PATRON-CLIENT DYNAMICS IN FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS' VITA: A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS.

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Submitted by:

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Ταῦτ᾽
ἔτι λέγοντος
κοιναὶ παρὰ πάντων ἐγίνοντο
φωναὶ καλούντων εὐεργέτην με καὶ
σωτῆρα, καὶ περὶ μὲν τῶν πεπραγμένων
ἐμαρτύρουν, περὶ δὲ τῶν πραχθησομένων
παρεκάλουν· πάντες δ᾽ ὤμνυον ἀνυβρίστους
μὲν ἔχειν τὰς γυναῖκας, λελυπῆσθαι
δὲ μηδέποτε μηδὲν
ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Flavius Josephus

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, Flavius Josephus has been the victim of character assassinations carried out by Jews, Christians and modern scholars alike. This thesis uses the methodology of social scientific analysis to compile a model of patron-client relations from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science, and ancient history. This eclectic model is then applied to Josephus' autobiography, the *Vita*, in an effort to arrive at a culturally sensitive understanding of the social personality of Josephus as a patron of the Galileans. Patron-client dynamics are uncovered in four groups of relational encounters; (1) Josephus, Poppea Sabina and Aliturus; (2) Josephus and John of Gischala; (3) Josephus and the Galileans; and (4) Josephus and Vespasian, Titus, Domitian and Epaphroditus. The results of this modelling process are contrasted against the results of the dominant historical methodology, with particular attention being given to the conclusions of Shaye J.D. Cohen's *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian*, (Leiden: Brill, 1979). It is demonstrated that patron-client relations are a significant factor within the *Vita* and the application of a model of patron-client relations serves to eliminate ethnocentric judgements that have been erroneously applied to both the text and its author.

PREFACE

This thesis has grown out of an earlier article, "Honour and Patronage in Josephus' *Vita* (1-103): An Analysis of Ancient Mediterranean Cultural Concerns and Their Role in Interpretation," (M. Strangelove, 1990, unpublished). The process of exploring Mediterranean honour, patronage and social prominence themes convinced me that the unique cultural concerns of the ancient Mediterranean that are embedded in the *Vita* are the key to its interpretation. A brief survey of the literature surrounding Josephus also revealed that a social-scientific commentary of the *Vita* is desperately needed. Thus this work as the beginning of of a larger commentary that departs from the tired agenda of Josephan studies. Here the focus is on the wealth of anthropological dynamics that Josephus has captured in his autobiography (indeed, where better can we be confronted with an alien society than through a text that tries to explain an alien *self*?).

If there is any insight in this work, if it has anything of value to add to the field, this is so largely because of the past six years that I have spent under the gentle and creative guidance of Professor Carl Kazmierski here at the University of Ottawa. The errors, over-generalizations and wild inaccuracies are my own unique contribution. I have also my ever loving wife, Natalie Strangelove, to thank for her constant encouragement, invaluable insights, and longsuffering patience.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJ	*Antiquitates Judaicae*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung,* ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1972-
BJ	*Bellum Judaicum*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
Compendia	*Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, Section Two, Vol. II*

PART ONE

I. General Introduction

I. A. The Issues

Flavius Josephus, also known as Joseph ben Matthia, is widely recognized as our most important source for the history of the Jewish people from the time of Herod the Great to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Born in Jerusalem c. 37-38 C.E. during the first year of the reign of the Emperor Gaius Caligula, Josephus lived a life of considerable drama. At the age of twenty-seven he was chosen to go as an ambassador to rescue some priests who had been sent to Rome on a "slight and trifling charge" (V 13). Upon return he was commissioned as a general to govern Galilee during the revolt of 66-74 C.E. Josephus surrendered to the Roman general Vespasian at Jotapata and was taken with the Roman army to witness the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. He then spent the rest of his years in Rome as a historiographer for the Imperial household. His extant works consist of the *Jewish War*, the *Jewish Antiquities*, an apologetic tract, *Against Apion*, and his autobiography, *Life*, also known as the *Vita* (V).[1] The time and place of his death is unknown. He probably died sometime early in the second century C.E.

While his writings are the centre of renewed intense analysis and speculation, Josephus the man remains shrouded by the mists of time. He has been "ignored by his own people, almost

[1]All references to the text and translation of Josephus are from H.S.T. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A Wikgren, and L.H. Feldman, eds. and trans., *Josephus* 9 vols., *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926-1965.

canonized by the Christians, and vilified and exploited by modern historians."[2] One recent example of the contempt which scholars have exhibited towards Josephus is seen in Shaye J.D. Cohen's statement, "it would have been an extraordinary feat for Josephus to record the unvarnished truth about anything."[3] Indeed, it was upon reading Cohen's ethnocentric and highly sceptical analysis, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian*, (Leiden: Brill, 1979) that I was drawn to investigate the question of Josephus' personality, which Cohen habitually vilifies. An example of Cohen's ethnocentric treatment of Josephus is seen in his use of the concept of vanity as an explanation of Josephus' behaviour towards John of Gischala (see below, II. B.3).

