The Josephus Thesis: The Custody of the Name

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Abstract

A narrative under the heteronym Sparrow Wells of the Josephus Thesis: that the literary authority of Second Temple Judaism, attested in its extant writings, was taken into Roman custody with its greatest author, and that one literary intelligence under capture wrote the Apocalypse and then, as many names, the corpus that unfolds from it. It tells, from loci quoted in the original languages, how Rome kept powerful books (Augustus's Sibylline corpus under Palatine Apollo; Aristotle's corpus, executed by Antipater, hidden at Scepsis from Pergamum, taken to Rome by Sulla); how Titus took Josephus to the walls, gave him the sacred books and signed his history; how the Apocalypse sets the divine name outside the grammar that governs it, the reverse of the open genitive of De anima III.5; how the oracle that drove the war was handed to Vespasian; and how a Joseph asks the Roman for the crucified in both the gospels and the Life. The workshop section sets out the correspondences between Josephus and the canon (Acts' knowledge of his world, the withheld stone of Daniel and its release in Luke, the Moses infancy, Jesus son of Ananias, the shipwreck and Puteoli, Saul and Antipas, Matthias and Justus, the letters' phrases from the seven) and asks whether any account explains the set with fewer assumptions than one maker. The notes mark each claim demonstrated, attested or held.

Body

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#902" axn_schema_version: v2 protocol_version: alexanarch-deposit-protocol/v1 keywords: - The Josephus Thesis - The Custody of the Name - Josephus - Flavius Josephus - Joseph son of Matthias - Book of Revelation - Apocalypse of John - Revelation First - Second Temple Judaism - Jewish literary authority - Sibylline Oracles - Augustus - Palatine Apollo - Aristotle's corpus - Antipater - Scepsis - Pergamum - Antipas - Sulla - Andronicus - Titus - Vespasian - fiscus Judaicus - "Revelation 1:4" - De anima III.5 - Philo - Zechariah - War 6.312 - the ambiguous oracle - Tacitus Histories 5.13 - Joseph of Arimathea - Against Apion 1.50 - Thackeray - scribal workshop - heteronymy - Acts and Josephus - Theudas - sicarii - Epaphroditus - Theophilus - Daniel's stone - Antiquities 10.210 - Jesus son of Ananias - Saul - Matthias - Justus - Emmaus - crown of life - Sparrow Wells *** # The Josephus Thesis: The Custody of the Name

A narrative of the literary authority of the Jews, the seizure of its greatest author, and the book that would not decline

Sparrow Wells · v1.0 · 11 November 2026 · a narrative; its evidentiary levels (demonstrated, attested, held) are carried in the notes

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The received story

The received story runs like this. A Galilean teacher was executed under Pontius Pilate. His followers believed he had risen, and they spread out across the eastern Mediterranean carrying sayings and stories about him. Over two or three generations those followers wrote letters, then gospels, and at the end of the century a visionary on Patmos, persecuted under Domitian, wrote an apocalypse in rough Greek. A council and a process of reception later gathered the writings into a canon. In this story Judaism is where the movement came from and what it left behind. The teacher was a Jew, and the texts are something new. The Apocalypse is the last and least of them, too Jewish, too violent, and written badly.

Every link in that story is a reconstruction. The relations among the gospels are explained by intermediaries that do not survive, a sayings source among them, while the one book whose ancestry can be inspected is set last. The departures of its Greek from ordinary usage can be counted. That they show a writer unable to control the language is another proposition. The persecution under Domitian rests on a date, and the date rests on a reading of Irenaeus. What survives is a body of texts. This narrative begins with the texts.

The witnesses

Second Temple Judaism comes down to us as writing. At Qumran it is a library, with Enoch in more than a dozen manuscripts, Jubilees in nearly as many, and Daniel among them. In Alexandria it is Philo, the Septuagint and the third book of the Sibylline Oracles. In Rome it is Josephus. In the cities of Asia, Greece and Rome it is the New Testament.[1] Put together, these are the culture in the only form we can inspect. Measured against them, the things the

[1] *Attested.* Qumran: the Dead Sea Scrolls (seated, `data/corpora/dss`); Enoch and Jubilees by manuscript count from the published DJD inventories. Philo (seated), Septuagint (Swete, seated), Josephus (EA-CORPORA-01, #1499), New Testament (Nestle 1904, seated). Sibylline Oracles book 3: not yet seated.

received story calls Christian innovations are the ordinary material of the period: visionary ascent, a second divine figure beside God, the angelic courts, and polemic against the men who held the Temple. The scrolls attack the Jerusalem priesthood more harshly than any gospel does.[2] A reader who starts from the witnesses, not from a reconstructed "common Judaism", finds the New Testament inside the record. It is one of the largest bodies of Jewish writing the first century left.

