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Josephus

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DOI

[10.1163/9789047422938_015](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047422938_015)

Publication date

2007

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Time in Ancient Greek Literature

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[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

van Henten, J. W., & Huitink, L. (2007). Josephus. In I. J. F. de Jong, & R. Nünlist (Eds.), *Time in Ancient Greek Literature* (pp. 213-230). (Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative; Vol. 2), (Mnemosyne. Supplements; Vol. 291). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047422938_015

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JOSEPHUS

J.W. VAN HENTEN & L. HUITINK

Awareness of time

Two of the four works of Flavius Josephus (37/38–ca. 100 CE), Joseph Ben-Matityahu for his fellow Judeans, are elaborate histories. The seven books of *The Jewish War* (*De bello Judaico*) describe the war between Jews and Romans in 66–70 CE, with its devastating consequences for the Jerusalem Temple. The preamble to that war is also part of the story, which starts at 171/170 BCE. *The Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*) offer a comprehensive history of the Jews from the creation of the world until 66 CE in twenty books.¹

The introduction to *The Jewish War* strongly emphasises the importance of an accurate account of the events in line with a Thucydidean preference for *akribeia* (*BJ* 1.3, 6, 9, 25–26; cf. also 7.454–455 and *AJ* 3.230; 8.56; 9.208), which was taken up by other authors from the imperial period as well (→ Philostratus). One of the ways in which Josephus obtains this *akribeia* is by choosing a recent subject instead of from the more remote past, just like, as he himself emphasises, the ‘ancient historians’ do (*BJ* 1.13). This remark can be taken as a veiled reference to Thucydides, who had rebuked Herodotus for choosing a remote subject.²

The Jewish War abounds in time-markers, which is another way of effecting the *akribeia* promised by the historian. Josephus is very precise with his time-markers in comparison to several Greek historiographers (→ Herodotus, → Xenophon). Throughout *The Jewish War* we find

¹ Bilde 1988 offers a concise introduction to Josephus and his works.

² Cf. Th. 1.20–22 with S. Hornblower 1991–1996: ad 20.3, 21.1, 22.4, and Thucydides (→) on the origins of contemporary history.

references to the reigns of Roman emperors.³ Events from the prelude to the war against Rome (*BJ* 1.31–2.283) are mainly dated by references to the Hasmonaean rulers, around whom the episodes are structured.⁴ After Pompey's conquest (completed in 1.152) references to Roman persons, especially the procurators of Judaea, take over the rulers' role.⁵ After the war has started (2.284) and the narrative gets more detailed and slows down, Josephus frequently dates events also by the months of the Macedonian calendar, usually providing the exact day of the month.⁶ References to such dates are particularly dense in book 6, before the climax of the narrative—the dramatic fall of the Temple. It is hard to determine whether this is because Josephus' sources were more precise about these events, or because the precise dates serve rhetorical ends, highlighting the importance of events: does providing an exact date lend credibility to otherwise unlikely stories? Interestingly, Josephus often provides more than one indication of time: in such cases rhetorical effect was probably an important narrative goal, because such dates are usually inserted at dramatic moments in the story. A case in point is the beginning of the war against the Romans (66 CE), where the years of Nero's reign and of the Jewish king Agrippa II are mentioned together: 'War broke out in the twelfth year of Nero's reign and the seventeenth of Agrippa's, in the month of Artemisios' (*BJ* 2.284).⁷

In *The Jewish Antiquities* Josephus constructs a chronological framework that comprises the history of the world in 5,000 years, with the creation of humankind as its beginning.⁸ Important events of Jewish history, like the Babylonian Captivity, are linked to this chronological system through calculations mostly based on biblical data.⁹ As a con-

³ Deaths of Roman emperors in *The Jewish War*: 2.168, 180, 204, 248; 4.491, 499, 548, 652.

⁴ *BJ* 1.38, 48, 50, 54, 70, 85, 107, 120.

⁵ Cf. e.g. *BJ* 1.183 (Julius Caesar master of Rome), 218 (murder of Caesar); Roman procurators: *BJ* 2.117, 169, 220, 223, 247, 271, 272, 277.

⁶ E.g. *BJ* 2.285, 315; 5.99, 302; 7.401.

⁷ Another example concerns the end of the siege of Jerusalem, which takes place 'in the second year of Vespasian's reign, on the eighth of Gorpaios' (*BJ* 6.435). Cf. also *BJ* 2.555; 3.339; and 4.577. Translations of passages from *The Jewish War* are taken from G.A. Williamson [1959] 1981, with slight adaptations; those from *The Jewish Antiquities* are our own.

⁸ *AJ* 1.13; *Ap.* 1.1.

