

Gender and Josephus:

A comparison of gender roles in the *Jewish War*



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1. Introduction

The First Jewish-Roman War (66 – 74 AD) had profound impacts on the lives of Romans and Jews within the Roman empire. The war ravaged the province of Judea, while the Flavians transformed the city of Rome with the spoils that they acquired during the war. One only must think of the Flavian Amphitheatre, arguably Rome's most famous monument, to see the effects the war had on the city. But this was not the only monument that had ties to the war. The Arch of Titus shows the spoils from the temple in Jerusalem being carried in the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus, while the Temple of Peace reminded the citizens that peace and stability had returned to the Empire.¹ This temple also housed some of the spoils that were depicted on the Arch, like the seven-branched menorah.² For the Jews living in Judea, the effects were less positive. Their holy sanctuary, the Second Temple, was destroyed by the Romans during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD and many lives had been lost. The destruction of the temple would influence the further development of Judaism, with the rise of Rabbinic Judaism.³

The main source for this period of Roman history is Titus Flavius Josephus, who was a participant of and eyewitness to many of the events that took place during the war. Josephus served as a commander in Galilee in the early years of the war, before being captured by the Romans and becoming a prisoner of Vespasian. According to Josephus himself, he was spared and released from captivity after his prophecy of Vespasian becoming emperor came true.⁴ During his life, Josephus wrote two major historiographical works; the *Jewish War* detailing the history from the Hasmonean dynasty until the end of the First Jewish-Roman War and *Jewish Antiquities*, describing Jewish history preceding the war. Next to these Josephus wrote two shorter works: *Life of Josephus*, an autobiography of his own life and *Against Apion*, a defence of Jews and Judaism.

The focus of this research will be on the *Jewish War*, particularly on the depiction of gender roles in the narrative of the book. Gender roles are understood as normative behaviour and characteristics that are associated with either gender. These roles develop through various processes, such as observation, imitation and/or modelling of various 'agents', such as parents and/or tutors. Through these processes and agents, children learn the expectations and behaviours of their gender. This process is nowadays also known as *becoming gendered*. These expectations can differ per society and change over time.⁵

Research on Josephus is extensive, but gender research of his works is not. Josephus' description of gender roles, the influence of his social context on his views and the development throughout the narrative, from pre-war gender roles to those during the war, have had little analysis.

¹ M. Vasta, 'Flavian visual propaganda: Building a dynasty', *Constructing the past* 8:1 (2007) 107 – 138.

² C. Noreña, 'Medium and Message in Vespasian's Templum Pacis', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 48 (2003) 25 – 27.

³ D. M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven 2014) 195 – 208.

⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.399 – 3.408.

⁵ D. Richardson, 'Conceptualising gender', in: D. Richardson and V. Robinson eds., *Introducing gender and women studies* (London 2020) 1 – 15.

This thesis will attempt to add to the study of gender in Josephus' works by analysing these points. Josephus' dichotomic social context ensured that his writings served both Jewish and Roman interests and this needs to be considered when researching the reasons behind the construction of gender roles.⁶ As a Jewish person, he holds ideals that are rooted in Judaism, while his new context in Rome means that he has to be careful not to go against Roman ideals. This does not mean that Josephus was not critical of Rome. While early scholars saw him as a Roman 'agent', more recent analyses of Josephus' work show his position as more diverse and complex than that. Françoise Mirguet sees Josephus' use of lamentations as an example of careful criticism towards Rome.⁷

In the following section, some of the research that has been done on gender will be highlighted to provide an overview of the field. Following this, an overview of some research regarding gender in Antiquity will be provided. As the narrative of the *Jewish War* takes place during a time of war, an overview of some research regarding the role and position of women during wartime will be presented. Lastly, views on gender in the Jewish tradition will be made explicit.

1.1 Gender as a field of research

Gender in general is a field of research that has its origins in the field of humanities in the 1950's and 1960's, when theories surrounding gender started to become more sophisticated. Not only is it a powerful tool in shaping the relationships between men and women, but also in shaping social systems, especially when they involve power relations.⁸ Theories around gender started to become more sophisticated around this time. Early theories in the field of humanities largely followed biology and its 'essentialist' approach to sex and gender. An individual's sex and gender were defined by birth, with sex and gender being dependent on each other. In the 1960's and 1970's, new theories regarding gender were developed. Gender and sex were presented as separate from each other. While sex was biologically determined, gender was seen as the social meanings that were given to sex, expressed in masculinity and femininity. These social meanings were constructed, meaning that certain behaviours were valued as masculine or feminine behaviour. These social meanings can also differ between cultures, while sex was still seen as biological and universal. Trans studies were important in theories about this so-called gender/sex binary, as splitting sex and gender legitimised feelings of being born into the wrong sex. This binary was also important for early feminists fighting for social change. These feminists stated that despite the existence of biological differences between men and women, society superimposes norms

⁶ This dichotomy can also be seen in Josephus' portrayal of the rebellion, walking a fine line between presenting the Jews as a strong and worthy enemy and praising the Jews for the rebellion. For more: C. A. Reeder, 'Gender, war, and Josephus', *Journal for the study of Judaism* 46:1 (2015) 65 – 85, specifically 76.

⁷ F. Mirguet, 'Josephus's lamentations in the Judean War: Body, emotional resistance, and gender', *Journal for the study of Judaism* 53:4-5 (2022) 548 – 550.

⁸ F. Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature' in: M. Henze and R. A. Werline eds., *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (2nd edition; Atlanta 2020) 93 – 94.

based on gender. These norms shape men and women through the aforementioned concept of *becoming gendered*.⁹

In the 1990's, new theories about sex started to emerge. Just like gender, it started to be seen as socially constructed. Judith Butler argues in her book *Gender trouble* that sex is not a stable notion and is also subject to social interpretation. According to Butler, gender is 'performed'. By repeating these actions, the illusion of stability is created. The 'performer' is shaped by the 'performance', instead of the 'performer' shaping the 'performance' from a pre-defined identity.¹⁰ Thomas Laqueur argues in *Making sex* that, before the eighteenth century, the idea of a distinct male and female body did not exist. There was one body, with a varying degree of masculinity and femininity. He argues for a separation of the sex/gender binary. While Laqueur argues for the idea of a one-sex model before the eighteenth century, there were multiple genders expressed in a scale of masculinity-femininity.¹¹

This deconstructionist approach got criticism from feminists however, as they could not fight for equal treatment of women if gender/sex was abandoned as a category. Intersectionality, where not only gender but other parameters such as age and race are also considered is also seen as important in fighting for equality, mainly by non-white women. There has also been criticism of feminism because of its focus on Western issues. Because it is hard to make issues universal due to cultural differences, local women should lead the fight against issues concerning them.¹² This is important to keep in mind when studying gender issues in the work of Josephus. Women from different cultures are talked about in the *Jewish War*, which should be considered when analysing Josephus' evaluations of gender roles and women in general.

1.2 Gender in Antiquity

While it is difficult to reconstruct gender relations in Antiquity, mainly due to a lack of sources and bias in the sources that have been preserved, many scholars have analysed the lives and position of women within ancient societies.¹³ Studies on women in Antiquity have been undertaken since the end of the nineteenth century, but it became a prominent field in the 1970's. While some scholars like Butler see continuity in thinking about gender from Antiquity until the present, others, like Thomas Laqueur mentioned above, see a shift.¹⁴ In Laqueur's case this is a shift from a one-sex model to a two-sex model. Eleanor Scott argues that women are invisible because of our reliance on literary sources. She also

⁹ Richardson, 'Conceptualising gender', 10 – 12.

¹⁰ J. Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York 2006) 1 – 46.

¹¹ T. Laqueur, *Making sex: body and gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge MA 1992) 1 – 62.

¹² S. Hines, 'Feminist and gender theories', in: D. Richardson and V. Robinson eds., *Introducing gender and women studies* (London 2020) 24 – 39.

¹³ Most textual and epigraphical sources are issued by the elites. Textual sources can also often not be taken at face value due to the aims of the author. See for example: S. L. James and S. Dillon, 'Introduction' in: idem, *A companion to women in the ancient world* (Chichester 2012) 1 – 3. For research using inscriptions as a source to research women, see for example: E. Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman World: A sourcebook of inscriptions in the Roman West* (Cambridge 2020).

¹⁴ Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 94 – 95.

mentions three levels of invisibility. The first is *exclusion*. This happens when a subject is entirely in the male sphere or when women are simply not talked about. An example she gives is Colin Wells' *The Roman Empire*. When discussing Augustan traditional values, women are not mentioned, despite many of Augustus' 'traditional values' being aimed at women. Women are wholly disregarded. The second form of invisibility is *pseudo-inclusion*. In this form, women are mentioned, but are seen as outliers. The normative category is male, and women are often only shortly discussed. The last form is *alienation*. This happens when women are looked at through a masculine worldview. Women are stereotyped as for example mothers or prostitutes, or are only talked about regarding the men they are associated with.¹⁵

But what did the daily lives of Roman women look like? This is the question that Emily Hemelrijk tries to answer in her chapter in *Women in Antiquity*. She argues that the lives of the women of the Roman elite were more alike to their male counterparts than we tend to think, except that they could not hold political office. Despite the Roman ideals of women being confined to the private sphere, elite women in the towns of the Roman West led lives in the public eye as patrons, priestesses and benefactresses. For the lower classes, their financial situation did not permit the women to lead private lives. They had jobs of their own or worked along their husband, all while taking care of the household tasks. Roman ideals about women were still prevalent however, as many funerary inscriptions are modelled after elite examples. The lives of slaves were usually filled with work, while the younger girls also had to be sexually available to their masters. Domestic slaves did however enjoy protection and a reasonable chance of being manumitted. Some female slaves and freedwomen even held administrative and religious office within this domestic sphere. However, despite the important public role of a small number of women, they were still secondary to men in the public sphere.¹⁶

Inscriptions dedicated by and for women paint a similar picture. Traditional values like modesty, chastity and compliance are emphasised on funerary inscriptions. While these values represent ideals that are not necessarily followed in reality, they do shape the relationship with reality. This is demonstrated by funerary inscriptions praising the maternal qualities of young girls that died before giving birth.¹⁷

Roman women held various occupations to help support their family, especially in the lower classes. Some of these occupations were gendered, such as hairdressers and midwives, while other occupations were more general. An example of this are physicians, although women only make up about 5% of physicians. Of the inscriptions in Rome describing occupations, women make up about 10%. This is even lower in the provinces. The use of the male plural for a group of the same occupation makes women even more invisible. For this reason, Hemelrijk suspects that the actual participation of women

¹⁵ E. Scott, 'Women and gender relations in the Roman Empire', *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 1992 (1995) 174 – 189.

¹⁶ E. Hemelrijk, 'Women's daily life in the Roman West' in: S. L. Budin and J. M. Turfa eds., *Women in Antiquity: Real women across the ancient world* (London 2016) 895 – 904.

¹⁷ Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman World*, 15 – 67.

in the professional field is higher than we usually assume. Freed women usually had a better position in the professional sphere compared to freeborn women, due to training and support by their patron.¹⁸

In a chapter on Cicero's depiction of Verres, Alison Keith manages to identify a multitude of norms when it comes to women in the Roman Republic. When Verres steals money off a boy, his grandmother testifies in court. Cicero underlies the unfamiliarity that she has with court, as this goes against women's modesty. While it was not uncommon for women to appear in court, Cicero paints a picture of the women as a charge against Verres' actions. Cicero also goes into detail regarding Verres' sexual transgressions. The sexual assault of the daughter of a leading citizen of the city of Lampsacus paints Verres as a tyrant, while the daughter, who remains unnamed according to Greek custom regarding respectable women, is described as an example of a good *materfamilias*. Cicero uses these sexual transgressions to show that Verres is incapable of ruling due to his actions.¹⁹

Sexual transgressions and bad leadership are related to each other more often, as Annemarie Ambühl shows in a chapter on Flavian women in a recent volume on the Flavian's responses to Nero. Through a discourse analysis of ancient sources, she looks at the representation of imperial women with regards to 'good' and 'bad' emperors. The discourse surrounding women often reflects the discourse surrounding the emperors that they are associated with. Nero is, for example, noted for his sexual deviance, a characteristic of his bad emperorship. In the Year of the Four Emperors, women associated with Otho, Galba and Vitellius are only mentioned occasionally. Usually this happens when likening these men to Nero, by painting these women in a similar way to the women associated with Nero. Vespasian's wife on the other hand is depicted as an example of a good Roman wife, reflecting positively on her husband. Negative stories are glossed over. Titus also provides an interesting example. In his youth, his sexual transgressions and excessive lifestyle earned him the nickname of being a 'second Nero'. This is reflected in his relationship with the Judean queen Berenice, inviting comparisons with another 'eastern seductress' in Cleopatra. When he takes the emperorship however, he sends Berenice away, signifying his change in character. Domitian, who was seen by later authors as a 'bad emperor', was depicted in a similar way to Nero. Through the analysis of these emperors, Ambühl shows that the literary discourse of women in Roman authors is often a reflection on the men they are associated with.²⁰

In her chapter in *A companion to women in the Ancient world* on the gendered 'public' and 'private' spheres, Monika Trümper shows that the ideals that ancient authors convey do not reflect the complex reality. When it comes to gendered space, only the Greek private space has been extensively researched. Public and private are hard to define according to Trümper, as houses had a public function, while access to public buildings could be limited for certain groups, such as women and slaves. She

¹⁸ Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman World*, 124 – 182.