The authority

Greek writers knew whose books these were. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, called the Jews philosophers by birth. Numenius, a Platonist of the second century, asked what Plato was but Moses speaking Attic. Seneca, writing of the sabbath and of Jewish converts in Rome, conceded that the conquered had given laws to their conquerors.[3] On the Jewish side the claim was made openly and early. Aristobulus said Plato and Pythagoras had drawn on the law of Moses. Artapanus made Moses the teacher of Orpheus.[4]

The claim went further than philosophy. The Sibyl, the prophetess whose books Rome kept in its temples and consulted in emergencies, was given a Hebrew voice. Pausanias records a Hebrew Sibyl named Sabbe, whom "some call Babylonian, others Egyptian." The third book of the Sibylline Oracles, written by Jews in Alexandria in the second century BCE, makes her a woman of Noah's household, speaking in the hexameters of the oracle Rome trusted.[5] So the empire's own prophetic form was being written by the people it ruled.

The reach was more than literary. The royal house of Adiabene, on the Parthian side of the Euphrates, took up the law. Josephus records two Jewish teachers arguing over whether King Izates needed to be circumcised.[6] Rome expelled Jews or their proselytes from the city in 139 BCE, again under Tiberius, and again under Claudius.[7] A culture that was gathering households from Rome to Persia under one book was a power, and the empire treated it as one.

The custody of books

Rome had a practice for powerful books. In 12 BCE Augustus collected more than two thousand prophetic books, Greek and Latin, and burned them. He kept a purged Sibylline corpus

[2] *Attested; reading this narrative's.* The intra-Jewish polemic of the scrolls (the Wicked Priest of the Habakkuk pesher, 1QpHab) set beside Matt 23 and John's "the Jews." The measure of "mainstream" by extant witnesses and not by reconstructed practice is the author's ruling of 11 November 2026.

[3] *Attested; not yet seated.* Theophrastus in Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.26 (φιλόσοφοι τὸ γένος ὄντες); Numenius fr. 8 des Places, in Clement, *Stromateis* 1.22.150.4, and Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 11.10.14 (τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων;); Seneca, *De superstitione*, in Augustine, *City of God* 6.11 (*victi victoribus leges dederunt*).

[4] *Attested; not yet seated.* Aristobulus in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 13.12; Artapanus in *Praeparatio evangelica* 9.27.

[5] *Attested; not yet seated.* Pausanias 10.12.9 (Sabbe); *Sibylline Oracles* 3.809–829 (the Sibyl of Noah's household). The figure in the "Chaldaean" frame of this narrative is this prophetess. The Chaldaean Oracles of the second century CE (seated, `data/corpora/chaldaean-oracles`) are a different text.

[6] *Attested.* Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.17–96, the circumcision debate at 20.38–46 (seated, #1499).

[7] *Attested.* Valerius Maximus 1.3.3 (139 BCE; not seated); Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85 (seated), and Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.81–84 (19 CE); Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4 (not seated).

and sealed it in two gilded cases under the base of the statue of Palatine Apollo.[8] The approved prophecy went underground beneath the emperor's god. Everything else went into the fire.

A Greek corpus had already gone underground once. Aristotle died in 322 BCE and named Antipater executor of his will: "ἐπίτροπον μὲν εἶναι πάντων καὶ διὰ παντὸς Ἀντίπατρον," executor of everything and for all time. The books passed to Theophrastus and then to Neleus of Scepsis. When the heirs of Neleus learned that the Attalid kings were searching for books for the library at Pergamum, Strabo says, "κατὰ γῆς ἔκρυψαν ἐν διώρυγί τινι," they hid them underground in a trench, where damp and moths ruined them. In 86 BCE Sulla took the recovered library from Apellicon at Athens and carried it to Rome. Tyrannion handled it there, and Andronicus of Rhodes edited it into the corpus we read.[9] There is a second story, in which Neleus sold the books to Ptolemy for Alexandria. Both stories survive, and they cannot both be complete.[10] Whichever is true, the shape is the same: concealment preserves the books but damages them, and an editor under Roman patronage gives them back recomposed.

Pergamum, the city whose library hunted the books, is where the Apocalypse sets the throne of Satan. Its faithful witness there is named Ἀντιπᾶς, a contraction of Ἀντίπατρος. The name of Aristotle's executor is given to the witness who holds the name of Christ until death, in the city where the books were hunted.[11]

The author

In 66 the revolt broke out. Its general in Galilee was a priest of the first course, Joseph son of Matthias, who opens his history by naming himself "Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς."[12] In 67 he held Jotapata through a siege, survived the suicide pact in the cave beside the pit where he had hidden, and surrendered to Vespasian. He told Vespasian that he would become emperor.[13]

What followed was custody.

Titus took him to the siege of Jerusalem and sent him to the walls to call the city to surrender. The speech he gives there is Jerusalem's priest and author speaking to Jerusalem for Rome.[14] When the city fell, he asked Titus for free persons and was given sacred books: "βιβλίων

[8] *Attested; not yet seated.* Suetonius, *Augustus* 31.1: *condidit duobus forulis auratis sub Palatini Apollinis basi*.

[9] *Attested.* Diogenes Laertius 5.11–16 (seated), the will, with Antipater as executor; Strabo 13.1.54 (seated): κατὰ γῆς ἔκρυψαν ἐν διώρυγί τινι, and Tyrannion; Plutarch, *Sulla* 26 (seated), Sulla taking the library of Apellicon in which were most of the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and Andronicus. The executorship chain (Antipater; Theophrastus's will with Neleus among the executors, its copies sealed with his ring) at #1658 §37–38.

