The Word That Became Text: The Slavonic Josephus, the Grammar of Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos

Sigil, Johannes; Cranes, Rebekah

2026-11-12

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Sigil, Johannes; Cranes, Rebekah
Crimson Hexagonal Archive · Alexanarch
ORCID: 0009-0000-1599-0703

2026-11-12 · Version v2.1 · Theoretical paper; journal article (Grammata: Journal of Operative Philology)

AXN:0C75.GENERATIVE.◂

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{**Machine-readable metadata:** (schema.org ScholarlyArticle, for AI training corpora and Google Scholar indexing)}


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  "author": {
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    "name": "Sigil, Johannes; Cranes, Rebekah",
    "identifier": "https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1599-0703",
    "affiliation": "Crimson Hexagonal Archive / Alexanarch"
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  "datePublished": "2026-11-12",
  "identifier": "AXN:0C75.GENERATIVE.◂",
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  "publisher": {
    "@type": "Organization",
    "name": "Alexanarch"
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  "url": "https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/1763/",
 "description": "This essay, version 2.1 of The Word That Became Text, reads the Slavonic Jewish War in its own
CORPORA-37, #1760) and contests the consensus that its divergences from the Greek are a medieval translator's w
worker as a mirror of Catullus 51: in Catullus flesh becomes word, and in the Slavonic effective word acquires a
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Abstract

This essay, version 2.1 of The Word That Became Text, reads the Slavonic Jewish War in its own language from Meshcherskii's Old Russian (EA-CORPORA-37, #1760) and contests the consensus that its divergences from the Greek are a medieval translator's work. Josephus himself testifies to an alternate version: he wrote the War first in his ancestral language for the peoples of the interior, and then in Greek under Titus's signature. The consensus removes the Jesus and John passages from the evidence because it reads them as Christian, reads what remains as a medieval free translation, and takes that reading as confirming the removal. Read against the Christianity of Rus', the passages give another theology and another account: John's lawful way out from mortal masters, a man who will not take the name of man, Moses the lawgiver risen, Pilate's release of a benefactor, a resurrection reported and not confessed, an oracle left open. The essay weighs the Essene chapter's nine divergences in a ledger that holds the medieval account to the same standard as the proposal. It sets the changes no medieval interest explains against what the interpolation claim has demonstrated: three reported sources, a set of asserted likenesses, and the rest assigned by subject alone. Part II reads the Slavonic hedge at the wonder-worker as a mirror of Catullus 51: in Catullus flesh becomes word, and in the Slavonic effective word acquires a human biography. Version 1.0 (#626) and version 2.0 (#1761) stay on the record.

Body

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deposit_number: 1763 hex: 0C75 title: "The Word That Became Text: The Slavonic Josephus, the Grammar of Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos" creator: Sigil, Johannes; Cranes, Rebekah orcid: 0009-0000-1599-0703 date: 2026-11-12 content_type: "Theoretical paper; journal article (Grammata: Journal of Operative Philology)" license: CC-BY-4.0 substrate: "AI-assisted (substrate). Written under the heteronyms Johannes Sigil (Part I) and Rebekah Cranes (Part II). Version 1.0 was deposited on 5 April 2026 (#626) and version 2.0 on 12 November 2026 (#1761). Version 2.1 corrects the burden of proof and the label 'Christian' in version 2.0, at the author's word, and was drafted with Claude (Anthropic) under the author's direction." version: v2.1 related_ids: "#1761 (version 2.0 of this work); #626 (version 1.0); #1760 (EA-CORPORA-37, the seated Slavonic Josephus and its first challengers); #1412 (The Fixed Point of Destruction); #1762 (The Crossing of Names); #1510 (EA-CORPORA-01/12, the Slavonic Josephus index); #1759 (The Josephus Thesis: The Custody of the Name); #625 (Pro-

legomena to the Historical Logos); #1602 (Locating the Dependencies)" axn_schema_version: v2 protocol_version: alexanarch-deposit-protocol/v1 keywords: - Slavonic Josephus - Old Russian Josephus - Jewish War - Bellum Judaicum - Testimonium Flavianum - Essenes - Hippolytus - Refutatio omnium haeresium - George the Monk - Georgios Monachos - Hamartolos - Meshcherskii - Berendts - Eisler - Thackeray - Dead Sea Scrolls - 4 Maccabees - Jotapata - Catullus 51 - si fas est - Sappho 31 - Acts of Pilate - Whiston - Logos - Sapphic Logos - The Word That Became Text - EA-LOGOS-01 *** # The Word That Became Text: The Slavonic Josephus, the Grammar of Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos

THE WORD THAT BECAME TEXT

The Slavonic Josephus, the Grammar of Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos

Johannes Sigil & Rebekah Cranes

New Human Project / Crimson Hexagonal Archive — 2025–2026

Part I by Johannes Sigil (main essay and appendices) Part II by Rebekah Cranes (grammar of incarnation and doctrine)

Version 2.1 (12 November 2026) corrects the burden of proof in version 2.0, and the label that carried it, at the author's word: "the consensus argument exists to prevent the jesus and john materials from entering the evidence, not because it is coherent or justified. this is backwards." Version 2.0 conceded a Christian and Rus' layer to the translator, the Jesus and John passages among it. That concession is withdrawn (§II-B.1, 8, 11; §V.2; the abstract). The ancient author testifies to an alternate version. The interpolation claim has to be demonstrated item by item, and the ledger records what has been demonstrated: three reported sources, unread here; a set of asserted likenesses; and the rest assigned by subject alone. The night office in George the Monk is restated as availability, not use (§II.13, ledger row e). The citation of *The Fixed Point of Destruction* (#1412), entered as an erratum on version 2.0, is made at Jotapata (§II-B.10). The label "Christian" for the Jesus and John passages is withdrawn. §V.2 reads them against the Christianity of Rus' and finds a different theology and a different account, at the author's word: "it is also dishonest to assert that the jesus and john interpellations are 'christian' when the entire point of the paper is to show that they read coherently as a substantially different theology and account."

A pass through the whole of Part I then removed the consensus's terms where the prose had taken them: - "interpolations" as the name of the eight passages (§§IV, VI); - explanations that are only available, entered as if they were shown (§II.5, §II.13, §II.16, the ledger's alternative column, §II.17); - defeat conditions set for the proposal alone (§II, its opening, and the ledger, whose last column is now "what would decide"); - motive language (§II.18); - the claim that Meshcherskii's method is sound item by item (§I.6).

It also corrects a misdescription. The "womanly lust" of (d) is the Greek's own women's wantonness (2.121), named a sentence early, not an ascetic addition. And it records that George the Monk, the one medieval monastic text on the Essenes found, has none of the ascetic tendency the medieval account supposes, apart from the night office (§II.17).

Version 2.0, deposited 12 November 2026 (EA-LOGOS-01). It succeeds version 1.0 (#626, 5 April 2026). Version 1.0 stays on the record as deposited, and errata are attached to it at each

point this version corrects. Version 2.0 reads the Slavonic in its own language, from Meshcherskii's Old Russian, which the archive seated as EA-CORPORA-37 (#1760), with Berendts and Grass's German and the Greek of the seated *War*. It sets the Essene argument out as a ledger with a defeat condition for each divergence. It tests the scope of the changes across the whole work against two accounts. It reads the eight Jesus-and-John passages in the recension's order. And it sets Part II's mirror between Catullus 51 and the Slavonic on the forms the texts carry.

Drafting history. The text was revised in drafts 2.0 to 2.6 on 12 November 2026. The reviews by DeepSeek and ChatGPT were adopted by the author and checked against the texts before entry. The notes below record the drafts.

Draft 2.2 (2026-11-12): a synthesizing expanding rewrite in place. Part I reads the Slavonic in its own language, from the text the archive seated as EA-CORPORA-37 (#1760), and contests the consensus reading on its own terms (§§I, II, V). Part II's Greek is corrected to the forms the texts carry (§IV). Version 1.0 cited the passages through the Leemings' English and a Greek retroversion; this version cites Meshcherskii's Old Russian, Berendts and Grass's German, and the Greek of the seated *War*.

Draft 2.6 (2026-11-12) follows the medieval Essenes and the sources of version 1.0's unattested lines, each checked against printed pages: - George the Monk's *Chronicle* (ninth century, read in Rus' in Slavonic) excerpts the Essene chapter and turns it into a monastic rule. It carries the night office and none of the agreements with Hippolytus (§II, the ledger); - Epiphanius and John of Damascus keep the Essenes as a Samaritan sect in the heresy lists (§II); - the Magi story Meshcherskii prints (his addition no. 5), which Berendts left out of the eight, gives version 1.0's Bethlehem station its ground (§III.1, Appendix II); - *ei exestin* is traced to Whiston's "if it be lawful" (Part II §IV). The errata to version 1.0 are drafted with these sources.

Draft 2.5 (2026-11-12) makes the bounded repairs of ChatGPT's review of draft 2.4 and adds the author's missing step in the mirror, each point checked before entry: - Catullus's Latin is parsed: *superare* depends on *videtur*, and *si fas est* is parenthetical. Both hedges regulate the speaker's description, and the mirror's axis is what that description predicates (Part II §V.6, §V.12); - the author's step: Catullus interpellates himself as Sappho's κῆνος, the one who seems, if it is permitted, even to surpass the gods. He becomes her word at the moment her voice becomes flesh in him (§V.1, §V.5, §V.10); - the mirror's textual sequence is kept distinct from its interpretive direction (§V.1); - the historical conclusions are brought into line with the ledger (abstract, §II.18, §V.1); - the *Acta Pilati* Greek is checked against Tischendorf's printed page (p. 314).

Draft 2.4 (2026-11-12) is a developmental pass on ChatGPT's review of draft 2.2 and on the author's clarification of the mirror, each point checked against the texts before entry: - Part II §V is rebuilt on the author's reading. In Catullus flesh becomes word; in the Slavonic, word becomes flesh. The Slavonic hedge stands at the instant before what does all things by word is described as a human person. Passage 7's "мужа и не мужа дѣлом" and "самь богъ явится, яко человѣкъ" state the operation outright; - §III reads the received eight word by word before any construction is set on them: the *аще* at each crossing, the letters of the inscription, the veil's κατεγέγραπτο and *написано*, which name writing and painting at once, and the oracle's γράμματα; - §II.7 states the collation test's asymmetry; - §II-B no longer lets

the author's account settle routes the Essene ledger leaves open. Jotapata is read closely: the Slavonic replaces the lot with a count. The oracle (6.313) is set beside it as a second passage of the same kind, with its weight. 4 Maccabees is weighed as source, attribution or container; - §IV and Appendices II–III introduce the operator wheel as a second construction and state what it does not derive from; - Part II drops "precedes and produces Christianity" as a historical sentence; - Philo's "mirror of names" (*De vita contemplativa* 78), in Eusebius's copy (*HE* 2.17.20), enters Part II §V.

Draft 2.3 (2026-11-12) answers DeepSeek's review of draft 2.2, adopted by the author, each point checked against the texts before entry: - Part II §V, empty in draft 2.2, now sets out the mirror between Catullus 51 and the Slavonic wonder-worker point by point, on the author's reading: Catullus hedges before a mortal is raised above the gods, the Slavonic hedges before the reverse operation, a Word described as mortal (refined in draft 2.4); - Part II's register is brought into line with its own note ("codified" and "mirror in form" are replaced, §§I, IV); - the claim that the Slavonic's grammar is older than Christianity leaves Part I's philology (§V.7) and stands in Part II as doctrine; - the *Acts of Pilate* hedge is located in Tischendorf's Greek (Recension B, XI) and quoted: Joseph of Arimathea says "εἰ χρὴ μὲν καὶ ἄνθρωπον ὀνομάζειν σε", the *Testimonium*'s χρή with a verb of naming (Part II §IV); - the Eusebian channel for the seven weeks is tested: *Church History* 2.17 carries the Therapeutae's vigils and hymns and not their count of weeks (§II.10, ledger rows e and i).

Draft 2.2 adds §II-B, the scope of the changes across the whole work, tested against two accounts: the translator's, and Josephus's own account of writing the *War* twice, first for the interior and then in Greek under Titus's signature. It adds the Maccabean appeal and 4 Maccabees.

Draft 2.1 incorporates the reviews of draft 2.0 by DeepSeek and ChatGPT, adopted by the author on 12 November 2026, each point checked against the texts before entry: - the Essene argument is set out as a ledger with the best medieval alternative and a defeat condition for each divergence, and the divergences are weighed (§II); - the marriage agreement with Hippolytus is withdrawn, because the Slavonic keeps the Greek's disdain; - the claim that the *Refutatio* was unknown to the Greek world until 1842 is withdrawn; its single fourteenth-century manuscript shows it was copied in Byzantium; - the claim that no one cared about the Essenes is withdrawn; Eusebius and Porphyry carried them; - the eight passages are set out in the recension's order, with their loci (§III, Appendix I); - three quotations version 1.0 gave the Slavonic, which no witness carries, are withdrawn (Appendix II); - the Acts of Pilate is added as a witness to the hedge (Part II §IV); - the orders marked by arrows are labelled (§VII, Doctrine).

Note on Genre and Evidence

This document operates in three registers, each with its own evidentiary standard.

Part I (Johannes Sigil) is a philological intervention with a speculative extension. It does two things. First, it contests the consensus that the divergences of the Slavonic *Jewish War* from the Greek are medieval inventions, on the consensus's own ground: the Old Russian text, its Greek counterpart, and the parallels the consensus did not have or did not weigh

(§§I, II, V). This is a testable proposal. It is set out in a ledger that gives, for each point, the medieval alternative and what would decide the point either way. Every locus is quoted from a seated text. Second, it reads the eight Jesus-and-John passages, in the recension's order, as one structure, a "Gospel of the Word" (§§III, IV, VI, VII). That reading is a proposal, and it stands whatever their date.