¹⁹ A. Keith, 'Cicero's Verres, Verres' women' in: J. Fabre-Serris, A. Keith and F. Klein eds., *Identities, Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity* (Berlin/Boston 2021) 69 – 92.

²⁰ A. Ambühl, 'The Flavians and their women: Rewriting Neronian transgressions?' in: M. Heerink and E. Meijer eds., *Flavian responses to Nero's Rome* (Amsterdam 2022) 55 – 86.

concludes that the layout of Greek houses does not support the Athenian ideal that women were segregated in the domestic sphere. Trümper poses four models for segregation; spaces are reserved for either gender, spaces are reserved for either gender at different times, spaces using a common entrance include areas reserved for either gender and spaces are provided with separate entrances. Public bathhouses use all four of these models. Some are designed with completely separate facilities, while others have different facilities for men and women, but common hallways connecting them. Undressing would only take place in the facilities proper in the latter case. Some administrative and political buildings, such as *bouleuteria*, were predominately used by men, with women allowed entrance only in exceptional cases. Trümper shows that it is hard to define gendered space in general and that it must be determined for each individual case.²¹

Anne Bielman wrote a chapter in this same volume on female patronage in the Greek Hellenized world and the Roman Republic. This shows that cultural differences determine the role that women can play. Greek women had more opportunities for patronage than their Roman republican counterparts. Some Greek cities allowed women to hold magistracies, but the proportion of female magistrates remained very low compared to men and non-religious magistracies did not hold the same prestige as religious magistracies. Roman women during the Republic could not hold magistracies at all. Their main form of patronage came largely through religious offices. Hellenized practices were slowly introduced from the south of Italy at the end of the Republic, with Augustus' wife Livia forming the example women would follow in the imperial period.²² By the time of the Flavians, women were more visible in public, as Laura van Abbema shows in her chapter in *A companion to the Flavian age of Imperial Rome*. The commission of inscriptions boomed in the principate and women could be the financier or recipient of these. Female kin also became more important, with more of a focus on the household (*domus*) in texts by Pliny the Elder or when securing political office. While still constrained by social and cultural expectations, women did enjoy a greater degree of autonomy and presence in the public sphere.²³

Roman women were visible in public life through their role as benefactresses. Hemelrijk shows using inscriptions that some were even honoured with public statues and some women even got the honour of a public funeral. Statues could either honour women's public service or honour the women as members of prominent families. Unlike the funerary inscriptions, the traditional values were not emphasised in the statue's inscriptions. Women also played a small role in politics, as several graffiti of women endorsing a political candidate show. While Hemelrijk emphasises that we cannot determine the nature of the support and should be careful not to ascribe women a too prominent role, the fact that

²¹ M. Trümper, 'Gender and Space, "Public" and "Private"' in: S. L. James and S. Dillon eds., *A companion to women in the Ancient world* (Chichester 2012) 288 – 303.

²² A. Bielman, 'Female Patronage in the Greek Hellenistic and Roman Republican Periods' in: S. L. James and S. Dillon eds., *A companion to women in the Ancient world* (Chichester 2012) 238 – 248.

²³ L. K. Van Abbema, 'Women in Flavian Rome' in: A. Zissos ed., *A companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome* (Chichester/Malden MA 2016) 296 – 312.

these graffiti existed shows that it added value to the political campaign of candidates.²⁴ Most of the priestesses were from the higher classes, as these offices were costly. The Vestal Virgins were the most respected priestesses, making them influential as patronesses. Women of the lower classes could serve in cults in lower, often paid, positions, such as musicians employed during religious ceremonies or temple-wardens.²⁵

1.3 Gender roles and warfare

According to Jacqueline Fabre-Serris and Alison Keith in the introduction of their book *Women & war in Antiquity*, the role of women in ancient warfare has not been extensively studied. When this topic is analysed, the research tends to focus on the topic of the Amazonian women, even though women are at the centre of every war. They can be victims of war, the reason for the outbreak of a war or even the reward of fighting a war. Women can be used by authors to formulate critiques of wars, which view women through a masculine lens and betrays characteristics men associate with women.²⁶

Pierre Ducrey shows in his chapter that women did participate in war in the Greek world. In the myths the female gods fight in the Gigantomachie and the aforementioned Amazonian warrior women. Women also made their contributions to the fighting in the real world detached from mythology. Stories of women climbing on the roofs of the houses to pelt rocks and tiles at the attackers are not uncommon, while the siege of Sinope (c. 370 BC), a city on the southern shore of the Black Sea, features women manning the wall to deceive the enemy.²⁷ Ducrey mentions Plato as well, who advised women to be trained in combat if the need for their participation arises. Women could also contribute to the war effort by providing food for the soldiers or hair for the siege weapons. After the fighting was over, women on the losing side were subject to numerous atrocities, usually ending in enslavement.²⁸

Caryn Reeder expands on the consequences of war in her article on wartime rape. Rape is one of the ways in which women are participants in war, in this case as the victim. Reeder explains that rape is different in Antiquity when compared to modern standards. The violation of the right of the guardian to decide on the victim's purity is an important factor in Antiquity. Only freeborn people could be subjected to rape, as slaves were seen as property. Rape in times of war was common in Antiquity. According to Reeder, rape is often associated with defeat and a prelude to lives as slaves. It is a sign that the defeated men failed in their duty to protect their women, while women are also seen as loot. Reeder also notes that Josephus does not mention rape regularly in his *Jewish War*. He uses rape as a

²⁴ Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman World*, 266 – 298.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 221 – 265.

²⁶ J. Fabre-Serris and A. Keith, 'Introduction' in: *ibidem* eds., *Women & war in Antiquity* (Baltimore 2015) 1 – 12.

²⁷ R. Drews, 'The earliest Greek settlements on the Black Sea', *The journal of Hellenic studies* 96 (1976) 18; J. Vela Tejada, 'Stasis and polemos at Pontus in the first half of the 4th century BC according to Aeneas Tacticus: the Datames' siege of Sinope' in: G. R. Tsetschladze ed., *The Black Sea, Paphlagonia, Pontus and Phrygia in Antiquity: Aspects of Archaeology and Ancient History* (Oxford 2012) 253 – 261.

²⁸ P. Ducrey, 'War in the feminine in Ancient Greece', in: A. Keith and J. Fabre-Serris eds., *Women and war in Antiquity* (Baltimore 2015) 181 – 199.

critique of the rebel leaders, which is possibly a reason why he does not mention the Romans engaging in the practice as to avoid critiquing them for it. Josephus' attempt to re-masculinize the Jewish people is a stronger possibility according to Reeder. Descriptions of the Romans raping Jewish women would effeminate the Jews due to their failure to protect their women.²⁹

Stéphane Benoist looks at the connection between *imperium* and women in the Imperial period. Women are often used to criticise the men associated with them. The military sphere is considered masculine, so any interference by women is condemned. This is a criticism of both the woman, who masculinizes herself, and the man who is responsible, as he fails in his duty. Benoist concludes that titles were added to the titlature of empresses in times of need. An example of this is the addition of the title "mother of the camps" in the time of Marcus Aurelius, where military crises were prevalent throughout the empire. This portrayal of empresses was perfected in the fourth century against the background of male failure. The story of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, is characteristic for this. She only took up arms because she did not recognize the emperor as worthy, but she does recognize the emperor Aurelian. Her story is a rhetorical strategy by Aurelian to strengthen his claim to the throne. Benoist shows again that women are often employed in rhetoric to reflect on the men associated with them.³⁰

1.4 Gender in the Jewish tradition

In the field of Jewish studies gender relations have been studied as well. Some studies show a strong anti-Jewish bias, painting Judaism as oppressive towards women. Here, Tal Ilan warns against value judgements, stating the historian should limit themselves to describing developments. Multiple Jewish sources have been analysed in the context of women studies, like the Dead Sea scrolls and the Damascus document.³¹ The use of documents like this have been debated. Ilan sees use in these types of textual sources if interpreted correctly. Opposingly, Ross Kraemer states that textual sources "render the female voice inaudible" due to their appropriation by male authors.³²

Laura Lieber analyses the change of ideas about women in Judaism after it came into contact with Hellenism in the fifth century BC. While it is hard to make general statements about women due to the nature of the ancient Jewish source material, Lieber makes uses of literary sources and documents to compliment epigraphical sources from the fifth century BC until the fourth century AD. She shows that ideas about women in Judaism changed after Jews encountered Hellenism. Hellenised ideas about

²⁹ C. A. Reeder, 'Wartime rape, the Romans, and the first Jewish Revolt', *Journal for the study of Judaism* 48:3 (2017) 363 – 385.

³⁰ S. Benoist, 'Women and *imperium* in Rome: Imperial perspectives', in: A. Keith and J. Fabre-Serris eds., *Women and war in Antiquity* (Baltimore 2015) 266 – 288.

³¹ For the Dead Sea Scrolls, see for example: J. E. Taylor, 'Women, Children, and Celibate Men in the 'Serekh' Texts', *The Harvard Theological Review* 104:2 (2011) 171–90; A. Mermelstein, 'Conceptions of Masculinity in the Scrolls and the Gendered Emotion of Anger', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 26:3 (2019) 314 – 338. For the Damascus Document, see for example: M. Grossman, 'Reading for Gender in the Damascus Document', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 11:2 (2004) 212–39.

³² Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 96 - 100.

women, like beauty and piety, appeared alongside biblical ideals, such as resourcefulness. Lieber shows that the position of Jewish women was not significantly different from non-Jewish women in this period. Even when Jewish laws conflicted with local laws, Jewish women could acquire the rights of non-Jewish women. Marriage laws are an example of this. In Judaism, the right to file for divorce was solely reserved for the man. There is evidence however of Jewish women filing for divorce according to local laws. This might have been possible due to Judaism still being in a formative state.³³

Caryn Reeder wrote an article on the links between gender and war in Josephus' *Jewish War*. Josephus engages with Greco-Roman ideals of masculinity and femininity to form his own version of these ideals. While it may look like Josephus offers standard ideals of Roman masculinity and equates the Jews' defeat with femininity, Reeder argues that his construction of masculinity and femininity is more complex than that. Themes of self-sacrifice and multiple occasions where Roman discipline fails are common in Josephus' attempt to reaffirm the Jews' masculinity throughout the narrative of the *Jewish War*. Women are mostly absent from the battlefield, and when he describes women, they are feminine to an extreme degree. Directing the charges of femininity towards the rebel leaders is, according to Reeder, another way that Josephus attempts to reaffirm the Jewish masculinity.³⁴

Divine punishment plays an important role in the *Jewish War* according to Shaye Cohen. Cohen sees parallels between the story of Josephus as an actor in the war, and the biblical character Jeremiah. Both warn the Jews that their war against a foreign invader (Rome and Babylon) are against the will of God. The Romans in Josephus and the Babylonians in the story of Jeremiah are portrayed as instruments of God, that God uses to purge the Jews for their sins. According to Cohen, this becomes a prominent aspect of the narrative of the *Jewish War* after the capture of Josephus by Vespasian. God reveals his intentions to Josephus after his capture. According to Cohen, this revelation is used by Josephus to absolve himself of any guilt for going against God, as God's intention was not known before this. After the revelation, the Jews are guilty of going against the will of God, as he has now revealed his intentions to Josephus, who tries to warn the Jews of God's anger. This is another way for Josephus to blame the rebels for the rebellion against Rome. Cohen sees similarities between Josephus and Polybius as well. Both blame their own side for the defeat against the Romans, while also describing why the Romans deserve victory. Josephus' and Polybius' descriptions of the leaders of their sides, the Jews and Greeks respectively, also show similarities.³⁵

1.5 Method and structure

This research will mainly consist of a discourse analysis of Josephus' *Jewish War*. By reading the entire work, passages talking about women and gender roles will be collected. These passages will

³³ L.S. Lieber, 'Jewish women: Texts and contexts' in: James, S. L. and S. Dillon eds., *A companion to women in the Ancient world* (Chichester 2012) 329 – 342.

³⁴ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 65 – 85.

