

# THE EMOTIONS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE *MOYSES GRAECUS* OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

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*Abstract:* In books III and IV of the *Antiquities of the Jews*, Flavius Josephus narrates the march of the Jewish people to the promised land under the guidance of Moses. The narrative includes the exposure of repeated conflicts between the people and their guide, as well as the description of the emotions that arouse these conflicts. Initially the emotions of the people are described in terms that highlight factors such as irrationality, lack of control, excess passions, and recklessness. Faced with this, Moses appears endowed with the qualities of foresight, confidence, security, moderation, and wisdom. The conflict between both actors (the Jewish community and Moses) is thus assimilated to the confrontation between an irrational mass dominated by violent feelings and a wise and judicious leader.

*Keywords:* Flavius Josephus – historiography – Judaeo-Greek studies – biblical studies – Greek literature

Josephus presents the *Antiquities of the Jews* as an account of the ancient history and the constitution of the Jewish people, an account carried out using the records that encapsulate them, i.e., the Sacred Scriptures. The national tone of the work is seen not only in the use of the possessive, as Josephus refers to «our ancient history» (τὴν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχαιολογίαν), but also in his stated intention: the objective will be to cover the history of the Jewish people from its origins until its confrontation (involuntary, according to Josephus) with Rome.<sup>1</sup> According to their author, the *Antiquities of the Jews* constitute a translation: ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθηρμηνημένην γραμμάτων is the expression that is used for the first time. This is later expanded and rounded off with this statement: «The precise details of our Scripture records will, then, be set forth, each in its place, as my narrative proceeds, that being the procedure that I have promised to follow throughout this work, neither adding nor omitting anything».<sup>2</sup> Josephus goes on to compare his composition with the known translation carried out under Ptolemy II, known as the *Septuagint*, which he intends to complete.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *AJ* 1.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> *AJ* 1.17. For Josephus, I always use the translation by Henry St. John Thackeray.

<sup>3</sup> *AJ* 1.10-13.

This statement by Josephus is certainly misleading. The *Antiquities of the Jews* are based on the biblical account, but they contain abundant omissions, additions and amplifications. One example of addition is the story about the military expedition on which Moses led the Egyptian troops in Ethiopia, as well as his marriage to an Ethiopian princess.<sup>4</sup> A significant omission can be found in the encounter between Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar in *Genesis* 38, an encounter Josephus surely keeps quiet because its scabrous content would clash with the moralizing tone predominant in the *Antiquities*. There are undoubtedly a variety of reasons for these alterations,<sup>5</sup> with said reasons being different in each case.<sup>6</sup> In the passages analyzed in this paper, these changes are largely caused by the approach and aim of Josephus' 'translation', if it can be called that, of the *Bible*.<sup>7</sup>

The translation is an attempt at intercultural mediation, striving to lessen the boundaries drawn by cultural differences and make them transparent.<sup>8</sup> The identity of a people, a nation or a group is a construction in which one contrasts one's own with that of others, the 'we' with the 'other'. Seen from this perspective, the translation aims to balance the differences existing between two identities.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the *Antiquities*, it is clear which two identities these are: on one hand, that of the source language, Hebrew, and the Jewish culture, and on the other, Greek, the target language, and Greek culture. The author expressly states as much:

I have undertaken this present work in the belief that the whole Greek-speaking world will find it worthy of attention [...] there where two further considerations to which I have given serious thought, namely, whether our ancestors, on the one hand, were willing to communicate such information, and whether any of the Greek, on the other hand, had been curious to learn our history.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that the *Antiquities of the Jews* bridge the gap between the two cultural spheres is not only seen in express statements like the previous one. The terms and categories Josephus uses to state his objectives reveal a desire to adapt the discourse on Jewish history to Greek mental habits. The use of these terms and categories is quite likely not a novelty, but rather something inherited. Literature on Jewish matters written in Greek is known to date back to the Hellenistic period. Due to reception and transmission issues, we aren't very familiar with

<sup>4</sup> *AJ* 2.238–253.

