judas, would
become “one of the first zealots and many of his descendants were active in the resistance to
Rome before and during the First Revolt.”26 Benjamin Isaac points out the way Josephus wrote
about these men, in contrast with the Sicarii, leaves no doubt that they were motivated by
religious opposition to Rome.27 The Sicarii varied in many ways but it seems that their lack of
real religious grounds for their attacks led to more tension. Killing Jewish elites for participating
with Romans was seen as treason for the Sicarii and motive for open rebellion.

While Judas and his followers preached about God as their only king, the Sicarii’s lack of
religious rhetoric speaks volumes, according to Josephus. However, Josephus’ selective

21 Sicker, Between Rome and Jerusalem, 117.
23 Judas the Galilean was the so-called teacher and founder of the Fourth Philosophy.
24 BJ 2.346-401; cf. Mason, Flavius Josephus, 265-268, details the speech with appropriate background and
context.
26 Isaac, The Limits of Empire, 78-79.
27 Isaac, The Limits of Empire, 79, citing AJ 17.271-272; 18.4-11; BJ 2.56; 2.117-18.
treatment of this matter should be taken with a grain of a salt. To a Roman audience, the Sicarii came across as a group of terrorists terrorizing the country while Judas and his followers were viewed as religious zealots. Martin Goodman argues against religious ideology as a motive for the rebellion because “Judaism was too varied for easy generalizations about Jewish beliefs.”

The scholarly consensus tends to agree with Martin Goodman in this regard. Judaism in the first-century was diverse.

**Pontius Pilate (26 - 36 CE)**

The reign of Pontius Pilate was noticeable, not only because under him Jesus was executed, but also his rule was so offensive and tumultuous to everyone that the Romans eventually had to replace him with Marcellus. Rhoads is quick to point out, and very astutely, that the inspection of Judaea by Vitellius after Pilate was removed went so well that his manner of diplomacy was contrasted “sharply with the harshness frequently evident among the procurators of the smaller province of Judaea, who were drawn from the Equestrian Order.”

The dichotomy in status between the Syrian and Judaean provinces remained intact. Josephus was careful to contrast the governors of the separate provinces in a manner that fit the theme of his work, *BJ*.

Pontius Pilate showed an inability to handle the province at times, for example the incident when he placed standards with pagan symbols in the Temple. This event was a

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30 *AJ* 18.85-89.

31 Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*, 62. Vitellius, the senatorial governor of Syria, was received warmly according to Josephus (*AJ* 18.90, 120) and it seems as though his reign was one of peaceful diplomacy, to dispel any lingering thoughts of hatred left over from Pilate’s prefecture.

32 *BJ* 2.169-177; *AJ* 18.55-59.
“radical departure from past practice” and that “former procurators respected the aversion of the
Judeans to graven images.” Pilate’s actions were abrasive but do not agree with Sicker’s
logical progression that Pilate deliberately went out to try and start a new era in Judaea. What
Pilate knew of Judaism and its followers is unclear but the clear lack of pagan imagery would
have been very obvious to Pilate. There is an indication here that Josephus had more available
sources or witnesses because his narrative is more detailed on Pilate than on the previous
governors.

Two events to discuss are Pilate’s introduction of the bust of Tiberius into Jerusalem and
the time he took money from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct for Jerusalem. Arguing
Josephus “actively composed these two adjacent accounts,” Schwartz sees that “they form a
balanced diptych: the first has a happy ending, the second has a tragic ending.” Josephus saw
the first as a legitimate concern since the Jewish people were ready to die rather than tolerate it.
In the second account, Josephus made no excuses for the Jews as Pilate was only doing what he
could to ensure the city was properly equipped. The story of Pilate in these two passages
suggests that Jews of all classes were extremely zealous to some degree.

Pilate was incapable of forging better relations for the Romans and it ultimately led to his
removal from the post by the Syrian governor, Vitellius. The citizens of any province seemed
to possess the ability of sending a delegation to Rome for help. Governors, especially cruel ones,
were susceptible to having their subjects undermine their authority and go directly to the emperor.

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33 Sicker, Between Rome and Jerusalem, 122; also note 123-127. These affirmations are difficult to
understand because they make it seem as though previous governors were sensitive about this sort of thing. Martin
Sicker infers Pilate was a new breed of governor that sought to raise tensions and was calculating. Nothing that I
have found hints at Pilate as anything of that nature; he appears often as ignorant and cruel. Perhaps Sicker was
thinking of the early years when Josephus had little to say of the early governors.
34 AJ 18.55-59 (the passage on Tiberius and the bust), AJ 18.60-62 (the passage on the Temple treasury and
the aqueduct); cf. BJ 2.169-177.
35 Schwartz, “Composition and Sources in Antiquities 18: The Case of Pontius Pilate,” 132-133. The way
Josephus tells the stories explains the difference between the two.
36 AJ 18.88-89.
Marullus and Petronius

Marullus did not have an easier time in his reign because the emperor Gaius wanted to erect a statute of himself in the Temple. The offense this plan caused to the Jewish population in Jerusalem reached a boiling point. The willingness to die for their religion is evident elsewhere, such as the story of the Maccabees. The implication was that war with Rome would have come much faster had Gaius gone through with his plan. As luck would have it Gaius was murdered before any type of construction could get underway. The legate of Syria, Publius Petronius, openly defied the emperor. Josephus explained the consultation Petronius had with the Jewish leaders about this plan. This is another example of a governor who knew the tumultuous history of the province and did not want to further aggravate the situation. Josephus highlighted these moments because it provided a stark contrast between good governors and bad governors.

Agrippa I and Agrippa II

The period between the end of Marullus’s reign in 41 and the death of Agrippa I in 44 was difficult because it had lasted only a few years before Judaea once again descended into being an unruly province. Agrippa I and Agrippa II were completely different in Josephus’ portrayal of each one. While Agrippa I was celebrated as being the last king of the Jews, a proponent and last bastion of autonomy, Agrippa II is seen in a more negative light, not through his own fault. Agrippa II is forever remembered for his heroic and tragic speech given right before the revolt began, at one of the most pivotal moments of the BJ narrative.

37 BJ 2.184-203; AJ 18.261-309.
38 BJ 2.184-7, 192-203; AJ 18.261-309. For Philo’s account see Leg. 188, 198-348.
39 BJ 2.184-203. The open defiance by Petronius was perhaps due the fact that he had a good idea of how the Jews would react and so he decided to take his chances by stalling. Even though Gaius “threatened to have Petronius put to death for his being so tardy in the execution of what he had commanded” Petronius thought it was best to avoid further altercations with the Jews.
Agrippa II’s speech given in BJ was seen as Josephus giving his own “philosophy of history.”

Gottfried Mader argues that the significance of the speech was that it played an important role in understanding what Josephus thought of the anti-Roman rebels. Another way of looking at Agrippa’s speech is as a dichotomy of the Jews. The Jews in favor of war against the Romans were “warmongers” and in the “minority” according to Josephus. Mader essentially says it in the best way: “much rather the king serves as a mouthpiece through whom Josephus articulates his own interpretation of the war.”


**Cuspius Fadus (44 - 46? CE)**

In BJ Cuspius Fadus is briefly mentioned. However, an incident involving the High Priest’s vestments marked his reign with importance. An example of the power structure between governors and the emperor can be found in the issue of the High Priest’s ceremonial vestments and how they were in the hands of the Romans. Daniel R. Schwartz argues out that “until the days of Pilate the high-priestly vestments had been held under lock and key by the governor of Judaea, just as had been the practice under Herod and Archelaus.”

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43 Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, 64.
made a gesture towards the Jews after the deposing of Pilate by allowing the priests to once again hold on to the vestments.44

Cuspius Fadus was the procurator associated with the event of the High Priest vestments. Goodman writes that an embassy of Jews was sent to Claudius “to ask for custody of the high-priestly robes.”45 Fadus took matters into his own hands and held prominent Jews as hostages until the matter regarding the vestments was resolved.46 Claudius ruled in favor of the Jews and Josephus even preserved the letter and names of the four ambassadors sent on the mission.47 Only during the Day of Atonement or other festivals were the vestments allowed to be taken out and given to the High Priest. Perhaps it was a testament to how powerful the High Priest still was in the minds of both the Romans and the Jews. By denying the High Priest the vestments the Romans were imposing their power both physically and psychologically.