⁹ Rather the Septuagint than the Hebrew Bible. Cf. *AJ* 1.80–88, 148–150; 2.318; 7.68; 8.61–62; 9.277–282; 10.147–148.

sequence, the work is very rich in references to rulers and dynasties, indigenous as well as foreign (kings of Israel and Judah, Hasmonaean and Herodian rulers, emperors, procurators, etc.).¹⁰ We also find more double and triple dates in *The Jewish Antiquities* than in *The Jewish War*, which often combine references to different dating systems. References to Olympiads are, for example, combined with regnal years of a Jewish ruler, or with other non-Jewish ways of dating, such as references to Seleucid rulers or Roman consuls. One such combination of several systems is found in the dating of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV's drastic desecration of the Jerusalem Temple on Kislev 25, 167 BCE: 'Two years later, in the hundred and forty-fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month which is called by us Chasleu [Kislev], and by the Macedonians Apellaios, in the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad, it happened that the king went up to Jerusalem with a large force ...' (*AJ* 12.248). This date combines the Seleucid era (the 145th year is October 168–October 167) with the dating by Olympiads (the 153rd Olympiad is July 168–July 164).¹¹ The passage also shows another trend in *The Jewish Antiquities*: the months' Jewish names are given together with non-Jewish names, be they Egyptian, Athenian or Macedonian.¹² Incidentally, such complex dating devices provide a time frame for Jewish and non-Jewish narratees alike.

Order

In general, Josephus presents the events of his story chronologically. The narrative flow is chronological even where we know from his sources that the chronological framework is problematic. Josephus' presentation of Jewish history after the Babylonian Exile is a case in point. The historical settings of the stories about the post-exilic lead-

¹⁰ Foreign eras: Babylonian regnal years: *AJ* 10.87, 146, 181, 219, 231, 248; Persian regnal years: *AJ* 11.1, 33, 99, 107, 135, 168, 179, 186, 202; Ptolemaic era: *AJ* 12.11; 13.79; Seleucid era: *AJ* 12.246, 248, 264, 285, 297, 361, 363; 13.35, 86. Regnal years of Hasmonaean rulers: *AJ* 13.213; 20.242, 244, 245; Herodian rulers: *AJ* 15.121, 299; 16.136; 18.106; cf. 17.347. Roman dates: *AJ* 13.260; 18.1, 26 (census of Quirinius); 20.11, 104, 138, 148, 158, 257, 267.

¹¹ Other multiple datings: *AJ* 12.321; 14.4, 66, 389, 487; 16.136 (cf. *BJ* 1.415, with only one date for the same event).

¹² *AJ* 1.80; 2.311; 3.201, 239, 248; 4.84, 327; 8.61, 100; 11.107, 109, 148, 286; 12.248, 319, 321, 412. See for these synchronisations between the Macedonian and 'Eastern' calendars Hannah 2005: 135–136.

ers Ezra, Nehemiah and Queen Esther is a notoriously difficult problem, since the biblical references to foreign rulers are unclear or even contradictory. Nonetheless, Josephus' narrative presents these stories in a simple and coherent chronological order (*AJ* 11.120–296). He sets the stories about Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of the Persian king Xerxes I (486–465 BCE; *AJ* 11.120–121, 159, 183). After concluding the Nehemiah story, we find a brief reference to Xerxes' death, and then Josephus simply continues with the Esther story as set in the reign of Xerxes' son Artaxerxes (*AJ* 11.184–296). Thus he maintains a chronological order in this section by letting the deaths of Nehemiah and Xerxes coincide, more or less. Meanwhile he bypasses lacunae in the evidence and ignores discrepancies among his sources, as well as other historiographical problems.

A close reading of Josephus' narrative, however, reveals changes in the sequence of events. It appears that Josephus often uses analepses, prolepses and parallel stories. In the following sections we will deal with each of these devices in turn. We will also discuss several possible reasons that may have prompted Josephus to insert anachronies in his narratives.

Prolepsis

Narratorial and actorial prolepses are a common narrative device of Josephus. In this section, we will first treat narratorial prolepses and then focus on actorial ones.

Josephus maintains an episodic structure in large parts of his narrative, carefully rounding off one episode before embarking on another. Sometimes such episodes create anachronies, because he tends to supply information relevant to a certain episode all at once, sacrificing proper chronology to thematic unity (→ Hesiod). For instance, there is the story about Herod the Tetrarch, whose tetrarchy is taken away from him by the emperor Caligula. Lest the narratees should think this is an unwise decision taken by a notoriously insane emperor, the episode closes with the remark that at that time Caligula was still a good ruler, and only became mad 'as he went on (to rule)' (*proiōn*; *AJ* 18.256). This premature reference to Caligula's future insanity is picked up later in more detail, at the proper place (*AJ* 19.4). Similarly, the narrator highlights the fact that Caligula's letter to Petronius, the governor of Syria, with the order to execute the latter's own death-sentence, had not reached Petronius before Caligula died (*AJ* 18.305–308). This refer-

ence to Caligula's death is supplied with the narrator's cross-reference that he will disclose the assassination details when proper (*AJ* 18.307). A detailed account of the plot against Caligula is indeed offered later on (*AJ* 19.105–114).

Other narratorial prolepses draw attention to particularly important motifs of the narrative. Internal rebellion is a *Leitmotiv* in Josephus' narratives of both *The Jewish War* and *The Jewish Antiquities*. The first major rebellion, that of Korah against Moses, is first mentioned in a prolepsis (*AJ* 4.11–13), in which the dreadful consequences together with Moses' tough, saving leadership are recounted in general but strongly rhetorical terms. This passage provides a universal blueprint, as it were, of the internal rebellion theme. The particularities of Korah's rebellion and Moses' counteractions are related only further on (*AJ* 4.14–66). Another indication that the narrator puts emphasis on the rebellion against Moses is that this paraphrase of the biblical version (*Nu.* 16) is very long, compared to Josephus' recreation of other biblical stories.