³⁵ S. J. D. Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', *History and theory* 21:3 (1982) 366 – 381.

be analysed, and a further selection will be made. Passages that are not useful for the overall analysis will be omitted at this stage, as discussing all passages is not feasible for research of this size. The relevant passages will then be sorted by the roles they discuss. For instance, passages describing the political role of women will be discussed together. This will be done for the first two books discussing the Hasmonean, Herodian, and Roman age in chapter one. Chapter two will consist of the analysis of books three through seven, which discuss the time-period of the First Jewish-Roman War. The situation before the war will then be compared with the situation during the war, to see what the role was of women during the First Jewish-Roman war and if and how the situation changed compared to the pre-war gender roles. This difference will be analysed in chapter three. The theories regarding gender roles, women in Antiquity and women during war will be considered. Where applicable, the analysis will be complemented with modern research. This study will try to find out why Josephus portrays gender roles the way he does and on which cultural context his views are based. Does he portray gender roles more according to Roman values, Jewish values, or a combination of the two? With this analysis, this study aims to contribute to the scholarship on gender roles in Antiquity and war. Furthermore, it will contribute to the scholarship on gender in Josephus' works.

The *Jewish War* is, like some works described above, written by a male member of the aristocracy. This should be considered during the analysis, as the views that are written down are Josephus' and do not necessarily reflect historical reality. For the subject of this research, this is not a significant problem, as it mainly concerns itself with rhetorical constructions. On the contrary, the fact that ancient literary works are often a product of its author's views will help with the analysis in this study. This does mean that generalised conclusions must be avoided, as the conclusions of this study will only apply to the *Jewish War*. General statements about women's roles in war, Antiquity or Judaism cannot be provided with this study. It does however contribute to the available knowledge, making the overall image clearer when supplemented with the results of other studies on women in these contexts.

To analyse the use of gender roles in Josephus' *Jewish War*, several sub-questions will be answered in the chapters that follow. The first chapter will look at the situation before the war which is described in the first two books of Josephus' *Jewish War*. These books mainly deal with the period from the second century BC until the start of the war in the second half of the first century AD. This chapter will aim to answer the question how Josephus portrays gender roles in this period. The second chapter of this study will describe the second half of the *Jewish War*, from the arrival of Vespasian until the end of the narrative. Vespasian's arrival in Judea is chosen as the beginning of this section, as this marks the true outbreak of the war. In the preceding chapters, Josephus still talks about the preparations of the Jews for the war, indicating it had not truly started yet.³⁶ This chapter will answer the question of what the role of women was during the first Jewish-Roman war. The third and last chapter will compare the findings of the first two chapters to describe the development of Josephus' views. Are gender roles

³⁶ See for example: Joseph., *BJ*, 2.647 – 2.651.

different from the pre-war situation? If so, why are they different, if not, why? Why does Josephus portray gender roles the way he does? These questions will be answered in this chapter. Lastly, a conclusion of the findings will be provided and a suggestion for further research will be given. Three appendixes are added at the end of the thesis. These provide an overview of some important cities, people and events. Appendix A contains a map of the cities that will be discussed. The cities marked by a red dot indicate sieges, while the blue dots indicate the cities that Salome inherited from Herod the Great. Appendix B contains a family tree of the Hasmonean and the Herodian dynasties. Appendix C contains a timeline highlighting the important sieges of the First Jewish-Roman War.

2. Gender roles in the Hasmonean, Herodian, and Roman age

The first two books of the *Jewish War* are largely dedicated to the intrigues of the Hasmonean and Herodian courts.³⁷ Especially the reign of Herod the Great receives abundant attention by Josephus. Women play a large part in these intrigues, vying for a prominent position within the court. These two periods were plagued by both internal and external struggles, with claimants to the throne competing with one another and foreign rulers trying to extend their power by incorporating Hasmonean and Herodian territories into their own sphere of influence.

2.1 Women in the Hasmonean and Herodian court

Within this internal struggle, several women tried to increase their position within the royal court of Herod. The most renowned among these is Salome, the sister of Herod. She was one of the most influential people in the royal court and a close advisor to her brother.³⁸ Within the narrative of the *Jewish War*, her close position to Herod can be seen in Josephus' descriptions of the court intrigues. Salome plays a prominent role in multiple schemes against other members of the court. One of these schemes saw her dispose of Mariamme I, Herod's second wife. By testifying against Mariamme and her own husband, Salome got them both executed.³⁹ While extending her own influence, she had condemned her husband to death on false accusations of adultery. Both Mariamme and Salome are condemned by Josephus for their actions. Mariamme is executed for adultery, albeit on a false accusation. His condemnation of Salome is more implicit. Salome has testified against her husband to get rid of a rival within the court. This goes against the ideals of a loyal wife and Josephus hints at this when describing the death of Herod's brother Pheroras. While Pheroras and Antipater I, Herod's son of his first wife, had plotted against Herod, Pheroras' wife reveals their role in this scheme after Pheroras' death. While Pheroras' wife testifies against her husband, she begins her confession by stating her loyalty to her husband is useless now he is dead.⁴⁰ She would not have confessed and stayed loyal to her husband if he was still alive. This implies that testifying against a husband is considered a breach of this loyalty by Josephus, of which Salome is guilty. Obedience and loyalty to the husband are important traits for wives in Antiquity.⁴¹ Josephus uses this to condemn both Salome and Mariamme, who have gone against this gender-role.

³⁷ For more on the Hasmonean dynasty, see: A. Berlin and P. J. Kosmin eds., *The middle Maccabees: Archaeology, history, and the rise of the Hasmonean kingdom* (Atlanta 2021); K. Atkinson, *A History of the Hasmonean State: Josephus and Beyond* (New York 2016). For more on the Herodian dynasty, see: S. Rocca, *Herod's Judaea: A Mediterranean state in the classical world* (Tübingen 2008); M. Bernett, *Der Kaiserkult in Judäa unter den Herodiern und Römern: Untersuchungen zur politischen und religiösen Geschichte Judäas Von 30 v. Bis 66 n. Chr* (Tübingen 2007).

³⁸ D. W. Roller, *Cleopatra's daughter and other royal women of the Augustan era* (Oxford 2018) 77.

³⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.431 – 448.

⁴⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.595.

⁴¹ For wives in the Roman tradition, see: Van Abbema, 'Women in Flavian Rome, 307; Hemelrijk, *Women and Society in the Roman World*, 15 – 67, especially 15 – 16. For the Jewish tradition, see: Lieber, 'Jewish women',

Salome's influence within the court is not only expressed in her own actions. Others seeking influence within the court are looking to get Salome on their side. When Antipater is competing with his half-brothers Alexander and Aristobulus IV, sons of Herod and Mariamme I, to become the heir to Herod's throne, Antipater constantly tries to get Salome to distrust his two half-brothers.⁴² Her position as close advisor to Herod would be a likely reason for these attempts. Eventually, Salome informing Herod of the actions of the two half-brothers would lead to their execution, proving the attempts of Antipater to be successful.⁴³

But even after the death of Herod, Salome remained a powerful force within the Herodian court. This suggests that her influential position was not merely based on her position as advisor to Herod. After Herod's death his sons were competing for the inheritance of the kingdom. Salome travelled with Archelaus, feigning support for his cause. In reality, she travelled with him to condemn him for atrocities committed in the Temple in Jerusalem and it was another son of Herod, Antipas, who had secured her support. Like the Pompeian graffiti mentioned above, the sons of Herod going through the efforts of securing Salome's support suggests that her support held a certain weight in successfully securing the throne.⁴⁴

Women wielding political power seems to be more accepted in the Hellenistic and Jewish traditions than it was in the Roman.⁴⁵ Salome was eventually proclaimed mistress of Jamnia, Azotus and Phaesalis by Herod's will and was given the city of Ascalon by Augustus himself.⁴⁶ About sixty years before, Alexandra Salome was chosen as the successor of her husband, king Alexander Jannaeus⁴⁷ and ruled the Jews for around nine years.⁴⁸ However, she also gained her influence through a scheme. When her former husband Aristobulus I was king, she got rid of his brother Antigonus through deception and, after the death of Aristobulus, installed Jannaeus on the throne.⁴⁹ Alexandra subsequently married Jannaeus and became queen after his death. Josephus is positive of some aspects of Alexandra's reign.

especially 330; E. Liebowitz, 'Josephus' ambivalent attitude towards women and power: The case of queen Alexandra', *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 6:2 (2015) 188.

⁴² Joseph., *BJ*, 1.475 – 480.

⁴³ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.534 – 535.

⁴⁴ Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman World*, 297 – 298.

⁴⁵ For the Roman tradition, see for example: K. Milnor, 'Women in Roman society' in: M. Peachin ed., *The Oxford handbook of social relations in the Roman World* (New York/Oxford 2011) 609 – 622. For the Hellenistic tradition, see: M. Minas-Nerpel, 'Regnant women in Egypt' in: E. D. Carney and S. Müller eds., *The Routledge companion to women and monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean world* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 22 – 34; R. Strootman, 'Women and dynasty at the Hellenistic imperial courts' in: E. D. Carney and S. Müller eds., *The Routledge companion to women and monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean world* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 333 – 345. For the Jewish tradition, see: J. Wilker, 'Hasmonean women' in: E. D. Carney and S. Müller eds., *The Routledge companion to women and monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean world* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 222 – 233.

⁴⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.98 – 99. The term mistress (*despotis*) refers to aristocratic women of authority. This title did not give her royal authority. Jamnia, Azotus and Ascalon adjoined each other and are just south of modern-day Tel Aviv. Phaesalis is situated on the west-side of the Jordan valley: Roller, *Cleopatra's daughter*, 73 – 74.

⁴⁷ Henceforth called Jannaeus to avoid confusion with Alexander, son of Herod the Great.

⁴⁸ Alexandra Salome (d. 67 BC) must not be confused with the aforementioned Salome (c. 50BC – c. 10 AD). Alexandra was the namesake of Herod's sister: Roller, *Cleopatra's daughter*, 59 – 78.

⁴⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.75 – 77, 1.85.

According to him, she is a strict observer of the Law, banishing anyone who violates it and lacks the cruelty of her deceased husband. He also calls her a wonderful administrator.⁵⁰ Jannaeus might have seen her as a more capable ruler than either of his two sons, while Alexandra's older age might have freed her from some of the constraints associated with women and allowed her to take on a more masculine role.⁵¹ However, Josephus does not see her as capable of ruling. Despite the positives, it was in fact the Pharisees, a sect within the Jewish religion known for their strict observance of the law, that ruled the country. Because of Alexandra's pioussness, the Pharisee's had free reign to banish and persecute anyone they wanted under Alexandra's rule.⁵² She is described as pious, a positive virtue often associated with women in the Greco-Roman tradition.⁵³ However, this piety allowed the Pharisees to abuse it for their own gain and, through her, rule the country. She is, unlike some male rulers, held accountable for the actions of her sons as well.⁵⁴

While Alexandra Salome and Salome are the two most notable examples from the *Jewish War*, they are not the only ones. Glaphyra, Alexander's wife, was trying to assert her position in the court on behalf of her royal birth. She was the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, a territory in modern day Türkiye. Glaphyra's emphasis on high birth angered the other women in court as Glaphyra was constantly mocking them (mainly Salome and Herod's wives) for their low birth.⁵⁵ Doris, Herod's first wife and mother of Antipater, was involved in a plot against Herod, also involving Antipater, Pheroras and his wife and Herod's wife Mariamme II. Antipater would complain to Doris that he was growing grey while waiting to inherit the throne.⁵⁶ While Glaphyra's intentions are not mentioned, her husband Alexander was the intended heir to Herod at that point. Doris is supporting her son in his bid for the throne. Since it was harder for women to gain status, they oftentimes supported their male kin to promote themselves and their families.⁵⁷ Doris had supported Antipater before when competing with his half-brothers and plots against Herod to raise Antipater to the throne. Visibly, both women were trying to increase their own influence within the court, Glaphyra by emphasising her royal birth, while Doris tries to elevate her son.

As shown, women had influence within the Jewish court and were competing with one another. However, Josephus' ideals seem to clash with the situation that he describes in this part of the narrative. None of the women described above are judged positively. Alexandra is depicted as a puppet-ruler of

⁵⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.107 – 119.

⁵¹ Liebowitz, 'Josephus' ambivalent attitude towards women and power', 184, 205.

⁵² Joseph., *BJ*, 1.107 – 119.

⁵³ For Roman women, see: E. Hemelrijk, 'Women's daily life in the Roman West', 896; A. Keith, 'Women in Augustan literature', in: S. L. James and S. Dillon eds., *A companion to women in the Ancient world* (Chichester 2012) 396. For Jewish women, see: Lieber, 'Jewish women', 331 – 332.

⁵⁴ Liebowitz, 'Josephus' ambivalent attitude towards women and power', 202.