_Tiberius Julius Alexander (46? - 48 CE)_

Claudius, “convinced that Jewish discontent with Roman rule had a fundamentally ethnic rather than a political basis,” appointed Tiberius Julius Alexander as procurator.48 Claudius’ intentions were good because he had brought in a Jewish person by birth to be procurator. However, Claudius did not understand the hatred for that family since they had renounced their

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45 Goodman, _The Ruling Class_, 141, cf. Josephus *AJ* 20.6-9. Fadus took the High Priest vestments but until this moment they had remained in the Temple. There is another famous case of the Jews sending an embassy to the emperor Claudius, see _CPJ_ 151, Claudius’ letter to the Alexandrians in 41 CE. Claudius’ ruling was essentially for both parties [Jews and Greeks] to keep their respective area. The Jews were not to seek benefits in a city not their own. The final statement contains an ultimatum by Claudius threatening to use force to subdue the parties. Claudius was wary of embassies sent by Greek and Jews so an ultimatum was issued.

46 *AJ* 20.8.

47 *AJ* 20.14. The names are Cornelius b. Creon, Typhon b. Theydon, Dorothy b. Nathanael, and John b. John. Goodman argues “The ruling class may have contained many such rich men who, like the publicans, crop up rarely in the sources because of their lack of local prestige.”

48 Sicker, _Between Rome and Jerusalem_, 137. Tiberius Julius Alexander was a nephew of Philo of Alexandria the famous Jewish philosopher.
ties to Judaism. The noteworthy point here is that the Roman emperor Claudius may have been aware of the failings of the governors.

**Ventidius Cumanus (48 – 52 CE)**

Cumanus came into an arduous situation that had been escalating with each governor. An important event occurs while transferring the procuratorship from Tiberius Alexander to Cumanus; Josephus seemed to indicate that Cumanus only ruled “the rest of the province.” The importance of the event is in the wording itself. However, Smallwood notes that by the end of Cumanus’ reign “the age of isolated episodes and clear-cut confrontations between the Jews and the Roman authorities largely comes to a close.” The first one occurs during the Passover festival. A soldier exposed himself to the Jews and made sounds that accompanied such a scandalous exposition. Quadratus, the governor of Syria, sent Cumanus to Rome so he could defend himself before Claudius.

**Antonius Felix (52 – 60 CE)**

Then, there was the rule of Marcus Antonius Felix from 52 to 60. His reign was important because Felix was of “quite exceptionally Roman status, for he was an ex-slave.” The influence of Pallas, the brother of Felix and close imperial advisor, on Claudius may have played a major role in the appointment of Felix as provincial governor of Judaea because Felix

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49 *BJ* 2.223; cf. Tacitus *Ann.* 12.54 (*cui pars provinciae habebatur*). This part claims Cumanus received only part the province; Tacitus and Josephus are in agreement. Mason indicates that perhaps Josephus was drawing on the same source. Steve Mason also notes the particular phrasing Josephus uses, τῆς δ᾽ ἀλλης ἐπαρχίας, in this could be construed as Cumanus only taking over part of the province, the Galilean area.


51 *BJ* 2.224; *AJ* 20.108. The incident occurs differently in *AJ*. There the soldier exposes his genitals but makes no sound. What we are to make of this change is unclear.

52 Goodman, *The Ruling Class*, 8. Cf. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 268-9 notes only one other freedman being a provincial governor. It was Hiberus and he was a temporary prefect of Egypt in 32 CE.

seemed to have lacked merit, at least to Josephus and Tacitus. The death of the High Priest Jonathan during Felix’s reign created “an atmosphere of intense suspicion: politicians watched their enemies warily and did not trust even their friends” according to Josephus.\(^{54}\) In the parallel account found in \textit{AJ} 20.162-163 Josephus writes that it is Doras, “the most trustworthy friend” of Jonathan, who arranged the murder. Josephus, according to Mason, argues that trust and friendship are very important during this heated time.\(^{55}\)

The mysterious death of the High Priest Jonathan outraged the crowd celebrating the festival and suffered ἀγανάκτησις (indignation) at this important event. Steve Mason comments on this significant theme throughout \textit{BJ}.\(^{56}\) Jews suffering indignation at the hands of the Romans were part of Josephus’ Jewish historiography, or Jewish influence directed towards the audience. Josephus wanted his Roman and predominantly gentile audience to understand that they had justification in their tensions with Rome. However, Smallwood pictures Felix as “a man who was inefficient rather than actively oppressive or obstructive.”\(^{57}\)

\textit{Porcius Festus (58/59 – 62 CE) and Luceceius Albinus (62 – 64 CE)}

Following Felix was Porcius Festus 58/59 - 62 CE. However, his reign was brief and with no real distinction according to Smallwood because any “efforts for the pacification of the country had no lasting effect” and “were rapidly undone under his successor, Luceceius Albinus (62-64 CE).”\(^{58}\) There is an important distinction between Festus and Albinus depicted by Josephus in \textit{BJ}. The change in \textit{AJ} is stark but Smallwood notes that it may be because Josephus understood that nothing the governors could do would calm the situation that was escalating.

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Smallwood also notes that because the legate of Syria did not receive any appeals, the reign of Albinus must be closer to the one found in *AJ*. The parallels between *BJ* and *AJ* on this matter deal with the descriptions of both Festus and Albinus. In *BJ* Josephus is more concise, Mason notes that the description of Festus is “remarkably spare, symmetrical, and positively disposed.” Josephus uses the Greek word κακουργία (malfeasance) to express the character of the last two governors before the war. Used in this context as a noun, in *BJ* 2.277 Josephus uses the verb form of the word (κακουργέω) and Mason sees this cognate of the two words as Josephus “building evil at the hands of Nero’s agents.”

**Gessius Florus (64 – 66 CE)**

Tacitus independently claimed that the boiling point for the war was when Jewish patience with the Roman cruelty had finally run out under Gessius Florus, one of the procurators Josephus lists as having been an immediate cause for the revolt. Having Tacitus corroborate Josephus is such a crucial piece of evidence, especially when it is so close to the war’s outbreak. Florus was reported to have been on board with the brigands that were terrorizing Judaea around this time. Tessa Rajak sees the story of Florus’ administration as a difficult situation to sort because Josephus was using rhetoric to gain proper knowledge of Florus. Florus’ reign, along with the reign of Pilate, seems to be the major cause behind the revolt. Florus was blamed, perhaps unfairly, for allowing the brigands to roam freely. So, Josephus and his contemporaries were forced into a war with the Romans.

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61 *BJ* 2.277-308.
63 Rajak, *Josephus*, 73. Rajak cites that at the end of *AJ* Josephus argues that the reign of Florus compelled the Jews to go to the war against the Romans.
The role of the governor up to the first Jewish revolt is apparent for having a direct hand in the revolt, as one of the causes. Josephus, in the *Bellum Judaicum*, argued for culpability on the part of the governors. However, the governors receive more blame for the revolt than they deserve. This blame is a direct outcome of earlier scholarship, which tended to view Josephus without any bias. It is impossible to know someone like Pontius Pilate or Cumanus apart from what Josephus or Tacitus wrote. Steve Mason and other scholars are trying to steer scholarship away from relying on this type of analysis. Even in Smallwood’s work, Mason still sees traces of that analysis because our reliance on Josephus is sometimes misguided. The older scholarship is indebted to Josephus and heralded him as a completely trustworthy source. Taking Josephus at face value when describing the events represents the old method of analyzing the works of Josephus.

While the governors may not have been extremely skilled with handling the province, they were also not helped by the system, or lack thereof, created by the Romans. The provinces were governed according to their status on the hierarchy. Not only were the governors of Judaea incapable of ruling their small province, these governors had to contend with the larger power in Syria. The fact that this revolt became so large demonstrates how little the Romans thought of Judaea. From 66 to 70 CE the Jewish rebels were able to fight the Romans and in the end only with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem did the war reach a psychological ending.

Moshe and David Aberbach argue that the revolt elevated the province of Judaea from the bottom to the top. Troops and administration needed to be upgraded to prevent any future revolt; an equestrian governor with auxiliary units was not strong enough to suppress this revolt. The status, post 70 CE, revealed that Rome quickly saw they needed to alter their administration of Judaea. “But while Rome looked forward with hope to a future of improved

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64 Aberbach, *The Roman-Jewish Wars*, 141.
control and more peaceful conditions, the Jews looked forward with gloom."\(^{65}\) This contrast can be seen in the ways Rome tried to pacify and restructure Judaea, which was now governed by an experienced governor of the senatorial order, with a procurator in charge of the financial administration, and a complete legion supplanting the auxiliary units.\(^{66}\)

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\(^{65}\) Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 331. Another way of looking at the 70 CE is the loss of a continuous history of Palestine.