This study will seek to answer questions surrounding Josephus' personality through an analysis of his autobiography. Our analysis will use one of the primary social scripts of the ancient Mediterranean, patron-client relations, to answer the question - what was the central aspect of Josephus' social personality *from the perspective of his culture*? The main theme of V is concerned with a defense of Josephus' character as an honourable patron. Within the social context of this defense we come to understand the most important aspect of his character, as defined by his social environment.[4]

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[2]H. Moehring, "Joseph b. Matthia and Flavius Josephus," *ANRW* 2.21.2 (1984) 865.

[3]Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian*, Leiden: Brill, 1979, 235. For less contemptuous evaluations of Josephus' credibility, see Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, London: Duckworth, 1983; D. M. Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution: 6-74 C.E.*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976; and Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66-70*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 21, who concludes that "In general when his (Josephus') narrative can be checked against other evidence he emerges as sometimes negligent but often remarkably accurate".

[4]See, Appendix I, *The Mediterranean Personality*, for a brief outline of Bruce J. Malina's model of the ancient Mediterranean personality.

The question of Josephus' character involves one of the more complex issues surrounding V, that of the literary unity of the work itself. Cohen claims that "no dominant theme can be discovered that would unite the autobiography's disparate elements."[5] But is this apparent lack of literary unity due to Josephus' supposed literary ineptitude or is it due to the way in which ancient texts captured the anthropology of the first century Mediterranean personality? In *Josephus*, Cohen is clearly confused on the issue of Josephus' character. On the one hand he claims that Josephus "did not draw attention to his own character" yet only a few pages later Cohen turns around and states that "V's defense of Josephus' character is so strident that it must be an end in itself, not just an element in a self portrait."[6] This confusion arises out of an intuitive use of the concept "personality." The question of Josephus' personality (character) appears to be treated by Cohen as if it were a simple and comparable phenomenon that consists of cultural universals. But what if Josephus' character is in fact a culturally-specific, social construct that must be measured and judged according to the terms of his culture? Within *Josephus* we find no indication that personality itself is a cultural construct and therefore must be judged according to the criteria of the culture in question.

It is unlikely that any analysis that overlooks a central cultural script[7] could penetrate

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[5]Cohen, *Josephus* 169. I am inclined to think that the failure to see thematic unity in alien texts is due to the social construction of our perception which fails to penetrate the relevant cultural codes embedded in ancient texts. Consider Cohen's conclusion in the light of the observation that historical criticism "betrays the narrative integrity of the text" (Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988, 25).

[6]Cohen, *Josephus* 105 and 127.

[7]The term "cultural script" is used as a synonym of "social institution". "Cultural script" is here preferred because of the connotations of the word "script" which conveys the sense of two or more actors sharing a known "text" that outlines the flow of action in any given situation. For example, in our culture when you invite me over to dinner I will follow an expected pattern of behaviour when I come to your house to dine (introductions, etiquette, type of clothes, body language and so on). We can speak of this

implicit (i.e., intuitively understood by its first readers) themes embedded within a text. If it is largely implicit and culturally specific concerns that provide the framework of V, then questions of its literary unity and the personality of its author must begin with the modelling of the major aspects of Josephus' cultural situation. As patronage is the dominant mode of relationship in antiquity,[8] it should come as no surprise that any analysis of V, an autobiography that is filled with sketches of various relationships, will miss the dominant literary-cultural theme of the text - patronage. This thesis will provide an indication of how V is indeed united through the constant but implicit cultural concerns of patron-client relations and how these relations in turn define Josephus' character in V.

Frequently, Josephus has been accused of flagrantly displaying sloppiness, confusion, ambition and vanity in V.[9] Yet it is our contention that these accusations of literary ineptitude and personality flaws are in essence actually culturally-determined value judgements. Judgements which arise when modern scholars apply anachronistic and culturally inappropriate criteria and standards to an ancient Mediterranean author. We will demonstrate how knowledge of the dynamics of patron-client relations serves to control and correct such anachronistic judgements.

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encounter in terms of actors who share a known script and thus come to expect certain patterns of behaviour in any given context. The same dynamic of culturally scripted action (a shared body of cultural knowledge) will be seen to govern actors in the context of patron-client relations within V.

[8]T.F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity*, Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975, 171. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill also notes that "if we want to understand the structure of social relationship in antiquity, patronage study is an essential tool of analysis" ("Introduction," *Patronage in Ancient Society*, London: Routledge, 1989, 7).