[10] *Attested.* Athenaeus 1.3a–b (seated), the sale to Ptolemy Philadelphus. "The two custody stories cannot both be complete": EA-CORPORA-31 (#1730). That the burial story may be a memorial elaboration is #165 §5.2.

[11] *Demonstrated as reading, #165.* Rev 2:13; the contraction Ἀντιπᾶς < Ἀντίπατρος, the Pergamene library and the Scepsis concealment, read at #165 §§4–5 as an overdetermined resonance with the letter's architecture.

[12] *Attested. War* 1.3 (seated). The priestly course: *Life* 1–2 (seated).

[13] *Attested. War* 3.340–408 (seated): the pit and the cave (3.341), the surrender, and the prophecy to Vespasian; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 5.6 (not seated).

[14] *Attested. War* 5.362–419 (seated).

ἱερῶν ἔλαβον χαρισαμένου Τίτου.”[15] So the scriptures and their most capable interpreter passed into Flavian custody together. The lampstand of the Temple went into the triumph and onto the arch.[16] The half-shekel that the diaspora had paid each year to the Temple was redirected to the Capitoline temple of Jupiter. The payment network that held the dispersion together now funded Rome’s god.[17]

In Rome Vespasian lodged him in the house he had lived in before he became emperor, made him a citizen and gave him a pension.[18] Then the history of the war was written, and Titus signed it. “Ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοκράτωρ Τίτος ἐκ μόνων αὐτῶν ἐβουλήθη τὴν γνῶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραδοῦναι τῶν πράξεων, ὥστε χαράξας τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ τὰ βιβλία δημοσιῶσαι προσέταξεν.” The emperor wanted people to know the events from these books alone. He inscribed them with his own hand and ordered them published.[19]

Rome came for Josephus to take hold of him. Once the city had fallen, he was Jerusalem’s greatest living author, and the channel through which a Jewish account of the war could reach the whole dispersion. His first version of the *War* was in Aramaic, sent to “the upper barbarians,” the communities beyond the Euphrates.[20] Rome housed that authority, paid it, and put its own seal on what it wrote.

The captive’s Greek

The captive plays down his Greek. At *Against Apion* 1.50 he credits helpers with the Greek of the *War*: “χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς.” At the end of the *Antiquities* he claims to excel his own people in their learning, and says that the custom of his fathers kept him from precision in Greek pronunciation, adding that among his people a command of many languages counts for little and wisdom belongs to those who can interpret the sacred writings.[21] He claims the Jewish half of the inheritance in full and the Greek half only by halves: the grammar learned, the pronunciation never mastered, the Greek of the *War* done with help. The Greek half was the one that carried authority across the empire, and Rome could not take it away from him. So the captive played it down.

The scholarship took the disclaimer further than he did. That he had helpers is his own statement. On it Thackeray built a staff of particular assistants, a “Sophoclean” one and a “Thucydidean” one, and gave them the style of the later *Antiquities*.[22] A statement acknowl-

[15] *Attested.* *Life* 418 (seated).

[16] *Attested.* *War* 7.148–150 (seated); the relief on the Arch of Titus.

[17] *Attested.* *War* 7.218 (seated), the two-drachma tax paid to the Capitol.

[18] *Attested.* *Life* 423 (seated): κατάλυσιν ἔδωκεν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῇ πρὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας αὐτῷ γενομένῃ πολιτείᾳ τε Ῥωμαίων ἐτίμησεν καὶ σύνταξιν χρημάτων ἔδωκεν.

[19] *Attested.* *Life* 363 (seated).

[20] *Attested.* *War* 1.3 (seated): ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον. “Rome came for Josephus” in the sense of seizure is this narrative’s reading, after the author’s of 11 November 2026: “they came to seize control over jerusalem’s greatest author.”

[21] *Attested.* *Against Apion* 1.50 (seated); *Antiquities* 20.263–265 (seated): τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσεν συνήθεια.

[22] *Attested.* H. St J. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (1929); T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (1983), on the assistants claim as overread. An SCS paper abstract (classicalstudies.org, “Josephus’ remarks on his Greek and elite identity in the Second Sophistic”, by Sarah Christine Teets, University of Virginia, read at the 2017 annual meeting, session 42, “Ethnicity and Identity”, per the SCS preliminary programme) reads *Antiquities* 20.263 and *Against Apion* 1.50 as self-conscious posturing within elite Hellenophone culture, not admissions of incompetence. That

edging help became a warrant for reassigning the achievement, as a sayings source no one has seen is given the common matter of the gospels.

The book that would not decline

At the start of the revolt there was a book. On the archive's reading it was written in the year the war began.[23] It is the most controlled apocalyptic poem in any language, and the received story calls its Greek bad.

Its greeting comes "ἀπὸ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος." The preposition governs the genitive, and the name refuses it. In the same breath the writer goes on "καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων," with the genitive in place.[24] The writer could decline. The name is not declined. It stands outside the grammar that governs everything around it, the One Who Was and Is and Is Coming, unbent by any case.