\(^{66}\) Ibid, 331. This legion, *X Fretensis*, replaced the six auxiliary units. Now, the legion was in command of the province and the auxiliaries supported them. The experienced governor was now an imperial legate of praetorian rank, not equestrian rank.
CHAPTER 4
THE EMERGING REVOLT? EXTERNAL FORCES ON THE JEWISH REVOLT

This chapter discusses the external circumstances leading to revolt in 66 CE. By laying out the parameters for the last few governors: their reign, events, military, and social interaction, the bigger picture of Roman administration before the revolt can be scrutinized to help us understand what led to the war. Price takes note of this,

Yet whereas during the first period of direct Roman rule, cool and sensible heads had occasionally prevailed (e.g., Petronius), the steadily escalating abuses of the last procurators gave the ideological opposition to Roman rule urgency and practical cause. The string of abuses led Tacitus to blame the procurators alone for the revolt. This view ignores the near tradition of rebellion begun in 63 B.C.E.¹

Tacitus was ignorant of or uninterested in this epoch; to him the procurators preceding the revolt were the ones with most blame.² Antonius Felix, Porcius Festus, Lucceius Albinus, and Gessius Florus are all marred with events that seemingly magnified the deteriorating relations between Rome and Judaea. Jonathan Price poses a challenge to the notion of a united Jewish ruling class against the anti-Roman rebels.³ This idea is discussed further in the next chapter. For now, this chapter specifically targets the reports by Josephus concerning the governors near the beginning of the revolt in 66. The governors immediately preceding the revolt tend to receive the most blame.

Claudius sent Antonius Felix to be procurator of Judaea.⁴ As previously mentioned, Felix received the favor of Claudius because of his brother Pallas, who was one of Claudius’ most

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¹ Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 7. Price criticizes this view because “it has had subtle influences on modern reconstructions.” See Schürer I, 455: “It might be thought, from the record of the Roman procurators to whom, from [the year 44], public affairs in Palestine were entrusted, that they all, as if by secret arrangement, systematically and deliberately set out to drive the people to revolt.” Aberbach, The Roman-Jewish Wars, 82, argues that these second wave of governors were of Greek descent and therefore of lower-rank with homegrown hatred.
² Tac. Hist. 5.10.
³ Ibid, 30-31.
⁴ BJ 2.247.
important freedmen and advisers.⁵ It was under the watch of Felix that Judaea became infested with the *sicarii* and the Egyptian pseudo-prophet roamed Jerusalem.⁶ These events, specifically the rise of the *sicarii*, are said to be after Felix purged the countryside of bandits, crucifying their leader Eleazar bar Deineus and whoever was in league with him.⁷ The act of ridding bandits is something that comes up again and again in Josephus because he is ready to blame them for causing tensions. However, in this case, it seems Felix was doing the job of a governor.⁸ The social tension between Josephus and the priestly class and the banditry in Judaea is a common source for animosity and internal struggle. Josephus tells the story of the Egyptian pseudo-prophet as a reminder to the audience that false prophets and messianic hope were misguided because they were not directed from God.⁹

The role of Festus is fuller in *AJ* than in *BJ* but both are surprisingly short. Festus succeeds in ridding the countryside of bandits in *BJ* but this claim is not found in *AJ*.¹⁰ Steve Mason notes a rhetorical connection between Felix and Festus. *BJ* uses the verb λυμαίνω (spoil) six times according to Mason. Felix and Festus attempted to stop banditry and actively tried to keep the countryside peaceful. Albinus and his successor Florus are completely different because Josephus claimed they assisted banditry. First, Lucceius Albinus is portrayed in the opposite light of Festus. Josephus informs the reader that Albinus “did not govern affairs in the same manner, and there was no conceivable form of sordid behavior that he neglected.”¹¹ Albinus released bandits for ransom, which is in stark contrast to the previous governors Felix and

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⁵ Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 199 n. 1546. The citation to Barnett, *Agrippina*, 126-27 provided by Mason argues it was Agrippina, the wife of Claudius and mother to Nero that provided the support for Felix.

⁶ *BJ* 2.254-263.

⁷ *BJ* 2.523.

⁸ *AJ* 14.159. Herod’s first task was to remove bandits from the area. Cf. Dig 1.18.1.


¹⁰ *BJ* 2.271; *AJ* 20.185-196.

¹¹ *BJ* 2.272.
Festus. The actions of the last four governors provided Josephus with the grievances that made rebellion by Judaea much clearer to the Romans. The reign of Albinus was only the beginning, as we shall see with the next governor as Josephus remarked, “Such a man was Albinus, but Gessius Florus, the one who came after him, showed him to be most excellent man in comparison.”

Tacitus drew on the idea that Judaea was justified in their rebellion against Rome, “Still the Jews’ patience lasted until Gessius Florus became procurator: in his time war began.” Patience on the Jewish side was running out due to the increasingly maddening actions of governors. Josephus’ portraits and accounts of these governors may be exaggerated but the corresponding bit of evidence found in Tacitus gives some validation. In BJ 2.284 Josephus provided an origin account of the war relating to events in Caesarea. The tension between the Hellenistic city and its Jewish inhabitants was nothing new. Nero’s decision to keep Caesarea Greek upset the Jews vying for control. This event marked one of the three major incidents, according to Price, in which Josephus provides apt detail.

Florus’ handling of the tensions between Greeks and Jews in Caesarea, the plundering of seventeen talents from the Temple treasury, and his attack on the Jewish mob are the pivotal events during this reign. Martin Goodman analyzes the futile attempt by the Jews in Caesarea, “But by then...attempting to gain influence by good relations with the procurator was something of a lost cause.” Josephus presented this as an appendage to the escalating situation in Judaea.

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12 BJ 2.273; Mason, Flavius Josephus, 223 n. 1731. This argues Josephus presented Albinus as an “anti-governor.”
13 BJ 2.277.
15 See footnote 109. As mentioned previously Claudius put his foot down on the tensions and told both parties to be on their best behavior.
16 Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 9.
17 Goodman, The Ruling Class, 149.
The manner in which Josephus presented the opposition is important. The “more hot-headed of the youths” were the ones readily opposing the events in Caesarea. The dynamic contrast between youth and seniority played into Josephus’ hands as he was able to distinguish the blame and make it apparent for his audience.18

The next event is more important because of its representation. Florus took seventeen talents from the Temple treasury because he saw it as his right to use the funds for Caesar’s needs;19 perhaps the money was meant for administrative necessities.20 The Jews’ reaction to this theft in the following lines gave credence to the idea. The final event, however, proved to be costly for the Jews. The confrontation between Florus and his Jewish subjects fanned the flame of revolt even more.21 Florus was trying to squash any rebellion from forming so he had the Jewish priests and other notable men come greet the cohorts. Josephus used this as another perfect example to portray his priestly class as wanting to remain peaceful and not cause any indignation towards Florus and the Roman cohorts.22 Josephus’ constant attention to the class of peaceful priests is significant. Josephus was writing in hindsight and wanted to clear his people, particularly the elite priestly class from any blame. The violence quickly escalated and Florus was forced to seek the counsel of Cestius Gallus, the legate of Syria. The Jews anticipated this and sent their own embassy to Cestius in hopes of removing Florus.

The tragic outcome occurred right before a critical movement as well. “What emerges from the speech of the Roman citizen Julius Agrippa as composed by another Roman citizen Flavius Josephus is the conviction that Rome is invincible and that all opposition is futile.”23

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18 Cf. BJ 2.225, 2.238, 2.290. For other uses of this contrast between youth and seniority.
19 BJ 2.293.
20 Cf. Xenophon, Hier. 4.11. The contrasts being that this behavior of plundering temples was correctly attributed to tyrants. Steve Mason notes that 17 talents was very significant in terms of monetary value.
21 BJ 2.293-308.
22 BJ 2.318-324.
23 Stern, “Josephus and the Roman Empire,” 76-77.
Josephus used this rhetorical device to convey the image of a native king trying to keep his province from potential war. Like with any speech in ancient historiography, it is the invention of the author. Josephus wanted his audience to understand that Agrippa II was trying to steer the majority of Jews in Jerusalem from revolt against the Romans. But, Josephus then exposed the weakness of this argument. The Jews in Jerusalem heard the speech and promptly responded that they did not want war with the Romans, but they were at war with Florus. It is as though the Jews responded to a different speech. The Jews were not interested in war with the Romans, Josephus was careful to point this out. Agrippa II’s speech towards his fellow countrymen fell on deaf ears when he instructed them to submit to Roman administration until Florus was replaced. Mason and others such as Price and Goodman place great emphasis on this speech because it was seen as a last ditch effort to prevent the revolt, which looked inevitable in the course of Josephus’ brilliant account of the war.