[9]For example, see, H.W. Attridge, "Josephus and His Works," *Compendia* 2.II (1984) 192.

Moehring has rightly observed that "Religious and political prejudices have coloured the understanding of Josephus."[10] Yet it also must be said that academic and cultural biases have also led us to judge Josephus, not on his own, but on our terms. For example, the alien culture of Roman Palestine and the historians' own cultural transference must be carefully considered before it can be stated that "V's incoherence is so great that the general impression left with the reader is confusion and obfuscation."[11] What Cohen and many other scholars fail to realize is that an ancient text such as V must necessarily appear as incoherent to us as does the alien cultural context that generated the work. To assume otherwise is to suggest that Josephus' social context was equivalent to our own.[12]

While no one would disagree that Josephus' social context was different from that of contemporary experience, the question of just exactly how different it was has not yet been fully mapped out. Social-scientific analysis is build upon the understanding that the ancient world was radically different from our own social construction of reality. This thesis represents part of the larger enterprise of clearly delineating the degree of cultural separation that exists between the present and our Graeco-Roman past. It is the aim of this thesis to rescue Josephus from pervasive cultural transference and provide the researcher with the necessary anthropological framework from which to analyze the ancient Mediterranean text known to us as the *Vita*. The task that lies before us is comparable to what Bronislaw Malinowski saw as the final goal of

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[10]Moehring, "Joseph," 866.

[11]Cohen, *Josephus* 110.

[12]For an introduction to the underlying issue of cultural universals (sameness) verses relativism (difference) see Edwin Ardener, "Social Anthropology, Language and Reality," *Semantic Anthropology*, London: Academic Press, 1982, 1-14. For an introduction to the anthropological characteristics of ancient Mediterranean biography see, Appendix II *Characteristics of Mediterranean Biography*.

ethnography, "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world (*sic*)."[13]

I. B. Thesis Statement

David B. Gowler has noted that characters in an ancient text can often seem "virtually incomprehensible" when they are read without a clear understanding of the "cultural processes" captured within the text.[14] This thesis will demonstrate that V must be read with an explicit model of one of the main "cultural processes" embedded in the text - that of patron-client relations. We will proceed by delineating a model of patron-client dynamics and then this model will be applied against four groups of relational encounters that Josephus describes within V: (1) Josephus, Poppea Sabina and Aliturus; (2) Josephus and the Galileans; (3) Josephus and John of Gischala; and (4) Josephus and Vespasian, Titus, Domitian and Epaphroditus. The intentions, or purposes, behind using a model of patron client-dynamics in our analysis are as follows:

> (1) first, and foremost, to arrive at a reading of the text that can be said to approximate the way in which it would have been understood by its first readers
> (2) to determine if the model provides cross-cultural insights into Josephus social personality and to test the model itself[15]

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[13]Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, New York: Dutton, 1922, 25.

[14]David B. Gowler, "Characterization in Luke: A Socio-Narratological Approach," *BTB* 19 (1989) 54.

[15]Rene Lemarchand notes that the "ultimate test" of a patron-client model rests in its "descriptive and explanatory power", ("Comparative Political Clientelism: Structure, Process and Optic," *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development*, Beverly Hills - London: Sage, 1981, 15).

(3) to frame new questions and discover significant facts previously overlooked

(4) to provide a new way of answering some old questions.

Thus our thesis statement is that patron-client dynamics are a significant factor within V and the application of an appropriate model of this cultural script greatly increases our understanding of both the text and its author, Flavius Josephus. Through the application of a model of patron-client relations, it will be shown that Josephus interacted with Poppea Sabina, Aliturus, the Galileans, John of Gischala and the emperors from within the context of a patron-client social system. It also will be demonstrated that the script of patron-client relations plays a primary role in defining and explaining Josephus' social personality. Finally, it will be suggested, based on our application of the model to the above four test cases, that V is unified by the constant theme of patron-client relations.

This will be demonstrated along the following lines: first, the dominant historical method's inability to analyze the inherent Mediterranean cultural patterns of communication, characterization and interaction, which are embedded in V, will be discussed (II.A). Having demonstrated the need for a supplementary method of interpretation, a justification for the use of Mediterranean cultural anthropology and related disciplines will be given (II.B). Having prepared the broad methodological framework for a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary analysis, a model of the cultural dynamics of patron-client relations will be developed (II.C). This will provide the comprehensive methodology needed to proceed with a cross-disciplinary analysis.

Part Three will apply the model outlined in Part Two to the text of V in the demonstration of our thesis. Here the text's inherent cultural script of patron-client relations will be made explicit and its interpretive implications will be developed. Throughout the analysis it will be

shown that a culturally sensitive reading both explains what was previously incomprehensible and challenges and corrects the culturally-biased conclusions of intuitive historical research.