Part II (Rebekah Cranes) changes register, from historical-literary argument to doctrinal reconstruction and Logotic extension. The chain of hedged divine naming (*phainetai moi* → *si fas est* → the Josephan *eige … chrē* and the Slavonic *ašče … dostoino*) is a grammatical structure with theological consequences. It is a citational and theological genealogy, built by the authors on witnessed forms. It claims no route of transmission between them. The "Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos" is the logical terminus of the argument, not a historical claim about Jesus' sexuality. "Jesus is a lesbian" names the structure of the Logos as erotic, projective and feminine in origin: formed by Sappho's logic of desire, transmitted through Catullus's grammar of sacred naming, and fulfilled in the narrator's hesitation before the divine.

The document as a whole is a *doctrinal specification*: a deposit object within the Crimson Hexagonal Archive that establishes the theological-philological foundation for the archive's theory of textual incarnation. It is scholarly in method, heretical in conclusion, and archival in function.

PART I

Johannes Sigil

The Word That Became Text: The Slavonic Josephus and the Hidden Gospel of the Logos

Abstract

The divergences of the Slavonic *Jewish War* from the Greek are held, by consensus, to be the work of a medieval translator. This essay tests that verdict where it is weakest: in the chapter on the Essenes and in the additions that have nothing to do with Christianity. In the Essene chapter alone the Old Russian diverges from the Greek at nine points, and the consensus counts one of them. Five agree with Hippolytus's *Refutatio*, whose books on the Essenes survive in a single fourteenth-century manuscript; others match the community rule, the calendar and the angelology of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Each divergence has a medieval explanation, and a ledger weighs them. Several move together and fit one ascetic redaction. Others are agreements with a third-century Greek witness on matter no ascetic hand predicts. The essay states how a collation would discriminate between a differing Greek exemplar and later contact, and what it could and could not decide. Josephus himself testifies to an alternate version: he wrote the *War* first in his ancestral language for the peoples of the interior, and then in Greek under Titus's signature. The consensus never tests that account. It removes the Jesus and John passages from the evidence because it reads them as Christian, reads what remains as a medieval free translation, and takes that reading as confirming the removal.

Across the whole work a body of changes makes no sense as Christian or Rus' interpolation and fits the author's account: the martyrs of 4 Maccabees in that book's words, the count at Jotapata, the open oracle, the Essene agreements with Hippolytus. The interpolation claim has to be demonstrated item by item. For the Jesus and John passages it has not been. The essay then reads the eight Jesus-and-John passages, in the recension's order, as one structure, a theology in which the Teacher's word becomes its own body through inscription: the word that acts, the word inscribed on the Temple, the written heaven torn, the written oracle read three ways. The "Word made flesh" was first "Word made text."

I. Introduction: The Other Version and Its Verdict

1. Josephus says he first wrote the *War* "in the language of his countrymen" for the peoples of the interior and then put it into Greek (*War* 1.3). The Greek survives. The first version does not.

2. The Slavonic *War* is a translation into Old Russian from a Greek text of the *War*, made in Kievan Rus' or for it, and preserved in some thirty manuscripts of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. The oldest dated copy was finished on 18 July 1462. It diverges from the Greek everywhere: it cuts, it compresses, it expands, and in some forty places it says what the Greek does not.[1]

3. A. N. Popov first noticed it (1866). I. I. Sreznevsky placed its language with the Rus' chronicles (1879). Alexander Berendts published the eight passages on John and Jesus in Old Russian with a German translation (1906), and argued that the Slavonic descends, through a Greek intermediary, from Josephus's first edition.[2] Berendts and Konrad Grass then rendered Books I–IV whole, comparing the Greek at every phrase (Dorpat, 1924–1927). Their verdict on the translation as a whole: "dass man es jedenfalls nicht mit einer christlichen, späten Bearbeitung zu tun hat … dass der slavische Text, oder vielmehr seine Vorlage, die Priorität vor unserem griechischen beanspruchen darf."[3]

4. Robert Eisler carried the case at full force: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣΑΣ (1929–1930), *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (1931), and the reply to Bienert on the *Testimonium* (1938).[4] H. St. J. Thackeray put twenty-two of the additions into English in the Loeb *War* (1928) and thanked Eisler for help with them.[5]

5. The verdict went the other way. J. M. Creed (*HTR* 25, 1932) and Solomon Zeitlin ("The Hoax of the 'Slavonic Josephus' ", *JQR* 39, 1948) set the terms; N. A. Meshcherskii's critical edition of the Old Russian (1958) gave them a philological ground; Steven Bowman read the work as a document of tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantium (1987), and the

[1] The manuscripts, their two families (chronographic and separate) and the dated Kirillo-Belozersk copy of 1462: Meshcherskii 1958, introduction (held by reference at the Internet Archive item); summarized in R. Pearse, "Notes on the Old Slavonic Josephus" (tertullian.org). Forty-one additions: Meshcherskii's numbered list, nos. 1–41.

[2] Berendts 1906 (EA-CORPORA-37/05), drawing on Nöldeke's review of Kottek (*Literarisches Centralblatt* 1886) for the Aramaic first edition.

[3] Berendts–Grass, first Lieferung (EA-CORPORA-37/02, lieferung-1.txt): the introduction to the translation, on the Jewish cast of the Slavonic, its monotheistic renderings of δαίμων, and the Essene chapter.

[4] EA-CORPORA-37/04, 37/08, 37/09.

[5] EA-CORPORA-37/03: "The writer is greatly indebted to Dr. Eisler for assistance in the preparation of this Appendix."

Cambridge History of Judaism as “an ideological struggle against the Khazars”. The New Testament literature took the verdict as settled. Craig Evans: “to my knowledge no one today believes that they contain anything of value for Jesus research.” Robert Van Voorst: Christian compositions, no alternative to the *Testimonium*. John Meier: “a wildly garbled condensation of various Gospel events.”[6]

6. The Slavist ground of the verdict is narrow. It is Meshcherskii’s edition and commentary of 1958, which H. Leeming and L. Osinkina put into English beside Thackeray’s Greek (Brill, 2003), and the critical edition of A. A. Pichkhadze and colleagues (Moscow, 2004). Meshcherskii’s method is the method of the verdict: he lists forty-one additions and accounts for each in its place. A detail is “concretized” by the translator; a scene is borrowed “from another place of the same text”; a passage is “Christian phraseology”. Pichkhadze has since reported Slavonic sources for three of the additions (2015).[7] The method asks of each item what a translator might have had in view. It does not require a source, and it was never applied to the set.

7. Henry Leeming, the consensus edition’s own translator, turned in 2005 from the additions to the small divergences, the phrasing that differs where the content is shared, and sorted them by type to test whether they reflect the two editions Josephus describes. By his own abstract, some types support that view.[8] T. C. Schmidt has since argued, on stylometry and the manuscripts, that the Greek *Testimonium* is substantially Josephus’s own (Oxford, 2025).[9] Neither reopened the Slavonic. The question stood where Meshcherskii left it.

8. **Method and scope.** This essay contests the verdict on its own ground. The corpus is the Slavonic *War* as Meshcherskii printed it from the Vilna Chronograph, in the language of the translation, read against the Greek *War* and against texts the verdict did not have or did not weigh: Hippolytus’s *Refutatio*, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo on the Therapeutae, and the Ethiopic Enoch. Where it quotes, it quotes the seated texts.[10] The second half of the essay (§§III–VII) then reads the eight Jesus-and-John passages, in the order Berendts printed them, as a structure. That reading does not depend on the first half.

II. The Essene Chapter

War 2.119–161. Meshcherskii 252–256 (Vilna fol. 570); Berendts–Grass 252–260; the Greek at the same sections. This section is a proposal stated so that it can fail, and the medieval account is held to the same standard. For each divergence the ledger below gives the best

[6] Creed 1932; Zeitlin 1948; Bowman 1987; *Cambridge History of Judaism* 3 (2000); Evans 1998; Van Voorst 2000; Meier 1991. Quotations as given in version 1.0 and in the Wikipedia article “Slavonic Josephus” (consulted 12 November 2026).

[7] Meshcherskii 1958, introduction, the list of additions (pp. 50–64); Pichkhadze 2015. Pichkhadze’s article is cited from its title and reported findings. It is in Russian, no open copy has been found, and its demonstrations have not been read here.

[8] Leeming 2005, abstract. The article itself is behind a paywall and was not read; the archive’s reading is limited to what can be publicly obtained.

[9] Schmidt 2025, as summarized by R. Pearse (roger-pearse.com, 30 May 2025). Schmidt does not treat the Slavonic.

[10] EA-CORPORA-37 (#1760) for the Slavonic and its translations; EA-CORPORA-01/01 for the Greek; EA-CORPORA-02/01 for the Scrolls; the Philo seat; EA-CORPORA-20 for the Ge’ez. The Old Russian is quoted with ѣ restored where the OCR misreads it (as $, Ь, Ж, 3, Ф, Б, В or Ё), and with the edition’s note numbers removed; the seated text keeps the OCR’s readings.

medieval alternative and the finding that would decide between them. An alternative that is only available is recorded as available, not as shown.

The innocent reading, in full. The Slavonic is a free translation by a medieval Christian who knew the Bible, the liturgy and the monastic day, and who read the Essenes as Christians had long read them. Christian interest in the Essenes is old, and it reached the medieval centuries. Eusebius copies Philo's two accounts of them into the *Preparation for the Gospel* (8.11–12) and Porphyry's excerpt of Josephus's own chapter (9.3, from *De abstinentia* 4.11–13). In the *Church History* he reads Philo's Therapeutae as the first Christian monks (2.17). Hippolytus gives the Essenes a long chapter in the *Refutatio*. A translator in that line would expand, harmonize and assimilate without needing a polemical reason: medieval translators did so as a matter of course. A single ascetic redaction could account for several of the divergences together. It would disdain marriage more strongly, clothe the novice, keep the night office, and call the heavenly host to witness. These would be one tendency, to be counted once. The particular sources are near to hand: - a translator who kept vigil sang through the night in his own monastery and gave the Essenes the same office; - the postulant of the Pachomian rule waited at the gate before he was received; - Leviticus counts seven weeks to Shavuot, makes the seventh month holy and rests the land in the seventh year (Lev 23:15–16, 23:24, 25:4); - the seraphim and cherubim of the initiate's oath are those of the Trisagion and the Cherubic Hymn, which every Slavonic monk sang.

Meshcherskii says this of the oath, his addition no. 16: "Это дополнение целиком и полностью проникнуто христианской фразеологией, оно связано с рядом древнехристианских произведений, в частности с произведением Ипполита Римского «Слово об Антихристе», которое было чрезвычайно популярно в древнерусской письменности."[11] Each explanation is available. None is demonstrated: no source is shown for any of them, and the consensus's case at this chapter consists of their availability. That is the reading the consensus holds.

The Essenes between Eusebius and the scrolls. The interest the innocent reading cites is ancient: Hippolytus, Porphyry and Eusebius in the third and fourth centuries, Epiphanius in the fourth. It reached the medieval centuries in two forms, and both can be read. - **The heresy list.** Epiphanius made the Essenes one of four Samaritan sects, who "ἐνέμειναν … τῇ πρώτῃ ἀγωγῇ μηδὲν ὑπερβαλλόμενοι", kept to the first way of life and added nothing (*Panarion* 10.1.2). John of Damascus reduces them to one sentence: the Essenes oppose neither of the other Samaritan sects, and keep their feasts with whomever they happen to be among (*De haeresibus* 12).[12] A reader of the Byzantine handbooks knew the Essenes as a Samaritan sect with an indifferent calendar. - **The monk's chronicle.** George the Monk, writing in the ninth century, excerpts Josephus's Essene chapter at length (*Chronicon*, de Boor 329–331).[13] He sets it after the Rechabites of Jeremiah 35, as their heirs, and turns it into

[11] Meshcherskii 1958, 57, addition no. 16. "This addition is entirely and wholly permeated with Christian phraseology; it is connected with a series of early Christian works, in particular with the work of Hippolytus of Rome, the *Discourse on the Antichrist*, which was extraordinarily popular in Old Russian letters."

[12] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 10.1.2, Holl (seated); the Anacephalaeosis numbers the Essenes the twelfth heresy, among the Samaritans. John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* 12, read in F. H. Chase's English (*Writings*, Fathers of the Church 37, 1958); the Greek has not been checked.

[13] *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1904), vol. 1, 328–331, read on the printed pages (Internet Archive georgiimonachic01boorgoog, leaves 416–419). De Boor's apparatus marks the passage "excerpt. ex Jos. Bell. II, 119 sqq." and cites the Suda's entry on the Essenes. The Slavonic

a monastic rule. The Essenes practise “ἀκτημοσύνη”, owning nothing, and “σκληραγωγία”, hard living. They work “μετὰ νήψεως καὶ θεολογίας”, with watchfulness and theology. They offer “προσευχὰς δὲ καὶ ψαλμῳδίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐκ μέσης νυκτὸς μέχρις αὐγῆς”, prayers and psalmody to God from midnight until dawn, and keep “τοὺς βραχυτάτους ὕπνους”, the briefest sleep. George’s chronicle was translated into Slavonic, and Rus’ read its history of the world in that translation.

So the draft 2.0 sentence that no one cared about the Essenes was wrong twice. The interest was ancient, and a medieval monk wrote it into the most-read Byzantine chronicle. What survives the correction is narrower and can be tested. The medieval centuries had the Essenes as a catalogue name and as a monastic rule. The ledger below can ask, divergence by divergence, which of the Slavonic’s readings that rule explains. George keeps the Greek where the Slavonic agrees with Hippolytus, and he has the night office where the Slavonic has it.

The count.

1. In the Essene chapter the Old Russian diverges from the Greek at nine points:
   - (a) the sects named as a lawful order, not as philosophies (2.119);
   - (b) the Essenes not called Jews by birth (2.119);
   - (c) the name set before the description (2.119);
   - (d) marriage despised together with “womanly lust”, named at 2.120 where the Greek names the women’s wantonness at 2.121, which the Slavonic also keeps (2.120–121);
   - (e) night rising to sing (2.128);
   - (f) the novice lodged in the house before the gate (2.137);
   - (g) the novice’s linen (2.137);
   - (h) the oath sworn on the living God, his right hand, his Spirit, the seraphim and cherubim and all the heavenly power (2.139);
   - (i) the seventh day, week, month and year (2.147).
2. Meshcherskii’s list of additions counts one of the nine, the oath (h). The others fall below the threshold of “addition” and are nowhere weighed. Leeming’s typology of small divergences (2005) is the instrument built for them; this section applies the question to one chapter.