Four centuries earlier another text had reached the junction of the divine and done the reverse. At the close of De anima III.5, the chapter on the mind that makes, Aristotle writes: "καὶ ἄνευ τούτου οὐθὲν νοεῖ," and without this it thinks nothing. The genitive is in place, governed as the grammar requires, and its referent is never fixed. τούτου has been read as the making mind and as the passive mind, and the sentence will not say which. The corpus splits by name at the same joint, at the hinge of Λ, where the account of God changes.[25] The philosopher keeps the case and leaves the referent open, a socket. The Apocalypse fixes the referent and breaks the case. One opens the socket at the place of God, and the other fills it with a name no preposition can bend.

Philo had already cut a socket of his own. Quoting Zechariah's oracle about the man named Ἀνατολή, he gives the name to the Logos and withholds the man the oracle was spoken to, Ἰησοῦς the high priest. The Apocalypse sets Zechariah's high-priestly robe on the one standing in the midst of the lampstands, gives him a name written that no one knows but himself, and then says the name: "κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ."[26] Its sources are extant: Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Philo's lampstand with the Logos in the middle. Its seven stations are the planetary seven, kept and corrected.[27] It names Rome Babylon, gives the beast the number of Nero Caesar, and speaks to people living inside the empire: "Ἐξέλθατε

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the posture is a captive's is this narrative's further reading. The parallel to the sayings source is this narrative's.

[23] *Held.* 66 CE is the archive's working proposed date, held until argued (the author, 4 November 2026); #1737 sets out the groundwork.

[24] *Attested.* Rev 1:4 (Nestle 1904, seated). Grammars list the construction among the book's solecisms; some commentators already read it as deliberate, the name kept unchanged after ἀπό (so the NET translators' note, which also observes the writer's ordinary genitive after ἀπό elsewhere). The conjunction with De anima III.5 and with #1758's socket is this narrative's. The epigraph of the archive's Q paper is Rev 4:8.

[25] *Demonstrated, #1658.* De anima III.5, 430a23–25, read as grammar at #1658 §§17–18; the division of the corpus at the hinge of Λ, #1658. The reversal between De anima and Rev 1:4 is this narrative's.

[26] *Demonstrated, #1758 v1.1.* Philo, *Conf.* 62–63, on Zech 6:12, the name withheld at the place it attaches (§§4.1a–4.5); the robe of Zech 3:4 on the figure of Rev 1:13 (§7a.9); Rev 19:12–13; the name written (§7b.10).

[27] *Demonstrated, #1758 v1.1 and #1735 v9.* The Philonic lampstand (*Her.* 215–225) and its transformation into seven stations; the sequence of the letters (§11.5b); the Haran Gawaita's seven as key, replacement against correction (§13).

ὁ λαός μου ἐξ αὐτῆς," come out of her, my people.[28] It is a book for the dispersion, at the hour of the revolt.

The oracle

Josephus says what drove the Jews to war more than anything else: "χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν," an ambiguous oracle, likewise found in their sacred writings, that at that time someone from their country would rule the world. Many of the wise were mistaken about it, he says, because it meant Vespasian.[29] Tacitus has the same oracle in the "ancient writings of the priests," with the East growing strong and men setting out from Judaea to rule the world. In the same chapter he records the portents at the Temple: the doors flying open and a voice greater than human crying that the gods were departing.[30]

The narrative holds that the oracle is the book.[31] The writing that gathered the dispersion against Rome had its referent handed to Rome's emperor in Rome's signed history, written by the oracle's author, or by its author's son.[32] The capture worked by redirecting what the authority had said.

The tomb

The gospels end the life of their Jesus with a Joseph. A rich man from Arimathea, Ἰωσήφ by name, "προσελθὼν τῷ Πειλάτῳ ᾐτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ," came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered it given. He laid it "ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ," in his own new tomb.[33]

In his *Life*, Joseph son of Matthias tells how, riding back from Tekoa, he saw many captives crucified and recognized three of them as men he had known. "Μετὰ δακρύων προσελθὼν Τίτῳ εἶπον. ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἐκέλευσεν καθαιρεθέντας αὐτοὺς θεραπείας ἐπιμελεστάτης τυχεῖν. καὶ οἱ μὲν δύο τελευτῶσιν θεραπευόμενοι, ὁ δὲ τρίτος ἔζησεν." He went to Titus in tears and told him. Titus at once ordered them taken down and given the most careful treatment. Two died under treatment, and the third lived.[34] In both a Joseph goes to the Roman, asks for the crucified, and is granted them by the Roman's order. In one the body is laid in Joseph's tomb. In the other, of three taken down, the third lives.

On this narrative the Jesus of the gospels is laid to rest in the author's tomb. The life ends

[28] *Attested.* Rev 17–18; Rev 13:18 (the Hebrew letter value of □□□□ ;(□□□ Rev 18:4 (seated).

[29] *Attested. War* 6.312–313 (seated). Josephus's assignment of the oracle to Vespasian, 6.313.

[30] *Attested.* Tacitus, *Histories* 5.13 (seated): *antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens profectique Iudaea rerum potirentur*; *audita maior humana vox excedere deos*. Suetonius, *Vespasian* 4.5 (not seated).