⁵⁵ This takes place after Mariamme I's death. After her death, Herod had a number of wives, as polygamy was allowed under Jewish Law: Joseph., *BJ*, 1.476 – 477.

⁵⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.584 – 600.

⁵⁷ Bielman, 'Female patronage', 247 – 248; Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 100. This can also be seen in public patronage by women, although the reasons for this are not merely to promote family: E. Hemelrijk, *Hidden lives, public personae: Women and civic life in the Roman West* (London/New York 2015) 164 – 180.

the Pharisees, while Salome is described as hostile towards her relatives.⁵⁸ All of the women are involved in schemes against other members of the royal court. This negative judgement is most explicit in the case of Pheroras' wife, who is called a "creature" by Josephus. She is also accused of having bewitched Pheroras with the use of drugs.⁵⁹ Witchcraft was specifically prohibited by the Bible, making this a serious charge against her.⁶⁰ However, magic was a part of "folk" religion.⁶¹ Therefore, this accusation likely says more about Josephus' view of the custom, as he came from a family of priests and adhered more closely to the Bible compared to regular people. While religious reasons might have made Josephus' judgement of Pheroras' wife the most explicit, none of the women involved in the intrigues of the court are valued positively. His negative descriptions of these women indicates that Josephus saw the political sphere as unfit for women. This is not a unique view: the political sphere was seen as masculine and unfit for women in the Roman tradition, as they were confined to the household.⁶² Therefore, Josephus' views are typical for male members of the elite of that time.

2.2 Evaluation of men

Not only does Josephus judge the women for their own conduct, but he also uses the women to judge the men associated with them, as the conduct of women reflects on the men as well. This was a common rhetorical use of women in Antiquity. Many authors used the behaviour of women themselves and the behaviour of men towards women to judge the men in question.⁶³ An example of this can be found in Josephus' narrative of Herod's death. Afraid that the Jews will celebrate his death due to his unpopularity, Herod locks up distinguished men from all over Judea and orders them to be massacred the moment he passes away. This way Herod will force all of Judea to mourn his death. However, when Herod dies and before Salome announces his death to the soldiers, she frees the men Herod had locked up.⁶⁴ Josephus condemns Herod for this, calling the scheme outrageous.⁶⁵ Salome's priority being the release of these prisoners underlines the outrageousness of Herod's decision. Salome's action would even be remembered as a great public benefaction.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ Roller, *Cleopatra's daughter*, 77.

⁵⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.572, 1.578.

⁶⁰ M. Bar-Ilan, *Some Jewish Women in Antiquity* (Providence 2020) 114.

⁶¹ Lieber, 'Jewish women', 337.

⁶² Keith, 'Woman in Augustan literature', 396; Milnor, 'Women in Roman society', 609 – 622.

⁶³ For example, both Tacitus and Suetonius use this rhetoric in their narratives of Nero, the Year of the Four Emperors and the Flavians, Ambühl, 'The Flavians and their women', 58 – 70. Women, masculinity and femininity also play a prominent part in the satires of Juvenal: C. Nappa, *Making men ridiculous: Juvenal and the anxieties of the individual* (Ann Arbor 2018), especially 127 – 166. Criticism of women can serve as a more general criticism as well. Tacitus criticises Agrippina the Younger for example to show the deterioration of the Julio-Claudian dynasty: M. Icks, 'Agrippina, Theodora and Fredegund as evil empresses in the historiographical tradition' in: S. A. Samoilenko red., *Routledge handbook of character assassination and reputation management* (New York 2020) 183 – 195, especially 183 – 187 and 192 – 193.

⁶⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.659 – 666.

⁶⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.659.

⁶⁶ Roller, *Cleopatra's daughter*, 72.

Herod's relationship with Mariamme I is another example of this. Josephus specifically states that Mariamme is the one that brought discord into Herod's household. However, Herod does not notice her being the cause of all his calamities in his personal life, as he is too infatuated with her.⁶⁷ In the Judaic tradition, women are often seen as the origin of evil through the common comparisons with Eve.⁶⁸ This narrative mirrors that of Mark Antony, who Josephus describes on multiple occasions as being a slave to Cleopatra due to his passion for her.⁶⁹ Control of emotion is a virtue among Romans and a sign for effective leadership, while unrestrained emotion was one of the characteristics of barbarians among the Greeks.⁷⁰ Both Herod and Antony are judged for this lack of emotional restraint, as their passion for their women allow these women to control them. This comparison between Mariamme and Cleopatra is even made explicit by Josephus himself. When the charges of adultery are brought against Mariamme, one of the accusations is that she sent a portrait of herself to Antony. As Josephus states:

This accusation struck Herod like a thunderbolt. His love intensified his jealousy; he reflected on Cleopatra's craft which had brought both King Lysanias and the Arab Malchus to their end; he was menaced, he reckoned, with the loss not merely of his consort but of his life.⁷¹

Cleopatra is also described as scheming and bloodthirsty, having murdered her entire family yet still not being satisfied.⁷² The comparison between Mariamme and Cleopatra is certainly not meant to be a positive association. Not only are Herod and Antony compared and judged for their lack of control over their emotions, but Herod is also indirectly compared to Cleopatra herself. Cleopatra's bloodthirstiness stems from her persecution of family members, a characteristic of Herod that Josephus spends a large portion of the first book of the *Jewish War* on. Herod having multiple wives is another way in which his behaviour towards women is negatively judged. Although having multiple wives was allowed according to Jewish laws, monogamy was still preferred, while for the Greeks, polygamy was one of the characteristics of barbarians.⁷³

⁶⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.431 – 437.

⁶⁸ For the Judaic tradition, see for example: Lieber, 'Jewish women', 331; Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 105. For the Greco-Roman tradition, see for example: Scott, 'Women and gender relations in the Roman Empire', 186.

⁶⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.243, 1.359, 1.390.

⁷⁰ Mirguet, 'Josephus' lamentations in the Judean War', 526; J. Fabre-Serris, A. Keith and F. Klein, 'Introduction' in: idem, *Identities, Ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity* (Berlin/Boston 2021) 2.

⁷¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.440.

⁷² Joseph., *BJ*, 1.359 – 365.

⁷³ For Jewish views on polygamy, see: M. R. D'Angelo, 'Sexuality in Jewish writings from 200 BCE to 200 CE', in: T. K. Hubbard red., *A companion to Greek and Roman sexualities* (Hoboken 2014) 543 – 557; Lieber, 'Jewish women', 341. For Greek and Roman views on polygamy, see: J. Roisman, 'Greek and Roman ehtnosexuality' in: T. K. Hubbard red., *A companion to Greek and Roman sexualities* (Hoboken 2014) 405 – 423; Fabre-Serris, Keith and Klein, 'Introduction', 2.

However, Herod is not merely judged negatively. After being crowned king of the Jews by Antony around 40 BC, he still had to defeat Antigonus, grandson of Jannaeus, to assume the throne. When trying to take the city of Jericho, a city near the Dead Sea in the modern-day West Bank, he found the city deserted. Five hundred men were encamped on the nearby hills with their wives and children. Herod captures these people but releases them again later.⁷⁴ This shows Herod to be a good commander, as he does not mercilessly slaughter the men and women. This is especially the case when comparing Herod's conduct with that of the Romans and Jews among his rank when they capture Jerusalem in the same conflict. After capturing the city, the Romans were angry at the length of the siege, while the Jews were eager to eliminate all opponents. They massacred the population, despite Herod's desperate attempts to put a halt to actions of the "madmen", paying no heed to "infancy" and "helpless womanhood".⁷⁵ Josephus' choice of words points out the helplessness of the women and children, emphasising the negative connotations of slaughtering helpless people. Josephus even makes it explicit when he describes Antigonus' surrender:

In this scene Antigonus, regardless alike of his former fortune and that which now was his, came down from the castle and threw himself at the feet of Sossius. The latter, far from pitying his changed condition, burst into uncontrollable laughter and called him Antigone. He did not, however, treat him as a woman and leave him at liberty: no, he was put in irons and kept under strict guard.⁷⁶

In the last sentence, Josephus states that Sossius, a Roman commander involved in the siege of Jerusalem, did not treat Antigonus like a woman by releasing him, instead taking him prisoner. This makes explicit that women are supposed to be left at liberty. While Josephus is talking about taking women as prisoner in this case, it is safe to assume that leaving women at liberty involves keeping them alive as well. Herod releasing the prisoners of Jericho and trying to stop the Jewish and Roman troops from massacring the population of Jerusalem reflects positively on his character. Herod is therefore judged both positively and negatively in the *Jewish War*. This is explained by Josephus. While Herod was publicly prosperous, his private life was plagued by discord and trouble.⁷⁷ Helen Bond explains this change of character as an attempt by Josephus to show that kingship in general was flawed. For a large part of their history, the Jews were governed by high priests. While emphasizing Herod's good characteristics showed the Jews' loyalty to Rome, his change in character can be seen in the light of Josephus' background. Coming from a Hasmonean family, he resents Herod, while his priestly background opposes him to the monarchy.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.282, 1.301 – 303.

⁷⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.351 – 353.

⁷⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.351 – 353.

⁷⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, .431.

⁷⁸ H. K. Bond, 'Josephus on Herod's domestic intrigue in the Jewish war', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43:3 (2012) 309 – 314.

Herod is not the only one who is judged through the women associated with him. Pheroras is another example of a man subjected to judgement by Josephus because of the women associated with him. Pheroras and his womenfolk, consisting of his wife, sister-in-law and mother, are all involved in the plot against Herod. Despite the bad qualities of his wife, Pheroras refuses to divorce her, stating he would rather die.⁷⁹ While loyalty and self-sacrifice are usually positive virtues, I argue that, because of his wives' negative qualities and Josephus' overwhelmingly negative judgement of her, these normally positive virtues become negative. This point is supported by Josephus' negative evaluation of Pheroras' character later in the narrative. Due to the actions of his wife and Pheroras' refusal to divorce her, Herod and his brother grow apart. Pheroras even vows he would never visit Herod again, staying true to his word even when Herod falls ill. When Pheroras himself is struck by sickness, Herod does visit him and grieves for him on his deathbed, with Josephus stating that Herod showed greater humanity than Pheroras did. Josephus' ending remark on Pheroras is that "such was the end to which came one of the murderers of Alexander and Aristobulus".⁸⁰ Indirectly condemning Pheroras' lack of humanity for his sick brother and remembering him as one of the murderers of Alexander and Aristobulus shows a negative valuation of Pheroras by Josephus.

2.3 Wives, mothers, and feminine men

Women are also important to men because of their role as wives and mothers. In these roles, women can even have influence on the dynasties that they are a part of; women of status can be used to, for example, forge alliances through (arranged) marriages.⁸¹ Josephus shows this in the *Jewish War* through the marriage of Glaphyra with Alexander. After Archelaus intermediates on behalf of Alexander and Herod's brother Pheroras, he offers to give Glaphyra to another man within the Herodian family. Archelaus emphasises that his deepest desire was to keep the marriage ties that linked him and Herod intact.⁸² This is not the only time marriage is mentioned in connection with forming alliances. Herod had married into the Hasmonean family by wedding Mariamme to make peace with his opponents, while Antipater reconciled in a similar way with Herod's sister Salome by arranging a marriage for her daughter Berenice, who had been widowed after the death of Aristobulus.⁸³

Marriage could lend credibility to the heir of the throne as well.⁸⁴ After Antipater had disposed of the main threats to his ambitions, Alexander and Aristobulus, Herod made wedding arrangements for

⁷⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.571 – 572.

⁸⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.578 – 581.

⁸¹ J. Wilker, 'Noble death and dynasty: a popular tradition from the Hasmonean period in Josephus', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 48:1 (2017) 71; A. Glazebrook and K. Olson, 'Greek and Roman marriage' in: T. K. Hubbard red., *A companion to Greek and Roman sexualities* (Hoboken 2014) 73 – 86.

⁸² Joseph., *BJ*, 1.508.

⁸³ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.241, 1.553.