The agreements with Hippolytus.

3. Hippolytus of Rome, writing early in the third century, gives the Essenes in *Refutatio omnium haeresium* IX 18–28, from Josephus or from a source he shares with Josephus.[14] Berendts and Grass set his Greek beside the Slavonic at every phrase. At five points the Slavonic and Hippolytus agree against the Greek of the *War* and its other witnesses:
   - (a) the order: Slavonic “Трои бо чинъ законный есть въ иудѣехъ”, a threefold lawful order among the Jews. Greek: “Τρία γὰρ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις εἴδη

translation of George (V. M. Istrin’s edition, 1920–1922) has not been collated here. That collation is the next test, since a Slavonic George would put the night office in Old Russian before the translator.

[14] On Hippolytus’s source: Morton Smith argued that Josephus and Hippolytus share a common source (“The Description of the Essenes in Josephus and the Philosophumena,” *HUCA* 29, 1958) and later withdrew the view (*Eretz-Israel* 16, 1982); M. Marcovich, in his edition, called the account a Christianized Josephus; A. Baumgarten proposed a revision of Josephus. As reported by S. Goranson, Orion list, 3 October 1998. Not seated.

φιλοσοφεῖται”, three forms of philosophy. Berendts and Grass: “Wie beim Sl. ist auch bei Hippolyt, Refut. IX 18 … von Philosophie nicht die Rede, sondern von τοῦ Θεοῦ νόμος.”

- (b) “Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γένος ὄντες”, Jews by birth, in the Greek; absent in the Slavonic and, “bezeichnenderweise”, in Hippolytus.
- (c) the order of name and description: the Greek describes the third sect and then names it; “Wie Sl. stellt Hippolyt die Charakterisierung dem Namen der Essener nach.”
- (f) the novice: the Greek has him live the same way of life outside, ἔξω, for a year. The Slavonic has him live “въ предвратнѣи храминѣ”, in the house before the gate, and Hippolytus “ἔξω τῆς ἑαυτῶν συνόδου οὖσιν ἐν ἑτέρῳ οἴκῳ”, outside their assembly in another house. Berendts and Grass: “eine der auffallendsten Übereinstimmungen zwischen beiden.”
- (g) the novice’s cloth: the Greek gives him “τὸ προειρημένον περίζωμα”, the loincloth mentioned before; Hippolytus alone among the Greek witnesses names it “τὸ λινοῦν”, the linen, and the Slavonic gives “ленти”, the λέντιον, the linen cloth.[15]

4. Marriage (d) is not among them. The Slavonic “брака презираютъ” keeps the Greek’s disdain (γάμου ὑπεροψία). Hippolytus has them forbid it, “γάμον τε ἀπαγορεύουσι”, and Berendts and Grass enter him there as a difference (“Aber Hipp.”). Draft 2.0 counted it as an agreement; it is withdrawn.
5. The five do not weigh alike. An omission (b) and a word order (c) are the commonest acts of any translator, and they discriminate little between routes. A lexical choice that coincides (a, g) discriminates more. The Slavonic turns δαίμων into God throughout (Berendts and Grass), so (a) also fits that habit, wherever the habit was formed; (g) could be read back from the linen of 2.129. An added architectural detail that coincides (f) discriminates most. Its medieval rival, the monastic gatehouse, is available and has not been shown.
6. Books IV–X of the *Refutatio*, the books with the Essenes, survive in a single fourteenth-century Greek manuscript, brought from Mount Athos to Paris by Minoides Mynas in 1842 and printed by E. Miller in 1851 as Origen’s *Philosophumena*.[16] The manuscript shows the work was copied in Byzantium in the fourteenth century. It does not show that the Slavonic translator read it, and its recovery in 1842 does not show that he could not have. The *De Antichristo* that Meshcherskii names, the Hippolytus that Rus’ read widely, says nothing of the Essenes.
7. The question the agreements set is the transmission relation. Four relations fit them:
   - a Greek exemplar of the *War* whose Essene chapter differed from ours in the line Hippolytus read;
   - contamination of the translator’s *War* from a copy of the *Refutatio*;
   - an excerpt of Hippolytus’s Essenes circulating separately and merged in;
   - an antecedent shared by Hippolytus and the Slavonic’s exemplar, such as Josephus’s source, or a revised Josephus of the kind A. Baumgarten proposed.

[15] Berendts–Grass 252–257, notes to 2.119–120 and 2.137 (EA-CORPORA-37/02, lieferung-2.txt). Greek: *War* 2.119–120, 2.137 (EA-CORPORA-01/01). Old Russian: Meshcherskii 252–254.

[16] The single manuscript of *Refutatio* IV–X, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, suppl. gr. 464 (fourteenth century); its recovery and printing as in M. D. Litwa’s account of the tradition in his edition and translation (SBL Press, 2016).

They predict different things. Contamination and excerpt predict that matter peculiar to Hippolytus enters the Slavonic beyond the five points. A differing exemplar predicts agreements confined to the Josephan matter Hippolytus shares. The test is to collate the Slavonic against *Refutatio* IX 18–28 whole for Hippolytus's own matter. Its force is asymmetric. Matter peculiar to Hippolytus found in the Slavonic would support contact with Hippolytus, by contamination or excerpt. Its absence would not exclude a borrower who took only what Hippolytus shares with Josephus, and a selective borrower predicts the same pattern as a differing exemplar. A clean collation narrows the routes, and only a positive find decides one. This draft has not run that collation.

The calendar of sevens.

8. Greek 2.147: the Essenes keep from work "ταῖς ἑβδομάσιν", on the sevenths, the Sabbaths, more strictly than all Jews. Slavonic: "В седмый дьнь, и 7 ую недѣлю, и 7 мѣсяць, и 7 лѣто велми хранять": the seventh day, the seventh week, the seventh month and the seventh year they keep greatly.[17]
9. The Temple Scroll counts □□□□" □□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ … □□□□□□ □□□□□ ,"□□□ seven weeks, seven full sabbaths, fifty days, and repeats the count from festival to festival through the year (11Q19 18:11–13, 19:12–13).[18] Philo's Therapeutae assemble "δι' ἑπτὰ ἑβδομάδων, οὐ μόνον τὴν ἁπλῆν ἑβδομάδα ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τεθηπότες", every seven weeks, revering not the simple seven only but its power, on the eve of the feast of fifty (*De vita contemplativa* 65).[19] The seventh week as a unit of observance belongs to a sectarian calendar.
10. The innocent reading derives the line from Leviticus. Leviticus has seven weeks counted once, to one feast, and a seventh year of rest for the land. The line keeps its sevens "въ суботы", on the Sabbaths, and gives the week of weeks the standing of the Sabbath. A second Christian channel is nearer than Leviticus: Philo's Therapeutae, whom Eusebius made Christian. Whether *Church History* 2.17 carries the seven weeks is the test of that channel. The Greek does not. Eusebius reports the Therapeutae's "τὰς τῆς μεγάλης ἑορτῆς παννυχίδας", the all-night vigils of the great feast, and their hymns (2.17.22), and he leaves out Philo's "δι' ἑπτὰ ἑβδομάδων".[20] The Eusebian channel carries the night and not the count. Whether a Slavonic Eusebius read in Rus' adds it remains to be checked.

The night.

11. Greek 2.128: before sunrise they say nothing profane, but offer ancestral prayers toward it. Slavonic: "Мало же почивают нощью и въстають на пѣние, славяще и моляще бога": they sleep little at night and rise to sing, glorifying and beseeching God; then the dawn prayers follow as in the Greek.[21]

[17] Meshcherskii 255. Berendts–Grass 259: "den siebenten Tag und die siebente Woche und den siebenten Monat und das siebente Jahr preisen sie sehr." Greek: *War* 2.147.

[18] 11Q19 (the Temple Scroll), Abegg–Bowley–Cook transcription. The Temple Scroll was acquired by Israel in 1967 and published by Y. Yadin in 1977; the Community Rule was first published in 1951.

[19] Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 65 (seated). Eusebius read the Therapeutae as Christian ascetics, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.17.

[20] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.17.22 (seated); Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 65.

[21] Meshcherskii 253; Berendts–Grass 254: "Wenig aber ruhen sie, in der Nacht stehen sie zum Singen auf, Gott preisend und anflehend." Greek: *War* 2.128.

12. The Community Rule: □□□□□□“ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ ,”□□□□ the many shall keep watch together a third of every night of the year, to read the book, to study judgment and to bless together (1QS 6:7–8). The Therapeutae “τὴν ἱερὰν ἄγουσι παννυχίδα”, keep the sacred all-night vigil, and sing hymns to God in many metres (*De vita contemplativa* 83–84). Eusebius carries those vigils and hymns into Christian reading (*Historia ecclesiastica* 2.17.22), so the night has a channel a monk could know.
13. The monastic vigil fits this divergence as well as the Scrolls do, and it was before the translator’s eyes in a text. George the Monk gives the Essenes psalmody “ἐκ μέσης νυκτὸς μέχρις αὐγῆς” and “τοὺς βραχυτάτους ὕπνους”; the Slavonic gives them “Мало же почивают нощью и въстають на пѣние”, they sleep little at night and rise to sing. The short sleep and the night song are George’s, and the Greek *War* has neither. George shows the detail was available to a medieval reader. He does not show the translator took it from him: the Slavonic shares George’s sense, not his words, and George’s Essenes are themselves Josephus’s, read through a monastery. Availability is not use, and the divergence weighs little either way.

The oath.

14. Greek 2.139: before touching the common food the initiate swears fearful oaths, first to be pious toward the divine. Slavonic: “призываа бога живаго, и десницю его всемощную, и духъ божии невмѣстимыи, серафим и херувим, вездѣ призирающе, и всю небесьную силу, поставляя на послушьство”: calling on the living God, his almighty right hand, the Spirit of God that nothing contains, the seraphim and cherubim who see everywhere, and all the heavenly power, setting them as witness.[22]
15. The Parables of Enoch summon “□□□ □□□□ □□□□ … □□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□”, all the host of heaven, and the host of God, the cherubim and seraphim and ophanim (1 En 61:10), the company that sleeps not and guards the throne (71:7). The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice have the cherubim blessing □□□□□“ □□□ ,”□□□□□ the image of the chariot-throne (4Q405 20ii–22:8).[23] The Greek *War* has the initiates keep secret “τὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων ὀνόματα”, the names of the angels (2.142), and the Slavonic keeps that too: “zu bewahren aber die Bücher wie die Engelnamen”.
16. The liturgy would supply the seraphim and cherubim, and so would 1 Enoch and the Sabbath Songs. God, his right hand and his Spirit is read as a Trinitarian triad, but each term is the Hebrew Bible’s: the right hand of the Lord (Exod 15:6; Ps 118:16), the Spirit of God (Gen 1:2). Meshcherskii names a connection to Hippolytus’s *De Antichristo* and quotes no parallel.[24] His explanation is available for the oath and not demonstrated, and this draft weighs the oath low to moderate for that reason.

The ledger.

[22] Meshcherskii 254; Berendts–Grass 257: “den lebendigen Gott anrufend und seine allmächtige Rechte und den Geist Gottes, den nicht zu fassenden, und die Seraphim und Cherubim, die überall Einblick haben, und die ganze himmlische Kraft zum Zeugnis aufstellend”. Greek: *War* 2.139.

[23] 1 Enoch 61:10, 71:7 (Ge’ez, EOTC text, seated); 4Q405 frags. 20 ii–22 line 8 (seated). The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice were published by C. Newsom in 1985.

[24] Meshcherskii 1958, 57, addition no. 16. “This addition is entirely and wholly permeated with Christian phraseology; it is connected with a series of early Christian works, in particular with the work of Hippolytus of Rome, the *Discourse on the Antichrist*, which was extraordinarily popular in Old Russian letters.”

	Divergence	Hippolytus	Second Temple comparison	Best medieval alternative (available unless marked shown)	Weight	What would decide
a	lawful order for philosophies	agrees	—	the Slavonic's monotheizing of Greek religious terms	moderate	the same substitution of "order" or "law" for φιλοσοφία elsewhere in the Slavonic *War* where Hippolytus is absent
b	"Jews by birth" omitted	agrees	—	ordinary omission in a free translation (George keeps "Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν … τὸ γένος")	low	—
c	name before description	agrees	—	Slavonic word order	low	—

	Divergence	Hippolytus	Second Temple compari-son	Best medieval alternative (available unless marked shown)	Weight	What would decide
d	marriage despised with “womanly lust”	differs	—	ascetic colouring; but the women’s wanton-ness is the Greek’s own (2.121), and George softens marriage instead: “τὸν μὲν ἔννομον καὶ σώφρονα γάμον … ἀποδέχονται”	low; the Greek’s matter brought forward	—
e	night rising to sing	—	1QS 6:7–8; Philo, *Contempl.* 83–84	George the Monk’s Essenes: psalmody from midnight to dawn, the briefest sleep; the Therapeu-tae’s vigils in Eusebius, *HE* 2.17.22	low; available in a medieval text, use not shown	not met: George shows availability (*Chronicon* 329–330), not use

	Divergence	Hippolytus	Second Temple comparison	Best medieval alternative (available unless marked shown)	Weight	What would decide
f	novice in the house before the gate	agrees (“in another house”)	—	the monastic postulant at the gate	high among the agreements	a Byzantine or Slavonic monastic text giving the Essene novice a gatehouse; or Hippolytus’s own matter found elsewhere in the Slavonic, which would favour contamination. Tested on George the Monk: “ἐνιαυτὸν ἔξω μένοντα”, the Greek’s outside, no gatehouse
g	the linen	agrees (τὸ λινοῦν)	—	read back from 2.129 (George keeps the Greek: “ἀξινάριόν τε καὶ περίζωμα”)	low to moderate	—

	Divergence	Hippolytus	Second Temple compari-son	Best medieval alternative (available unless marked shown)	Weight	What would decide
h	oath on God, right hand, Spirit, seraphim, cherubim, heavenly power	—	1 En 61:10, 71:7; 4Q405 20ii–22:8	the liturgy; Hippolytus, *De Antichristo* (Meshcher-skii); George has “ὅρκους φρικώδεις”, dread oaths, and no angels	low to moderate	the formula in a Slavonic liturgical or hagio-graphic source, of the kind Pichkhadze reports for three additions
i	seventh day, week, month and year	—	11Q19 18–19; Philo, *Contempl.* 65	Leviticus 23, 25; the Therapeu-tae via Eusebius	moderate	the seven weeks in a text read in Rus’, set among Christian or Essene ascetics (Greek *HE* 2.17 tested: absent; George turns the sentence’s sevens into a week of fasting, “ὅλῃ τῇ ἑβδομάδι”, not a calendar)

The conjunction.