<sup>5</sup> A broad account of omissions and additions is offered by Feldman 1998, 38–39.

<sup>6</sup> See Feldman 1998, 39–44.

<sup>7</sup> Feldman 1998, 44–46, takes a look at the terms Josephus uses when referring to 'translation' as well as at the broad and diverse content this concept seems to cover.

<sup>8</sup> Baker 2014, 15–16.

<sup>9</sup> Assmann 1997, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *AJ* 1.5 and 9.

this literature, the preservation of which is largely fragmentary.<sup>11</sup> The authors mainly write about biblical topics, but at the same time they show a high degree of Hellenization. They are therefore representative of a Hellenized Judaism in which Jewish traditions intermingle with Greek topics and content.<sup>12</sup> It is very possible that this mixed literature contributed to forging the vocabulary Josephus uses to characterize his work. In any case, his use of said vocabulary shows familiarity and fluency and that indicates to what extent Greek intellectual standards are present in the *Antiquities of the Jews*.

An example of this presence is already seen in the prologue. The work is said to contain a large dose of inquiry into nature (φυσιολογία); the work of Moses, the Jewish legislator (νομοθέτης), is based on intellectual inquiry (κατανοῆσαι, νοῦς) into God and his work, while the detailed study of the origins (αἰτίαις) of Jewish beliefs will require profound reflection on highly philosophical content (πολλή [...] ἡ θεωρία καὶ λίαν φιλόσοφος).<sup>13</sup> Specifically, Greek presence is noteworthy when the work is characterized from the historiographical perspective. As mentioned previously, the *Antiquities* are based on the biblical account, an account in which divine intervention has a decisive presence. It is striking that the content is described in the following terms:

The things narrated in the sacred Scriptures are, however, innumerable, seeing that they embrace the history of five thousand years and recount all sorts of surprising reverses, many fortunes of war, heroic exploits of generals, and political revolutions.<sup>14</sup>

With this description, Josephus seems to want to follow the Greek historiographical tradition. Indeed, Greek historians focus their accounts on political and social phenomena, events in the physical world and perceivable realities in general. However, the Sacred Scriptures can be described (and in fact have been described) as a theological narrative in the sense that theology, the design God outlines for his people, is the element that gives the narrative meaning.<sup>15</sup> Josephus thus characterizes the content of his source – the Sacred Scriptures – in a light allusive to the tradition started by Herodotus, a tradition in which human feats (τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων) are the center of the story.<sup>16</sup> It seems incoherent to

<sup>11</sup> The problems with chronology, authorship and reception that the study of these texts pose has been highlighted by specialists: see Schürer 1986, 472; Siegert 2016, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Holladay 1983, 1-3. Regarding Hellenistic Jews' high degree of Hellenization and the complexity of the convergence between Greek and Jewish cultural worlds, see Gruen 2002, 213-231.

<sup>13</sup> *AJ* 1.18-19; 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> *AJ* 1.13: μυρία δ' ἐστὶ τὰ δηλούμενα διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων, ἅτε δὴ πεντακισχιλίων ἐτῶν ἱστορίας ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐμπεριελημμένης, καὶ παντοῖαι μὲν εἰσι παράλογοι περιπέτεια, πολλὰ δὲ τύχαι πολέμων καὶ στρατηγῶν ἀνδραγαθία καὶ πολιτευμάτων μεταβολαί.

<sup>15</sup> Regarding these and similar expressions («narrative Theologie», «Geschichtstheologie») applied to the biblical account, see Kaiser 1984, 61, 64-65.

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the general content of the work by Herodotus and, by extension, that of Greek historiography, see Pelling 2019, 1-21.

assert that human feats represent the content of the theological history presented in *Exodus*. However, this contradiction can be interpreted as a symptom of the intercultural mixing that takes place in Josephus' work.