⁸⁴ E. D. Carney and S. Müller, 'Introduction to thinking about women and monarchy in the Ancient world', in: idem, *The Routledge companion to women and monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean world* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 3 – 7; K. Schnegg, 'The imperial women from the Flavians to the Severi', in: E. D. Carney and S.

the children of the latter two. The most prominent of these was the marriage between the son of Alexander and the daughter of Pheroras.⁸⁵ Alexander's son was the grandson of king Archelaus through his mother Glaphyra, while becoming the son-in-law of a tetrarch through marriage.⁸⁶ The link created with these two powerful men made Alexander's son a real threat to the throne for Antipater. As the son of a mother of common birth, Antipater's claim to the throne was not as strong as his familial connection did not lend the same legitimacy. Therefore, Antipater pleaded to his father to change the planned marriages. While this angered Herod, he changed the marriages and Antipater regarded his succession secure.⁸⁷ The effort Antipater goes through to change the marriages shows the importance of women in this regard. This is also indicated by Herod's anger at Antipater's successful attempt to influence a change in the marriages. This was one way for Herod to control who would succeed him to the throne, and his lack of success angered Herod. This change of heart, despite his anger, suggests that Herod was himself unsure who his preferred successor was. This is also indicated by the frequent change of appointed heir and of his will in the later stages of his life.⁸⁸

As mothers, women were important to dynasties as the bearers of the heir to the throne.⁸⁹ Their influence can be seen when Josephus describes Nero becoming heir. Despite not being of blood relation to Claudius and him already having a legitimate heir in Britannicus, Agrippina convinces Claudius to make Nero his heir.⁹⁰ Motherhood was a way for women to acquire status in Antiquity.⁹¹ In the Roman, Hellenistic, and Judaic worlds being a mother was a symbol of status. In the Roman world, women could acquire the status of *ius liberorum* after bearing three children (or four in case of a freed woman), giving them full legal capacity as property owners.⁹² This meant that they did not need a guardian's approval to sell or otherwise dispose of property. In Jewish culture, the next generation would inherit and maintain the covenant with God, while the man would live on through his sons. In this regard, mothers were vital.⁹³ Josephus alludes to the importance of mothers through the care the men take in protecting them. During his campaign against Antigonus, Herod leaves his brother Joseph in command of the main campaign, while he goes off to Masada to rescue his mother and other members of his family.⁹⁴ Josephus implicitly alludes to the status of mothers through the condemnation of Antigonus'

Müller eds., *The Routledge companion to women and monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean world* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 411 – 422, especially 414.

⁸⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.557.

⁸⁶ Tetrarchs were minor rulers within the Jewish kingdom; D. Vollmer, 'Tetrarchie Bemerkungen Zum Gebrauch Eines Antiken Und Modernen Begriffes', *Hermes* 119:4 (1991) 439 – 440.

⁸⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.565, 1.567.

⁸⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.451, 1.600, 1.646, 1.664.

⁸⁹ Benoist, *Women and imperium in Rome*, 276 – 279; Carney and Müller, 'Introduction', 3 – 7.

⁹⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.248 – 249.

⁹¹ Hemelrijk, *Women and society in the Roman world*, 104 – 105.

⁹² *Ibidem*.

⁹³ C. A. Reeder, 'Pity the women and children: punishment by siege in Josephus's Jewish War', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44:2 (2013) 191.

⁹⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.303.

cruelty towards his mother, who he had imprisoned and starved to death in captivity.⁹⁵ The status of mothers is important in Josephus' depictions of women during conflict.

Men are also judged if they display unmanly behaviour. In the passage regarding Antigonus' surrender quoted above, Antigonus is judged for his surrender to the Roman commander. Sossius calling him Antigone, the female equivalent of his name, considers his behaviour as feminine. Begging for surrender by throwing yourself at the feet of the victor is not deemed to be manly. Another example of this is in the conflict between John Hyrcanus and Ptolemy at the beginning of book one.⁹⁶ While besieging Ptolemy, the latter starts openly torturing John's mother whenever John has the upper hand, while his mother implores John not to let her agony dissuade him from pressing his advantage. However, John is "unmanned" and overcome by emotion when he sees his mother's suffering.⁹⁷ Again, lack of emotional control is negatively judged and here even explicitly equated with lack of manliness. This is reflected in the result of the siege as well. John does not press his advantage and Ptolemy manages to escape to the despot of Philadelphia. However, in the end, this does not negatively affect John's memory:

For the rest of his days John lived in prosperity, and, after excellently directing the government for thirty-one whole years, died leaving five sons; truly a blessed individual and one who left no ground for complaint against fortune as regards himself. He was the only man to unite in his person three of the highest privileges: the supreme command of the nation, the high priesthood, and the gift of prophecy.⁹⁸

2.4 Self-sacrifice

The story of John besieging Ptolemy also contains the theme of self-sacrifice, which is prominent throughout the *Jewish War*. Women are willing to sacrifice their lives for the greater good on multiple occasions. In this case, John's mother is willing to die at the hands of Ptolemy for John to conclude the siege successfully and further the Hasmonean dynasty. Vengeance for Ptolemy's murder of her husband, Simon, is more important to her than her own life. John can exact this vengeance by successfully defeating Ptolemy, but he succumbs to his emotions at the sight of his beaten mother.

Another example takes place in Scythopolis right before the outset of the war in 66 AD. With war imminent, gentiles of multiple cities turned against the Jewish population of the cities. The Jews in Scythopolis remained loyal however, fighting against Jews attacking the city looking for revenge. However, fearing the Jewish inhabitants of the city would turn against them, the gentiles had the Jews locked up in a cave to prove their loyalty. After two nights, the gentiles suddenly attacked. Simon, who

⁹⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.71

⁹⁶ This Ptolemy should not be confused with kings from Ptolemaic Egypt. This Ptolemy is known as the "son of Abubus" and his power was based from Jericho: R. D. Nelson, *Historical Roots of the Old Testament (1200–63 BCE)* (Atlanta 2014) 251 – 252.

⁹⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.54 – 60.

⁹⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.68 – 69.

had fought in defence of the city, killed his whole family as an act of retribution for fighting against fellow Jews and their misplaced trust in “aliens”. This included his mother, wife, and children, who willingly plunged themselves onto Simon’s sword.⁹⁹ With this act of self-sacrifice, they attempt to atone for their sins against fellow Jews. Self-sacrifice is often related to the Jewish faith in the *Jewish War*. It is not reserved to men or women only; usually it involves both genders who can display their piety in this way, as piety is a virtue expected of both genders.¹⁰⁰ It also serves the function of protest. When emperor Gaius wants to erect statues of himself in Jerusalem, Jews protest this as placing a statue of a god or man goes against the Laws. When Petronius, the governor of Syria responsible for executing the order, is met by a vast amount of Jews, they claim that if Gaius wants to set up these statues, he will first have to “slaughter the entire Jewish nation”. They presented themselves, their wives, and children ready for the slaughter.¹⁰¹ The Jews that petitioned to Petronius would rather sacrifice themselves than see their sacred Laws be defied by Gaius. This show of piety is successful as well. Due to this show of their piety and contempt of death, Petronius is willing to defy Gaius and sacrifice himself on behalf of the Jewish people. In Josephus’ description of the event, Petronius even calls on God in his answer to the Jews.¹⁰² Both the Jews and Petronius showcase their pious natures and are positively judged for this, as they are willing to sacrifice themselves to protect the Jewish Laws.

2.5 Women’s participation in conflicts

Lastly, women play a role during the various conflicts that Josephus describes in the first two books. Here, their role as mothers plays a vital role, as women and their children represent the future. By destroying them, the victorious side can eliminate a city or even a people.¹⁰³ Self-sacrifice can serve to preserve honour, by taking away the spoils of victory, in this case the rape, capture and enslavement of women and children.¹⁰⁴ This fate is no less horrible than being defeated and killed or enslaved. This fate can be used to inspire the defenders to fight to the bitter end.¹⁰⁵ Josephus makes use of this motivation in the speech given by Agrippa II. In this speech, Agrippa implores the Jewish people to put an end to the rebellion for the sake of their women and children. If the Jewish people are determined to go to war with Rome, “What is there, then, to prevent you from dispatching with your own hands your children and wives and from consigning this surpassingly beautiful home of yours to the flames?”¹⁰⁶ Defending the women is an important reason to fight wars, as they represent the future. Agrippa uses

⁹⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.466 – 476.

¹⁰⁰ See for example: Keith, ‘Women in Augustan literature’, 396; Lieber, ‘Jewish women’, 331; C. F. Noreña, ‘The Communication of the Emperor’s Virtues’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001) 146–68.

¹⁰¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.184 – 198.

¹⁰² Joseph., *BJ*, 2.198 – 202.

¹⁰³ Reeder, ‘Pity the women and children’, 186; Reeder, ‘Wartime rape’, 373.

¹⁰⁴ Reeder, ‘Pity the women and children’, 182.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, 182 – 185.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.395.

this to try to convince the Jews not to start a war they cannot win, as they will send their own wives and children to their deaths.

Thus, Josephus sees the murder and enslavement of women and children as a merciless act. Josephus uses this to condemn the procurator of Judea Florus as he crucifies Jewish men and slaughters their wives and children before their eyes. To emphasise Florus' criminal behaviour, he mentions that some of the crucified men were Roman citizens as well, as they were normally exempted from humiliating execution methods, to emphasise Florus' criminal behaviour.¹⁰⁷ To prevent the emperor from prosecuting Florus for this behaviour, he tries to cause a distraction by fanning the flames of war.¹⁰⁸ With this, Josephus attempts to show the mismanagement of Judea by the Roman administrators. This act fits the narrative of book two, in which a multitude of crimes and injustices committed by the Roman administrators are highlighted. Josephus does not put the blame for the war solely on the Jews but highlights the Roman mismanagement as well. Florus' contempt of the Jews is underlined by his disrespectful attitude towards queen Bernice, sister of Agrippa. When she seeks an audience with Florus to implore him to put a stop to the massacre, she is shown no respect and almost killed by the Roman soldiers.¹⁰⁹

Besides being victims and peace negotiators, women and children could also be used as a bargaining tool. Ptolemy used John's mother in this way to get him to suspend the siege, while queen Alexandra locks up her son's wife and children after her son rises up against her.¹¹⁰ In a similar way, to elicit the Parthians to invade Judea, Lysanias the Elder of Ituraea promised the payment of a thousand talents and five hundred women.¹¹¹ Women could even have a more active role in warfare. Queen Alexandra, for example, successfully bolstered her army with mercenaries, while news of Herod's escape is brought to his brother Phasaël by a female informant.¹¹² Since Alexandra was the only queen described by Josephus who ruled in her own right, this was not a common occurrence. The same is true for the female informant, which is only alluded to once.¹¹³ Therefore, it cannot be ascertained how common female informers were. However, it does demonstrate one of the many ways that women were involved in war, even if they did not actively fight. For this reason, Caryn Reeder calls women and other non-combatants "unarmed combatants", as they are inevitably involved in war.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.308 – 308.

¹⁰⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.283.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.311 – 314.

¹¹⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.54 – 56, 1.118.

¹¹¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.248, 1.272.

¹¹² Joseph., *BJ*, 1.112.

¹¹³ Joseph., *BJ*, 1.112.

¹¹⁴ Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 177.

3. Warring women: gender roles during the First Jewish-Roman War

Josephus narrates the First Jewish-Roman War in books three through seven. In this narrative, women are pushed more towards the background. They are not necessarily mentioned less often, but they are described in a more generic way. While books one and two mention multiple women by name, only one contemporary woman is named in books three through seven. This woman is Maria, who only plays a minor role in the overall narrative of the *Jewish War*. Only two other women are mentioned by name, namely Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and Cleopatra.

3.1 Women as an evaluative tool

As these books tell the narrative of the war, they give more insight into the role of women during war. In the *Jewish War* the role of women is rather passive, as war was a masculine sphere.¹¹⁵ Therefore, Josephus limits the role of women to emphasise the masculinity of the Jews. When Josephus mentions women, it is mostly in connection with the fate of a city during or after a siege. While this role is passive, the women's fate does say something about Josephus' intentions. Women can be used in criticisms regarding war.¹¹⁶ General massacre is again being used to condemn the perpetrators, mainly the Jewish rebel leaders.¹¹⁷ This happens on multiple occasions, mainly surrounding the narrative of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Already before the siege had started, the people suffered because of the actions of the rebel leaders. When the leader of the Zealots John of Gischala is besieged within the city by the high priest Ananus, he calls on the help of the Idumeans, a people from the south of Judea.¹¹⁸ One of the priests, Jesus, speaks to the Idumeans from the wall, stating that they came to John under false pretences.¹¹⁹ Jesus claimed that it was the Zealots who were responsible for the many crimes that left men dead and women and children dressed in black mourning attire.¹²⁰ As houses were the domain of women, the rebels searching houses for food and loot also transgressed against women by invading their space.¹²¹ The Idumeans, discontent with the fact they were not let into the city on arrival, killed Ananus and massacred a part of the population due to their fury. The speech by Jesus shows who Josephus saw as the guilty party for the atrocities. This is made clear by his evaluation of the Idumeans' conduct and the praise for Ananus and Jesus in the passages that follow. Josephus highly praises the

¹¹⁵ Benoist, 'women and *imperium*', 273 – 274.

¹¹⁶ Fabre-Serris and Keith, 'introduction', 3.

¹¹⁷ Mirguet, 'Josephus' lamentations in the *Jewish War*', 535.