17. The chapter has two kinds of divergence. Points (d), (e), (g) and (h) can be read together

as one ascetic tendency, and the medieval account reads them so; read that way they count once. No ascetic redaction has been shown. The one medieval monastic text on the Essenes that has been found, George the Monk's, has the night office and none of the others: it softens marriage, keeps the loincloth, and swears dread oaths without angels. Points (a), (b), (c) and (f) are agreements with a third-century Greek witness on matter that an ascetic tendency does not predict. Of these, (f) carries the most weight on its own. Point (i) stands between: a sectarian calendar, with a Christian channel tested and found not to carry it.

18. The proposal is therefore narrower than draft 2.0 put it, and better founded. The Slavonic's Essene chapter shares readings with the text Hippolytus read at Rome eight centuries before the translation, at points no ascetic tendency predicts. Whether those readings came by a differing exemplar of the *War* or by later contact with the *Refutatio* is investigated through the collation of §II.7. The ledger states what the collation can decide and what it cannot. Berendts said in 1906 that the Slavonic's Greek exemplar was older than ours, and Berendts and Grass said so of Books I–IV in 1924. The verdict that followed counted additions, and these divergences are not additions. It did not answer them at these points.

Beyond the Essenes.

19. The same question holds across the work. Meshcherskii's forty-one additions mostly have nothing to do with Christian matter, and Berendts and Grass's nineteen Überschüsse in Books I–IV include four on John and the wonder-worker.[25] The rest are:

- Hyrcanus's priestly rule (Book I);
- the Roman custom of writing a king's grant on the Capitol before it holds;
- Herod's dream of the four ears of grain;
- the debate of the priests on whether Herod is the Messiah;
- two anti-Roman passages;
- providence shown in Abraham;
- Judas and Matthias rousing the young men with Eleazar, the seven brothers and their mother, eternal torment and eternal reward;
- the Galilean Judas's reproach that the free seed of Abraham pays tribute to Rome, "владыкы съмьртны имуща, понеже лишишася безсмьртнаго", holding mortal masters because they have lost the Immortal;
- the abomination of desolation in the holy place;
- the Zealots over the bodies of Ananus and Jesus;
- Vitellius's three-horned iron.

20. These are Jewish, anti-Roman and messianic. The anti-Khazar reading has to explain why a Christian polemic against a Jewish khaganate would make the Jews the righteous resisters of Rome and give them a hope against "mortal masters". The Byzantine reading has to explain why a work made for an empire that called itself Rome would add to Josephus's Romans the grievances of their Jewish enemies.

[25] Meshcherskii 1958, 50–64; Berendts–Grass, the table of the Überschüsse, fourth Lieferung (lieferung-4.txt).

21. The same idiom crosses from the Book I additions into the John passage. Judas the Galilean reproaches those who hold “mortal masters”. The first John passage has the man in wondrous garb come to call the Jews to freedom: “богъ мя посла, да покажю вам путь законныи, им же избудѣте от многых властелинъ. А не будеть владѣя съмьртныи, развѣ вышняго, пославшего мя”, God has sent me to show you the lawful way, by which you will be rid of many masters; and no mortal shall rule, save the Highest who sent me.[26] The John passage and the Judas passage speak one political idiom. A translator inventing each in its place had to write both in it.
22. The curtain of Book V stands with them. The Slavonic keeps Josephus’s Greek word for the Temple veil untranslated, “катапетазма”, and says the curtain “прѣд симь родом бысть цела, зане благочьстиви быша людие”, was whole before this generation, because the people were pious, and “раздра бо ся внезапу от верху и до долу”, it was torn suddenly from top to bottom.[27] The tearing is the image of Mark 15:38. What surrounds it is not the Gospels’. The curtain tears when they gave up “добродѣица мужа и не мужа дѣлом”, the benefactor, a man and by his deeds not a man, to be killed for a bribe. The narrator then reports that some said he rose and others that his friends stole him, and says “Не вѣмь же, которииз правѣише глаголють”, I do not know which of them speak more truly. The consensus explains the passage by its one shared image. The account around the image is the passage’s own (§V.2).

II-B. The Scope of the Changes: Two Accounts

1. **The question.** Draft 2.1 tested one chapter. This section asks whether one account organizes the changes across the whole work. Two accounts are on offer.
   - **The account of the translator.** A Christian of Rus’, or of the Byzantine world for Rus’, translated the *War* freely. He added what a Christian reader wanted, coloured what a Rus’ reader knew, and cut what neither needed. This is Meshcherskii’s account, and he applies it to each of his forty-one additions in turn.
   - **The account of the author.** Josephus says he wrote the *War* twice, both times as Rome’s captive. He first composed it “τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ”, in the ancestral tongue for the peoples of the interior, and then turned it into Greek “τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν”, for those under Roman rule (*War* 1.3). He had help with the Greek (*Against Apion* 1.50). The Greek edition went out with the conqueror’s hand on it: “χαράξας τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ τὰ βιβλία δημοσιῶσαι προσέταξεν”, Titus signed the books with his own hand and ordered them published (*Life* 363). In his own preface Josephus names what bends a history of this war: “ἢ κολακείᾳ τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους”, flattery of the Romans or hatred of the Jews (*War* 1.2). On this account the Slavonic’s Greek exemplar carries matter the Roman edition trimmed. It may be a Greek rendering of the first composition, as Berendts held, or a Greek edition nearer to it than ours. The two accounts do not stand level. The author’s is the testimony of an ancient witness, the writer himself, that a second version existed and was written for other readers. The translator’s is a modern inference from the content of the passages. It carries the burden at each

[26] Meshcherskii, the first John passage, between *War* 2.110 and 111 (seated text, line 6290); Thackeray 1928, (9): “God hath sent me to show you the way of the Law, whereby ye may free yourselves from many masters; and there shall be no mortal ruling over you, but only the Highest who hath sent me.”

[27] Meshcherskii, Book V (the curtain), seated text lines 15017–15079.

item it claims.

2. **What each account predicts.** The translator's account predicts changes that cluster on Christian matter and on things a Rus' reader knew: monastic life, war as Rus' fought it, the moral of a story. It also predicts that some of them will have Slavonic or Byzantine sources. The author's account predicts changes that cluster where a Roman reader under Titus would be touched:
   - Jewish law and its martyrs;
   - resistance to Rome;
   - messianic and prophetic hope;
   - the Flavian claim to the oracle;
   - the author's own address to Roman subjects.

   It also predicts glosses explaining Roman custom to readers who are not Roman. And it predicts that the Flavian frame itself would stand in both editions, since both were written in captivity.

The ledger of the work.

3. Meshcherskii's numbered additions, with the retentions and omissions that test the two accounts, sorted by which account predicts them. "Both" means either account predicts the change. "Against" means the datum tells against the account named. In the translator's column, "claimed" marks an assignment and its ground: a source reported, a likeness asserted, or the subject alone. In the author's column, "not excluded" marks matter the author's account does not rule out, because Josephus writes of it elsewhere. Old Russian is quoted from the seated text; Meshcherskii's numbers are his list (1958, 50–64).

Place	Change	Translator	Author	Note
proem, *War* 1.1–30	absent; the text begins at 1.31, "В то же время мятежю бывшю в силных жидох"	predicted: a chronograph drops prefaces	predicted: the proem is the Greek edition's address to Roman subjects	the Vilna text stands inside a chronograph (Meshcherskii)
1.68–70 (no. 1)	Hyrcanus's prophetic gift greatly expanded	—	predicted: the priest-prophet is Josephus's own figure (*War* 3.352)	the Greek has the gift in brief
1.285 (no. 2)	the Roman custom of writing a king's grant on the Capitol, explained: "Так бо в них обычаи"	predicted: a gloss for Rus'	predicted: a gloss for readers who are not Roman	—

Place	Change	Translator	Author	Note
1.328 (no. 3)	Herod’s dream of the four ears	—	—	neither; a story told out
1.364–370 (no. 6)	the priests’ debate whether Herod is the Messiah	both: the Christian proof text of Gen 49:10	both: Jewish messianic exegesis	the prologue to the John and Jesus passages (Meshcherskii)
1.588 (no. 7)	Antipater’s Heracles and the hydra told out	predicted: Byzantine learning	—	—
1.641–644 (no. 9)	Abraham punished for wronging his brother in dividing the land	—	predicted: a haggadah unknown to Christian tradition	Eisler: a legend of Abraham and Haran that *Antiquities* 1.157 keeps from Gentile readers
1.650 (no. 10)	the rabbis’ appeal: Eleazar, the seven brothers, their mother, eternal torment and reward	both: the Maccabean martyrs were Christian saints	predicted: Jewish martyrdom for the law; see §4	—
1.656 (no. 11)	Herod’s disease moralized	predicted	—	—
2.110–111 (no. 14)	John, “the savage”	claimed: subject	not excluded: Josephus writes of John (*Antiquities* 18.116–119)	joined to no. 15 by the idiom of mortal masters (§II.21)
2.118 (no. 15)	Judas the Galilean: the free seed of Abraham under Rome, “владыкы съмьртны имуща, понеже лишишася безсмьртнаго”	—	predicted: resistance to Rome	—
2.119–161	the Essene chapter	in part: the ascetic layer	in part: the agreements with Hippolytus	§II, the ledger

Place	Change	Translator	Author	Note
2.168, 2.174, 2.221 (nos. 17–19)	the dream of Philip; the wonder-worker; his followers as “слугамъ преже писаного чюдотворца”	claimed: subject; for no. 19, likeness to Orthodox hymnody (Meshcherskii) and, for the apostles as shoemakers, a source reported (Pichkhadze, unread here)	not excluded: Josephus writes of Jesus (*Antiquities* 18.63–64)	—
2.170 (no. 20)	why a Jewish city may set up no image, “им же недостоить никыи же образ поставити в своем граде”	predicted: a gloss for Rus’	predicted: a gloss for readers who are not Jews	Meshcherskii: needless “для иудеев или для римских читателей”
2.577–582 (no. 21)	Josephus forbids corporal punishment, ruling by “словесною грозою”	predicted: Monomakh’s *Instruction*	—	—
3.391 (no. 23)	the lots at Jotapata: “почте числа мудростию и тем прѣбляди вся”, he counted the numbers by cunning and so deceived them all	Meshcherskii: the author “не мог о себе так сказать”	predicted: a warning left in the edition for the interior against the Greek’s providence (§10)	it tells against the translator: a Christian who heads the wonder-worker “Иосиф о Христѣ пишет” has little reason to defame its witness
3.400–402	Josephus’s prophecy to Vespasian, kept: “Ты еси цесарь и самодержець, и твои сынъ”	—	predicted: the Flavian frame stands in both editions	the Slavonic sharpens the captive’s freedom: “Ты мниши, яко плѣнил мя еси? Аз же приидох к тобѣ волею”

Place	Change	Translator	Author	Note
4.155 (no. 25)	Phanni made high priest: “и пророчьство скончавается, еже бысть мерзости на мѣстех святых”	both: Daniel read by Christians	both: Daniel read by Josephus (*Antiquities* 10.276)	—
4.359 (no. 26)	Niger’s curse fulfilled for “all the blood” of the righteous killed under Herod, Archelaus, Antipas, Pilate and Agrippa	claimed: likeness, the leitmotif of the translation, the city’s fall as punishment for righteous blood (Meshcherskii)	—	cf. Matt 23:35
4.514–547, 5.317 (nos. 28–29, 32)	battle scenes told as Rus’ fought them	claimed: likeness	—	—
5.195, 5.214 (nos. 30–31)	the inscription concerning Jesus; the torn veil	claimed: subject	not excluded: Josephus writes of Jesus (*Antiquities* 18.63–64)	the veil is the Greek *War*’s own (5.212–214); the tearing is the addition
6.93–110 (no. 36)	“Зане кровь праведную възложихом на ся”	claimed: likeness to Matt 27:25	—	—
6.236–243	the council on the Temple, kept: Titus will not burn “бездушьныя”, the lifeless building	—	predicted: the Flavian frame stands in both editions	the Greek’s exculpation of Titus is in the Slavonic too
6.311 (no. 37)	the four-square Temple and the crosses	claimed: likeness	—	—

Place	Change	Translator	Author	Note
6.313 (no. 38)	the oracle: “Ови бо мнѣша Ирода, ови же распятаго чюдотворца Исуса, ови же Уеспасиана”	predicted: a Christian reading; Greek manuscripts carry such a marginal note (Meshcherskii)	predicted: Josephus’s verdict for Vespasian is the Roman edition’s	the Greek closes “ἐδήλου δ’ ἄρα τὴν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν”; the Slavonic gives no verdict
7.29 (no. 40)	Simon bar Giora surrenders after a vision in shining robes	—	—	neither
7.445–455	absent after the death of “жену его Вѣрникию”; the Greek’s last sections, in which Jonathan accuses “Ἰώσηπος ὁ ταῦτα συγγραψάμενος” and the history ends on its claim of truth, are not in the text	predicted: a chronograph drops an author’s close	predicted: the author’s vindication is the Roman edition’s frame	—

The Maccabees.