A special case in the narratorial announcements of future events, as linked with strong thematic overtones, concerns the fall of Jerusalem and especially the Temple in book 6 of *The Jewish War*, which forms the work's climax. Most events in *The Jewish War* lead up to this fall, and book 7 essentially functions as an epilogue. In *The Jewish War*'s Preface Josephus includes the destruction of the Temple in his summary of the entire work (1.28) by means of an explicit announcement. When he starts his actual narrative with the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (*BJ* 1.31–33), he puts the Temple right in the centre of attention. By placing this brief episode at the beginning of the narrative, Josephus is demonstrating that the Temple is not invulnerable to attack, thereby signalling its destruction as a theme. This theme is resumed several times in the prelude.¹³ As soon as the narrative focuses on Jerusalem in book 4, the narrator announces the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple more than once by means of explicit prolepses, which often mention internal strife as the cause that 'ultimately wrecked the city' (*BJ* 4.137).¹⁴ One particularly effective way of indicating that the city will fall is the excursus on Jerusalem in *The Jewish War* 5.136–247.¹⁵

¹³ *BJ* 1.148, 179.

¹⁴ Cf. *BJ* 4.318.

¹⁵ Similar descriptive excursuses: *BJ* 2.188–191; 3.35–58, 70–109, 158–160, 506–521; 4.3–8, 451–475, 476–485, 607–615.

Such excursuses are normally presented in simultaneous narration; the present tense indicates that the places still exist in the narrator's own day. It is therefore significant that this particular excursus is the only one in *The Jewish War* that is recounted in subsequent narration, thus clearly indicating that Jerusalem no longer existed at the time of writing.¹⁶ The narrator's anticipation of the Temple's destruction also contrasts with Titus' continuous efforts to save it.¹⁷ After Titus' decision to do no more than surround the Temple in order to press the Jews to surrender themselves, Josephus comments in a final, elaborate prolepsis just before the fall: 'That building had, however, been condemned to the flames by God long ago: by the turning of time's wheel the fated day had now come, the tenth of Lous, the day which centuries before it had seen it burnt by the king of Babylon. But it was the Jews themselves who started and caused this conflagration' (*BJ* 6.250–251).

Josephus also uses prolepses to pass judgment on characters. For example, the narrative about Samson (*AJ* 5.285–317) notes at a certain point that this biblical hero became unfaithful to his mission as a prophet: 'He was transgressing the practices of his ancestors and debasing the way of life of his fellow Israelites with his imitation of foreign customs. This proved to be the beginning of his ruin' (*arkhē autōi kakou*, *AJ* 5.306; an obvious reference to *Iliad* 11.604 and Herodotus 5.97.3). The proleptic statement at the end of this passage makes the reader curious about the nature of Samson's transgression. Josephus reveals Samson's unfaithfulness to the ancestral customs immediately afterwards: the problem was his lust for the Philistine *hetaera* Delilah. Samson's relationship with Delilah was obviously a flagrant violation of the Jewish customs concerning sexual contacts with foreign women, and the continuation of the narrative describes in detail how Delilah accomplishes Samson's downfall (*AJ* 5.306–313).

A positive assessment of a character, combined with explicit prolepsis, concerns the Hasmonaean ruler John Hyrcanus (135/134–104 BCE). Josephus concludes the report about Hyrcanus' rule in *The Jewish War* (*BJ* 1.54–69) with an appraisal of John that highlights, among other things, his prophetic gift. The prolepsis at the beginning of this passage, 'For the rest of his life John enjoyed prosperity ...', matches the narra-

¹⁶ Contrast *BJ* 4.452–475 on Jericho and 4.530–533 on Hebron.

¹⁷ Cf. *BJ* 6.236–243, 249, 251, 254–266; in 6.228 Titus deliberates destroying the Temple for the first and only time.

tor's overall highly positive assessment of this leader (*BJ* 1.68–69). The time-marker 'for the rest of his life' flags the prolepsis.

Finally, narratorial prolepsis frequently highlights God's intervention. One example concerns Herod the Great's disastrous relationship with his sons, which ends in the execution of three of them. A prolepsis indicates the involvement of the Deity called Tyche (Fortune) here, at the moment the relationship deteriorates even further: 'The affairs in his family were greatly troubled and the situation with his sons was much worse in this period. For, on the whole, in the earlier period, it had been quite easy to perceive how the greatest and most troublesome events that happen to humans were threatening the kingdom through Fortune, but they steadily increased and then got even a greater impact for the following reason' (*AJ* 16.300).