As the revolt quickly approached, Josephus was confronted with a dilemma: assist the rebels in their cause or sit idly by. In his autobiography, *Vita*, Josephus explicitly demonstrated his desire for peace and publicly advocated against war. James S. McLaren poignantly points out “a clear connection between the described action and the alleged understanding of the situation made explicit in the *Life* narrative.” However, McLaren goes on to discuss what scholars have been debating for years, that the narrative in *Vita* is different from the one found in *BJ*. The *BJ* narrative given by Josephus is not entirely believable but it does offer a division

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24 BJ 2.402.
25 Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 310 n. 2535. This is seen as “rhetorical misdirection” by Mason.
26 BJ 2.342-43.
27 Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 264-268. This provides an excellent excursus on this speech.
29 *Vita* 17-29.
between aristocrats and rebels, and further subdivision in these two groups. Josephus was clearly trying to discern criticism from those who questioned his involvement in the war. In *Vita* Josephus positioned himself as clearly anti-rebellion.

The governors who played an important role in the revolt from the annexation of Judaea into the Roman Empire in 6 CE to the beginning of the Jewish revolt in 66 CE according to Josephus. The governors of Syria prior to 6 CE build the argument that the *legati* of Syria had a better relationship with Rome than the governor of Judaea. Steve Mason argues that Josephus crafted his work to center around the administrators of Judaea and only Judaea, out of a desire “to establish the incompetence of Roman administration in Judea as a primary cause of rising tensions. By focusing on Judea as if it were a separate province, he can highlight the allegedly unworthy equestrians – a point more easily made if he ignores their distinguished superiors in Syria.”

Josephus portrayed the Syrian governors as complete opposites of their Judaean counterparts. Josephus established this dichotomy, which allowed his audience to identify the contrast. By comparing the Syrian governors to the Judaean governors, indirectly or directly, Josephus continued setting up the background for the revolt.

When Josephus did mention the governors of Syria, he saw them as governors of better character. Mason drives this point home, “In *War*, again, Josephus seems concerned to stress the low character and status of Judea’s equestrian governors, in order to help explain the origins of the conflict. In this he agrees with Tacitus, *Hist. 5.9.*” Cestius Gallus, however, was the last governor of Syria before the revolt and it caused great animosity. The decision to openly revolt

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31 *BJ* 2.418-419, 422-424, 556. The division comes to those aristocrats who stay and fight with the rebels and those who flee the city after Cestius Gallus is defeated.
33 Ibid, 80.
against Florus, and subsequently Rome, forced the hand of the governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus. However, Edward Dabrowa argues, “The governor’s indecision soon led to the outbreak of an uprising.”\footnote{Dabrowa, The Governors of Roman Syria, 57.} This is an unfair assessment because it was not clear what Cestius was to do. Pilate and Cumanus were the only Judaean governors (that we know of) to be removed from office, the former by Vitellius and the latter by Quadratus. These are two exceptions and although Cestius was within his right to remove Florus he did not.

Agrippa II temporarily succeeded in keeping war at bay but when he tried to get the province “to submit to Florus until Caesar should send a successor in place of him” the mob turned on him.\footnote{BJ 2.352-354. Mason, Flavius Josephus, 265-268.} Steve Mason argues the speech comes full circle, with Agrippa II arguing for patience.\footnote{BJ 2.406.} The hope for a better governor must have seemed ridiculous to the Jews in Jerusalem. The Jews suffered through Cumanus and it was only getting worse. An important thing, which may go unnoticed, occurred when the Jews hear this part of the speech. The Jews “became provoked”\footnote{BJ 2.406.} by what Agrippa II said regarding Florus and patience. The Greek word παροξύνω (provoke) is important Josephus because he used it 112 times within the body of work. Forty-six times they occurred in BJ 1-6, fourteen of those being just within book 2, covering the buildup to the war.\footnote{Mason, Flavius Josephus, 10. Footnote 53 gives parallel constructions; cf. BJ 2.11, 305, 406. A “complementary word denotes ‘aggravation, irritation, indignation’”: this word is the noun ἁγανάκτητης, which occurs 16 times within books 1-6 of BJ and the cognate verb occurs 26 times. Cf. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus, Leiden: Brill, 1973.}

The theme of patience is important to Josephus because it allowed him to set up parallel constructions throughout the work, all the while fulfilling the causes of the revolt. Provocation and indignation are two ways the audience was to understand the cause of the revolt. In BJ 2.405, the end of Agrippa’s speech, the king saw “the rush of the revolutionaries was uncontrollable.”
The rebellion was fervent and Josephus knew this because in the next lines he tells us of the rebels’ capture of Masada, a foreshadowing of events in the last stages of the war.

When Eleazar ben Ananias, a very bold young man according to Josephus, persuaded the priests to cease all sacrifices for the emperor, it must have been a very prominent step towards war even if it was not seen that way as it was happening. As previously noted in BJ 2.260, there was another “foundation for rebellion” when Felix dealt with the Egyptian pseudo-prophet. However, the one concerning the sacrifice must have felt more important to Josephus because he stressed it a few lines later in BJ 2.417. The revolt was now a collection of priests and bandits banded together to resist the Romans at all cost. The coalition between these two forces is examined in the next chapter. Now, the conversation turns to the external forces on Judaea leading up to and through the initial stages of the rebellion.

Once the revolt was a topic of real discussion, some of the priestly class tried everything to keep the people from following Eleazar and his influential group from continuing. Josephus said that once the priests “who were experts in the ancestral traditions” saw that the rebellion was inevitable, or at least uncontainable, they tried “to off-load responsibility.” These “powerful men” were trying to avoid war with Rome, whether for themselves or the province it did not matter. Envoys, with strong connections to Agrippa, and maybe even the High Priest, were sent to Florus in order to “amputate the civil strife before it became uncontainable.” Josephus portrayed these “powerful men” as priests, who were so worried they considered bringing it to

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39 Mason, Flavius Josephus, 211 n. 1638. According to Mason the Greek usage of “ἀποστάσεως...καταβολή” is special because the noun only occurs in BJ with regards to the foundation of the war; cf. BJ 2.409, 417. In the other instances, πολέμου is used. The foundation story of the war is a prominent theme in Josephus.

40 BJ 2.418.

41 See above. The men were Simon ben Ananias, Saul, Antipas, and Costobar. Simon ben Ananias is the one potentially tied to the former High Priest Ananias. Mason, Flavius Josephus, 320 no. 2634 notes that it is an interesting array of names Saul (Hebrew), Antipas (Greek), and Costobar (Idumeans). Another interesting point is the accounts of Saul and Costobar in AJ 20.214. There they are shown as behaving as lawless men during the reign of Albinus.
the attention of the governor, whom they are grieving under. Florus “resolved to kindle the war.”\textsuperscript{42} Josephus used terms such as “fan the flames of war”, “promote war”, or “re-ignite trouble” to further this belief that both parties, Jews and Romans, had culpability in the war.\textsuperscript{43} However, in \textit{BJ} 2.650 Josephus used those terms to cast blame on the Judaeans responsible for the war. The context for the usage of one phrase was omens. The peace party had the benefit of divine omens while those “who had kindled the war they were being improvised at their pleasure.”\textsuperscript{44} As Rajak points out, “Only prophets who are on the right side are acceptable.”\textsuperscript{45}

The political dichotomy was firmly established and Josephus did everything he could to present the rebels as opposite from the peaceful priestly class. This claim runs into problems as other scholars have pointed out. Eleazar, son of the former High Priest Ananias, the Temple captain was able to persuade priests and others to join him. The rule of Florus and his predecessors had instigated revolt from not only Judaea, but also in the Diaspora. While the external force was felt primarily in Judaea, there were Diaspora Jewish communities feeling uneasy under Roman rule.\textsuperscript{46} Florus, in particular, was one of the governors with the most responsibility according to Josephus. The external forces, however, pale in comparison with the internal struggle that plagued Jerusalem before the revolt and during its critical junctions.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{BJ} 2.240. The Greek wording is \begin{greektext}ἐξάπτειν τὸν πόλεμον\end{greektext}.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{BJ} 2.282-83, 296 for “promote war”; 2.293, 243 for “fan the flames of war”; and 2.318 for “re-ignites trouble.” Mason (2008) 321 no. 2642 notes the main phrase in 2.420 is mentioned again in 2.650 but these are not seen before Josephus, giving him a distinction.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{BJ} 2.650.
\textsuperscript{45} Rajak, \textit{Josephus}, 91.
\textsuperscript{46} See revolts in Caesarea and Samaria. Some emperors, like Claudius, ruled in favor of the Jews. This, however, did not stop the tensions between the Jewish inhabitants.
CHAPTER 5

“FOR, THAT IT OWED ITS RUIN TO CIVIL STRIFE.”

Modern historians have explored the tradition of Thucydides and Polybius found within Josephus.\(^1\) Although στάσις (strife) was a common theme with previous Greek writers, Josephus put his own twist on the famous word. Strife was common for writers like Thucydides because it helped prove what caused certain events. In this sense, strife is like an outside force exerting pressure and causing things. In this chapter, the strife within Jerusalem is examined to give the revolt more proper context in terms of its origin.