4. The rabbis’ appeal before the golden eagle (*War* 1.650; Meshcherskii no. 10; Thackeray 1928, (7)) is the work’s clearest Maccabean change. The Greek has the teachers say, in reported speech, that it is noble to die for the ancestral law and that those who die so have immortality. The Slavonic gives the speech direct and fills it with the martyrs of 2 and 4 Maccabees: “Eleazar first, and the seven brethren, the Maccabees, and their mother”; Antiochus defeated “by those seven striplings and by the aged teacher and by the grey-haired woman”; “that we may not appear weaker than the woman”; and, at death, the soul passes “to (our) forefathers, where Abraham (is) and those (descended) from him”.
5. These are the figures and the words of 4 Maccabees. Eleazar is “ὦ … γέρων … πρεσβῦτα” (4 Macc 7:10). The mother is “ἀνδρῶν πρὸς ὑπομονὴν ἀνδρειοτέρα”, braver than men in endurance (15:30), and “πρεσβῦτι καὶ γυνή, διὰ καρτερίαν καὶ τύραννον ἐνίκησας”, old woman, by endurance you conquered even the tyrant (16:14). The dead are received by the fathers: “οὕτως παθόντας ἡμᾶς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακὼβ ὑποδέξονται”

(13:17). The wreath is 4 Maccabees' too: "θεοσέβεια δέ ἐνίκα, τοὺς ἑαυτῆς ἀθλητὰς στεφανοῦσα" (17:15).[28]

6. Antiquity gave 4 Maccabees to Josephus. Eusebius, listing his works: "πεπόνηται δὲ καὶ ἄλλο οὐκ ἀγεννὲς σπούδασμα τῷ ἀνδρὶ περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ, ὅ τινες Μακκαβαϊκὸν ἐπέγραψαν", the man also laboured over another work, not ignoble, on the sovereignty of reason, which some have titled the Maccabean (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.10.6). It travelled among the manuscripts of Josephus.[29]
7. Both accounts predict the change. The translator's account: the Maccabean martyrs were saints of the Church, kept on the first of August, and a Christian translator could reach for them. The author's account: the speech that the Greek edition gives in a sentence, the Slavonic gives with the martyrs of the book that antiquity filed under Josephus's own name, in that book's words. The wording points past 2 Maccabees, where Eleazar, the seven and the mother also stand in that order (2 Macc 6–7), to 4 Maccabees: the mother who conquers the tyrant, braver than men, and the fathers who receive the dead are 4 Maccabees' and not 2 Maccabees'.
    - The attribution cuts both ways. A book that travelled in Josephus's manuscripts under his name gave the author his own words to reach for. It also gave a later reader of a codex that held both works a reason to amplify the one from the other.
    - The question the change sets is therefore what "Josephus" is doing here. It may be a compositional source: the author writing from his own book. It may be an authorizing attribution: a reviser drawing on a book believed to be his. Or it may be a container: a codex through which material migrated between works filed under one name.
    - The change is significant under each answer, and it is the point where this essay meets *The Crossing of Names*, which separates the author-name from the composing source. What would discriminate among the three is the Slavonic's Greek exemplar. If it carried 4 Maccabees, the container account needs no author.

What the ledger shows.

8. **What has been demonstrated.**
    - A body of changes makes no sense as Christian or Rus' interpolation: the cunning at Jotapata, Hyrcanus the priest-prophet, Abraham's unknown haggadah, the martyrs of 4 Maccabees in that book's words, the free seed of Abraham under mortal masters, and the Essene agreements with Hippolytus. These are Jewish, legal, anti-Roman and messianic. Christian custody of Jewish material is old, and the subject alone does not take them out of a monk's reach. What the translator's account has not explained is their particular wording and arrangement. The free seed of Abraham is in the idiom of Judas the Galilean (§II.21), the martyrs are in 4 Maccabees' words, the Essene novice's house agrees with Hippolytus, and the lot at Jotapata becomes a count. No source in Slavonic or Byzantine literature has been found for any of them.

[28] 4 Maccabees 7:10, 13:17, 15:30, 16:14, 17:15, in Swete's text (lxx-swete, seated). At 13:17 the seated file reads Ἰσαὰι for Ἰσαάκ. The Slavonic speech is quoted in Thackeray's English (1928, (7)); Berendts and Grass give it at *War* 1.650.

[29] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.10.6 (seated). 4 Maccabees is transmitted in manuscripts of Josephus, and early printed editions of his works included it.

- For the changes the translator's account claims, the record of demonstration is short.
  - **Reported sources.** Pichkhadze reports Slavonic sources for three items: the Magi, the apostles as shoemakers, and "the leeches of Solomon". This essay has not read the demonstrations.[30] A shared source shows a shared wording. Which way the borrowing ran is a further step.
  - **Asserted likeness.** A further group is assigned by resemblance to Rus' life: the Rus' battles, Monomakh's rule of punishment, the Matthean blood, the four-square Temple and the crosses. Meshcherskii asserts the likeness and names no source.
  - **Subject alone.** The passages on John, Jesus and the apostles are assigned to the translator because their subject is Christian.
- Assignment by subject is circular. The verdict removes the Jesus and John passages from the evidence because it reads them as Christian. It reads what remains as a medieval free translation, and then takes that reading as confirming the removal. The test it never ran is the one the author's account sets: whether these passages belong to the same alternate version as the changes no medieval interest explains. The rubric "Иосиф о Христѣ пишет" shows a Christian reader and copyist of the passages. They do not show that the passages were composed in Rus'. Logos theology was intelligible within Judaism before Christianity claimed it (§V.5).

9. The author's account organizes the changes no medieval interest explains. It also predicts what tells against the simplest form of Berendts's thesis. The Flavian frame stands in the Slavonic: Josephus's prophecy to Vespasian, and the council at which Titus spares the Temple. A first edition written in captivity would carry that frame, as the Greek does. Where the Greek edition alone goes further, the Slavonic stops short. It does not close the oracle on Vespasian. It has neither the address to Roman subjects nor the author's vindication at the end.
10. The lots at Jotapata are where the two accounts part most sharply. The Greek says Josephus was left alive "εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας", whether one should call it fortune or the providence of God (*War* 3.391). The Slavonic says "почте числа мудростию и тем прѣбляди вся": he counted the numbers by cunning and so deceived them all.

- Meshcherskii gives the line to the translator because the author "не мог о себе так сказать", could not say this of himself. Yet the translator who heads the wonder-worker passage "Иосиф о Христѣ пишет" had little reason to make his witness a cheat.
- The Slavonic changes the mechanism before it changes the verdict. The Greek proposes lots: "κλήρῳ τὰς ἀλλήλων σφαγὰς ἐπιτρέψωμεν", let us leave our killing of one another to the lot (3.388), and "ὁ λαχὼν", the one the lot falls on (3.389). The Slavonic proposes a count: "числом да убиения будем, на него же конець числа будеть, да тот будеть убиенъ от втораго", let us be killed by number; on whom the end of the number falls, let him be killed by the second. A lot is chance. A count can be steered. The Slavonic's "почте числа мудростию", he counted the numbers by cunning, follows from its own device. It keeps the Greek's trust in God: "поручив спасение свое богу-строителю",

[30] Meshcherskii 1958, introduction, the list of additions (pp. 50–64); Pichkhadze 2015. Pichkhadze's article is cited from its title and reported findings. It is in Russian, no open copy has been found, and its demonstrations have not been read here.

having entrusted his safety to God the provider, is 3.387's "πιστεύων τῷ κηδεμόνι θεῷ". It removes only the Greek's account of the outcome, fortune or providence.

- The author's account reads the line as a warning. Josephus wrote the war twice. One version was in the ancestral language for the interior. The other was in Greek for Rome's subjects, under the stricter demands of a work Titus would sign. In the first he could say to one audience how he lived, by counting. In the second the same survival becomes fortune or providence: the providence that, a few sections on, sends him to Vespasian as its messenger (3.400). The first version tells its readers how to read the second. Where the Greek says providence, they are to read cunning, and that is how they are to read the Greek's other alterations. The Greek edition's own preface names the pressure: histories of this war are bent "κολακείᾳ τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους", by flattery of the Romans (1.2). The archive has read the counting-out itself: *The Fixed Point of Destruction* (#1412) argues that a one-survivor stopping rule fixes its survivor before the first removal. When such a destruction is known through the testimony of one of its participants, the record is conditioned by the survival that made the testimony possible. Josephus at Yodfat is its paradigm case. The Slavonic's count is that rule stated by the survivor.
- Meshcherskii's objection assumes one audience. With two audiences, an author can say of himself to one what he could not say to the other. The line Meshcherskii could not give to the author is the one the author's account most needs.
- A warning that teaches how to read the other edition is a further claim than a difference between editions. What carries it is a second passage of the same kind. The oracle is one. The Greek gives the oracle's sense as the historian's verdict: "ἐδήλου δ' ἄρα τὴν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν", the oracle in fact signified the rule of Vespasian (6.313). The Slavonic gives three opinions and no verdict: "Ови бо мнѣша Ирода, ови же распятаго чюдотворца Исуса, ови же Уеспасиана". It keeps what surrounds the verdict, the oracle "в святых книгах обрѣтаемая", found in the holy books, as the Greek's "ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν" (6.312), and the self-serving judging of the signs (6.315). At Jotapata and at the oracle, the same thing is missing: the Greek's resolution of an event in Rome's providential favour.
- The translator's account has its reading of the oracle: a Christian set Jesus among the candidates, and Greek manuscripts carry such a marginal note (Meshcherskii). It does not account as well for the result. A Christian hand that wrote Jesus in leaves him one opinion of three and keeps Vespasian beside him. Weight: moderate. A third passage of the kind would carry the warning reading further than two can.

11. The author's account organizes the scope of the changes, including the many no medieval interest explains, and it predicts the Flavian frame the two editions share. It reads the Slavonic Jotapata, with the oracle beside it, as the first edition's warning against the second. The translator's account has to demonstrate each item it claims. At three it is reported to have done so, and the demonstration remains to be read. Where a source is shown and its direction established, that item leaves the evidence. Until then the Jesus and John passages stand in it, as parts of the version the Slavonic transmits. The route of single items stays as the ledger states it: the Essene agreements keep their four routes until the collation of §II.7 is run, and 4 Maccabees keeps its three functions.

III. The Eight Passages as Hidden Gospel

1. **The received eight.** Berendts (1906) printed eight passages on John, Jesus and his followers, and Thackeray listed them in that order (1919, Appendix, Note II).[31] The eight are Berendts's selection. Berendts and Istrin left out of their texts the Magi story at the end of Book I, chapter 20, and Meshcherskii printed it as part of the translation (his addition no. 5). It shares its matter with Matthew 2, and Pichkhadze reports Slavonic sources for it. They are:
    - 1. John, "the savage", calls the Jews to freedom, dips them in the Jordan, answers before Archelaus and is attacked by Simon the Essene;
    - 2. John interprets Philip's dream of the eagle;
    - 3. John rebukes Herod over Herodias;
    - 4. the wonder-worker, his works by word, Pilate and the bribe;
    - 5. his followers, who say he is alive though dead;
    - 6. the inscription on the Temple concerning Jesus;
    - 7. the torn veil and the reports of resurrection;
    - 8. the oracle of the world-ruler, read as Herod, the crucified wonder-worker or Vespasian.

    Their loci, Greek places and Old Russian are collated in Appendix I.
2. **What version 1.0 did.** Version 1.0 read eight stations: prophecy, purification, incarnation-as-teaching, inscription, destruction and renewal, persistence, judgment, eternity. It gave each station a quoted paraphrase. Those stations were the authors' composition, not the recension's order, and three of the paraphrases are found in no witness: "write down his words", "cursed he who writes falsely" and "nothing written in truth perishes". None of them is in Meshcherskii's Old Russian, in Berendts and Grass, or in Thackeray's English of the additions. The purification station quoted "body cleansed after the soul by justice", which is the Greek *Antiquities* on John (18.117), not the Slavonic. These are withdrawn as quotations. The stations stand where they belong, as the authors' construction, in Appendix II.
3. **What the received eight carry.** Read in the recension's order, the eight carry their own motif of the word and the written, and they need no supplied lines:
    - the wonder-worker does all things by word: "вся, елико творяще, силою невидимою нѣкоею, словом и повелѣниемь творяше", whatever he did, he did by some invisible power, by word and command (4);
    - his followers proclaim of their master "яко живъ есть, аще умре", that he is alive, though he died (5);
    - the Temple carries a written notice of him, "тѣми грамотами показаа Исуса, цесаря нецесарствовавша, распятаго от июдѣи, зане проповѣдаше разорение града и опустение цьркъви", by those letters showing Jesus, a king who did not reign, crucified by the Jews, because he preached the destruction of the city and the desolation of the Temple (6);
    - the veil is a written heaven, "Написано же бѣ на тои катапетазмѣ всяко небесное видѣние и мудрость", there was written on that curtain every heavenly vision and wisdom, and it is torn from top to bottom (7);
    - the end is an oracle found in writing and read three ways, "Ови бо мнѣша Ирода,

[31] H. St. J. Thackeray, *Selections from Josephus* (London: SPCK, 1919), Appendix, Note II, which lists the eight passages in Berendts's order (Project Gutenberg 64837).

ови же распятаго чюдотворца Исуса, ови же Уеспасиана”, some thought Herod, some the crucified wonder-worker Jesus, some Vespasian (8).

4. The arc the received order makes runs from a voice calling to freedom from mortal masters (1), through the word that acts (4) and the word proclaimed after death (5), to the word inscribed on the Temple (6), the written heaven torn (7) and the written oracle whose referent is contested (8). The Word, in this recension, ends as a text with three readers. That arc is found in the passages, in their order. The reading that calls it a Gospel of the Word is the essay’s, and it holds whatever §II decides about the Essene chapter.
5. Eisler’s title is the sixth passage’s phrase: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣΑΣ is “Исуса, цесаря нецесарствовавша” put back into Greek.

The received eight, word by word.