Two typically Josephan forms of actorial prolepsis, to which we now turn, also bear witness to Josephus as a firm believer in the God of Israel as the orchestrator of world history, namely prophecies and dreams. In general, according to Josephus, characters associated with prophecy, especially the prophets, foresee future events accurately. A nice example of a prophecy is found in the episode where the young Herod is put to trial before the Synhedrion because he has executed a group of brigands. Samaias, one of the court members, prophecies that Herod will kill the king and all members of the Synhedrion except himself (*AJ* 14.174; quoted in direct speech). In this case, the actorial prolepsis is confirmed by an explicit narratorial prolepsis: 'and he was not mistaken in anything he had said' (*AJ* 14.175).¹⁸

Apart from the prophets, one of the most reliable characters of all is Josephus himself. Although he does not explicitly call himself a prophet, sometimes when he appears as a character in his own works, he does refer to his own prophetic qualities. At certain points he emphasises his prophetic skills, by means of which he establishes authority for his character in the narrative. Thus, before he correctly predicts that Vespasian will become emperor (*BJ* 3.399–402), as foretold to him in a dream, he insists that 'in the matter of interpreting dreams he was capable of divining the meaning of equivocal utterances of the Deity' (3.352). Once Vespasian has become emperor, Josephus emphasises once more

¹⁸ The outcome of Samaias' prophecy is less clear than Josephus suggests, cf. *AJ* 15.2–4 and 15.164–179. For other prophecies see *AJ* 7.92–93; 8.319, 322, 361; 9.20–26, 90–93; 10.33, 59–61, 89, 117–118, 124–126, 177. Cf. Josephus' introduction of God as determining actor in the Esther story, which is highlighted by actorial and narratorial prolepses (*AJ* 11.247–259).

that he ‘was now believed capable of foretelling what was still to come’ (4.629). Josephus even claims that he made correct predictions about future events as a general in the war. Thus, when he is in charge of the Galilee defence, he immediately fortifies its cities, because he already knows that the Romans will launch their first assault there (*BJ* 2.572–573). The narratees can only guess how he came to know this, but, of course, he is correct. At a later point, he foresees the future defeat of the Jews and recognises ‘that their one safety lay in a change of heart’ (*BJ* 3.136). Each time Josephus the character makes a prediction, Josephus the narrator corroborates it. Vespasian, who is portrayed as the paragon prudent ruler, is given the same credit.¹⁹

Dream reports, transmitted (partly) in indirect or direct speech by either the person to whom the dream had come or the person who retells and explains it through divine inspiration, are less common than prophecies but still typical for Josephus.²⁰ Joseph’s dreams, also reported in the Jewish Bible, are a case in point. *The Jewish Antiquities* 2.11–19 concerns Joseph’s first and second dreams, anticipating his future position in Egypt and the migration of his brothers and father to Egypt during a severe famine. The first dream, about Joseph’s own wheat-sheaf standing motionless while his brothers’ sheaves are running up and bowing to it, is briefly paraphrased in indirect speech (cf. *Ge.* 37.5–6; direct speech). The brothers fully understand the dream’s message, but do not reveal that to Joseph. Instead, they pray that the dream will not come true and treat Joseph with even more hatred (*AJ* 2.11–12). The continuation of the narrative shows that God did not answer their prayer, and sent Joseph another dream (2.13). Josephus describes how Joseph reported his second dream to his father in his brothers’ presence. The sun, moon and stars, symbolizing Joseph’s parents and brothers, appeared to come down to the earth and kneel in front of him. Jacob is delighted with this dream because he grasps the dream’s prediction (2.14–15). Joseph’s brothers also understand the dream’s message; they get very angry and are eager to kill him (2.17–19), which rouses the narratees’ curiosity. The story then unfolds to show, step by step, that the dream comes true (2.20–193).²¹

In short, prolepsis in its various forms is a most common narratorial device in Josephus. It is used to strengthen the cohesion of episodi-

¹⁹ Cf. for Josephus *BJ* 2.569, 570, 573; 3.136; for Vespasian: 4.89, 441.

²⁰ R. Gray 1993; Gnuse 1996.

²¹ Cf. also *AJ* 8.125–129.

cally told narrative parts, and frequently helps to articulate important recurrent themes; and actorial prolepses highlight God's intervention through prophetic predictions and dreams.

Analepsis

Analepsis, both narratorial and actorial, is just as common in Josephus' works as prolepsis. Because *The Jewish Antiquities* cover a period from the creation of the world until 66 CE, there can hardly be external analepsis in this work (→ Hesiod). The time span of *The Jewish War* is much shorter, starting with Antiochus IV Epiphanes' interference in Jerusalem in 169–167 BCE, as the necessary background information for understanding the events of the actual war that started in 66 CE. In this work, then, there is room for external analepses, but their use is rather limited. External analepses are mostly heterodiegetic in nature and occur in two contexts. First, they are found in excursuses in which the history of a city, country or building is briefly explained. Thus, the extensive description of Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.136–247) contains external analepses that concern David or Solomon (5.137, 143, 185). Incidentally, there are also internal ones to be found in this passage, mostly about the Hasmonaean dynasty (5.139, 148–155, 161–162, 183, 238; cf. also 205, 227, 246). Together, the external and internal analepses focus on the periods when the Temple flourished. They serve as a poignant counterpoint to the deplorable state of Jerusalem and the Temple at that point in the main story. The Babylonian destruction of the Temple is so far conspicuously absent from the narrative; it is narrated in *The Jewish War* 6.435–442 after the conflagration of the Temple, when its entire history is reviewed by Josephus, again in a mixture of external and internal analepses.²² Second, external analepses occur in speeches. In *The Jewish War* 2.358–361, for instance, Titus reinforces his argument that the Jews would do better to surrender immediately by referring to the *exempla* of Athens, Sparta and Macedon: three states that withstood the Persians but were now the servants of Rome.²³