This paper will focus on the emotions of a wandering πόλις, the Jewish community led by Moses towards the promised land. In the biblical account, the Jews repeatedly rebel against Moses. Josephus includes these rebellions and, in doing so, indicates the feelings and emotions that accompany the collective revolt. Moses is the cause of continuous conflict and the target of feelings of indignation among the rebels, while he is also the superior figure, the leader who knows how to overcome the conflict and lead the masses on the right path. Josephus' account of the *Exodus* and the Jewish people's wandering years is dominated by the opposition between Moses and the rebellious mob. The examination of some of the passages that speak of this opposition will help clarify how a profoundly Hellenized Jew describes the collective emotions of his people.

At first glance to the aforementioned opposition, the continuity and clarity with which he characterizes the two poles in the conflict is striking. On one hand, people are described in terms alluding to irrational feelings, uncontrolled emotions, and attention to pleasure above all. Added to this is the forgetting of recent events, especially the blessings bestowed, and a lack of foresight. On the other extreme, Moses is portrayed with the qualities of perseverance and sagacity, remembrance of the promises and blessings of the past, tranquility, caution, persuasiveness, and magnanimity.<sup>17</sup> The conflict between the two extremes, Moses and the people, is therefore described as a political clash: an irresponsible mass who are slaves to passion and unable to control themselves are guided and saved by a wary, prudent, foresighted and wise leader. And in this conflict, the victor is the sensible leader, Moses. There is surely a third factor involved, divinity, but God always supports Moses' decisions. The consequence of this is that, in Josephus' account, there is no contradiction nor interference noted between both planes (the human [or political] and divine).

The *Antiquities of the Jews* follow the tradition of a moralizing historiography whose premises reached considerable dissemination in the Greek world. For its followers, moral instruction is a fundamental objective of the historical composition. Another objective is exemplariness, understood as the desire to offer a gallery of models of virtue through the protagonists in the accounts. Representative of this line of thought is Dionysius of Halicarnassus, one of whose works, *Roman Antiquities*, has been compared to Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*.<sup>18</sup> Dionysius justifies the content of his composition, which discusses primitive Roman history, with the aim of showing how Rome, since its early days, produced men of innumerable virtues. His intention is born from a love of justice and the truth and tends to show how the study of history benefits honest

<sup>17</sup> A full inventory of Moses' strengths is offered by Feldman 1998, 397–425.

<sup>18</sup> Feldman 1998, 7–12.

men and lovers of contemplating grand and noble feats.<sup>19</sup> Another text that follows this approach, the prologue of *Library of History* by Diodorus of Sicily, illustrates the conception of the history being discussed. After praising historical compositions' ability to instill the habits of excellence (ἐπισκευάσαι δύνασθαι τὰ ἴθη μᾶλλον πρὸς καλοκάγαθίαν) to the highest degree,<sup>20</sup> Diodorus continues as follows (1.2.2; 2.8): «for it [history] is ever to be seen urging men to justice, denouncing those who are evil, lauding the good, laying up, in a word, for its readers a mighty store of experience».<sup>21</sup>

For this conception of history and the historiographical work, in the human sphere, virtue has always predominated over its opponents. The account of historical events is therefore moralizing (moral excellency prevails) and exemplary (the course of events incites admiration and imitation from the bearers of excellence). Josephus makes these ideas his own and underscores the triumph of good qualities. This allows him to juxtapose the two causal axes that act in his conception of history: divine providence and human feats. The triumph of virtue is guaranteed, but it does nothing more than reaffirm the will of God. The human plane and the divine plane thus run parallel, without interference nor contradiction between the two.

It is likely that in designing the figure of Moses, Josephus did not exclusively refer to Greek sources; the biblical and extrabiblical Jewish tradition seem to have contributed to his design of the character.<sup>22</sup> It is also possible that, as mentioned previously, Judeo-Hellenistic literature served as an important source of material.<sup>23</sup> In any case, the Moses that Josephus designs is a victorious figure from the perspective and on the scale of Greek values.<sup>24</sup> Here, it is important to keep in mind that the *Antiquities of the Jews* carry out a partial transposition or refiguration of the conflict between the people and their leader and legislator. As indicated in the prologue, the work uses the Sacred Scriptures as a source. But in these, in the biblical account, the conflict between Moses and the Jewish people is of a religious or theological nature. The people give in to idolatry and abandon their God, or rather they refuse to follow the conduct guidelines God reveals through Moses. Josephus does not deny this aspect of the confrontation, but he adds and even highlights another dimension of it, a dimension that transforms the original theological conflict into a civil one. In general terms, the *Antiquities*

<sup>19</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.5.3; 6.5; cf. 11.1.4–5. For a brief yet complete and up-to-date overview of Dionysius and an illustrative selection of his view of history, see Marincola 2017, 257–336.