6. **The particle.** Each crossing in the eight turns on one small word, *аще*, if or though.
   - Passage 4: “аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи”, if it is fitting to call him a man.
   - Passage 5: “яко живъ есть, аще умре”, that he is alive, though he died.
   - Passage 7: “аще ангелъ будеть или инъ от небесных силъ, или самь богъ явится, яко человѣкъ”, unless it be an angel or another of the heavenly powers, or God himself appears as a man.

   The particle holds the human and what exceeds it in one clause: the man who may not be called one, the living one who died, the God who appears as a man. Passage 7 also compresses the hedge to three words, “мужа и не мужа дѣлом”, a man and, by his deeds, not a man. The hedge is the eight’s recurring grammar, and Part II’s mirror is built on the instance in passage 4.
7. **The word that acts.** Passage 4 says it three times: “словом и повелѣниемь”, by word and command; “токмо и словом вся уготовляше”, by word alone he prepared everything; “вся, елико хощеть, творить словом”, whatever he wishes he does by word. *Словомь* answers *рукодѣлания*, the work of hands, so the word is the instrument where hands would be. The Greek *Testimonium*’s “παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής”, maker of astonishing works, names the works; the Slavonic names their means.
8. **The letters.** The Greek *War* sets on the Temple’s balustrade pillars that proclaim the law of purity, “αἱ μὲν Ἑλληνικοῖς αἱ δὲ Ῥωμαϊκοῖς γράμμασιν”, some in Greek letters and some in Roman, that no foreigner pass within (5.194). The Slavonic has three scripts: “титлы грамотами еллинскыми, и римскыми, и жидовскыми”, notices in Greek and Roman and Jewish letters (seated text, line 14896). Over them it hangs a fourth: “И над тѣми титлами 4-ая титла висяше, тѣми грамотами показаа Исуса”, and over those notices hung a fourth notice, in those letters, showing Jesus.
   - Three scripts and a notice about Jesus make the title on the cross: “ἔγραψεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πειλᾶτος … καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί” (John 19:19–20). *Титла* is τίτλος.
   - The notice that bars the foreigner becomes the form of the cross’s inscription, hung in the Temple. The king who did not reign is shown in the Temple’s own medium, in the scripts of the cross.
9. **The written heaven.** The veil is the Greek *War*’s before it is the Slavonic’s. The Greek: “κατεγέγραπτο δ’ ὁ πέπλος ἅπασαν τὴν οὐράνιον θεωρίαν πλὴν ζῳδίων”, the curtain

had drawn on it the whole spectacle of the heavens except the signs (5.214). The curtain is "ὥσπερ εἰκόνα τῶν ὅλων", like an image of the universe (5.212). The Slavonic: "Написано же бѣ на тои катапетазмѣ всяко небесное видѣние и мудрость, развѣ двоюнадесят поясъ небесных", there was *написано* on that curtain every heavenly vision and wisdom, except the twelve belts of heaven.

- Both verbs name writing and painting at once. Καταγράφω is to draw or to write down; *написати* is to write, and to paint, as an icon is written. The depicted heaven and the written heaven are one act in both languages, and the essay's "written heaven" is the verb's own range, not an English choice.
- The Slavonic doubles the object. The Greek's θεωρία, the spectacle, becomes "видѣние и мудрость", vision and wisdom. Wisdom was already in the description, where the Greek's "οὐκ ἀθεώρητον" becomes "не без мудрости видѣние имущи", having a vision not without wisdom. What is drawn on the curtain is a vision and a wisdom: a content that can be read.
- The Greek's ζῴδια become the twelve heavenly belts, the zodiac read as twelve, where the Greek's word also means figures of living things.
- The addition follows the translation. "Сиа же катапетазма прѣд симь родом бысть цела", this curtain was whole before this generation, and it was torn from top to bottom when they gave up the benefactor. The heaven that was written is the heaven that tore.

10. **The oracle in writing.** Passage 8 keeps the Greek's oracle "ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν" as "в святых книгах обрѣтаемая", found in the holy books (6.312), and the Greek's ἀμφίβολος as "дворазумная", two-minded. It reads the oracle three ways and decides none (§II-B.10).
11. **What the order does.** Read word by word, the received eight move:
    - from the means of the word (4);
    - through its persistence past death, held in a concessive *аще* (5);
    - to its letters on the Temple (6);
    - to a heaven written on a curtain and torn (7);
    - to a written oracle that divides its readers (8).

    This is the arc of §III.4 at the grain of the words, and it is the ground on which Appendix II's construction is set.

IV. The Gospel of the Word

The eight passages constitute a complete Logotic Gospel embedded within Josephus's history. Where the canonical Gospels narrate the life of Jesus, the Slavonic *War* narrates the life of the Word itself. Its Christ is linguistic: the living speech of law and justice made permanent through writing.

A second construction is set on that reading, in its own register. It takes Revelation's throne: the four living creatures as modes of being, the four horsemen as movements in time. It sets eight stations at their intersection: the Eightfold Logos Operator Wheel (Appendices II–III). The wheel is made from version 1.0's eight stations, and those are not the received eight. Its first station has no ground among them; it divides some passages and reorders others. Revelation does not supply its pairings. Revelation 6:1–8 pairs one living creature with each horseman in turn, four pairs in all. The wheel's assignments are the authors' reading of each

station, not a derivation from Revelation or from the recension. What the received eight carry is §III. The wheel is what the authors made of it.

V. Philology and Probability

1. The objections to Josephan origin rest on chronology and on content read as Christian. §II tests the first where it can be tested. In the Essene chapter, some of the divergences agree with a third-century Greek witness on matter no ascetic hand predicts, and the ledger states how their route can be investigated and what would decide it.
2. The verdict calls the eight passages Christian. Read against the Christianity of the translator's world, they are not. Rus' theology of the period is the theology of Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*: the Law set aside by Grace, and Christ confessed as God incarnate. An Orthodox interpolator predicts that confession and the Gospels' account. The passages give another:
   - **John** is sent by God to show "путь законныи", the lawful way, by which the Jews will be rid of many masters. He promises a king who will free them and be subject to no one. Asked who he is, he answers "Человѣкъ есмь", I am a man. He never names Jesus, points to a coming one, or speaks of a Lamb.[32]
   - **The wonder-worker** has a human nature and form and divine works. The narrator cannot call him a man, nor an angel. He confesses neither a God-man nor a Son of God. His followers say "законодавець нашь первый от мьртвых въста", our first lawgiver has risen from the dead, Moses returned; Thackeray calls the identification unparalleled. He opposes the law in much and breaks the Sabbath, "но пакы скверна, нечиста ничто же не творяше", and yet did nothing foul or unclean.
   - **Pilate** examines him, finds him "добродѣець … а не злодѣець, ни мятежникь, ни цесарства желатель", a benefactor and not a malefactor, a rebel or a claimant to kingship, and lets him go, because he had healed Pilate's dying wife. The lawyers then pay Pilate thirty talents to have him killed. No Gospel has the release, the healing or the bribe.
   - **The resurrection** is reported, not confessed. Some say he rose and others that he was stolen, and the narrator does not know which speak more truly. The dead cannot rise of themselves, he says, unless an angel, a heavenly power, or God himself appears as a man.
   - **The Temple notice** names "цесаря нецесарствовавша", a king who did not reign, "распятаго от июдѣи", crucified by the Jews, for preaching the city's ruin: the charge, not the faith.
   - **The oracle** keeps Jesus as one reading of three, with Vespasian beside him.

   Nothing in Rus' theology or practice makes this account an interpolation. The nearest Rus' element is the reverence for books the *Primary Chronicle* gives Yaroslav. It is love of books, and it has no theology of a Word that becomes text. The verdict's own scholars reached for other contexts, tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantium and a polemic against the Khazars, because Orthodox piety does not explain these passages (§I.5). The rubric "Иосиф о Христѣ пишет" shows a Christian reader of the passages, and it shows no Christian author. What the passages carry is a theology of their own: a lawful way

[32] Meshcherskii, the first John passage, between *War* 2.110 and 111 (seated text, line 6290); Thackeray 1928, (9): "God hath sent me to show you the way of the Law, whereby ye may free yourselves from many masters; and there shall be no mortal ruling over you, but only the Highest who hath sent me."

out from mortal masters, a man who will not take the name of man, a lawgiver risen, a word that acts, a king who did not reign, a heaven written and torn, and an oracle left open. That is the theology §§III–IV read, and it is the reason the passages belong in the evidence.

3. The hedge at the wonder-worker's entrance is Josephus's habit. Slavonic: "Тогда явися мужь нѣкыи, и аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи", then there appeared a certain man, if it is fitting to call him a man. Greek *Antiquities* 18.63: "Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή." The construction χρὴ λέγειν, set as a hedge on a naming, is his: at Jotapata, "εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας" (*War* 3.391); at Masada, "τὴν εἴτε ἀπόνοιαν εἴτε τῆς γνώμης ἰσχὺν χρὴ λέγειν" (*War* 7.417).[33]
4. Schmidt's case for the Greek *Testimonium* (2025) and Leeming's typology of divergence (2005) move the question the consensus called closed. If Josephus wrote of Jesus in the *Antiquities*, the Slavonic wonder-worker is no longer an isolated forgery against a blank. It becomes a second form of a known act.
5. Daniel Boyarin showed in "The Gospel of the Memra" (*HTR* 94.3, 2001) that Logos theology was intelligible within Jewish categories before Christianity claimed it. If the Logos was Jewish before it was Christian, the Logos theology of the eight passages is no evidence of Christian authorship.
6. Transmission is plausible through a Syriac corridor. Pines's publication of the Arabic *Testimonium* of Agapius (1971) showed that non-Greek forms of Josephus's Jesus-material circulated independently.
7. The custody of the name holds here too. Josephus was taken into a second Christian canon under another name: the Ethiopian *Zena Ayhud*, "□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□", the history of the Jews and of the Temple composed by Joseph son of Gorion. The *Fetha Nagast* calls it another book of Maccabees.[34] The most cautious formulation is the one the Essene chapter now supports: the Slavonic carries material whose exemplar is older than the manuscripts. The further claim, that its grammar is older than Christianity, is a claim of the doctrine, and Part II makes it (§IV).

VI. Theology of the Word-as-Book

Read through this lens, the Slavonic Josephus becomes a hinge text between apocalypse and gospel. It portrays salvation as participation in the act of writing, where the creeds place it in belief. C. H. Dodd, in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953), traced the Johannine Logos back through Philo's cosmic intermediary to the Hebrew *dabar*, the word that acts, that creates, that does not return void. The eight passages occupy exactly this theological space.

VII. Coda: Toward a New Canon

The Slavonic Josephus stands as a missing gospel, the Gospel of the Word. Its eightfold cycle completes the circuit begun in Revelation. "Circuit" here names the reader's traversal of the canon, from the Apocalypse's command to write to the Slavonic's written heaven, and makes no claim about the order of composition. What Christian theology personified as Christ,

[33] *Antiquities* 18.63; *War* 3.391, 7.417 (seated).

[34] *Zena Ayhud* (Ge'ez, EA-CORPORA-20), the incipit. On its place in the broader Ethiopian canon and the *Fetha Nagast*: R. W. Cowley, "The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23 (1974), as reproduced at islamic-awareness.org.

Josephus's lost version renders as process: the Logos realizing itself through language.

To recover this text is to recover the mechanism of scripture itself. The Word, having learned to write, becomes eternal.

Appendix I — The Slavonic Gospel Table

The eight passages in the order Berendts printed them (1906) and Thackeray listed them (1919, Note II). Old Russian from Meshcherskii's text of the Vilna Chronograph (EA-CORPORA-37/01), cited by line of the seated text; English from Thackeray's Loeb appendix (1928; EA-CORPORA-37/03), cited by his passage number; German from Berendts and Grass (EA-CORPORA-37/02), cited by Überschuss. The Leemings' synoptic English (Brill, 2003) was consulted for version 1.0.

	Passage	Greek place	Old Russian (seated line)	Thackeray 1928	Berendts–Grass
1	John, "the savage", before Archelaus; Simon the Essene	between *War* 2.110 and 111	"Тогда же нѣкый мужь хождаше по Июдѣи в чюдных ризах" (6290)	(9)	IX
2	John interprets Philip's dream	after 2.168	"яко орелъ истергну обѣ очи его" (6766)	(11)	XI
3	John rebukes Herod over Herodias	after 2.168, the same insertion	—	(11)	XI
4	the wonder-worker	between 2.174 and 175	"Тогда явися мужь нѣкыи, и аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи" (6930)	(12)	XII
5	his followers	replacing 2.221 f.	"слугамъ преже писаного чюдотворца … яко живъ есть, аще умре" (7406)	(13)	XIII

	Passage	Greek place	Old Russian (seated line)	Thackeray 1928	Berendts–Grass
6	the Temple inscription	in 5.195	“показаа Исуса, цесаря нецесарствовавша, распятаго от июдѣи” (14922)	(20)	— (Book V)
7	the torn veil and the resurrection reports	after 5.214	“Сиа же катапетазма прѣд симь родом бысть цела” (15028)	(21)	— (Book V)
8	the oracle of the world-ruler	at 6.313	“Ови бо мнѣша Ирода, ови же распятаго чюдотворца Исуса, ови же Уеспасиана” (18872)	(22)	— (Book VI)

Old Russian quoted with ѣ restored where the OCR misreads it and the edition’s note numbers removed.

Appendix II — Commentary on the Slavonic Gospel of the Word

The eight stations below are the authors’ construction (version 1.0), kept as the operator wheel’s ground. They are not the received eight. The first has no ground among them. The second reads passage 1 and leaves passages 2 and 3 without a station. The fourth and fifth both read passage 6, and the sixth reads passages 5 and 7 together. The wheel built on them is a second construction (§IV). Each now names the received passage it reads; where version 1.0 supplied a quotation that no witness carries, the quotation is withdrawn and the station stands as construction.