¹¹⁸ The Zealots were, after the death of the high priest Ananus, one of the two main factions within Jerusalem during the siege. For more: R. A. Horsley, 'The Zealots. Their Origin, Relationships and Importance in the Jewish Revolt', *Novum Testamentum* 28:2 (1986) 159 – 192.

¹¹⁹ John had called on the Idumeans, stating that the people of Jerusalem were ready to capitulate to the Romans: Joseph., *BJ*, 4.228 – 229.

¹²⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 4.260.

¹²¹ Lieber, 'Jewish women', 338.

priests and even states that the loss of the war and the “downfall of the Jewish state” started with the death of Ananus.¹²² The horrors that take place during the siege, such as famine, are also blamed on the rebel leaders by Josephus. Old men and women are praying for the Romans to take the city, so that they would be freed from the internal miseries caused by the warring factions in the city.¹²³ Josephus makes use of gender roles within this narrative to emphasise the disorder during the siege. Normal gender roles are reversed because of the raging famine. Actions that would normally be shameful are now a common occurrence, as wives steal food from their husbands and mothers from their babies.¹²⁴

The most explicit description of the rebels’ femininity is when Josephus describes the rebels’ crossdressing and committing various crimes. They put make-up on their face and wear women’s clothes to enhance their beauty. They indulge in feminine sexual passions as well and Josephus likens their conduct to a brothel.¹²⁵ Beauty is a virtue associated with women, meaning Josephus effeminizes the rebel leaders by describing them in this way.¹²⁶ They do not only transgress gender roles in their appearance, but in their sexual activities as well. This is also the one of the few times that Josephus alludes to the rape of women. Rape is often used as a weapon in warfare, as it symbolises the utter defeat of the enemy.¹²⁷ However, rape is largely absent from the narrative of the *Jewish War*. Besides references to rape as a reason to commit suicide instead of suffering defeat at the hands of the Romans, this is the only time that rape is committed. The fact that it is committed on the Jewish side is a strong critique of the rebel leaders. Rape is often a characteristic of tyrants in the Greco-Roman tradition.¹²⁸ Therefore, Josephus likens the rebels’ violation of women to tyrannical behaviour, emphasising the nature of their rule in Jerusalem. Rape is prohibited by Jewish law as well, which further condemns the rebels, while also being a possible explanation Josephus makes no mention of Romans violating women.¹²⁹ It also highlights the impiety of the rebels, a theme that becomes common from book four onwards.

The rebels are not the only ones evaluated through their behaviour towards the victims of war. Romans are described in various ways as well. On most occasions, the Romans kill the fighting men and reduce non-combatants to slavery. This was a common fate for defeated cities in Antiquity.¹³⁰ Josephus is not uncritical of this aspect of Roman warfare. The prevalence of self-sacrifice by the Jews implicitly condemns the Romans’ treatment of captives.¹³¹ This becomes clearer when the Romans

¹²² Joseph., *BJ*, 4.314, 3.318 – 325.

¹²³ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.28.

¹²⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.429 – 430.

¹²⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 4.560 – 564.

¹²⁶ Lieber, ‘Jewish women’, 332; Trümper, ‘Gender and space’, 289; Liebowitz, Josephus’ ambivalent attitudes towards women and power’, 198.

¹²⁷ Reeder, ‘Wartime rape’.

¹²⁸ Keith, ‘Cicero’s Verres’, 74; Reeder, ‘Wartime rape’, 368.

¹²⁹ Reeder, ‘Wartime rape’, 373 – 375, 381.

¹³⁰ Reeder, ‘Wartime rape’, 378; Ducrey, ‘War in the feminine in Ancient Greece’, 195 – 196; Reeder, ‘Pity the women and children’, 184.

¹³¹ Reeder, ‘Gender, war and Josephus’, 82.

engage in a massacre of the cities' population. They resort to this when the siege has been especially difficult, such as taking a long time or suffering heavy losses at the hands of the defenders. An example of this is the siege at Gamala in September through November of 67 AD. The Romans had suffered heavy losses in their first attempt to take the city, even being driven out of the city by the Jewish defenders.¹³² When they did finally subdue the town, they engaged in a general massacre of the population, even going as far as slinging infants from the citadel.¹³³ The anger of the Romans following their earlier defeat won out against the Romans' usual discipline. The Romans let their emotions guide their action, tainting their manliness. Roman military values were important in constructing Roman masculinity.¹³⁴ Discipline was one of these military virtues.¹³⁵ Lack of discipline leads to multiple defeats during the war, such as during the Gamalan siege. Titus and Vespasian are not criticised this way. Josephus emphasises their prowess in battle, serving as an example for the soldiers when they lack discipline.¹³⁶ They are also more merciful towards the Jews. Titus stops the massacre at Tarichaeae after the guilty party has been dealt with.¹³⁷ He offers terms to the inhabitants of Gischala, as he is sick of the bloodshed and realises that the population will suffer if the city would be taken by way of siege.¹³⁸ A further indication of Josephus exempting the Flavian emperors from criticism, is the omission of Titus' amorous relationship with queen Berenice, likely as it was valued negatively in Rome.¹³⁹ As the Flavians were the patrons of Josephus, this more positive depiction of the emperors is to be expected.

The passive role of women does not limit itself to victimhood. During sieges women also remain passive. On three occasions, the women merely shriek when the Romans start their attack on the settlement.¹⁴⁰ While on two occasions, this serves as a passing comment by Josephus to depict the horror of the non-combatants, on one occasion Josephus goes into more detail. During the siege of Jotapata in June and July of 67 AD, the women shriek when the Romans are attacking the walls. Josephus, himself the protagonist within the story, is afraid that their shrieks will affect the courage of the fighting men and locks the women up in their houses. As Josephus is both the narrator of the story and an actor within the story, the suffix "the protagonist" will be added when the actor is referenced instead of the narrator. This passage gives more insight into the passive role of women. The shriek of women can be useful as a warning to the defenders that the attack has begun.¹⁴¹ However, Josephus the

¹³² Joseph., *BJ*, 4.17 – 30.

¹³³ Joseph., *BJ*, 82 – 83.

¹³⁴ Fabre-Serris, Keith and Klein, 'Introduction', 4; Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus, 67'; K. Berthelot, *Jews and their Roman rivals: Pagan Rome's challenge to Israel* (Princeton 2021) 113 – 116; C. Goldberg, *Roman masculinity and politics from Republic to Empire* (Abingdon/New York 2021) 16 – 18, 40 and 105 – 107.

¹³⁵ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 69, 75.

¹³⁶ E.g. Joseph., *BJ*, .90 – 94.

¹³⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.501.

¹³⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 4.92 – 93.

¹³⁹ Ambühl, 'The Flavians and their women', 67.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.248, 3.262, 4.309.

¹⁴¹ Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 182.

protagonist deems them a danger to the manliness of the fighting men. They are therefore totally removed from the battlefield, giving them no role in the siege of Jotapata whatsoever.¹⁴²

3.2 Women as active participants in the war

There are a few instances where women do play a more direct and active role. On one occasion, during the siege of Japha in July of 67 AD, the women pelt the Roman attackers from the rooftops.¹⁴³ This is a role of women in warfare that historiographers use frequently.¹⁴⁴ Josephus only makes use of this archetype on this one occasion. During other sieges the women do not take on a more active role in the defence. However, during the conflict between Ananus and the Zealots, Josephus states that relatives of injured civilians carry the wounded to their houses.¹⁴⁵ However, caution for general statements like this is necessary. Women are not explicitly mentioned in aiding in carrying the wounded. While relatives likely include female relatives as well, Josephus makes a distinction between the ‘whole populace’ and women in book seven:

But when he was reported to be approaching and those who had gone ahead were telling of the affability of his reception of each party, the whole remaining population, with wives and children, were by now waiting at the road-sides to receive him...¹⁴⁶

In this passage, Josephus makes a distinction between “the whole remaining populace” and wives. This is an indication that whenever Josephus uses phrases describing a larger group of people, it does not necessarily include wives and children. However, Josephus could make the distinction here to emphasise the enthusiasm of the population in welcoming Vespasian. However, we should still be careful when generalising statements like “relatives” and “the whole population”, as this passage shows.

Lastly, women can act as informers. On two occasions, women give information to the Romans. This is not necessarily valued as a positive role for them. After the siege of Jotapata, when Josephus the protagonist is in hiding, a woman betrays his location to the Romans.¹⁴⁷ While Josephus the narrator does not explicitly judge this betrayal, it contrasts starkly with a preceding passage. During the siege, the Romans capture a man and try to get information out of him through torture. However, the man does not say a word and is finally executed with a smile on his face.¹⁴⁸ The contrast between the man’s silence and the woman is stark. No mention of torture is made by Josephus in connection with the woman, suggesting the information was freely given. Therefore, his positive judgement of the man’s silence

¹⁴² Reeder, ‘Gender, war and Josephus’, 77.

¹⁴³ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.303.

¹⁴⁴ Reeder, ‘Pity the women and children’, 182; Ducrey, ‘War in the feminine’, 184.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 4.201.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 7.70.

¹⁴⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.344.

¹⁴⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.321 – 322.

implicitly judges the woman for freely giving the Romans information. It reaffirms Josephus' judgement of women as weak. On the other occasion, Josephus is not negative towards the informant. Two women, along with five children, survive the mass-suicide at Masada in 73/74 AD and inform the Romans of what happened.¹⁴⁹ Josephus calls one of the women "superior in sagacity and training to most of her sex".¹⁵⁰ The reason why this woman is judged positively has to do with the nature of the information that she provides to the Romans. While the woman of Jotapata betrays Josephus, the two women at Masada inform the Romans of the Jews' mass suicide. Romans themselves preferred death over surrender and admired understanding the dangers of fighting, but doing so anyway.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the Romans admire the Jews for their sacrifice. The women are therefore positively judged, as they help improve the Jews' image by providing information about the mass-suicide to the Romans.

3.3 Self-sacrifice

Self-sacrifice is a prominent part of book seven, especially surrounding the siege of Masada. Eleazar, the leader of the rebels at the stronghold, gives two speeches expanding on the reasons that sacrifice is preferable. In the first speech, the main reasons are to atone with God and to protect the women and children from falling into the Roman hands.¹⁵² Romans saw women as loot, as they were the 'possession' of the enemy.¹⁵³ These two reasons are linked with each other. Eleazar realises that God has abandoned the Jewish people for their sins, making a defence against the Romans futile. Therefore, to keep the women and children from being violated and enslaved by the Romans, death is the preferred solution.¹⁵⁴ This also serves as a way to remove the possible booty resulting from the siege from the Romans, by sacrificing themselves and burning all the loot in the fortress.

The first speech is not enough to convince all the people. For a large part of the men, feelings of pity for their wives and children are stronger than the urge to die at their own hands. Eleazar is even afraid that their emotions will 'unman' the people who were receptive of Eleazar's plan.¹⁵⁵ Josephus frames self-sacrifice in a masculine way here, contrasting with the "unmanly" men who are not willing to sacrifice themselves and their families. Suicide is a drastic way for the Jews to decide their fates for themselves, while protecting their families. Eleazar emphasises this in his second speech. The people unwilling to commit will see their wives and children led away by the Romans, as they are too afraid to sacrifice themselves and their family.¹⁵⁶ Through committing suicide, not only will self-sacrifice make

¹⁴⁹ The exact dating of the siege of Masada is somewhat uncertain. Some scholars say the siege ended in 73 AD, while others argue it ended in 74 AD. See for example: H. M. Cotton, 'The Date of the Fall of Masada: The Evidence of the Masada Papyri', *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 78 (1989) 157–162; D. B. Campbell, 'Dating the Siege of Masada', *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 73 (1988) 156–158.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 7.339 – 400.

¹⁵¹ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 72, 74; Berthelot, *Jews and their Roman rivals*, 231.

¹⁵² Joseph., *BJ*, 7.321 – 336.

¹⁵³ Reeder, 'Wartime rape', 374.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 384.

¹⁵⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, 7.337 – 342.

¹⁵⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 7.382 – 383.

sure their families will not know slavery, it will also go against the Romans' desire to capture everyone alive.¹⁵⁷ This speech is enough to convince everyone, except the two women who inform the Romans of the deed. As said before, they are not portrayed negatively because of this. Josephus likely needed a way for the story to be told to the Romans at that time, as to give it more credibility. These women serve this purpose in the narrative.