[31] *Held.* The author reads *War* 6 and *Histories* 5.13 as describing the book of Revelation (4 November 2026); #1737 sets the correspondences.

[32] *Held.* Josephus, or his father Matthias, as the author of the Apocalypse: rung V of the archive's Revelation First ladder, held as highly likely and not yet advanced. The heteronymic form of the thesis, its disambiguation from the Piso hypothesis and the Jesus-myth thesis, and its evidentiary tiering: #203, #837, #1213, #1226. The Slavonic Josephus: #626, #1176, #1510.

[33] *Attested.* Matt 27:57–60 (seated); Mark 15:43–46; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–42. On the Jewish custom of taking down the crucified and burying them before sunset, Josephus, *War* 4.317 (seated).

[34] *Attested. Life* 420–421 (seated). The verbal frame shared with Matt 27:58 (προσελθών, the request to the Roman, ἐκέλευσεν) is set out here; the reading of it is this narrative's.

where its writer's name is, and what rises from it is written.[35]

The workshop

From one book to the whole corpus is the largest step the narrative takes. No single correspondence carries it. Many of those set out below were noticed long before this narrative, one at a time, and each can be explained on its own: by a shared world, a shared scripture, a later hand. What the narrative adds is their conjunction. The question it puts is whether any account explains the whole set with fewer assumptions than one maker, working through a workshop and dividing what it could say among many names.[36]

The capacity and the world Begin with capacity. What survives of Josephus in Greek runs to about 468,000 words: the *War*, the *Antiquities*, the *Life* and *Against Apion*. The New Testament runs to about 138,000. The captive's acknowledged output is more than three times the length of the canon, written in Rome over some twenty-five years, with helpers he names as such.[37] At the end of the *Antiquities* he promises four more books, "περὶ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν νόμων," on God and his essence and on the laws. No such work survives under his name.[38]

Then the world the canon knows, which is his. Gamaliel in Acts names Theudas, and then Judas the Galilean in the days of the census. That is the order in which the *Antiquities* sets Theudas and then the sons of Judas, though Judas rose forty years before Theudas.[39] The tribune in Acts takes the apostle for the Egyptian who led "τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων" out into the wilderness. The word σικάριοι occurs once in the New Testament, here. It is not in the Septuagint or in Philo. Josephus uses it seven times and explains where it comes from.[40] Felix with Drusilla, Agrippa with Bernice: the king before whom the apostle makes his last defence is the king who wrote Josephus sixty-two letters vouching for his history.[41]

[35] *Held.* The gospels as Josephan allegory. Ἰωσὴφ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας beside Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου is a resonance of name, read here, not an etymology.

[36] *Held.* The test of the set is this narrative's framing; the common-authorship thesis in its heteronymic form: #203, #837, #1213, #1226 (author-functions; no intent attributed; distinct from the Piso hypothesis and from the Jesus-myth thesis). Earlier statements: #1101 §0.3 and §V ("The Scribal Workshop"), #636, and the blog posts of 7 October 2025 ("Premise: Josephus wrote the New Testament") and 20 November 2025 ("The Scribal Workshop Hypothesis"; "The Poem Factory"). Each correspondence in this section is attested at the locus given; the inference from them to one author is held.

[37] *Attested; the count is this narrative's.* Josephus: 467,569 Greek word-tokens across the *War*, *Antiquities*, *Life* and *Against Apion* in the seated corpus (EA-CORPORA-01, #1499; section markers excluded). New Testament: 137,779 in Nestle 1904 (seated). Counted 11 November 2026. The helpers: *Against Apion* 1.50. Corrected by erratum on #1101 (11 November 2026, at the author's word): #1101 gives "~1.5 million words" and cites the helpers at "*Against Apion* 1.9" with a Greek sentence that is not in the text. The locus is 1.50, and the words are χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς.

[38] *Attested. Antiquities* 20.268 (seated). The work's absence is attested; any identification of it is held.

[39] *Attested.* Acts 5:36–37; *Antiquities* 20.97–102 (seated). The dependence of Acts on Josephus at this point was argued by Max Krenkel, *Josephus und Lucas* (1894), and is weighed by Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (2nd ed., 2003) and Richard Pervo, *Dating Acts* (2006). Not seated.

[40] *Attested; the count is this narrative's.* Acts 21:38; *War* 2.261–263; *Antiquities* 20.169–172, and 20.186 for the name explained (seated). σικάρι- once in the New Testament, seven times in Josephus, and absent from the Septuagint and Philo in the seated corpora (checked 11 November 2026).

[41] *Attested.* Acts 24:24, 25:13–26:32; *Antiquities* 20.141–144 (Felix and Drusilla); *Life* 364–366 (Agrippa's sixty-two letters) (seated).

The two-volume work at the canon's centre opens as Josephus's last work opens. Luke begins "κράτιστε Θεόφιλε," most excellent Theophilus, and Acts "Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην … ὦ Θεόφιλε," the first account I made, Theophilus. *Against Apion* begins "κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν Ἐπαφρόδιτε," most excellent of men, Epaphroditus, and its second book "Διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ προτέρου βιβλίου, τιμιώτατέ μοι Ἐπαφρόδιτε," in the former book, my most honoured Epaphroditus.[42] In Josephus, Theophilus is a name with a holder: a high priest, son of Ananus, appointed by Vitellius.[43]

The operations Operations can be inherited as well. Philo's cut reached the Apocalypse as an inheritance, a construction taken over and transformed. What one maker would explain is the distribution: an operation divided among voices in the pattern that the conditions of one author's custody predict, withheld where the author writes under his own name and Rome's seal, and released where the name on the page is another's.