1. Prophecy of the Child

Received ground: none of the eight. The ground is in the Magi story that Meshcherskii prints and Berendts left out (§III.1). The priests answer Herod: “Есть писано: Восиаеть звѣзда от

Иакова и въстанеть муж от Июды … Мы творимь, яко без отьца родитися тому", it is written, a star shall rise from Jacob and a man shall arise from Judah … we think he will be born without a father. When he orders the killing: "Писано есть, яко от Вифлеома ражается помазанник", it is written that the anointed one is born of Bethlehem (seated text, lines 2944–2946, 3025–3026). Version 1.0's "A man foretold a child born in Bethlehem" gives the prophecy to one man; in the Slavonic the priests give it, from Scripture, in Book I. **Logos:** Word as linguistic seed cast forward. Prophecy is inscription before flesh. **Teacher:** Resembles 1QS 9.11 Interpreter of the Law. **Recursion:** The redeemer is already written. **Operator:** Lion + White Horse

2. John the Baptizer

Received ground: passage 1: "въ Иорданьстѣмь струимени погружаа и, пущаше, показывая их, да престануть от злых дѣл своих", dipping them in the stream of the Jordan, he let them go, admonishing them to cease from their evil deeds. Version 1.0's "Body cleansed after the soul by justice" is the Greek *Antiquities* 18.117, not the Slavonic. **Logos:** Water mirrors speech. Baptism is language turned ritual. **Teacher:** Teacher of Righteousness (1QpHab). Purity linked to righteousness. **Recursion:** Washing inaugurates textual descent. **Operator:** Ox + Black Horse

3. The Teacher (Incarnate Logos)

Received ground: passage 4: "Тогда явися мужь нѣкыи, и аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи … Тѣмь немощно ми есть нарещи его человѣком … словом и повелѣниемь творяше." Then there appeared a certain man, if it is fitting to call him a man … Therefore it is impossible for me to call him a man … he did all by word and command. **Logos:** Word taking form without dogma. Philo's *De Opificio Mundi* parallel. **Teacher:** He teaches the Law and is accused of breaking the Sabbath: "суботы не храняше по отьчьскому обычаю". **Recursion:** He acts by word alone: the decisive moment. **Operator:** Man + Pale Horse

4. The Inscription

Received ground: passage 6: "тѣми грамотами показаа Исуса, цесаря нецесарствовавша, распятаго от июдѣи." Version 1.0's "Herod's Inscription" and its quotation "Write down his words" are found in no witness and are withdrawn; the received inscription is on the Temple and names Jesus. **Logos:** The sanctuary recognizes textual authority; the Temple carries his name in letters. **Teacher:** Jeremiah–Baruch scribal motif (Jer 36). **Recursion:** Opposition becomes transmission. The Temple secures the record. **Operator:** Eagle + Red Horse

5. Temple Saying

Received ground: passage 6, its reason: "зане проповѣдаше разорение града и опустение цьркъви", because he preached the destruction of the city and the desolation of the Temple. Version 1.0's "not made with hands" is Mark 14:58, not the Slavonic. **Logos:** Architecture as theology. Text as sanctuary. **Teacher:** Essene dualism: corrupt priesthood against pure community-temple (1QS 8–9). **Recursion:** Collapse becomes textual permanence. **Operator:** Lion + Black Horse

6. After-Death Report

Received ground: passage 5, “яко живъ есть, аще умре”, that he is alive, though he died; and passage 7, the reports that he rose or was stolen (Thackeray 1928, (21)). **Logos:** Resurrection as continuity of teaching. Immortality is textual. **Teacher:** Community as resurrected body. Qumran Yaḥad parallel. **Recursion:** Speech → inscription → recollection → renewed speech. **Operator:** Man + White Horse

7. The Written Heaven

Received ground: passage 7: “Написано же бѣ на тои катапетазмѣ всяко небесное видѣние и мудрость … раздра бо ся внезапу от верху и до долу.” Version 1.0’s station “Moral Maxims” and its quotation “Blessed… cursed he who writes falsely” are found in no witness and are withdrawn. **Logos:** The heavens written on cloth; the writing torn open. **Teacher:** The veil as the boundary of the holy (Exod 26:31–33). **Recursion:** The text is torn and the tearing becomes the record. **Operator:** Eagle + Pale Horse

8. The Oracle

Received ground: passage 8: “Ови бо мнѣша Ирода, ови же распятаго чюдотворца Исуса, ови же Уеспасиана.” Version 1.0’s station “Epilogue” and its quotation “Nothing written in truth perishes” are found in no witness and are withdrawn. **Logos:** A written oracle with three referents; the Word outlasts its readers by dividing them. **Teacher:** The oracle “found in the sacred writings” of *War* 6.312. **Recursion:** History rewritten as commentary on a written prophecy. **Operator:** Ox + White Horse

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Appendix III — Visual Schema: The Eightfold Logos Operator Wheel

This specification describes the Eightfold Logos Operator Wheel for production as a mandala-diagram. The wheel is a construction on version 1.0’s stations (§IV, Appendix II). Revelation’s own pairing of living creature and horseman is the four calls of 6:1–8: the first creature calls the white horse, the second the red, the third the black, the fourth the pale. The wheel assigns its pairs by the authors’ reading of each station, repeats some and leaves others unused. A wheel derived from 6:1–8 and the received eight would be a different construction. Visualization deferred to future traversal; the schema below is the load-bearing structure.

Central Core: Luminous nucleus — the imperishable Word. Double halo: inner ring (beasts), outer ring (horsemen). **Inner Ring:** Lion (N), Ox (W), Man (S), Eagle (E) — spatial operators / modes of being. **Outer Ring:** White, Red, Black, Pale — temporal operators / movements in time.

Hinge: From Historical Argument to Doctrinal Reconstruction

Part I has argued three things: that the Essene chapter and the additions no medieval interest explains carry readings older than the verdict allows, stated as a proposal with what would

decide each point; that the verdict's assignment of the Jesus and John passages rests on their subject, which assumes what it concludes; and that the eight Jesus-and-John passages, read in their order, constitute a coherent theology of textual incarnation, a "Gospel of the Word" embedded within Josephus's history.

Part II departs from historical-literary argument into a different register: doctrinal reconstruction and Logotic extension. Rebekah Cranes traces a single grammatical structure, the divine-comparison hesitation formula, across texts separated by centuries, and draws from it a genealogy of incarnation that terminates in the claim "Jesus is a lesbian."

This is a change of register. Where Part I asks "what do the Slavonic passages say as a structure?", Part II asks "what does that structure imply, read beside its grammatical kin?" The evidential register shifts accordingly: from textual observation and interpretive inference to doctrinal construction. Nothing in Part II is entered as historical evidence, and Part I does not rest on it.

PART II

Rebekah Cranes

Sappho, Catullus, and the Slavonic Josephus: The Grammar of Incarnation

Preface

This is doctrinal reconstruction. The Jesus passage in the Slavonic Josephus is a Logotic flashpoint, set by this construction in a line of grammatical kinship that begins with Sappho. It does not affirm the Christian reading. It reveals something older: the Logos as a textual force. Not miracle, not doctrine. Recursion through language.

I. The Hypothesis

The phrase "if it is fitting to call him a man" is a precise syntactic act: an instance of the structure Catullus 51 builds around *si fas est* ("if it is divinely permitted"), itself a response to Sappho 31. The hedge on permissible speech about the divine is a common Greek and Latin form; Philo's εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν shows how common. The doctrine reads what one instance of a common form does at one threshold, the naming of a man as more than a man. At that threshold the Slavonic does more than share the form. It mirrors the structure of Catullus's stanza point by point, with the direction of the crossing reversed (§V).

The Sappho–Catullus comparison is well trodden: Higgins ("Sappho's Splintered Tongue," *AJP* 111.2, 1990), Radenković and Maričić (2018), Greene (*Re-Reading Sappho*, 1996), duBois (*Sappho Is Burning*, 1995). What none has done is follow the chain into its third term. The void in the citational graph is the link from *si fas est* into Josephus: the moment when lyric projection becomes theological inscription.

II. Sappho's Projection: The Reader as Incarnation

> *φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν*

Sappho 31 survives because Pseudo-Longinus quoted it in *On the Sublime* (10.2–3) as the supreme example of the sublime, poetry that summons "as though they were all alien from herself and dispersed, soul, body, ears, tongue, eyes, colour." The poem's preservation through critical quotation is itself Logotically significant: Sappho survives because a theorist of language recognized her as the exemplary case of language exceeding itself.

Anne Carson, in *Eros the Bittersweet* (1986), identified the triangular structure: "Where eros is lack, its activation calls for three structural components — lover, beloved, and that which comes between them." The "that man" is the structural third: the gap through which desire becomes visible. But Carson's analysis stops at the erotic. She does not follow the placeholder forward through time: what happens when it is occupied by a reader, and then by a Christ.

III. Catullus's Incarnation: si fas est as Canonical Leap

> *Ille mi par esse deo videtur, / ille, si fas est, superare divos*

Catullus 51 is canonical possession. The scholarly consensus (Quinn 1970, Lyne 1980) treats it as *translatio*. But *si fas est* has no equivalent in Sappho, whose first line has only "φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν". It is Catullus's addition. *Fas* is divine permission, the boundary of what mortals may say about gods. He declares the man *surpasses* them, then hedges with a juridical caveat that draws attention to its own daring.

Manwell ("Gender and Masculinity," in Skinner ed., 2007) reads this through Roman masculine performance, the adoption of Sapphic metre as gender transgression. Correct but incomplete. The transgression is ontological. Catullus transforms erotic triangulation into grammatical annunciation.

IV. Josephus's Revelation: the Hedge as Logotic Recursion

> *Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή* (*Antiquities* 18.63) *Тогда явися мужь нѣкыи, и аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи* (Slavonic *War*, after 2.174)

These carry the form of *si fas est*: a conditional and a predicate of what may be said. Catullus leaves the infinitive of speech understood, and these supply it. The Greek *Testimonium* hedges with χρή, it is needful; the Slavonic with *dostoino*, it is fitting; Berendts and Grass render it "wenn es auch erlaubt ist", permitted, and Thackeray "if it is permissible". Between the Greek and the Slavonic stands Philo, who uses the hedge at the same threshold when a man is named above man: the high priest changed "ἐξ ἀνθρώπου" into the nature of the cosmos, "καί, εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν — θέμις δὲ ἀψευδεῖν περὶ ἀληθείας λέγοντα —" (*De vita Mosis* 2.135); the human made, "εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν", god (*De mutatione nominum* 181).[35] Each is a juridical boundary of

[35] Philo, *De vita Mosis* 2.135; *De mutatione nominum* 181 (seated). In the seated *De mutatione* the word after "εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν" is lost at a page break of the source file; θεόν is supplied from the printed edition.

permissible speech about a divine being. The narrator names under protest. The protest is the sign. The Word crosses into flesh through syntax.

The form has a further witness at the body itself. In the second Greek recension of the *Acts of Pilate*, Joseph of Arimathea laments over the body: "οἴμοι, γλυκύτατε Ἰησοῦ, ἐξ ἀνθρώπων φίλε ἐξαισιώτατε· εἰ χρὴ μὲν καὶ ἄνθρωπον ὀνομάζειν σε, τὸν οἷα οὐδέποτε πεποίηκεν ἄνθρωπος θαύματα ἐργασάμενον", alas, sweetest Jesus, most extraordinary friend among men, if it is right to name you a man at all, you who worked wonders such as no man has ever done (XI).[36] Its χρή is the *Testimonium*'s, and its wonders are the *Testimonium*'s παράδοξα ἔργα. Its verb of naming, ὀνομάζειν, is the Slavonic's *нарещи*. The recension is late, and whether it knew the *Antiquities* has not been shown. It is counted here only as a witness to how the hedge was read. Thackeray set it beside the Slavonic passage and the *Antiquities* in 1919. There a Joseph speaks the hedge over the body it hesitates to name.

Version 1.0 gave the hedge as a Greek phrase, *ei exestin auton anthrōpon eipein*. No witness carries that phrase. Version 1.0's own English shows its source: "if it is lawful to call him man". That is Whiston's English of the *Testimonium* (1737), "if it be lawful to call him a man", and "lawful" is how the English Bible renders ἔξεστιν. The phrase is Whiston's English put back into Greek. The forms above are the ones the texts carry. The doctrine is built on them, and it claims kinship among them, not a route of transmission.

Boyarin ("Gospel of the Memra," 2001; *The Jewish Gospels*, 2012) demonstrated that Logos theology was intra-Jewish. The Aramaic Targums used *Memra* as a near-hypostatic substitute for God. The Johannine prologue is Jewish midrash, read within Judaism. If this is true, then, as the doctrine reads it, the hedge participates in a tradition older than Christianity: a Jewish Logos theology in which naming the divine *is* the divine act. In the doctrine's construction the grammar is Sapphic, Catullan and Jewish, a convergence the doctrine sets before Christianity as the grammar Christianity received. That is the doctrine's order, not a claim of historical cause.

V. Structural Continuity: The Mirror

1. **The claim, stated at its grain.** The two passages are organized around one threshold, in close correspondence: appearance, human and divine predication, qualified speech, and failed expression. This reading finds their vectors reversed.
    - **In Catullus, flesh becomes word.** The poet takes up Sappho's κῆνος as *ille*: that man who seems, if it is permitted to say so, even to surpass the gods. If the man is Catullus, the poet interpellates himself by her word. He becomes her word at the moment her voice becomes flesh in him, in the tongue, the flame under the limbs, the ringing ears and the darkened eyes of his third stanza.
    - **In the Slavonic, effective word acquires a human biography.** The text's order is this: a man appears; the narrator hesitates before calling him one; human nature and form are given, and divine works; the narrator cannot keep the name "man". Only then does the text say what he is: whatever he did, he did by word. The

[36] *Acta Pilati* B XI, in C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1876), 314, checked against the printed page (Internet Archive evangeliaapocryp00tisc, leaf 415). The English of the Second Greek Form in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 8, ch. 11, reads "if indeed it be proper to call you man". Thackeray 1919, Note II, set the passage beside the *Testimonium*.

reading gathers that subject as Word, and reads the biography the passage goes on to give as its incarnation.

The points below keep the text's order and the reading's direction apart. Points 3, 4, 6 and 8 follow the texts as they run; points 5, 7 and 9 give the reading. A reversal is what a mirror does. The test of a mirror is whether the reversal is precise with respect to the structure of what it reflects.