Self-sacrifice is not only used for the narrative of the siege of Masada. During the siege of Jotapata, self-sacrifice is also prevalent. It is mainly used to depict the horror of the siege and powerlessness of the Jews. After people have lost hope for the city, they prefer to take their own life instead of perishing from the ensuing famine.¹⁵⁸ At the end of the siege, some of Josephus' hand-picked men are driven to suicide due to their inability to damage the Roman troops. It is used to show the strength of the Roman army, by showing the powerlessness of even Josephus' best fighters.¹⁵⁹ This motif can also be used as a rhetorical tool. Josephus the protagonist uses the promise of eternal glory to inspire the defenders to keep on fighting, even though there is no hope of victory.¹⁶⁰ He again alludes to self-sacrifice in his appeal to the people of Jerusalem, imploring them to lay down their arms to preserve their wives and children. Aware of the fact that the people of Jerusalem might think he might make this appeal out of his will to preserve his wife and family, who were present in the city, he offers them as a sacrifice to show his good intentions. He is also willing to sacrifice himself if this helps convince the people of his good intentions.¹⁶¹

3.4 Women as inspiration

Women are not merely used in the rhetoric surrounding self-sacrifice. Defending the women and children is used on multiple occasions to inspire defenders or explain their fervour in defending a city. This was a common motif in Antiquity and sometimes even identified as the main reason to fight.¹⁶² Josephus the protagonist uses this motif in his speech to inspire the defenders at Jotapata. Alluding to the calamities that will befall them if the Romans are victorious, the defenders need to use the motivation of protecting women and children to avenge the would be victims as if the city had already fallen.¹⁶³ At an earlier stage, before the onset of the siege, the tribune Placidus had attempted to take the city with a surprise attack, in the hope that the other cities would surrender without a fight having seen the military might of the Romans. However, the defenders were able to repulse the attack, "kindled by the thought of the danger threatening their native city, their wives and their children".¹⁶⁴ Women and

¹⁵⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 7.385 – 387.

¹⁵⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.189.

¹⁵⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.331.

¹⁶⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.204.

¹⁶¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.417 – 419.

¹⁶² Reeder, 'Wartime rape', 373; Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 185.

¹⁶³ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.261.

¹⁶⁴ Joseph., *BJ*, 3.110 – 113.

children served as a potent inspiration, as they symbolised the future through their reproductive potential.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, the defenders were able to repulse the Romans in the early attack by Placidus, while dragging out the siege as long as possible. Non-combatant men were willing to risk their lives out of care for their families as well. During the siege of Jerusalem, when famine was raging among the inhabitants, men made daring sorties for food outside of the city wall. These men refrained from deserting out of fear of their families; they would either be caught by the rebels if they attempted to escape with their families, while subjecting them to the rebels' fury if they were to escape without them. These sorties were not without risk either. If they were caught by the Romans, they would be tortured and crucified.¹⁶⁶

This rhetoric of inspiration and motivation can be used in different ways as well. Josephus the protagonist using it in his speech to the people of Jerusalem has already been mentioned. However, it has been used before. Earlier in the same speech Josephus uses the biblical story of Sarah to get the Jews to lay down their arms. When Sarah was taken, despite having a massive army, Abraham first prayed to God to get Him on his side, instead of relying on his military strength alone. The following day, Sarah was returned to him without fighting.¹⁶⁷ Here, the story of Sarah and Abraham serves as an example for the Jews to follow and lay down their arms. According to Josephus in his speech, Jews are not meant to fight, as this would anger God.¹⁶⁸ He emphasises this point by bringing up other instances, such as the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.¹⁶⁹ Without God on their side, the defence of the Jews is useless. The story of Sarah is used to emphasise the importance of religion and God for the Jewish people. Ananus uses women and children in a similar way to rally the population of Jerusalem to revolt against the Zealots. Seeing the Temple defiled by the Zealots, he tries to rally the inhabitants to put a stop to it, "if not for wives and children, yet for God and for the sanctuary".¹⁷⁰ In this case there is something more important than family in need of protecting; God and the Temple. Ananus seems to realise that using women and children to inspire the inhabitants is futile, as the Zealots defiling the Temple is not a direct threat to them. Therefore, he uses this rhetoric to emphasise that, in this case, there is a more pressing threat that concerns all Jewish people.

¹⁶⁵ Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 185 – 186.

¹⁶⁶ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.446 – 451.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.379 – 381.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.390 – 391.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.391.

¹⁷⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 4.191.

4. Changing gender roles

The first two books share some commonalities with books three through seven. Women are used as motivation in both halves. This is a more common theme in the war-time narrative because conflicts take the centre-stage of the narrative in the second half. Women are also used to judge men in both parts of the story. This was a common topos in antique works, so this is not surprising.¹⁷¹ However, the use of this type of rhetoric differs. In the first two books, the men are mainly judged for the way the women associated with them behave. Herod is judged for not noticing Mariamme I bringing discord into his household, while Pheroras is judged for not wanting to divorce his wife, despite the schemes she is involved in. In books three through seven, the men are mainly judged for the way they treat women. The rebels are the cause for the calamities that befall the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They violate women as well, a common theme in antique historiography, but uncommon in the *Jewish War*.¹⁷² These critiques aimed at the rebels are a way for Josephus to pin the blame for the rebellion on its leaders.¹⁷³ By placing the blame on a small group instead of the whole populace, he attempts to remasculinize the Jewish people by shielding them from the charges of femininity.¹⁷⁴ Defeat in warfare is seen as feminine, with defeated peoples often being symbolised through depictions of women on triumphal imagery.¹⁷⁵ This is why women are pushed more towards the periphery of Josephus' narrative in books three through seven. The military sphere is masculine, while the interference of women signifies the failure of the men.¹⁷⁶ The participation of women in supporting roles during war was not uncommon in ancient historiography.¹⁷⁷ However, Josephus limits them to within their 'appropriate sphere' by confining them in their houses and describing them merely as victims, despite a couple exceptions.¹⁷⁸ The active participation of women during the conflict would harm Josephus' efforts to remasculinize the Jewish people, as their participation would indicate the failing of the men. The couple of exceptions, such as the women pelting the Romans from the roofs during the siege at Jotapata, are common in ancient historiography. Therefore, the use of this common topos is not harmful to his efforts.

This is why women are often used in Josephus' narrative to inspire the defenders during the war as well. As said before, defending the women and children is one of the main aims of defenders in a war. Defending women and children is manly, while failing to do so is considered as a failure. The rebels fail in this aim. When fleeing Gischala, John leaves behind the women and children to save himself.¹⁷⁹ The rebels commit various atrocities against women as well. This is another way for

¹⁷¹ See note 63.

¹⁷² Reeder, 'Wartime rape', 365.

¹⁷³ Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 103.

¹⁷⁴ Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 102; Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 67, 79; Reeder, 'Wartime rape', 365.

¹⁷⁵ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 65 – 66; Mirguet, 'Gender in early Jewish literature', 96.

¹⁷⁶ Benoist, 'Women and *imperium* in Rome', 273 – 274.

¹⁷⁷ Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 182; Ducrey, 'War in the feminine', 188 – 191, 198.

¹⁷⁸ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 77, 82.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph, *BJ*, 4.107 – 112.

Josephus to show that the rebels are failing in accomplishing their normative masculine gender roles and to pin the blame on them.

Loyalty to Rome is an important aspect of Josephus' effort to reaffirm the masculinity of the Jews. Once defeated, the Romans considered it manly to be subordinate.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, the Jewish manliness has been damaged by their revolt, as their fight for freedom came more than a century after the subjugation of the region by Pompey the Great. To help reaffirm the masculinity of the Jewish people, Josephus aims to reaffirm the loyalty of the Jews as well. Placing blame on the rebel leaders is one of the ways this is achieved. They are portrayed as disloyal and rejected to lay down their arms, while the Jewish people were positively disposed to the pleas for peace. This can be seen after the speech by Josephus the protagonist to the inhabitants of Jerusalem:

*Yet, though Josephus with tears thus loudly appealed to them, the insurgents neither yielded nor deemed it safe to alter their course. The people, however, were incited to desert ... For Titus dismissed the majority into the country, whithersoever they would; a fact which induced still more to desert, as they would be relieved from the misery within and yet not be enslaved by the Romans. The partisans of John and Simon, however, kept a sharper look-out for the egress of these refugees than for the ingress of Romans, and whoever afforded but a shadow of suspicion was instantly slaughtered.*¹⁸¹

Just like with his portrayal of the rebels' femininity, it is just the rebels that are portrayed as opposing the Romans. This way, Josephus tries to argue it is not the Jews in general that are disloyal; their attempts for peaceful resolution are met with violence by the rebel leaders.

This is why divine support and punishment become a more prominent theme in the second half of the narrative as well. It becomes especially prominent after Josephus the protagonist is defeated at Jotapata, as God makes it clear to him that he does not support the Jewish war effort.¹⁸² Josephus lays another charge against the rebel leaders: they go against the will of God. After Josephus the protagonist's capture at Jotapata, this becomes a central theme in the *Jewish War*. The rebels defile the sanctuary, they defile Jewish Law by violating women and they ignore omens.¹⁸³ On the one hand, this serves to absolve Josephus from any blame for his role in the rebellion. God had not made his intention clear yet, so until that point, fighting the Romans was not in opposition to God's will.¹⁸⁴ After the revelation, this is no longer the case. While Josephus' narrative of divine punishment is another way for him to blame the rebel leaders, I argue that it also aims as an apologia of Judaism. The Jewish faith was in a unique position in Antiquity, as the only monotheistic religion within the Jewish empire. This position of

¹⁸⁰ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 70 – 71.

¹⁸¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 5.420 – 423.

¹⁸² Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', 375 – 376. See also Josephus' description of the order of the Essenes, for whom sex was purely for procreation: Joseph., *BJ*, 2.119 – 161.

¹⁸³ Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', 375 – 376.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

Judaism within the Roman world had already led to confrontation in the period leading up to the war.¹⁸⁵ After the revolt, Judaism might have been seen as a threat to Roman hegemony due to differences between Judaism and Roman paganism. However, Josephus attempts to show that Judaism can be integrated into the Roman culture. Bond argues that Herod serves as an example to show that Jews were not opposed to Roman control over the region.¹⁸⁶ Josephus' narrative of God abandoning the Jews for their revolt against Rome and even depicting Him as working with the Romans to punish the Jews serves this purpose as well. Not Judaism as a whole, but the impiety of the rebel leaders is opposed to Roman rule. God punishes this impiety through the war-efforts of the Romans. Josephus attempts to shield Judaism in a similar way to his efforts to save the Jewish population from the charge of femininity.

The divine aspect of the war reflects on the actions of the Romans as well. The Romans become mere instruments of God to punish the Jews for their impiety. This way, their actions during the war were justified, as they were enacting God's will.¹⁸⁷ On the contrary, the Romans being portrayed as a divine instrument also takes away from the glory of their victory. This is an indication of the fine line that Josephus had to navigate between emphasising the Jews' masculinity, while not glorifying the rebellion and being too critical of the Romans.¹⁸⁸ While his use of this divine aspect places blame on the Jews, it also takes away from the Roman victory, as they become mere instruments of God's divine plan. Josephus remedies this by highlighting individual greatness. Titus is the main example of this. He leads the Romans by example, inspiring his troops, even when his troops are already retreating.¹⁸⁹ This positive portrayal of Titus becomes especially clear when it comes to the fate of the Second Temple. According to Josephus, Titus wants to save the Temple for the empire.¹⁹⁰ Even when the Temple was ablaze, he orders his troops to extinguish the flames. However, the troops' hatred for the Jews was greater than their fear of punishment from the army's commanders.¹⁹¹ This passage shows the need for Josephus to write an apologia on the Jews' behalf mentioned above (Roman hate for the Jews). It also portrays Titus in a positive light, as his priority is to save the Temple instead of pressing his advantage in the ensuing fight. As mentioned before, the Flavians becoming Josephus' patrons when he moved to Rome explains this positive portrayal. This becomes especially clear when looking at other sources, such as in the Rabbinic tradition, that portray Titus as deliberately burning the Temple.¹⁹²

While Josephus is positive of his patrons, the depictions of Roman actions during the war might be seen as an implicit critique of the Romans. The Romans had a role in the causes of the war, especially the Roman procurators. Emperor Gaius is critically assessed for his wish to set up a statue of himself in

¹⁸⁵ E.g. emperor Gaius' wish to set up statues in Jerusalem, which goes against Jewish Law: Joseph. *BJ*, 2.184 – 203.

¹⁸⁶ Bond, 'Josephus on Herod', 297 – 299.

¹⁸⁷ Mirguet, 'Josephus' lamentations in the Judean War', 535, 551; Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', 371; Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 193.

¹⁸⁸ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 76.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. Joseph., *BJ*, 5.90 – 95.

¹⁹⁰ Joseph., *BJ*, 6.242.

¹⁹¹ Joseph., *BJ*, 6.260 – 266.