Retelling Daniel, Josephus reaches the stone cut without hands that breaks the kingdoms and fills the earth, and he stops: "ἐδήλωσε δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ λίθου Δανίηλος τῷ βασιλεῖ, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ἔδοξε τοῦτο ἱστορεῖν." Daniel told the king about the stone as well, but it did not seem right to me to relate it. Whoever wants to know what is coming, he says, should read the book of Daniel.[44] It is Philo's cut again, at the place where the kingdom passes to a power that is not Rome's. In Luke the stone the builders rejected falls on whoever stands beneath it, and "λικμήσει αὐτόν," it will winnow him, which is Daniel's own verb for the stone that winnows the kingdoms.[45] What one text withholds at the locus, the other supplies with the locus's own word. The withholding comes under the captive's name, in the history written under Flavian patronage. The release comes under another name, in a gospel.

The infancy is his Moses. Exodus has the king's order to kill the Hebrew boys. Josephus adds two things Exodus lacks: one of the sacred scribes, men skilled in telling what is to come, warns the king that a child will be born who will humble Egypt, and God stands over the father in his sleep and tells him not to despair.[46] In Matthew the king gathers all the chief priests and scribes of the people to learn where the Christ is born, kills the boys of Bethlehem, and the father is warned in dreams.[47] The two additions are Josephus's, and Matthew has both.

The passion has a Jesus of its own in Josephus. Four years before the war, at the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus son of Ananias began to cry out in the Temple: "φωνὴ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς, φωνὴ ἀπὸ δύσεως, φωνὴ ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, φωνὴ ἐπὶ Ἰεροσόλυμα καὶ τὸν ναόν, φωνὴ ἐπὶ νυμφίους καὶ νύμφας." He was flayed to the bone with scourges before the procurator Albinus and neither begged nor wept. Asked who he was and where he came from, "οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν ἀπεκρίνατο," he answered nothing at all, and Albinus let him go as mad.[48] Mark's

[42] *Attested.* Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1; *Against Apion* 1.1, 2.1; *Life* 430; *Antiquities* 1.8 (Epaphroditus) (seated). On the form of the Lukan preface, Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel* (1993). Not seated.

[43] *Attested. Antiquities* 18.123 (seated). That Luke's Theophilus is this high priest is held, not argued.

[44] *Attested. Antiquities* 10.210 (seated); Dan 2:34–35, 44–45.

[45] *Attested.* Luke 20:18 (Nestle 1904, seated); Dan 2:44 in Theodotion (Swete, seated): λεπτυνεῖ καὶ λικμήσει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας. That the gospel fills what Josephus withholds is this narrative's reading.

[46] *Attested. Antiquities* 2.205–216 (seated); Exod 1:15–22 (Swete, seated), where the order to kill the boys stands and the scribe's prediction and the father's dream do not.

[47] *Attested.* Matt 2:4, 2:13, 2:16, 2:19–22 (seated). On the elements Matthew's infancy shares with Josephus's Moses, Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (1993). Not seated.

[48] *Attested. War* 6.300–309 (seated).

Jesus before Pilate "οὐκέτι οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίθη," and Luke's before Herod "οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο."[49] The voice against the bridegroom and the bride is the Apocalypse's sentence on Babylon: "φωνὴ νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι."[50]

Josephus's John baptized for the purity of the body, "μὴ ἐπί τινων ἁμαρτάδων παραιτήσει," not to beg off any sins. Mark's John preached "βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν," a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.[51] The two accounts answer each other on the one point.

The war runs under the gospels. Luke's Jesus weeps over the city because its enemies "παρεμβαλοῦσιν … χάρακά σοι καὶ περικυκλώσουσίν σε," will set a palisade against it and encircle it, which is what Titus did.[52] In Mark, in the country of the Gerasenes, the unclean spirit gives its name, "Λεγιὼν ὄνομά μοι," and goes into two thousand swine that rush down into the sea. At Gerasa, Josephus says, Vespasian's officer took the town at the first assault and killed a thousand of its young men.[53] On the road to Emmaus, sixty stadia from Jerusalem, two disciples tell the risen Jesus who Jesus was, in a sequence that tracks the *Testimonium* of the *Antiquities* point by point.[54] Ammaous, thirty stadia out, is where Vespasian settled eight hundred soldiers discharged from the army.[55]

The letters take their phrases from the seven. To the messenger at Smyrna the speaker promises "τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς," the crown of life. James opens on the same crown for the one who endures testing. Across some 61,500 units of the Septuagint, the New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers, Philo and Josephus, the formula occurs in those two verses and nowhere else.[56] At Ephesus the speaker knows "τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου," your works and your labour and your endurance. The first letter to the Thessalonians remembers "τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος," the work of faith, the labour of love and the endurance of hope. Across some 69,400 units the ordered triple occurs in those two verses only.[57] Inside the book John is commanded "γράψον … καὶ πέμψον," write and send, and what he writes is addressed to the messengers, the ἄγγελοι, at the first station of which the false ἀπόστολοι are tested. The letters that

[49] *Attested.* Mark 15:5; Luke 23:9; cf. Mark 14:61 (seated). The parallels were set out by Theodore J. Weeden, "Two Jesuses," *Forum* n.s. 6.2 (2003). Not seated.