The struggle for command in Judaea is something that requires proper evaluation of the class structure at the time of the revolt. A changing administration in Judaea by the Romans did not allow for much growth in power except by certain prosperous families. Josephus did his best to hide the distinction between the lower and upper classes. However, it became obvious this was not the case. Josephus distinguished the rebels by using all sorts of epithets and slanders while seeking to absolve the ruling class from any guilt.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Florus was said to have driven the province to war.\(^2\) Josephus continually presented the ruling class in unison, favoring peace.\(^3\) The son of a former High Priest\(^4\) was sent, along with other people connected with the king, to convince Florus of their innocence. This picture is clearly marked with biases and other rhetorical devices. Josephus wanted his mostly gentile audience to understand that the revolt was not the fault the

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\(^2\) Tac. Hist. 5.10.

\(^3\) BJ 2.239, 243, 408-24. See Mason, Flavius Josephus, 194 n. 1493, for all the Greek terms Josephus for the elite ruling class that was in favor of peace according to Josephus.

\(^4\) BJ 2.418. Simon the son of Ananias is the presumed father of Eleazar ben Ananias, the one who ceased sacrifices for the emperor.
Jewish ruling class. The rebellion was indirectly started by events in Caesarea and then directly by the ceasing of the sacrifice on behalf of the emperor by Eleazar ben Ananias.

Josephus’ problematic rewriting of events is clouding our perception. Goodman captures the struggle within the ruling class and the lower class but it does not focus as much on the internal priestly struggle. Price’s account adds to the idea of an internal class struggle as well. While Price’s work focuses on the temporary government installed at the beginning of the revolt, Goodman’s focus is on the lack of a ruling class. A discussion on the nature and role of a ruling class in Judaea is necessary to understand the complexity between Rome and Judaea. Class stratification divided the population in Judaea and especially in Jerusalem; so it had that in common with the rest of the ancient world. However, a closer examination of the ruling class of Judaea has to be made because just what constituted these “elites” apart from the rest of the nation remains murky. The reason is that the class division within Judaea at the time of the revolt could not have evolved overnight. One of the problems facing Judaea and the Romans was that there was no class capable of filling this role. As Goodman pointed out, the obvious institution to fill this need was the Temple and the priesthood. The Jewish priests were unlike other elite classes that Rome was accustomed to. The priests were more concerned with the Temple and though they did sacrifice to Caesar’s good fortune (a point of contention later on,) their concerns laid elsewhere.

The role of the ruling class of Judaea is important when discussing their interactions with Roman governors. It seemed there was an internal struggle within Judaea, a point discussed in chapter 5. Josephus borrowed from Thucydides and other ancient historians when describing the

5 Goodman, The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66 –70. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. This work is important for those attempting to research the role class played in the Jewish revolt.
6 Goodman, The Ruling Class, 43.
situation at the time. Using the common rhetoric and theme of στάσις (stasis), Josephus was able to portray the revolt as an internal struggle ultimately leading to destruction. When revolt seemed inevitable, it was a turning point for those in favor of war, bandits and others, and those opposed to war, the ruling class. Josephus was a part of this ruling, priestly class.

A hierarchy of priests allowed dissatisfaction to grow among the Temple priests. Josephus made it hard for scholars to trust him when it came to the Jewish factionalism, or lack thereof at the eve of the revolt.

The priestly family Josephus descended from was an elite family; therefore his ties remain with those in power:

My family is not undistinguished. From a long way back it traces its descent from priests; and just as different peoples define nobility in different ways, so among us the proof of aristocratic birth is participation in the priesthood … Moreover, I am of royal blood on my mother’s side, for she was descended from the Hasmoneans, who for a long period were not only high priests of our nation, but also kings.7

Josephus was not modest when it came to his background and legitimacy. The excerpt is found in his Vita, the work attached to AJ. This autobiography was written to defend his actions during the war. Vita was written much later than the war but it has a similar prologue to BJ, which was his earliest extant work. Josephus was vested in maintaining his credibility as a historian and a general during the war unblemished. The internal forces discussion begins with the examination of one specific High Priest, whose term fostered ill will and invited insurrection.

James VanderKam points to the problems internally and externally affecting the province as a whole. “During the reign of Ishmael as high priest, a number of severe problems continued to afflict the Jews of Judea, both in their relations with each other and with the ruling authorities.”8 The focal point is the account found in AJ, there is no mention of this in BJ.9

7 Vita 1-2.
8 VanderKam, From Joshua to Caiaphas, 463.
High Priests were using these “insurgents” and “revolutionaries” to do their dirty work. Stealing the tithes from the lower priests led to violence within the priestly class of Judaea. The province was bereft of justice according to Josephus.

Briefly looking at the rhetoric and language Josephus used to describe the prior events concerning the priestly class and the people they employed is important. “The fact that the term “insurgents” is limited to the war period may imply that there was no organized revolutionary group within the city before the war began.” Rhoads presents the complex and loaded term insurgents, στασιαστής (one who stirs up sedition), and association with the early participants of the revolt. The idea of a complete lack of “insurgents” in Jerusalem prior to the war is a bit ludicrous. Perhaps, Josephus was trying to persuade us to accept that all previous brigands and rebels were not the “insurgents” that arose at the start of the revolt.

In *BJ* 2.274-276, Josephus spoke of “those wanting to foment revolution” not as actual “revolutionaries” (οἱ νεωτερίζοντες) but as imitators. Goodman argues *AJ* is where one finds the fuller and perhaps more accurate account. An ex-High Priest, Ananias, was the chief culprit and the one who used his servants to establish power by forcing the lower priests to hand over their tithes. Josephus points out two other leaders of the ruling class, again ex-High Priests, Jesus ben Damnaeus and Jesus ben Gamalas. The ruling class was clearly not the peaceful and united class Josephus presents them during the revolt and the time before it. It becomes easy to

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9 *AJ* 20.180-181. VanderKam points to another instance in *AJ* 20.206-207. Both of these, VanderKam argues, may have been the basis for this Talmudic saying (*b. Pesah.* 57a): “Woe is me because of the house of Ishmael the son of Phabi, woe is me because of their fists! For they are High Priests and their sons are [Temple] treasures and their sons-in-law are trustees and their servants beat the people with staves.”

10 Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution*, 162.


12 Cf. Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 10 n. 57, notes that the no other ancient text uses the phrase so thematically.

13 *AJ* 20.215.


15 *AJ* 20.213. In the following line (*AJ* 20.214) Josephus cites two relatives of the Herodian dynasty as others who collected these insurgents and revolutionaries for their own purposes; they were Saul and Costobar. The same Saul and Costobar who would later be sent to Florus in order to prevent war.
differentiate the accounts found in both BJ and AJ when we realize certain things. Josephus’ intention in BJ is to keep the blame from the ruling class, which he was a part of, and shift it towards the insurgents and rebels. This explains the change in mood. AJ is no longer a few years removed from the revolt and Josephus no longer has to hide the class tension he hid so well in the previous work.

The debate of those who held power is very hard to pin down. Goodman writes, “There were quite certainly others within the ruling group who cannot be put into any of these categories but, perhaps precisely because they lacked such claims to local status, they are not recorded as taking part in the factional politics.” Josephus would probably have known the other members of these early factions. Here, Josephus is trying to direct his audience view the revolt in his perspective.

All of our details for the factions occur in the works of Josephus. Goodman is correct when he addresses these groups, not according to any ideology or religious belief, but by individual leaders. Jonathan J. Price is another scholar who delves deep into the pre-revolutionary Judaea, focusing in on the internal collapse of the ruling class. “Aristocratic rivalry rose to the surface during the brief period when Judaea was without a procurator, between Festus’ death and Albinus’ arrival.” This too seems to follow closely with Goodman. Their accounts may be seen as a revolution that was inevitable. As discussed earlier, I do not agree with such interpretations.

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16 Goodman, The Ruling Class, 141.
18 Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 29. This High Priest would go on to “lead the revolutionary group” and condemn James, the brother of Jesus.
The rivalry is grasped when Eleazar ben Ananias, the Temple captain, persuades his fellow priests to stop the sacrifices (*BJ* 2.409-47). Josephus is at his finest here I believe. By presenting this important event in minimalist terms, Josephus was showing where his alliances lay. “By way of contrast, Josephus’s description of the motives of those opposed to the decision is quite extensive…It is notable that Josephus’s sympathy lies with these people.”19 The narrative leaves the intentions a mystery, although Josephus himself says that this action laid the foundation for war.