<sup>20</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.2.2.

<sup>21</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.2.8: ὁρᾶσθαι γὰρ αὐτὴν [τὴν ἱστορίαν] προτρεπομένην ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνην, κατηγοροῦσαν τῶν φαύλων, ἐγκωμιάζουσαν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, τὸ σύνολον ἐμπειρίαν μεγίστην περιποιούσαν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι. Regarding Diodorus and his historiographical view, see Marincola 2017, 231–245.

<sup>22</sup> With respect to this topic, see the explanation offered by Bloch 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Moses seems to have been a figure discussed extensively in Judeo-Hellenistic literature. Regarding this topic, see Inowlocki-Meister 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Feldman 1998, 386–397.

show a clear tendency towards what Louis Feldman calls «detheologizing», in other words, a tendency to look at the Bible as history and not theology. The result is an account of events in which the emphasis on divine intervention is reduced and human factors are stressed as the causal elements of the story.<sup>25</sup> The examination of the terminology Josephus uses to describe the clashes between Moses and his community is illustrative of this tendency towards detheologizing.

The first clash takes place before crossing the Red Sea, when the Egyptian army is approaching, and the Jews are filled with despair.<sup>26</sup> In this passage, Josephus mentions how the people have forgotten the blessings and miracles performed by their leader Moses and briefly contrasts the attitude of the two opposing sides. On one hand, there are the masses who are furious at their leader (ἀγριαίνοντος πρὸς αὐτὸν τοῦ πλήθους), and it must be emphasized that Josephus uses the verb ἀγριαίνω here, a word that comes from ἄγριος, an adjective whose meaning includes the notions of «savage», «violent» and «brutal». On the other side is Moses who, despite his people's rage, maintains his *pronoia* and remembers God's promises.

The second clash occurs a short while later.<sup>27</sup> Josephus tells how, once they reach the oasis of Elim, its bitter waters and scarce fruits cause the people, hungry and thirsty, to confront Moses once again (εἶχον οὖν ἐν αἰτίᾳ τὸν στρατηγόν), who they want to stone, forgetting the blessings his virtue has awarded them. The terms used to describe the masses' movements again refer to uncontrolled emotions like rage (δι' ὀργῆς τὸν στρατηγὸν εἶχον) and agitation (οὕτως ἀνηρεθισμένοι τοῦ πλήθους καὶ πικρῶς ἐπ' αὐτὸν κεκινημένου). Facing this, Moses, armed with his trust in God and his far-sighted attention to the people (τῷ θεῷ θαρρῶν καὶ τῷ συνειδότι τῆς περὶ τοὺς ὁμοφύλους προνοίας), calms the mob with his words (ἐπράϋνεν αὐτούς). Later, the miraculous divine intervention puts an end to the people's deprivation.

Two subsequent clashes take an identical or similar approach, one occurring when the wandering nation reaches Rephidim and the other caused by the perspective of an armed encounter with the Amalekites.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps more significant is the episode that Josephus recounts at the end of book III.<sup>29</sup> After leaving Mount Sinai, the masses begin to revolt again (τὸ πλῆθος πάλιν στασιάζειν ἄρχεται). It is a complex episode that stems from hardship and forgetting the blessings bestowed. When Moses manages to calm this first clash and reveal the promised land, the people decide to send twelve explorers on a reconnaissance mission. They return astonished by the magnitude and power of the lands they have explored. Panic-stricken before the task of conquering these lands, they try to sew their panic among the Jewish masses (αὐτοὶ τε κατεπλάγησαν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος οὕτως

<sup>25</sup> Feldman 1998, 205-214.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 2.320-333.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 3.9-25.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 3.32-38; 42-48.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 3.295-316.