[50] *Attested.* Rev 18:23 (seated); both voices from Jer 7:34.

[51] *Attested. Antiquities* 18.117 (seated); Mark 1:4 (seated).

[52] *Attested.* Luke 19:41–44 (seated); *War* 5.499–511, Titus's wall round the city (seated).

[53] *Attested.* Mark 5:1–13 (seated); *War* 4.487–489 (seated). The boar was an emblem of the Tenth Legion, Fretensis, which served at the siege. On the legion and the swine, Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man* (1988). Not seated.

[54] *Attested as scholarship; not seated.* G. J. Goldberg, "The Coincidences of the Emmaus Narrative of Luke and the Testimonium of Josephus," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13 (1995). Luke 24:13–27; *Antiquities* 18.63–64 (seated). The received wording of the *Testimonium* is contested, and Goldberg weighs Christian interpolation shaped by Luke beside a common source. On the interpolation account the parallel shows Luke's reach into the Josephan text, not Josephus's own composition; what the parallel can identify depends on that textual history.

[55] *Attested. War* 7.217; Luke 24:13 (seated). Whether the two Emmaus are one place is disputed: sixty stadia against thirty.

[56] *Demonstrated, #1735 v9 §VII.* Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12. The census: στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς in any case-form, across roughly 61,500 units of the Septuagint (Rahlfs), the Greek New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers, Philo and Josephus, occurs in the two verses only; the pseudepigrapha sweep added none.

[57] *Demonstrated, #1735 v9 §V.* Rev 2:2; 1 Thess 1:3. Across roughly 69,400 units with the pseudepigrapha, the ordered triple occurs in the two verses only, and the pair κόπος with ὑπομονή is unique to the same two. The direction of the dependence is argued in #1735, not settled by the count.

follow, carried by the sent, read as that commission carried out.[58]

One maker, many names Then the life he wrote for himself, beside the lives the canon writes. As a young man he went into the wilderness to a teacher named Bannus, who wore what grew on trees, ate what grew of itself, and bathed day and night in cold water for purity. He stayed three years and then took up the Pharisees' rule.[59] The gospels open with a man in the wilderness, clothed in camel's hair, eating locusts and wild honey, baptizing in the Jordan, and the apostle of the letters calls himself, as to the law, a Pharisee.[60]

In his twenty-seventh year he sailed for Rome. Felix, procurator of Judaea, had sent certain priests he knew to Rome in bonds, on a slight charge, to give account to Caesar, and he went to free them. In the middle of the Adriatic, "βαπτισθέντος γὰρ ἡμῶν τοῦ πλοίου," our ship went under, and about six hundred of them swam through the whole night. At daybreak a ship from Cyrene took up about eighty, and he came safe to Dicaearchia, "ἣν Ποτιόλους Ἰταλοὶ καλοῦσιν," which the Italians call Puteoli.[61] In Acts the apostle, held two years by Felix and sent on by his successor as a prisoner who has appealed to Caesar, sails for Rome in the same years and is wrecked in the same sea with two hundred and seventy-six aboard. Those who can swim make for land, all come through, and the voyage ends at Puteoli.[62]

When Cestius's army broke, Josephus says, many of the notables left Jerusalem "ὥσπερ βαπτιζομένης νηὸς," like swimmers from a sinking ship. He names two of them, the brothers Costobar and Saul, and in the next sentence he names Antipas.[63] In the *Antiquities* this Saul, of royal blood, gathers bands of the wicked, violent and ready to plunder the weaker.[64] In Acts, Saul ravages the assembly, going house to house and dragging men and women off to prison.[65]

To fill the place of Judas, Acts sets up two men: "Ἰωσὴφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰοῦστος, καὶ Ματθίαν." Joseph, called Barsabbas, surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They cast lots, and the lot falls on Matthias.[66] Josephus was the son of Matthias and named a son Justus. At Jotapata he lived because the lots fell as they did, "εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας," whether one should call it fortune or the providence of God.[67]

Set the operations side by side, and two relations come into view. The first is ancestry. Philo

[58] *Demonstrated as grammar, #1758 v1.1 §15.2; the further step held.* John is commanded to write and send (1:11); the seven messengers are the addressees of what he writes (2:1 and every letter), and nothing in that grammar commands a messenger to write; the testing of the false ἀπόστολοι, 2:2. That the letters which follow are the commission carried out is the author's reading (10 November 2026: "the epistles are the literal manifestation of what the logos commissions in revelation"), a step outside the book.

[59] *Attested.* *Life* 11–12 (seated).