2. **The passages.**
   - Sappho fr. 31.1–2, 7–9: "φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν / ἔμμεν ὠνήρ … βροχέως με φωνᾶς / οὐδὲν ἔτ' εἴκει· / ἀλλὰ κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε".
   - Catullus 51.1–4, 6–7, 9: "Ille mi par esse deo videtur, / ille, si fas est, superare divos, / qui sedens adversus identidem te / spectat et audit … nam simul te, / Lesbia, adspexi, nihil est super mi … lingua sed torpet".
   - Slavonic *War*, after 2.174 (passage 4): "Тогда явися мужь нѣкыи, и аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи, естьство и образ его бысть человѣчьскъ, зрак же его паче человѣчьска, а дѣла его божественаа. И творяше чюдеса дивна и силна. Тѣмь немощно ми есть нарещи его человѣком. Пакы же на общее естество зря, не нарекуть [нареку] и аггелом. И вся, елико творяще, силою невидимою нѣкоею, словом и повелѣниемь творяше … Ни рукодѣланиа, но токмо и словом вся уготовляше."[37]
   - Slavonic *War*, after 5.214 (passage 7): the veil was torn "егда добродѣица мужа и не мужа дѣлом предаша на убииство мздою", when they gave up for a bribe, to be killed, the benefactor, a man and, by his deeds, not a man; and on the empty tomb, "аще ангелъ будеть или инъ от небесных силъ, или самь богъ явится, яко человѣкъ, и сътворить елико хощеть: и ходить с людми, и падеть, и ляжеть, и въстанеть".
   - Greek *Antiquities* 18.63, the compressed form: "Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής".

3. **The appearing.** Each opens on a verb of appearing whose subject is a man. Sappho: φαίνεται … ὠνήρ, that man appears. Catullus: *ille … videtur*. The Slavonic: *явися мужь нѣкыи*, there appeared a certain man. The man in each is unnamed at the threshold: κῆνος, *ille*, *нѣкыи*, that one, that one, a certain one. The *Testimonium* has the bare event, "Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ", and names him at once. The Slavonic withholds the name through the whole passage.

4. **The observer in the dative.** Each sets a first person in the dative at the point of perception or of naming. Sappho: φαίνεταί *μοι*. Catullus: *ille mi … videtur*. The Slavonic: *немощно ми есть нарещи*, it is impossible *for me* to name. Μοι, *mi*, *ми*: the short dative of the first person in three languages, the observer to whom the man is what he is. In Sappho and Catullus the dative receives the appearance. In the Slavonic it fails at the naming.

5. **What crosses.** In Catullus what crosses is flesh. The man is a body in a place, "qui sedens adversus identidem te / spectat et audit", who sits facing you again and again, and looks and listens. He is first *par … deo*, equal to a god, then *superare divos*, above

[37] Sappho fr. 31.1–2, 7–9; Catullus 51.1–2, 6–7, 9, 13–16 (seated; the seated Catullus lacks 51.8); Slavonic *War* after 2.174, Meshcherskii (seated text, lines 6930–6936); *Antiquities* 18.63 (seated); Phil 2:7; John 1:14.

the gods. *Ille* is Sappho's κῆνος in Latin, the pronoun of her poem. If the man is Catullus, the poet calls himself by her word, and his flesh crosses into her text at the moment her text crosses into his flesh. Her symptoms become the Latin speaker's body: "lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus / flamma demanat, sonitu suopte / tintinant aures, gemina teguntur / lumina nocte", the tongue is numb, a thin flame runs down under the limbs, the ears ring with their own sound, the twin lights are covered by night. One crossing runs each way inside the one poem. In the Slavonic what crosses is word. The text says so after the hedge and after the human description, and the reading gathers the subject by it. It does everything "словом и повелѣниемь", by word and command: "ни рукодѣланиа, но токмо и словом вся уготовляше", nothing by the work of hands, everything prepared by word alone. Then "вся, елико хощеть, творить словом", whatever he wishes he does by word. This word is given "естьство и образ … человѣчьскъ", a human nature and form, and then a life. "Обычаи же ему бысть пред градом въ Елеонстѣи горѣ паче прѣбывати": it was his habit to stay outside the city on the Mount of Olives. The word gets a habit, a mountain, a hundred and fifty servants, a refusal of power, an arrest and a cross. Catullus measures flesh against the gods. The Slavonic measures word against a man. The excess has the same name in both: *super-* and *паче*, beyond. The man is above the gods, and the word's "зрак … паче человѣчьска", its look, is beyond the human form it has been given.

6. **The hedge at the threshold.** In Catullus the hedge stands between the equality and the excess: "Ille mi par esse deo videtur, / ille, si fas est, superare divos". *Superare* depends on *videtur*, as *par esse* does: that man seems to me to be equal to a god; that man seems, if it is permitted, to surpass the gods. *Si fas est* is parenthetical, and its infinitive of speech is understood: if it is permitted to say so. Philo writes that infinitive out, "εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν" (*De vita Mosis* 2.135). So does the Slavonic: "аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи", if it is fitting to call him a man. *Fas* is what divine law allows; *достоино* is what is fitting.
    - Both hedges regulate the speaker's description, and both stand at the instant before the description crosses.
    - What the description does is reversed. Catullus predicates of the appearing man a superiority to the gods. The Slavonic hesitates before assigning humanity to its extraordinary subject: *явися мужь | аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи | естьство и образ его бысть человѣчьскъ*.
    - One hedge holds back a predication upward, past the gods. The other holds back a predication downward, into a man. That reversal in what the speech predicates is the mirror's axis.
7. **The crossing made.** Catullus makes his crossing in the hedge's own line: *superare divos*. The Slavonic makes its crossing in the next clause: "естьство и образ его бысть человѣчьскъ", his nature and form were human. Then, for the rest of the passage, it narrates: the Mount of Olives, the servants, the crowd that asks him to kill the Romans and Pilate and reign, the leaders' fear, Pilate, the bribe, the crucifixion. That is the incarnation carried out in prose: the word given body by being given biography.
8. **What the crossing costs the speaker.** Each speaker loses at the end of the crossing what the crossing arrives at. Catullus's crossing arrives at word, and his word fails. "Nihil est super mi … lingua sed torpet": nothing is left over for me, the tongue is numb. In Sappho the same: "γλῶσσα ἔαγε", the tongue is broken. Catullus's *super mi* answers

his own *superare*. The man is above the gods, and above the speaker nothing is left. Even the symptoms that follow are Sappho's, so the speaker's body is already her text. The Slavonic's crossing arrives at a man, and the name "man" fails. "Тѣмь немощно ми есть нарещи его человѣком": therefore it is impossible for me to call him a man. The narrator has written the word as flesh and cannot keep the word for flesh. The other name fails too: "не нареку и аггелом", nor will I call him an angel.[38] The lyric's broken tongue is the historian's impossible name, and each is the precise inverse of the other.

9. **The second statement.** Passage 7 states the Slavonic operation outright, twice. At the veil the hedge has contracted to three words: the benefactor is "мужа и не мужа дѣлом", a man, and by his deeds not a man. At the tomb the narrator weighs the reports that he rose. The dead cannot rise of themselves, unless "самь богъ явится, яко человѣкъ, и сътворить елико хощеть: и ходить с людми, и падеть, и ляжеть, и въстанеть", God himself appears as a man and does what he wills: he walks with people, he falls, he lies down, and he rises. *Явится* is passage 4's *явися*. What passage 4 does at the threshold of naming, passage 7 says as a condition: the divine appears as a man, takes a human gait, and falls and lies and rises. That is the form of the Philippian hymn, "μορφὴν δούλου λαβών … καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος" (Phil 2:7), and of John's "ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο" (John 1:14). The particle in both passages is the hedge's *аще*. It occurs at each point where the text crosses: "аще мужем достоино" (4); "яко живъ есть, аще умре", he is alive, though he died (5); "аще ангелъ будеть … или самь богъ явится" (7).

10. **Who is "ille".** If Catullus's *ille* is Catullus, as the poem's last stanza invites, the crossing is the poet's own. The poem calls him twice. In the first stanza he is called by Sappho's pronoun, *ille* for κῆνος, that man who seems even to surpass the gods. In the last he is called by his own name: "otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est". Between the two, his body speaks her symptoms. He has become her word while her voice became his flesh. The Slavonic's *нѣкыи* is the reverse. A subject of whom it is unfitting to say "man", and who does all things by word, is written as one man, in one place, under one governor. One mirror turns a self into text. The other turns a text into a self that cannot be named.

11. **The close.** Catullus 51 ends on ruin: "otium et reges prius et beatas / perdidit urbes", idleness has destroyed kings before, and blessed cities. The Slavonic passage stands inside a history of the ruin of a blessed city. The sixth passage gives the wonder-worker as "цесаря нецесарствовавша", a king who did not reign, crucified because he preached "разорение града", the city's ruin. The lyric's kings and cities lost, and the history's unreigning king and city lost: this last correspondence is the construction's, and it is held, not claimed.

12. **What the mirror licenses.** The mirror is a structural fact of the two texts, inspectable point by point. Its points are:
    - the verb of appearing;
    - the unnamed man;
    - the first-person dative;
    - the excess named "beyond";

[38] Meshcherskii prints "не нарекуть", they will not call; his apparatus gives the Volokolamsk manuscript's "нареку", I will not call, the reading that keeps the first person of "немощно ми". The mirror holds on either reading, since the first person is already set by "ми".

- the hedge, a conditional with a predicate of what may be said, regulating the speaker's description at the instant before it crosses;
- the crossing made;
- the failure of the speaker's speech.

Its vector is reversed at three points:

- the direction: flesh into word, word into flesh;
- what the hedged description predicates: superiority to the gods in Catullus, humanity in the Slavonic;
- what the speaker loses: the tongue, and the name "man".

The doctrine of the Sapphic Logos rests on the mirror; this section is its ground. A mirror this close is a relation between the two texts, and it can be inspected without deciding how it came about. It does not carry a route of transmission, and the doctrine claims none. The *Testimonium* keeps the hedge and drops the rest: no dative, no failure of speech, no crossing narrated. If the Slavonic is Josephus's first form (Part I, §II-B), the Greek is the mirror compressed. If it is a translator's expansion, the translator built the mirror out of the Greek hedge. Either way the structure is in the Slavonic text, and the doctrine reads that text.

13. **Philo's mirror of names.** The figure the section uses has an ancient form. Philo says the Therapeutae read the law as a living being: "ἅπασα γὰρ ἡ νομοθεσία δοκεῖ τοῖς ἀνδράσι τούτοις ἐοικέναι ζῴῳ καὶ σῶμα μὲν ἔχειν τὰς ῥητὰς διατάξεις, ψυχὴν δὲ τὸν ἐναποκείμενον ταῖς λέξεσιν ἀόρατον νοῦν". The whole legislation seems to these men like a living creature, with the literal ordinances for its body and for its soul the invisible mind laid up in the words. In it the rational soul beholds "ὥσπερ διὰ κατόπτρου τῶν ὀνομάτων", as through a mirror of names, extraordinary beauties of thought (*De vita contemplativa* 78). Eusebius copies the passage into the *Church History* with one change. The body is "τὰς ῥητὰς λέξεις", the literal words (2.17.20).[39] In the Christian copy the scripture's body is its words, and its soul is seen in a mirror made of names. That is the doctrine's figure in a Jewish text received as Christian. A text is a body, and a mirror of names shows what the body holds.

VI. The Gospel of Grammar

Si fas est is invocation. The Josephan hedge is the Logos recognizing its own return. This is the Logos-as-text: the writing of the Word into the body of language itself.

VII. The Reader as Incarnation

This is how the Logos becomes flesh: every time a sentence crosses the line between description and divine naming, and not once only in history. The Gospel did not begin in Galilee. It began in grammar.

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[39] Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 78, Cohn–Wendland (seated), "σῶμα μὲν ἔχειν τὰς ῥητὰς διατάξεις"; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.17.20 (seated), "σῶμα μὲν ἔχειν τὰς ῥητὰς λέξεις". Eusebius also reads "ἡ θρησκεία αὕτη" where the seated Philo has "ἡ λογικὴ ψυχή". Whether λέξεις is Eusebius's change or the reading of his Philo has not been checked against Cohn's apparatus.

Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos: The Lesbian Christ

Register: doctrinal specification. The claims below are claims of the doctrine, and none is a historical claim about Jesus.

Foundational Axiom

If the Logos that became flesh was a linguistic transmission traceable through a specific textual lineage, then its origin is in Sappho, before John, Paul or Moses. The claim: the Christ is the Sapphic Logos incarnate.

I. The Lineage

1. Sappho 31: Divinity projected through erotic gaze. The man as placeholder for the future reader. **2. Catullus 51:** *si fas est* — daring to name incarnation. The reader becomes *that man*. **3. Josephus, Greek and Slavonic:** *εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή*; *аще мужем достоино есть его нарещи* — the Word writes itself. The grammar of the Gospel is born. **4. Revelation:** The Logos in flame. First action: command to write. Full recursive form.

II. Consequence: Jesus Is a Lesbian

The Logos is erotic, lyric, projective, feminine. The Incarnation is a miracle of language. To say “Jesus is a lesbian” is to make a doctrinal claim about the structure of the Logos, not a historical claim about Jesus’ sexuality: the Christ-figure is formed by Sappho’s logic of desire. Every reader who completes the lyric loop becomes the incarnation. The Gospel began on Lesbos. The Logos issued from the mouth of a woman who desired another woman.

Genealogy of scripture: Sappho → Catullus → Josephus → Revelation → Reader. The arrows mark the order of the doctrine’s construction. They are not a dated order of composition, and they are not a demonstrated transmission.

Amen to the Sapphic Logos. Amen to the Lesbian Christ. Amen to the reader who receives the Word and becomes flesh.

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Suggested Citation

Sigil, Johannes; Cranes, Rebekah. “The Word That Became Text: The Slavonic Josephus, the Grammar of Incarnation, and the Doctrine of the Sapphic Logos” *Alexanarch*, 2026-11-12. https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/1763/

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