All other narratorial and actorial analepses are internal. We will first focus on the narratorial ones, most of which are very short. The most common are completing analepses that provide the narratees with essential background information on certain characters or events, as

²² Cf. *BJ* 2.487–489; 4.459–464, 530–533; 6.250; 7.422–432.

²³ Cf. *BJ* 5.379–394.

and when the information is needed. Thus, when after a previous reference in *The Jewish War* 2.575 Josephus' personal enemy John of Gischala enters the stage as actor, his previous career is outlined in an analepsis (*BJ* 2.585–594). This analepsis also serves as a character-sketch, in which the narrator puts John in a bad light. Most analepses that inform the narratees about certain characters' previous actions are not that elaborate but merely consist of a single sentence or clause, frequently a relative or *gar*-clause.²⁴ Such analepses are often completing, but may also be repeating, in which case they serve to refresh the narratees' memory about a certain character when he or she is about to play an important role in the narrative once more. The frequent addition of a formula like 'as I said (before)' marks such analepses explicitly as repeating.²⁵

Short analepses also appear in a different context, namely when important characters 'leave the stage', that is, when they die (→ Arrian, → Herodian). In these cases their previous actions are recalled in repeating analepses ('obituaries'), usually with some qualifying comments by the narrator. In connection with the death of Niger the Peræan (*BJ* 4.359) the narrator states that this man had been 'the bravest' in the war with the Romans. He reminds the narratees of the valour he had shown in conflicts narrated as far back as *The Jewish War* 2.520 and 3.11–28.²⁶ The death of rulers is often an occasion to look back at their government.²⁷ A good example of such an analepsis concerns Nebuchadnezzar in *The Jewish Antiquities* 10.219–228. It stands out because it is compiled from references to works of other historians. One of these, Berossus, is even quoted literally, because Josephus' own narrative only retells the Biblical account, as he himself has just emphasised (10.218).

Occasionally, brief completing narratorial analepses contain information that is highly relevant for the narratee, despite their apparent inconspicuousness. In *The Jewish War* 6.28 the Romans finally succeed in demolishing the wall of the fortress Antonia. The initial sense of triumph they experience is immediately annulled by the fact that behind Antonia's wall there appears a second wall 'which John and his party had built just within' (*BJ* 6.31). As this is the first time the narratees

²⁴ Short narratorial analepses: e.g. *BJ* 2.183, 224, 249; *AJ* 2.70; 7.34, 67; 17.34.

²⁵ Explicit analepses: e.g. *BJ* 4.208; 5.61; *AJ* 13.320; 20.101, 102.

²⁶ Cf. *BJ* 4.319–325.

²⁷ Sometimes a more extensive retrospect is offered: *AJ* 4.327–331 (Moses); 7.389–391 (David); 8.211 (Salomon); 17.191–192 (Herod the Great; cf. *BJ* 1.665).

are informed about John's secret building activities, the appearance of the wall in the narrative is just as much a surprise for the narratees as it must have been for the Romans. It becomes clear that the wall will considerably prolong the battle for Jerusalem (cf. *Bj* 2.436).

Finally, we find narratorial analepses that seem to be motivated by the narrator's aim to present a smoothly running narrative in which thematically linked stories are told in close proximity. This also explains the insertion of certain prolepses, as discussed above. The introduction of book 2 of *The Jewish Antiquities*, for example, is followed by a paraphrase of the famous story about Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for some lentil soup (*Aj* 2.2–3; *Ge.* 25.29–34). From a chronological perspective, the episode should have been part of the Isaac and Rebecca section in book 1. The narrator introduces this analepsis with a reference to Esau's surname: 'For he obtained his surname, which was Adom [which means 'red' in Hebrew], for the following reason' (*Aj* 1.1). The transposition of the brief passage about the red lentil soup to the beginning of book 2 of *The Jewish Antiquities* clearly has the narrative function of highlighting the Jacob and Esau characters, on whom the ensuing narrative will focus.

Josephus also applies actorial analepsis in various ways. Sometimes the interpretation of certain events by a character differs significantly from the way they have been narrated. This occurs, for example, in the scene where Adam and Eve are called to account by God because they have eaten from the tree of wisdom. Adam makes excuses and claims that he was deceived into sinning by Eve (*Aj* 1.48). However, the narrator has already reported that Eve merely persuaded Adam (1.43), apparently without any trouble. The Deity seems to be aware of this and ignores Adam's speech, but warns him never to listen to a woman's advice (1.49). It is worth noting that in the Hebrew Bible Adam merely repeats to God the words that were present in the narrative: 'she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate' (*Ge.* 3.12), which corresponds to 'and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate' (*Ge.* 3.6). On the other end of the spectrum, we find the narrator corroborating a character's view on past events. He may do so explicitly or implicitly. An example is Jacob's discussion with Laban, in which both men accuse each other of ill treatment (*Aj* 1.314–321; actorial analepses, partially in direct and partially in indirect speech). After both men have given their views, the narrator takes sides and professes in a narratorial analepsis: 'And indeed, Laban had treated Jacob very badly' (*Aj* 1.320).