ἔχεν ἐπειρῶντο). They succeed and the masses, hopeless, want to stone Moses and Aaron. Thanks to his extraordinary power of persuasion, Moses manages to calm them. The expressions used here to characterize the revolting multitude resemble those used previously: forget, rage, insolence, turmoil, agitation, etc. But there is also the novelty of Josephus introducing the episode with the verb *στασιάζειν*. *στάσις* and *στασιάζειν* are terms used in Greek historiography and political treaties to designate social struggles and crises that result in *μεταβολαί*, changes in constitution.<sup>30</sup> By using this term, Josephus introduces the idea that the clashes between Moses and the people equate to a civil war.<sup>31</sup>

The account of a new clash, described at the beginning of book IV,<sup>32</sup> once again contrasts the leader described as having his usual virtues (intelligence, foresight, etc.) and a violent mob. But the use of Greek political vocabulary is taken a step further. The Jews, tired of the harsh conditions of desert life, want to immediately fight the Canaanites, which Moses refuses. Irritated by his refusal, they deprive Moses of his position as an intermediary between God and the Jewish people (*λέγοντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχὶ Μωυσεῖ χαριζόμενον ἐπικουρεῖν αὐτοῖς*). The people aspire to be their own masters (*ὅπως τε συμφέρειν αὐτοῖς τὸ αὐτοκράτορσιν εἶναι*) and have no reason to tolerate a tyrant like Moses (*Μωυσῆν τύραννον ἀνέχεσθαι*). This leads to an attack on the Canaanites and, as expected, the Jewish army suffers a spectacular defeat, with Moses again sparing them from the worst consequences. But the discord continues. As tends to occur in defeated armies, indiscipline, disobedience, and irritation towards those in charge spreads among the Jewish troops. This causes a *στάσις* to break out, an uprising of the people against their legislator and leader of colossal proportions (*στάσις οὖν αὐτοὺς οἷαν ἴσμεν οὔτε παρ' Ἑλλήσιν οὔτε παρὰ βαρβάροις γενομένην κατέλαβεν*). Josephus describes the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in this way. In the biblical account (*Numbers 16*), the rebellion is in response to Aaron's appointment as high priest. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, leading 250 distinguished Jews, incite an act of sacrilege, since Aaron's appointment arises from the will of God. As a result, they suffer a deserving punishment, being swallowed by the earth along with their families. Josephus calls it divine punishment, but his account forcefully highlights the political and human component. He refers to a civil conflict (*στάσις*) in which Korah is supported by an unsettled and violent mob. A mob

<sup>30</sup> The Greek ideas on the *στάσις* as a political and moral phenomenon have as its foundational text the reflections of Thucydides (3.82-83) on the effects of the civil war of Corcyra in 427. Possibly the best analysis of this text continues to be that of Price 2004, 6-72. Price himself (11 n. 5) cites Gehrke 1985 and Loraux 1987 as his main predecessors. An updated revision of Thucydides' text in Joho 2021, 34-35. See n. 33.

<sup>31</sup> The importance of *στάσις* in the *Antiquities of the Jews* has been highlighted by Feldman 1998, 140-148. This importance has been accentuated by later studies, although the *Jewish War* has been the work that has focused the analysis on the subject: see Mason 2005a, 253-256; 267; Id. 2009, 326-330; Brighton 2016, 244; Kemezis 2016, 464; Mason 2018, *passim*; Glas 2020, *passim*.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 4.1-53.

which sees Moses as a tyrant, which succumbs to an innate desire to defame its leaders, which feeds confusing desires for freedom and which, for all these reasons, wants to stone its leader.