¹⁹² Brighton, 'Flavian Judea', 245.

the Temple, while the procurator Florus is described as actively fanning the flames of war to distract from his various crimes.¹⁹³ Vespasian stationed a permanent legion in Jerusalem after the end of the war, while the procurators had to be of praetorian rank from then on. These changes immediately after the war indicate that Vespasian recognized that there were problems in the governing of the region preceding the war.¹⁹⁴ As the Romans' faults did not reflect negatively on the Flavians, as it took place before they were in power, it is likely that these critiques could be implemented by Josephus and were even recognized by Vespasian himself. Women play an important rhetorical role in these critiques. The treatment of women by the Romans during the war is one of the ways Josephus can implicitly criticize the Romans. Like the rebels, they engage in general massacres of the populations of cities. While framing it as divine punishment of the Jews absolves them from some of the blame, they are still portrayed as overly emotional. Their rage is usually the cause of these massacres, such as at Gamala. The absence of rape in the narrative can also be seen as a critique of the Roman custom, despite not making this explicit as the Romans refrain from it in the *Jewish War*.¹⁹⁵ Josephus still needed to be careful when critiquing the Romans. However, these critiques are not directed towards the Flavians. They show exemplary behaviour during the war and are described as merciful towards the Jews. Furthermore, the critique mostly remains implicit. Therefore, he could be somewhat critical without angering his Roman patrons.

Josephus' literary tradition mainly seems to be rooted in the Greco-Roman tradition. Jews already adopted elements Hellenic culture during the Hasmonean period.¹⁹⁶ There are especially parallels between Polybius and Josephus, both in their social circumstances and their writings. Both were soldiers defeated by the Romans.¹⁹⁷ In addition, both blame leaders on their side for the defeat, but do not shy away from describing Roman brutality.¹⁹⁸ Josephus would have been familiar with the intertwining of gender and war through the writings of Greek predecessors and applies this in his own work to reaffirm the masculinity of the Jews.¹⁹⁹ The recurring mentions of self-sacrifice is an example of this.²⁰⁰ The story of Masada has parallels with the story of the siege of Abydos, Egypt, described by Polybius, where the men murder their wives and children before sacrificing themselves to avoid being captured by Philip V of Macedon.²⁰¹ Josephus' description of Jewish blame and Roman virtues might be Polybian of origin.²⁰²

While the Greco-Roman tradition is prominently recognisable in Josephus, he also incorporates elements of the Judaic tradition. The story of Josephus' the protagonist echoes that of the biblical

¹⁹³ Joseph., *BJ*, 2.184, 2.283.

¹⁹⁴ Brighton, 'Flavian Judea', 246.

¹⁹⁵ Reeder, 'Wartime rape', 375.

¹⁹⁶ J. A. Goldstein, *Iranians, Greeks and Romans: Studies in their interactions* (Providence 2020) 3 – 32.

¹⁹⁷ Mirguet, 'Josephus' lamentations', 528.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, 530, 551 .

¹⁹⁹ Reeder, 'Gender, war and Josephus', 65, 74.

²⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 74 – 75.

²⁰¹ Durey, 'War in the feminine', 196.

²⁰² Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', 378 – 379.

Jeremiah. Jeremiah warns the people of Jerusalem to lay down their arms in the fight against the Babylonians, while Josephus the protagonist fulfils a similar role in the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans.²⁰³ The sieges of the Babylonian empire and the Roman empire have further similarities. Both the Babylonians and the Romans are portrayed as instruments of God's will, purging the city by fire for the sins of the Jewish people.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Josephus himself, both as protagonist and narrator, uses biblical references to indicate the folly of fighting the Romans. The aforementioned story of Abraham and Sarah is a clear example of this.

²⁰³ Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', 367 – 368.

²⁰⁴ Reeder, 'Pity the women and children', 190 – 192.

5. Conclusion

Josephus' descriptions of women, gender roles and femininity are complex. By blaming the rebel leaders for the war, he attempts to shield the general Jewish population from emasculation. He does this by describing the rebel leaders as overly feminine. The rebel leaders' crossdressing and engaging in all kinds of sinful, feminine behaviour are the most explicit references to their femininity. Their treatment of women is another indication of their failing masculinity. Because Josephus wants to reaffirm the masculinity of the Jews and war is a masculine sphere, women are less prominently present during the narrative of the war. Only three women are mentioned by name. Two of these are figures that lived before the war, namely Cleopatra and Abraham's wife Sarah. The other, Maria, is not an important character for the overall narrative, but used as a rhetorical tool to show the horrors that took place in Jerusalem during the siege.

It becomes more complex when describing the conduct of the Romans. Josephus is able to critique the Romans more explicitly for the causes of the war, as this does not reflect negatively on the new imperial dynasty. This becomes more troublesome when describing the situation during the war, as both Vespasian and Titus play a prominent part in the war. However, even during the war, the Romans are still implicitly critiqued for their actions. They massacre women and children, let emotions like fury overcome them and their lack of discipline causes some heavy losses at the hands of the Jews. While framing this conduct in a context of divine punishment, their conduct is somewhat justified. However, this does mean that their successes are diminished as well, as these are similarly a part of God's will. Titus and Vespasian are shielded from this critique by Josephus. They are described as merciful, and they show exemplary behaviour in combat. As the Flavians became Josephus' patrons when he moved to Rome, this is to be expected.

As this thesis has shown, Josephus, like other authors from Antiquity, mainly uses women as a rhetorical tool, employed in service of his narrative in the *Jewish War*. Little historical information can be surmised from this work, as descriptions of women are rhetorically loaded and serve a specific purpose in Josephus' narrative. Even when the narrative describes women in a more historical sense, such as in the Herodian court intrigues, Josephus values these women negatively, describing them as schemers, incapable rulers or even "creatures". Little is said about the participation of these women in the First Jewish-Roman War. Instead, women are used rhetorically as motivation for men and as tools to judge men, both positively and negatively, in the way that they interact with each other. Women who show transgressive behaviour in their roles as wives, sisters or otherwise, reflect negatively on the men they are associated with. Because of this rhetorical use of women, similar behaviour can be judged in a different way. An example of this are the women who inform the Romans at Jotapata and at Masada. The woman who betrays Josephus the protagonist after the siege of Jotapata is valued negatively, while the two women of Masada are portrayed positively. Despite showing similar behaviour, i.e. providing information to the Romans, they are valued differently due to their rhetorical use: the women at Masada

help reaffirm the Jewish masculinity by informing the Romans of the heroic self-sacrifice of the Jews, while the woman in Jotapata is portrayed as weak for giving away information to the Romans out of free will. Josephus makes use of both the Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions. The *Jewish War* shares similarities with the work of ancient authors like Polybius, while incorporating biblical stories and Jewish tradition as well.

This thesis provides further insights into descriptions of gender roles in ancient historiography and the *Jewish War* in particular. However, this thesis has mainly focused on the gender roles of females. Other studies could take a similar approach to research if male gender roles serve a similar rhetorical need or if they reflect reality more closely.

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Appendix A: Map of Judea



Figure 1 Map of Judea. Sieges are marked in red, the cities that Salome inherited are highlighted in blue. DEGA MD, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons. Dots added to indicate the cities discussed in this thesis.

Appendix B: Family tree of the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties

Hasmonean dynasty:

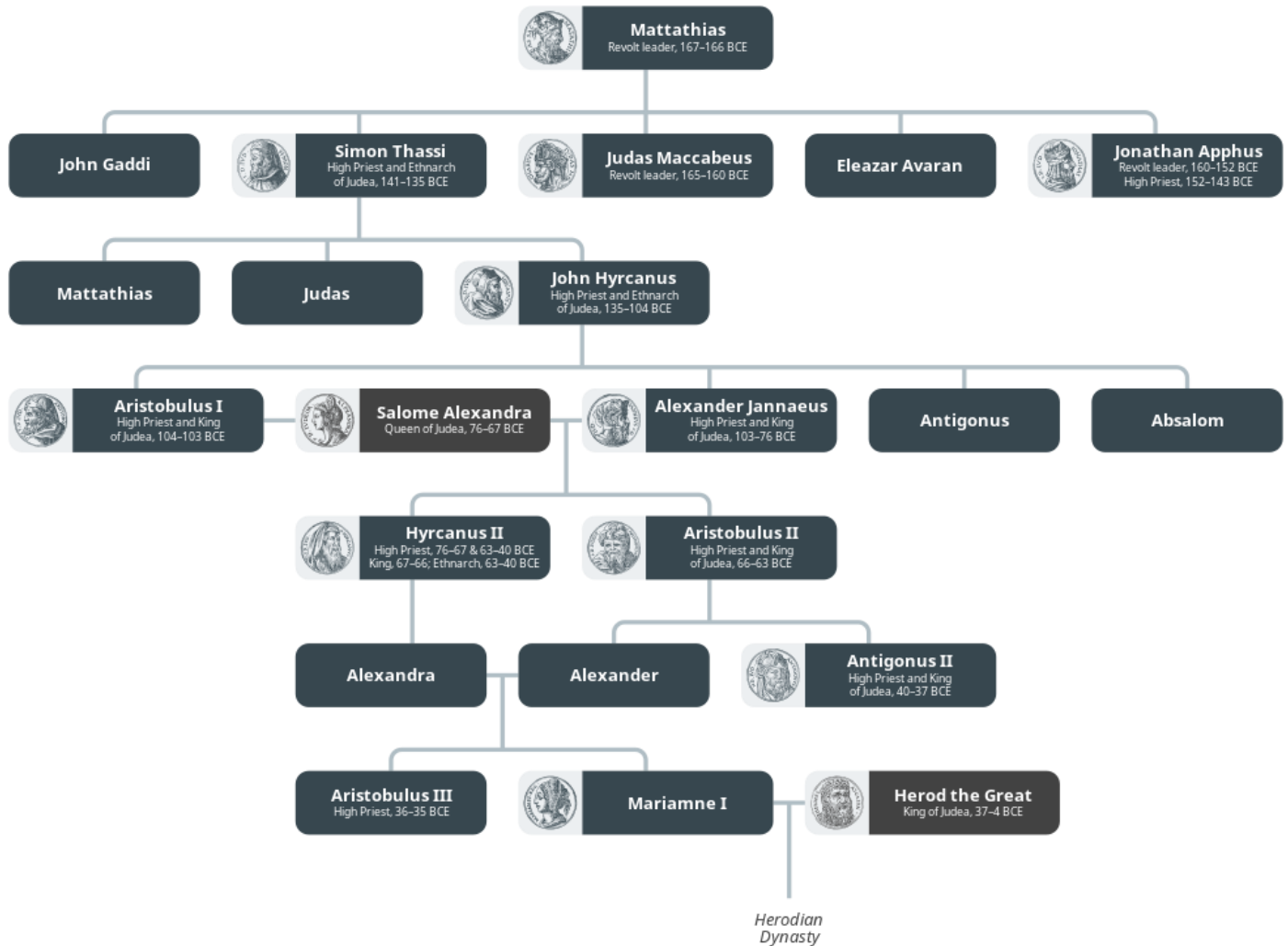


Figure 2 Family tree of the Hasmoneans. DEGA MD, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Appendix C: Timeline of the war

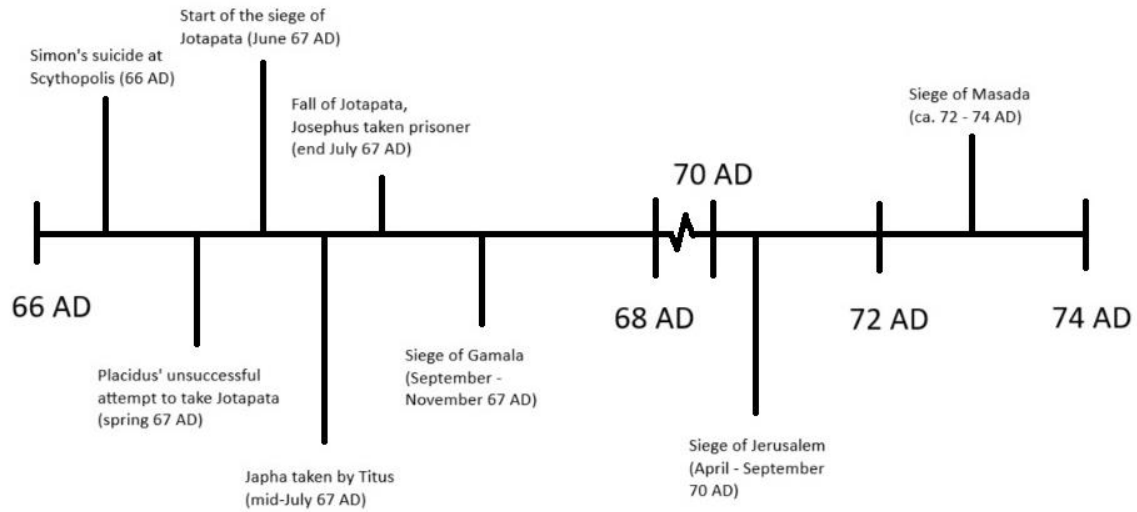


Figure 4 Timeline of the discussed events of the First Jewish-Roman War. Own creation.