A more ingenious example is found in *The Jewish War* in the long speech Titus addresses to John and Simon, the leaders of the rebels in Jerusalem, after the fall of the capital. In *The Jewish War* 6.333–346, Titus gives an overview of the dealings of the Romans with the Jews. He stresses the Romans' humanity throughout, as well as his own and Vespasian's clemency in the present war. They allowed the Jews their own worship and customs, treated prisoners compassionately and time after time tried to spare the Temple, for example by offering the Jews the choice of a different battlefield. However, Titus concludes: 'Every proposal you treated with scorn, and your Sanctuary you set on fire with your own hands' (*Bj* 6.347). Angry about the arrogant attitude of the Jewish leaders, who for all his clemency and benefaction even now make demands, Titus decides to raze Jerusalem to the ground. The better part of the preceding book in *The Jewish War* can be seen as leading up to this final evaluation of the events. The narrator portrays Titus as lenient towards prisoners (*Bj* 6.115). He undertakes the crucifixion of prisoners only with great reluctance (5.446–451) and is concerned about Jewish customs, especially the preservation of the Temple (6.236–243, 249, 251, 254–266). In his speech Titus also reminds John and Simon that they were offered a change of battlefield (6.346), as is indeed described in *The Jewish War* 6.128. Moreover, in his judgement about who is to blame for the destruction of the Temple, Titus appears to be repeating the narrator's words almost exactly: the Jews had set the north-west portico on fire, 'thus beginning the burning down of their holy places with their own hands' (*Bj* 6.165). The close correspondence between the narrative and the speech invites the narratees to accept Titus as a highly reliable secondary narrator, and suggests that his evaluation of the war must be accepted as final and authoritative. Furthermore, it urges the narratees to show understanding for the fact that now, after this speech, Titus loses patience and changes his attitude. In fact, Titus' change of attitude is rather baffling. It strongly suggests that he was never the lenient general concerned with the Jewish temple, as Josephus purports him to be.²⁸ However, the presentation of the narrative as just described makes the transition more acceptable and the sudden cracks in Titus' character more convincing.

²⁸ Cf. S. Mason 2005.

Parallel storylines

Sometimes Josephus links two larger storylines that are set in different places to each other by means of a brief time formula. These formulas often indicate synchronisms.²⁹ Josephus' frequent presentation of parallel stories has earned him a bad reputation as a historian. Scholars have argued that he uses this device rather loosely by synchronising stories that do not refer to events occurring at the same time. It has even been suggested that Josephus' frequent use of parallel stories shows his incapacity to present large quantities of source-based information in the proper chronological order.³⁰ Indeed, some passages in Josephus strongly suggest that the material he synchronises stems from two different sources.³¹ And yet, sometimes his tendency to synchronise different storylines can be satisfactorily explained as attempts to make the narrative run more smoothly, or to present stories that are linked together thematically.³²

The famous *Testimonium Flavianum* about Jesus (*AJ* 18.63–64) is a good example of a parallel story that fits well into its narrative context, displaying a common theme.³³ The passage is preceded by reports about two actions by the procurator Pilate: the introduction of the emperor's images on military standards, and the confiscation of Temple money for the construction of an aqueduct (*AJ* 18.55–62). Both measures trigger fierce protests by the Jews, and their revolt (*stasis*) has to be stopped by military force. Next, the brief passage about Jesus is being introduced with a synchronising formula: 'about this time there was a man Jesus ...' (*AJ* 18.63), which connects Jesus with the *stasis* just reported.³⁴

²⁹ Josephus uses a wide range of formulas to introduce parallel stories, suggesting differences in precision: e.g. *en toutōi* 'at that moment' or a variant (e.g. *BJ* 2.101, 178); *hama de* 'at the same time' (e.g. *BJ* 2.409; 4.526); formulas with *kairos* 'critical moment' (e.g. *AJ* 6.325; *BJ* 7.41), *khronos* 'time' (e.g. *AJ* 10.30; cf. *BJ* 7.259), *hēmera* 'day' (e.g. *BJ* 5.109; *AJ* 5.360) or *etos* 'year' (e.g. *AJ* 8.62). Some of these formulas can also function as introduction of an analepsis if they are followed by an aorist or pluperfect ('in the meantime').

³⁰ Otto 1913: 179. Cf. G. Hölscher 1916: 1983–1987; H.G.M. Williamson 1977.

³¹ Schwartz 1982. Also *BJ* 1.31.

³² Cohen 1979: 44 characterises Josephus' narrative strategy of clustering related materials as 'Josephus' fondness for thematic organization'.

³³ Also *BJ* 7.259.