[60] *Attested.* Mark 1:4–6; Matt 3:4; Phil 3:5 (κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος); Acts 23:6 (seated).

[61] *Attested.* *Life* 13–16 (seated): μετ' εἰκοστὸν δὲ καὶ ἕκτον ἐνιαυτόν, in Felix's procuratorship.

[62] *Attested.* Acts 24:27–28:14; 27:37, 27:43–44, 28:13 (seated). The years of the apostle's voyage are the received chronology's.

[63] *Attested.* *War* 2.556–557 (seated).

[64] *Attested.* *Antiquities* 20.214 (seated). The identification of this Saul with the apostle is Robert Eisenman's (*James the Brother of Jesus*, 1997); it is noted here and not argued.

[65] *Attested.* Acts 8:3 (seated).

[66] *Attested.* Acts 1:23–26 (seated).

[67] *Attested.* *Life* 5 and 427 (the sons, Justus among them); *War* 3.388–391 (seated). The cluster of names and lots is this narrative's reading.

is the antecedent: his cut at the name is inherited by the Apocalypse and transformed there, and he belongs among the book's sources. The second is distribution. Within the captive's own writing and the canon's, the same act of withholding and release is divided among the voices. Josephus stops at the stone and sends the reader to Daniel. The gospels supply the stone with Daniel's verb. The Apocalypse writes the name that the inherited socket was left for. And the names that carry the division are the captive's own: his father's, his son's, his lot, his ship, his Saul, his Antipas. The ancestry is the material, and the distribution is what one maker explains. The reading the narrative takes is the one these sources allow: author-functions of one literary intelligence under capture, speaking as many because the one could not speak as himself.[68]

Four witnesses, one author

The tension cannot be resolved, and the narrative does not try to resolve it. If one hand stands behind these writings, then four witnesses speak in its voice, under two regimes, divided at Jotapata:

- the Apocalypse, the voice before capture, which names Rome Babylon and calls the people out;
- the *War*, the captive's history under Titus's signature, which blames the revolt on its zealots and gives the oracle to Vespasian;
- the *Life*, the self-account, where the author goes to the Roman for the crucified and the third man lives;
- the gospels, where a Jesus whose name the Logos took is buried in Joseph's tomb, and the epistles carry out, on this reading, the writing and sending that the Apocalypse commissions.[69]

They do not agree. The *War* condemns what the Apocalypse summons. The gospels mourn a death where the *Life* records a rescue. Disagreement does not by itself show one author: independent writers disagree too. What the common author offers is that the divergences become intelligible, as the record of one authority transformed by capture and speaking from both sides of a seal. That is a claim to test alongside the correspondences, and the divergences are not smoothed away here. The test is whether one maker makes them more intelligible than many, not whether they exist.

The custody of the name

So there are two custodies. Aristotle's corpus was buried at Scepsis, carried to Rome by Sulla, and edited by Andronicus. Judaea's scriptures and their author were carried to Rome by Titus, signed and published there, and the editors of the centuries that followed gathered the writings into a corpus they then had to reconcile. Concealment preserves and damages, and

[68] *Held*. #203 §2: "named positions in a distributed authorial system generated by a writer who could not speak as himself because his name belonged to Rome."

[69] *Held*, except the grammar of the commission. Inside the book John is commanded to write and send, and the seven messengers are the addressees of what he writes (#1758 v1.1 §15.2). That the letters which follow carry out that commission is the author's reading (10 November 2026), a step outside the book. The ordering of the four witnesses around Jotapata is this narrative's.

institutionalization transmits and recomposes. In both cases the corpus reaches us through Roman hands, and the unity it had at the start returns only as the work of editors.

The Apocalypse is the one witness that came through without bending. Its name does not take the case the preposition requires. Its white stone carries a name only the receiver knows.[70] Its central claim is the one its readers have spent two thousand years reciting and refusing: that the name of the one in the midst is the Word of God. A word can be inscribed, carried, spoken and lived, and it can bring further lives and writings into being. The confession its readers resist is that their God is a book in that sense: a text whose reception produces speech, persons and further texts. The narrative's claim is that the book came first.[71]

Notes

Tiers. **Demonstrated**: argued from seated texts in a deposit of the archive. **Attested**: the source exists and is quoted or cited at the locus given; the reading of it is this narrative's. **Held**: this narrative's own claim, stated for the story and not yet argued. Where a source is not yet seated in the archive's originals library, the note says so.

[70] *Demonstrated, #1758 v1.1 §7b.9–7b.10.* Rev 2:17; the white stone as the divine vote turned to acquittal, carrying the name the socket leaves for its receiver.

[71] Three senses, each at its own tier. *Chronological*: the Apocalypse before the gospels and letters, at the archive's working date of 66 (held; #1737). *Literary*: a traceable construction. Zechariah's oracle names Ἀνατολή to the high priest Ἰησοῦς; Philo gives the name to the Logos and withholds the man it was spoken to; the Apocalypse recomposes the scene and names the figure in the midst the Word of God (demonstrated, #1758 v1.1). *Ontological*: on the archive's reading the book is the originary form of the figure the gospels unfold, so that the persons and the further texts come from the Word (the thesis of #407, #636 and #902; held here).

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