McLaren and other scholars are not sure what the intentions of Eleazar were, or whether Eleazar knew his actions were going to be so impactful. Josephus specifically names Eleazar as the leader of this group, refusing to admit even the possibility of priestly support for the decision to stop the sacrifices. Seth Schwartz aptly points out that *BJ* 2.41020 is “the only passage in *BJ* where Josephus hints that the priesthood was not a single class always acting in concert.”21 The support for this decision did not rest just within the Temple, according to Josephus, for the populace was then asked to decide whether or not to follow through with Eleazar’s decision. As Donaldson notes, “The closeness of the relationship between the crowd and the rebels is nowhere clearer than in Josephus’ description of the leaders’ response to the cessation of sacrifices for Rome.”22 Goodman agrees with this statement noting that the “Judaean politicians,” whoever they may be, were beginning to seek support outside of the procurator and instead seeking it through the populace or δῆμος. The arrangement is following a pattern and Josephus is carefully

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20 Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 314-15. With both the chief priests and the notables constantly appealing to them not to jettison this custom on behalf of the rulers, they would not give in: having come to rely much on their own throng, for the most vigorous [element] of the revolutionaries were working with them, they were also looking intently to Eleazar as their commander. Cf. The Loeb translation: “The chief priests and the notables earnestly besought them not to abandon the customary offering for their rulers, but the priests remained obdurate. Their numbers gave them great confidence, supported as they were by the stalwarts of the revolutionary party; but they relied above all on the authority of the captain Eleazar.”
21 Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 84 n. 103.
22 Donaldson, “Rural Bandits, City Mobs and the Zealots,” 40.
leading his audience with “no doubt regarding the groups opposed to the action and, therefore, opposed to provoking conflict with Rome.”

The internal crisis only intensifies after the “notable men” and “high priests” attempt to get Agrippa and Florus to intervene and take control of the situation. Goodman argues that because Eleazar had the popular support, the ruling class was left with no choice than to seek the help of the very governor who had made their life miserable. The situation escalated quickly. But, before these events unfolded I think it is important to analyze the situation between the priestly class, Florus, and Agrippa. As noted earlier, Florus was “resolved to kindle the war” and therefore he did nothing. It is strange to see Florus not taking any action due to his previous nature of instigating and fanning the flames of war according to Josephus. I see this as an attempt for Josephus to phase out the Roman governors and introduce the civil strife that would eventually take over the rest of his work. Agrippa II, the Jewish king, is now done with his impassioned speech to his fellow countrymen and openly engages in bringing troops to restore order.

The civil war was now out in the open. Josephus represents Agrippa as an agent of peace and wanting to spare his people, city, and Temple from destruction at the hand of the Romans. However, as Josephus demonstrates, Agrippa was trying to play the role of client king. Mason notes that Agrippa “stands as a mediator between the ruling power and the people, trying to influence the Roman governors for better treatment of the people and to protect them against unscrupulous governors.” The breakdown continues when the sicarii take over the rebel forces, or at least join them at first and eventually assume control. There we find the stories of palaces

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25 BJ 2.420.
26 BJ 2.421.
and archives being burnt, along with the capturing of the fortress Antonia and the death of a Roman garrison.\textsuperscript{28} The war was now more along the lines of Jews against Jews. Menahem, the leader of the \textit{sicarii}, firmly established himself as the leader of the rebellion. After killing Eleazar’s father and uncle, Menahem “set himself up as king and came with his followers to the Temple to offer appropriate sacrifices.”\textsuperscript{29} Josephus is especially harsh with Menahem, calling him “an unbearable tyrant.”\textsuperscript{30} In fact, earlier in \textit{BJ} 2.437 Josephus refers to Menahem as a participant in the civil strife, along with the other main leaders. This fallout between the \textit{sicarii}, and their leader Menahem, and the insurgents of Eleazar ben Ananias was a major turning point in the war. I believe the internal factions within Judaea at this time were competing for control of the war.

Josephus paints Eleazar and Menahem quite differently but in the end their roles in the narrative disappear as quickly as they came into the picture. The tyrannical nature Josephus attributes Menahem because he presents himself as an “imposing figure decked out in royal clothing”\textsuperscript{31} With Eleazar, there are no clear delusions of grandeur for Josephus to use. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Eleazar ben Ananias is the Temple captain. However, Josephus was quick to call him a “hot headed youth” but that perhaps was a personal attack since there was not much else he could fault him for.

The depictions of these two figures are just a microcosm of the bigger picture Josephus was trying to paint. Josephus “tries to disassociate his own actions and that of his colleagues appointed in October/November 66 from those of the rash revolutionaries who preceded them.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{BJ} 2.425
\textsuperscript{29} Schwartz, \textit{Agrippa I}, 75. Eleazar b. Ananias is listed with other priests with unknown fates. Seth Schwartz does a wonderful job of breaking down these priests in a concise manner.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{BJ} 2.442; Mason, \textit{Flavius Josephus}, 329 n. 2746. This notes that the other precedent remotely close to this is in Dionysius, \textit{Ant. Rom.} 4.70.2.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{BJ} 2.444.
and the wicked brigands and tyrants who replaced them in command of the Jewish forces.”

Where he could, Josephus would divulge information and name names but he would hide information, such as the names of other revolutionary forces. Josephus was well aware of a priestly connection within Eleazar and Menahem’s forces but he was very careful not to give it away. Another aspect, which we must consider, is the “moderates” such as Josephus who opposed the decision by Eleazar but also was not fond of Florus and the Roman administration.

Josephus was always aware that the motif of his work was *stasis* and that for it to come across, there would have to be no room for moderates. Rajak argues that their decision to stand the middle ground was unfeasible and that they were forced to take sides. As mentioned earlier, Florus took no action at this decisive moment. Goodman argues it was because he “had no confidence in the ability of any of the ruling class to control the population.” The ruling class was in effect incapable of handling such a massive resistance as shown by their inability to reverse the decision by Eleazar to stop the sacrifices. Clearly, the popular support was in the favor of the revolutionary. Therefore, what Josephus refers to “the ruling class” was forced to look outside for support and help. The evidence is clearly biased when we take into account the description of similar events in *AJ*. According to Price,

*AJ*’s evidence thus vitiates the clear picture of BJ, in which the Jewish ruling class exerts every effort in unison to accommodate the troubled country to the Roman peace but it is unable to control the revolutionary factions, its mortal enemies, who by recklessly responding to every Roman abuse force the nation into war.

The ruling class was not a united group and, as pointed out by other scholars, did not have the popular support. Josephus purposefully contrasts the two works in order to spare the Jewish aristocracy and ruling class from any blame and responsibility for the revolt. The Jewish state

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32 Goodman, *The Ruling Class*, 156.
33 Rajak, *Josephus*, 129.
collapsed due to the internal factions and while the external forces escalated the situation, it was only partly to blame. In this I agree with Martin Goodman, the ruling class failed the province.

In BJ 2.411, Josephus writes that the Pharisees joined forces with οἱ δύνατοί (the powerful men) to try and fix, as Mason translates it, “irremediable calamities.” This, Mason notes, can be seen as an important and unusual collaboration between the chief priests and the Pharisees.36 This shows that there were divisions within Judaism and that sects themselves were not a part of the ruling class. The Pharisees were well connected, wealthy, and were privileged to garner more public support than the Sadducees and Essenes.37 The powerful men apparently do not have the same traits, for they have to seek the help of the Pharisees.

A similar event occurs in BJ 2.417, when priests bring “experts in the ancestral traditions.” It seems Josephus was slipping here in his careful presentation of the ruling class. Perhaps, Josephus expected the audience to not catch these slips or not to question them. The idea of bringing in another group, aside from the powerful men and Pharisees, is very interesting because Josephus mentions the chief priests and powerful men in BJ 2.411 as the experts.38 Mason even argues that in his other works, Josephus claims only other nations need to consult experts because they are not as versed in their laws as the Jewish nation.39 Josephus himself was a part of the discussions going on at this time in Jerusalem.40

Let us take a moment to analyze the faction of “powerful men.” Josephus uses many interchangeable terms to describe the same people and Mason argues that his audience would have immediately understood the groups he was intending.41 These are just some of the terms

38 BJ 3.352; AJ 4.304, 324; 12.49; Vita 1-9, 198; CAp. 1.29-36, 54; 2.185-87.
39 CAp. 2.177-78.
40 Vita 21.
41 Mason, Flavius Josephus, 194 n. 1493.

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Josephus uses: οἱ δυνατοί (the powerful men), οἱ γνώριμοι (the notables), οἱ πρῶτοι (the principal or first men), οἱ ἐπίσημοι (the distinguished), οἱ ἐπιφανέστατοι (the most illustrious, eminent), and οἱ ἀρχοντες (the leaders, magistrates). The Greek words are interchangeable to Josephus because in BJ 2.243 he uses τῶν δυνατωτάτων to describe the elites of Judaea. The fact that Josephus uses all these terms while refusing to individually name them is interesting because Josephus was very quick to name out individuals he disliked or mistrusted. However, when he uses a similar grouping method with the insurgents and revolutionaries it becomes very perplexing. Josephus should name the culprits, like Eleazar and Menahem, but he only does this infrequently.