In his descriptions of the clashes between Moses and the Jewish people, Josephus uses a series of mental parameters that go back to Greek literature: the negative depiction of the emotions and desires that dominate the ordinary man and the unruly masses; the belief that the majority is ignorant; the perverse effect of passions on human affairs; violence as an opposing principle to moderation and wisdom.<sup>33</sup> This set of ideas is present in historiography and plays an important role in explaining the origin of civil strife, στάσις.

Thucydides' description of the Corcyraean civil war holds a canonic place.<sup>34</sup> In it, Thucydides recounts the state of mind accompanying the internal conflict occurring on the island. In this description, terms and expressions appear (τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν, τόλμα ἀλόγιστος, ἐτόλμησαν τὰ δεινότερα, αἴτιον ἀρχὴ ἢ διὰ πλεονεξίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν) that are clearly evoked, as critics indicate,<sup>35</sup> in Josephus' passages recounting the clashes between Moses and the people.

Texts condemning conduct dictated by violence could be gathered within Xenophon's historical work. Fury (ὀργή) as a movement devoid of rationality (ἀπρονόητον) is characterized by its inefficiency even on the battlefield.<sup>36</sup> The different forms of irrational violence produce detrimental results when tested by political leaders<sup>37</sup> and constitute a characteristic trait of στάσις when used by the community.<sup>38</sup>

Polybius also discusses the destructive effects caused by the uncontrolled feelings of the masses. The section of book VI dedicated to the decadence of democracy and its transformation into ochlocracy (ὄχλοκρατία) is a text of great irradiation in later literature and which gathers several commonplaces of Greek thought.<sup>39</sup> One of its passages reads:

<sup>33</sup> The subject is dealt with by a well-known text by Plato (*Resp.* 6, 488a2–489a6): see analysis and commentary on this text in Keyt 2006. Arist. *Pol.* 5, 1304a33–38 («emotions and self-assessments often played a major role in causing revolution») is one of the texts on which Balot 2006 bases his analysis of the civil conflict in Aristotle (pp. 230–234). Rogan 2018 is essential to understand στάσις as a key concept in Aristotle's political thought: see his analysis of book V of *Politics* (*L'inextricable Livre V des Politiques*, pp. 81–127). Rogan's study is also a remarkable contribution to the importance of στάσις in the Greek conception of man (*La στάσις constitutive du politique humain*, pp. 131–245: see part. 132: «vouloir penser une cité sans στάσις reviendrait paradoxalement à annihiler la polis»).

<sup>34</sup> Thuc 3.82–83; see n. 30. There are numerous studies that have followed the ideas expressed by Price 2004 in his analysis of this text by Thucydides. Among them can be highlighted those of Mara 2009, 119–121; Stahl 2013, 311–331, and Palmer 2017, 410–414.

<sup>35</sup> Feldman 1998, 140–148.

<sup>36</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.7. Cf. Tuci 2019, 26.

<sup>37</sup> See the citations offered by Bearzot 2019, 20.

<sup>38</sup> See Bearzot 2019, 26.

<sup>39</sup> See Walbank 1957, 744–745. On the role played in book VI by the terms related to violence and the breakdown of the law (ἀδικία, ἀλαζονεία, ὕβρις, πλεονεξία, ἀλογία, ἀποθηρέομαι, θηριώδης and their cognates), see Champion 2004, 241–244. On the negative impact caused, according to Polybius, by uncontrolled emotions and the absence of reflection, see Moore 2020, 38–41.

For now, stirred to fury and swayed by passion in all their counsels [subject is the people], they will no longer consent to obey or even to be the equals of the ruling caste, but will demand the lion's share for themselves. When this happens, the state will change its name to the finest sounding of all, freedom and democracy, but will change its nature to the worst thing of all, mob-rule.<sup>40</sup>