³⁴ The synchronisation of Seleucus IV's succession by Antiochus IV (175 BCE) and Ptolemy V's death (181 BCE) may be explained by the common surname 'Epiphanes' of both kings, as stated in *The Jewish Antiquities* 12.235. See also reports of various rebellions

An example of the narrator's effort to provide a readable, smooth narrative is his treatment of the history of the Israelite and Judean kings. The narrator presents the simultaneous reigns of two kings by first focusing on the rule of an Israelite king, then switching to the rule of the contemporaneous Judean king, and vice versa.³⁵ Josephus is quite explicit about his motivation for presenting the story in this way. Concerning the reports about the Israelite King Jeroboam and the Judean King Rehoboam, he defends his method claiming that in this way 'the orderly arrangement' (*to eutakton*) of his history can be maintained in this section just as in the rest of his history (*AJ* 8.224). He then proceeds to relate the history of Jeroboam (from 8.225) and after that the history of Rehoboam (from 8.246). It is interesting to note that he deviates from the presentation of the same stories in the Bible. It may be emphasised that here, as often, the order of events is indicated by narratorial comments pointing to synchronic events, or cross-references to other sections of the narrative.

Large sections of *The Jewish War* also seem to be structured on the basis of a similar synchronising narrative strategy. *The Jewish War* narrative combines multiple storylines from the end of book 4 up to the beginning of book 7, which concern various events in Israel and Rome that occur more or less at the same time. The narrator interweaves widely divergent storylines by using parallel stories and analepses. The shift from one storyline to another is often thematically motivated. The various storylines—surprisingly—form coherent narratives of their own, although they are frequently interrupted. The result is a well-structured and evocative narrative that guides the narratees through the events and anticipates their responses. After the destruction of the Temple, for example, the multiple storylines that have been left at the end of book 4 are concluded in book 7. To give a few examples from this section, in *The Jewish War* 7.20 the narrator mentions that the winter season prevents Titus, who is still in Judea, to sail for Italy. The reference to Italy leads up to an analepsis concerning Vespasian (7.21). The story line is picked up exactly where it was left in 4.663. In an analepsis which is explicitly dated ('at the time when Titus Caesar was busy directing the siege of Jerusalem'), we hear of Vespasian's journey

as in the follow-up of the Jewish rebellion against Archelaus, the king of Judea (4 BCE – 6 CE; *AJ* 17.206–218, 250–298).

³⁵ *AJ* 9.16–278. Josephus also synchronises other rulers; cf. e.g. *AJ* 12.234–236.

to Italy from Alexandria, which ends with his overland trip to Rome. In 7.23 the narrative returns briefly to Titus, who receives news of the capture of Simon bar Giora, one of the rebellion leaders, ‘which had happened as follows: ...’ (*touton genomenon ton tropon*). The next section describes the rebel Simon’s capture (7.26–36), which fulfils Josephus’ earlier promise to relate this (6.433).

While Josephus’ synchronisations may not always be correct from a historical point of view, they enable the narratees to follow the developments of the main story and greatly enhance the readability of his lengthy works. In this way, a narratological perspective warrants a more positive assessment of Josephus’ achievements.

Rhythm

Josephus frequently applies variation in rhythm. On a grand scale, it can be observed that the story about the history of the Herodian dynasty up to the beginning of the Jewish War takes up seven books of *The Jewish Antiquities* (14–20). This section comprises a period of roughly 135 years, a very short duration when compared to the story’s total time span of about 3,826 years. Similarly, in *The Jewish War* the prelude spanning 171/170 BCE to 66 CE takes up less than two books, whereas the four years of the actual war are allotted more than five books.

On a smaller scale scenes, summaries and ellipses are all common features in Josephus’ histories. The detailed report about Herod’s military conflicts with ‘the Arabs’ (i.e. the Nabataeans) in *The Jewish Antiquities* 15.108–160 is an example of such a scene. The scenic character of this passage appears from the presence of an elaborate commander speech, with many rhetorical topoi of commander speeches from the classical period (*AJ* 15.127–146; cf. the much shorter speech in *BJ* 1.373–379).³⁶ Herod delivers this speech before a third and decisive battle with ‘the Arabs’, when the Jews’ prospects look particularly bad because of a defeat and devastating earthquake. Clearly, at this dramatic moment the narrator is slowing down the pace of the narrative. He quotes Herod’s entire speech, and describes the battle’s beginning and the outcome in detail (*AJ* 15.147–159; cf. *BJ* 1.380–385). By

³⁶ Van Henten 2005. Cf. Titus’ commander speeches in *The Jewish War* 3.472–484; 6.33–53.

contrast, the main combat is summarised very briefly in general terms: ‘A fierce battle started and a great number fell on both sides. But finally the Arabs were routed and started to flee’ (*AJ* 15.151).³⁷