The similarity in vagueness between both parties is telling. For Josephus, the parties should be seen in light of his stasis dichotomy established in the prologue. There, Josephus begins his work and agenda for his audience. It would be unfair to at least not hold the idea that the Greek version strayed or was reworked from the original Aramaic version. Josephus intended for his gentile audience to understand the basis of their war and why they were defeated. Josephus hides the ruling class members who were part of the revolutionary factions. Josephus hides the internal squabble within the ruling class in order to preserve a peaceful group not wanting war with Rome. It is clear that Josephus never intended to out those who had revolutionary tendencies. This would destroy his case because Josephus was a member of the priestly class that was affiliated with the peace party

The intention remains clear throughout the work BJ but in AJ and his other later works, Josephus strays from this picture. The rebels were to be named only when they were the leaders because if Josephus had exposed more names, he ran the risk of outing some of the notable men in favor of the rebels. Josephus was aware his audience may have heard of or read other versions

42 BJ 1.9-11.
of the events.\textsuperscript{43} I think Josephus’ intention was not to name everyone involved, regardless of side, and to leave a level of anonymity for the reader. It is important to note that this too was perhaps a rhetorical device, much like Polybius calling out the individuals responsible for the war with Rome. The civil war was Josephus’ main thematic expression throughout war and it was only possible if he placed both sides under the same heading with few leaders and named suspects. The revolt itself is caused by multiple circumstances out of the hands of the Jewish population, but the continuation and prolonged effort fall squarely on the Jews of Judaea.

“Josephus’ clear message is that the war was shallowly rooted, unnecessary, criminal. He laments the inability of sensible individuals – even those in the ruling class – to control or stop the rebellion.”\textsuperscript{44} Price’s work is seen as the only work relevant to the history of the revolt according to James S. McLaren.\textsuperscript{45} I tend to agree with McLaren’s take on the work because it is extremely valuable and presents the information in a convincing manner. However, I do take exception with Price’s remark, “What is true is that insurrection began from the moment Roman rule was imposed and did not cease before the full-scale rebellion broke.”\textsuperscript{46} This is a stretch that I am not willing to accept. The facts are that there were periods of relative tranquility and that for the most part, the Jews in the Diaspora were unaware of the events in Jerusalem.

Judaea was troublesome during the first century, and the time prior given my narrative on Pompey and Herod. But, to regard the revolt as an inevitable act or something that was doomed from the start as Josephus puts it is to grossly underestimate the time period and overstate Josephus’ work.\textsuperscript{47} Even if we examine just Josephus’ actions, we see a man who was a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} BJ 1.1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 49.
\item \textsuperscript{45} McLaren, Turbulent Times, 172.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 49.
\item \textsuperscript{47} BJ 2.352-3, 5.365; AJ 20.257; Vita 27. Cf. Price, Jerusalem under Siege, 49-50, sees Agrippa II’s speech as the Josephus’ understood meaning of the revolt, that it was shallowly rooted, unnecessary, and criminal.
\end{itemize}
“moderate” supporter of the war. Josephus can be very biased, especially when it came to his own participation in the war. The fact that the generals were all from wealthy, priestly families should have been a clear indication to the audience that not all the priestly families were united. However, Josephus has an answer for this readily available, or one he believes his audience will eat up. The moderates, like Josephus, were just trying to keep the nation from getting too deeply involved in the rebellion. They held hope for a quick end to the revolt and hoped to gain favor from Rome. Some of them even attempted to hand over the city to the Romans before things escalated further.48

Civil strife can be interpreted as a major cause if we only take Josephus at face value. However, it becomes obvious that Josephus is writing with an agenda; that has been noticeable to scholars from the early twentieth century up to the present. An interesting case is made with the killing of Menahem at the hands of Eleazar. Josephus was giving even more evidence for this civil strife and hopeless war by creating a false sense of “messianic pretensions.”49 Menahem was a strong figure and Josephus contends that the quarrel between his men and the followers of Eleazar was class based.50 After this incident, Josephus goes on to demonstrate “the populace indeed collaborated in these [matters], hoping for some repair of the entire civil strife…”51

The populace was not united. Josephus has shown this by discussing leaders such as Menahem and Eleazar building their own parties with dedicated followers. No, Judaea was more fractured that Josephus let on but what can be taken from this is that a major section of the population wanted to rebel, it was just a matter whom they happened to follow. The followers of Menahem were wrong because they chose to follow someone who may or may not have held

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48 BJ 2.533-34.
49 Rhoads, Israel in Revolution, 114.
50 BJ 2.443.
51 BJ 2.449.
messianic aspirations. Josephus is careful to place blame, but even after the death of Menahem he does not immediately seek to praise Eleazar.

The civil strife reaches a low point when Ananus ben Jonathan, an otherwise unimportant and minor figure, attempts to hand over the city to Cestius.\(^{52}\) The remarkable device here is that Josephus uses his common terminology for the citizens persuaded by Ananus to hand over the city to Cestius.\(^{53}\) Whereas before, the priests and others were persuaded by Eleazar to stop the sacrifices and now the common folk were being persuaded to give the city in order to put an end to any revolt. The revolt reaches an important moment when the Jewish rebels defeated Cestius and his legion.\(^{54}\)

This moment is vital because it drew a hard line in the sand. The peaceful, important, or powerful Jews of the ruling class were now forced into making a hard decision. Would they stay and fight with the rebels and support a war they felt uneasy about or would they flee; their decision was to shape the war. The “eminent” Judeans are said to have fled as if on a sinking ship from the city.\(^{55}\) A similar theme is found in *BJ* 2.396, during Agrippa’s speech to the Judaeans. It is significant that the reader understand this theme because Josephus, and Antipas along with others, remain loyal to their city and do not abandon it. The contrast is showing the dedication Josephus wants his audience to understand. Though Josephus and others protested the revolt, after the initial victory over the Syrian governor Cestius Gallus, they were not about to abandon their city.

\(^{52}\) *BJ* 2.533-535.  
\(^{53}\) Cf. *BJ* 2.253 with Mason’s commentary. Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 206 no. 1596 has 13 occurrences of δημότης, all which occur in *BJ*. The distinction is between the good, peaceful and ordinary people and the bandits and insurgents leading the nation into war.  
\(^{54}\) *BJ* 2.542-555.  
\(^{55}\) *BJ* 2.556. Saul and Costobar make another appearance here, as does Philip, son of Iacimus, camp prefect of Agrippa. Mason (2008), 378 no. 3339 demonstrates how *BJ* only references Philip twice (*BJ* 2.421; 556). In *Vita* Josephus is more descriptive (*Vita* 46-61, 177-80, 407-09). The contradictory nature of Josephus is exposed here according to Mason. While Saul and Costobar are to be seen as cowards fleeing their city, Philip is leaving a city refusing his help.
We come upon another episode of civil strife. Eleazar ben Simon and Simon ben Gioras were two generals who fought and defeated Cestius Gallus but were soon pushed to the side.\footnote{Goodman, \textit{The Ruling Class}, 163.} That the ruling class members, Ananus and Josephus, were chosen to be generals is no coincidence. The ruling class was a supporter of the war, how else would they have convinced the rebels to follow them. “Indeed the central role of the upper class in the war is all the more evident from the fact that it can be reconstructed despite Josephus’ reluctance to admit its existence.”\footnote{Goodman, \textit{The Ruling Class}, 167.} Goodman continually argues for a ruling class incapable of preventing war and then taking part in it, reluctantly or not. Josephus was indeed very apologetic in his nature, especially when it came to the ruling class’s involvement. I tend to agree with Martin Goodman’s assessment of the ruling class. Their failure is a major concern but the civil strife involving differing classes, members of the same classes, or any other kind of internal strife was the major cause for the revolt.
CHAPTER 6

JOSEPHUS AND THE FINAL ANALYSIS

In conclusion, the usage of Josephus by scholars has tended to vary depending on the individual scholar. Truly, such an important event in Jewish history cannot have just one cause and solution. The revolt revealed “the two chief defects in the Roman administration of Judaea between 6 and 66 had been the poor quality of the governors and the inadequacy of the military establishment.” Smallwood sees this as a reason why the revolt in 66 occurred. It would not be far-fetched to assume that had these policies been in place before, the revolt would not have lasted as long as it did. Rome immediately tried to “remedy both defects” after the war by putting the competent governor in charge with the procurator under him handling the finances of the province (in other words, the accouterments of a regular province). The biggest improvement came in regards to the military upgrade. The six previous auxiliary units were replaced by an entire legion, X Fretensis. These movements were all made in order to prevent a future revolt in the area. However, these are all in hindsight. Given the times the Jews and Romans lived through, it is irresponsible to lay too much blame on one side or one cause.