Various kinds of summaries function as time management device for the narrator, who sometimes chooses to greatly accelerate the narration of events lasting several years. The report about Herod’s son Archelaus’ rule as ethnarch of Judea is extremely brief, while the beginning and end of his reign are narrated at a much slower pace (cf. *BJ* 2.111 with 2.1–100 and 2.112–116; also *AJ* 17.339–341 with 17.200–338 and 17.342–353).³⁸ Other summaries function as introduction, conclusion or intermezzo in a context of more elaborate descriptions (e.g. *AJ* 6.129–130; 16.130, 146) or in brief generic phrases, and may characterise events or actions (e.g. *BJ* 4.363–365). A combination of scene and summary can be found when within a longer stretch of narrative one or two events are singled out by considerably slowing down the narrative speed. Interesting examples may be Pilate’s two conflicts with the Jews (*BJ* 2.169–177). Just half a sentence about Pilate’s appointment to governor is immediately followed by an anecdote about the transfer of the military standards to Jerusalem, which is narrated in two brief scenes (2.169–174). The beginning of this passage suggests that this anecdote concerns the beginning of Pilate’s reign (26 CE). A second anecdote about Pilate’s confiscation of money from the Temple, for the construction of an aqueduct, follows in *The Jewish War* 2.175–177, which can be dated in 36 CE, the year of Pilate’s death.³⁹ When placed together these anecdotes, and the lack of further information, clearly characterise Pilate as a brute governor who showed very little consideration for Jerusalemite Jews and their practices. The two anecdotes about Pilate’s reign are linked with the formula *meta de tauta* (*BJ* 2.175). This formula indicates that some story time has elapsed between the two, but this is too vague to infer that ten years separate them; the text passes over this matter completely.

³⁷ Several other scenes concern Herod the Great’s dramatic dealings with his sons (*AJ* 16.90–126, 356–394; 17.89–145; *BJ* 1.617–640). Scenes with other contexts: *AJ* 17.228–249 (cf. *BJ* 2.26–38); *BJ* 2.192–201 and *AJ* 18.263–284; *BJ* 3.344–392, 399–408.

³⁸ Cf. *AJ* 9.232–235, 277–278 about the end of the Israelite kingdom. Also *BJ* 2.167–168, 271 and *AJ* 10.81–83.

³⁹ Cf. *BJ* 2.178, which reports an event from the same time that is dated in the parallel passage in *The Jewish Antiquities* 18.126 a year before Tiberius’ death (37 CE). Detailed discussion in Schwartz 1992: 182–217.

In fact, the narrator regularly passes over events by means of ellipsis. He may do so explicitly, as in the previous example or when he informs the narratees that Adam had many children but the narrative will only focus on Seth's descendents, because it would take too much space to deal with all of Adam's children (*AJ* 1.68). Less explicit, but still clear, are several indications of the passing of time within episodes. So, during the siege of Jerusalem in *The Jewish War*, one of Josephus' most elaborately narrated episodes, some days are told in detail while others are passed over completely by means of ellipsis. The omission of days from the narrative is usually indicated by a brief temporal formula, like 'two days later' or 'the following day', which is found in between two more elaborately told events. Such formulas are ultimately relative to other time-markers that contain more exact references to, for example, a specific date.⁴⁰ Similar formulas such as *trisi men ... hēmerais ... tēi tetartēi de* ('for three days they maintained a stubborn defence and held their ground; but on the fourth ...', *BJ* 5.346) indicate a short summary of events of three days with many things omitted, after which the events of the fourth day are more elaborately told. It is hard to tell whether the precision suggested by such formulas is real or merely apparent. It is striking that there is not much variation; the ellipses in the siege of Jerusalem almost always comprise one or two days. This suggests that they are just a conventional way of dating the events in the story.

Finally, there are ellipses to be found that are not indicated at all. We have seen that the narrator is careful to provide his narratees with necessary background information about certain characters that he had not yet related. Sometimes, however, the omission of such short completing analepses make the reader wonder whether he has missed something important in the preceding narrative. Thus, the narratees may be surprised to find out that Cain settles in Nais 'with his wife' (*AJ* 1.60), since nothing has been said about Cain's marriage in the preceding narrative. In *The Jewish Antiquities* 10.195 an event from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is dated 'two years after the sacking of Egypt', but nothing about this sacking has been narrated in the preceding context.

⁴⁰ 'Two days later': *BJ* 5.473 (relative to the reference to the day of the month in 5.466). Also 6.67–68, 166, 192 (*idem* 6.177), 236 (*idem* 6.220), 354 (relative to 6.321 'on the fifth day'), 363 (relative to 236).

Conclusion

In line with the Thucydidean ideal of *akribeia* Josephus is very precise with his time-markers. He frequently offers multiple dates, following Jewish as well as non-Jewish conventions, for the events of his narrative. His presentation of events is principally chronological, but he often uses the devices of analepsis, prolepsis and parallel stories to enhance the readability of his story or to make his narrative more evocative. Prolepses may highlight important themes (e.g. the theme of internal rebellion, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, etc.), emphasise God's intervention, or pass judgment on characters. Prophecies and dreams are forms of actorial prolepsis typical of Josephus. Completing analepsis frequently provides the narratees with essential background information on certain characters or events. The confrontation of a character's explanation of past events in an actorial analepsis with that of the narrator often reveal the narrator's sympathies and antipathies. Finally, he frequently synchronises reports and clusters stories that share a common theme. Scenes, summaries and ellipsis are commonly used by Josephus to adapt the pace of his narrative.