Josephus’ portraits of the war’s origins, the calamities facing Judaea, the stasis that corrupted the city, and the sins committed by the nation convincingly sway a reader towards his line of thinking. Yet, we the scholars discover through our own studies that Josephus as a historian cannot be fully trusted. Josephus was an evolving historian if we trace his works from Bellum Judaicum all the way to Contra Apionem. The agenda and idea behind each work was as different as the works themselves. Understanding Josephus is to understand a civilian coming to terms with the destruction of his city and enslavement by those who were responsible.

1 Smallwood, The Jews under Roman, 331.
Josephus provides a narrative that is an important rhetorical device, used by many past historians. From this narrative we see the picture of a province falling further and further towards rebellion, almost inevitably. This assumption has been one that scholars have latched on for years, and it is one that takes no great effort to achieve. Yet, we cannot accept this interpretation, at least I cannot. As David Rhoads points out “there is little evidence for the presence or activity of a Jewish revolutionary sect in the prewar history of 6-44 C.E.”² The role of the insurgents has to be greatly exaggerated by Rhoads and others.³ There were some similarities between those rebellious groups in the early stages of Roman occupation and those in the years closer to the war are there. Perhaps, they laid low and were not as active in the “prewar history” because there numbers were small or they feared repercussions. This is not worth debating because the bonds between these early bandits and the latter are too tenuous.

The presence of banditry before the war is not a huge concern. The war brought forth many factions, like the *sicarii* and the Zealots, who were all too eager to continue the war indirectly started by Eleazar ben Ananias in the summer of 66. However, the banditry activity not reported does not mean it was not present; perhaps it was just not ideal for them to be active. Some governors took an active role in the events, while others played a more passive role allowing revolutionaries tendencies to fervor.

The Roman emperors played a minor role with Gaius Caligula and Tiberius proving to be the most provocative, Nero being the most negligent.⁴ While an emperor like Claudius was seemingly in favor of (or not antagonistic towards) the Jews, their governors were not always so much alike. Vespasian and Titus were now concerned with preventing another revolt but also

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⁴ Cf. the statue and bust episodes in *BJ* 2.
using the Jewish war as the legitimate claim to rule. The triumph given to Titus is eloquently described in book 7 of BJ and it would be a rude awakening for the Jews living in Rome at the time.\(^5\) The diaspora, which included Rome, was now forced to pay a tax as a result of the rebellious factions. Josephus makes no reference to the particular Jewish community in Rome, perhaps he was unsure of their true loyalties. Yet, Josephus was to encounter them later in his life as he was living in Rome under the patronage of Vespasian and Titus. The relationship between Josephus and the Jewish Roman community must have been tense.

Josephus composed and crafted the Bellum Judaicum, first and foremost in a version for an eastern audience. There is a debate as to whether this version is different from the later Greek account of the war.\(^6\) It is all dependent on one translates the verb μεταβάλλω (translate or change/alter) but this debate is not crucial at this juncture. Whatever the Aramaic version contained that was different, if it was different, can only be speculated at this point. The intended audience was a Greek and Roman audience. There is no clearer evidence for this than all the rhetorical and thematic devices found in the works of Josephus. Josephus provided a great piece of Greco-Roman historiographical work that should be placed alongside the works of Herodotus or Thucydides. Josephus was careful in explaining a difficult situation. Perhaps, Josephus too was suffering and coming to terms with the destruction of his city and Temple. The hindsight provided for Josephus allowed him to remove himself somewhat from the events. In fact, after the first year the account of the war is not as detailed because Josephus was not present.

\(^5\) Goodman, “Josephus as Roman Citizen,” 330-38. The case is made that Josephus should be viewed as a brave man for continuing his Jewish faith and customs even in Rome. As Goodman points out, it could not have been easy for Josephus to make many friends or allies after the death of Vespasian and Titus. The Jews of Rome were not too keen on his betrayal of his fellow countrymen.

\(^6\) See Gohei Hata. "Is the Greek Version of Josephus' "Jewish War" a Translation or a Rewriting of the First Version?" The Jewish Quarterly Review. 66, no. 2: 89-108.
However, Josephus was present during the siege of Jerusalem, which ultimately led to the destruction of the Temple at the hands of Titus.

The account of the Jewish war is a magnificent piece of ancient literature that has long interested scholars. For such an impactful event, we are fortunate to have someone like Josephus. This is not to say Josephus is without faults. Clearly, this thesis has shown that he carefully crafted his work to conform to his take on the war. Josephus was not going to let his image or that of his nation take slander for a rebellion, he says they did not believe in. Obviously, Josephus wrote after the fact and his account is probably tainted with the idea that it was an inevitable war and that it was doomed to fail. Yet, Josephus and other prominent Jews were involved during the early stages of the war and despite what Josephus would have us believe, it was not just Eleazar and the rebellious youth that led the nation into war. The characterization of the governors of Rome juxtaposed with those in Syria, the Roman emperors’ active or passive stance on the growing violence in Judaea, and finally the internal strife that consumed the rebels throughout the war were all conduits by which Josephus shaped the war narrative.
APPENDIX A

SYRIAN AND JUDAEAN GOVERNORS
All years and dates are CE unless otherwise noted.

These lists are compiled from three separate but related works, all using Josephus. They are *The Jews under Roman Rule* by E. Mary Smallwood, Edward Dąbrowa’s *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus*, and Steve Mason’s *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Vol. 1b, Judean War 2*. The reliance on Josephus for information on the early governors of Judaea makes it difficult to properly assess the reigns of governors before Pilate. The work by Edward Dąbrowa is very detailed providing other sources on the Syrian governors, when available, apart from Josephus.

*Judaea*

Coponius 6 - 9
M. Ambibulus 9 - 12
Annius Rufus 12- 15
Valerius Gratus 15 – 26
Pontius Pilate 26 – 36/37
Marcellus 37 – 41
Cuspius Fadus 44 – 46?
Tiberius Julius Alexander 46(?) – 48
Ventidius Cumanus 48 – 52
Antonius Felix 52 – 58/59
Porcius Festus 59 – 62
Lucceius Albinus 62 – 64
Gessius Florus 64 – 66
Syria

(L. Licinius) Varro (Murena) c. 25 – 23 B.C.E.

M. Titius c. 13 – c. 10 B.C.E.

C. Sentius Saturninus c. 10 – 8/7 B.C.E.

P. Quinctilius Varus 7 – c. 4 B.C.E.

L. Calpurnius Piso Pontifex c. 4 – 1 B.C.E.

L. Volusius Saturninus 4 – 6

P. Sulpicius Quirinius 6/7

Q. Caecilius Metelus Creticus Silanus ?11 – 17

Cn. Calpurnius Piso 17 – 19

Cn. Sentius Saturninus 19 – 21 (23?)

L. Aelius Lamia (?)23 – 32

L. Pomponius Flaccus 32 – 33

L. Vitellius 35 – 39

P. Petronius 39 – 42

C. Vibius Marsus 42 – 44

C. Cassius Longinus 44 – c. 51

C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus 51 – 60

Cn. Domitius Corbulo 60 – 63

C. Cestius Gallus 63 – 67

C. Licinius Mucianus 67 – 69
L. Iunius Caesennius Paetus 70 – 73

A. Marius Celsus 73

M. Ulpius Traianus 73 – 78
APPENDIX B

ROMAN EMPERORS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emperor</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augustus</td>
<td>27 BCE – 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiberius</td>
<td>14 – 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius</td>
<td>37 – 41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudius</td>
<td>41 – 54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nero</td>
<td>54 – 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galba</td>
<td>68 – 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otho</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitellius</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vespasian</td>
<td>69 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>79 – 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domitian</td>
<td>81 – 96</td>
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</tbody>
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APPENDIX C

HIGH PRIEST FAMILIES IN THE HERODIAN PERIOD
All years are CE unless otherwise noted.


**Ananus**

1. Ananus son of Seth/Sethi (6-15)
2. Eleazar son of Ananus (16-17?)
4. Jonathan son of Ananus (36 or 37)
5. Theophilus son of Ananus (37-41)
6. Matthias son of Ananus (42-43)
7. Ananus son of Ananus (62)

**Boethus**

1. Simon son of Boethus (24/22-5 BCE)
2. Joazar son of Boethus (4 BCE? – 6)
3. Eleazar son of Boethus (4 BCE)
4. Simon Cantheras son of Boethus (41-42)
5. Jesus son of Gamaliel (his wife was from the family of Boethus) (63-64)

**Phiabi**

1. Jesus son of Phiabi (30 – 24/22 BCE)
2. Ishmaelson of Phiabi (15-16)
3. Ishmael son of Phiabi (59-61)
APPENDIX D

MAPS
BIBLIOGRAPHY