Josephus thus explains the feelings that overtake the people in their clashes with Moses by using clichés and recurring ideas from Greek literature. This explanation represents one of the additions that form a part of his 'translation' of the *Bible*. It is therefore aimed to fill a void. Some time ago, Erich Auerbach compared the narrative processes of Homer and the *Bible* in a well-known book. In the biblical account, Auerbach explains, the actions, situations, and movements are not explained, at least overtly. The power of the ellipsis is an essential characteristic here. Neither the circumstances that surround the events nor the characters' motives, their qualities or attributes, nor the elements that guide the action are directly explained. The biblical account is thus one full of gaps and silences, assumptions that are not explained and certainly not discussed.<sup>41</sup> And this is a singularity that makes the biblical account the opposite of the principles of Greek historiography. For Greek historians, adequately assessing the situation, describing the circumstances in which the events take place, is an essential part of the historical work. Particularly important is the examination of thoughts and intentions. The actions that make up the historical account emanate from protagonists that may be an individual or a community. These protagonists act based on motives, motives which in turn stem from feelings and are associated with a character, a way of feeling. Thus, according to the Greek perspective, the observation and explanation of feelings, intentions, characters, etc. are no longer an indispensable element, but rather the lifeblood of the historical account.<sup>42</sup>

To narrate the episodes that make up *Exodus* in accordance with the principles of Greek historiography, it was necessary to fill the voids and silences in the biblical account. That is what Josephus does in his 'translation'. With this aim, he describes the clashes between Moses and the people by resorting to a cliché image of the Greek political and historiographical tradition. The people thus appear to be a furious, violent, irrational mob who confront the wise and foresighted Moses. With this depiction, by conferring those feelings to the people, Josephus creates a work assimilable to the parameters of Greek historiography, but which somehow alters the account he claims to be translating.

<sup>40</sup> Polyb. 6.57.8-9 (trans. by W.R. Paton): τότε γὰρ ἔξοργισθεὶς καὶ θυμῷ πάντα βουλευόμενος οὐκέτι θελήσει πειθαρχεῖν οὐδ' ἴσον ἔχειν τοῖς προεστῶσιν, ἀλλὰ πᾶν καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον αὐτός, οὐ γενομένου τῶν μὲν ὀνομάτων τὸ κάλλιστον ἢ πολιτεία μεταλήψεται, τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ δημοκρατίαν, τῶν δὲ πραγμάτων τὸ χεῖριστον, τὴν ὄχλοκρατίαν.

<sup>41</sup> See Auerbach 2013, 7-11.

<sup>42</sup> There are numerous studies on the importance of motivation and character analysis in Greek historiography. See the bibliography offered by Wallace 2018, 69-70.

Josephus was a Jewish priest who received a Jewish education, but he also wrote his works in Rome, used the Greek language and knew Greek literature well. His writings therefore fall between the two mental universes. Postcolonial studies produced tools aimed to analyze the contact between a hegemonic culture (the Greco-Roman one, in this case) and another subordinate local culture (the Jewish one). Using these tools, John Barclay characterizes another of Josephus' works, *Against Apion*, using the term «hybridity». For Barclay, hybridity results in products that neither continue the subordinate culture (Jewish) nor reproduce the hegemonic one (Greco-Roman). Said products would be unstable and destabilizing works that, on one hand, affirm the authority of the dominant culture and, on the other, create something different.<sup>43</sup> In a way, and at least with respect to the passages examined here, the *Antiquities of the Jews* are born from hybridity understood in this way. However, it must be kept in mind that Josephus does not mix nor merge the Greek and Jewish cultural and epistemological categories. The only thing he does is overlap them, placing the political design of the clash between the irrational masses and the far-sighted leader over the theological framework of *Exodus*. The repeated characterization of the Jewish people as a mob easily controlled by irrational feelings and which resorts to dangerous violence has a certain air of artificiality and is fairly unconvincing. But perhaps Josephus' contemporary audience would find a point of interest here. It is important to remember that Josephus wrote under the Flavian dynasty. The rise to power of its founder, Vespasian, was preceded by the Year of the Four Emperors and the terrible civil wars that marked the end of Nero's reign and the establishment of the new dynasty. The ghost of the civil wars at the end of the Republic seemed to have returned, becoming a trauma that fills contemporary literature. The editors of a work dedicated to the subject assert that the authors of Flavian Rome wrote for an audience of survivors: on one hand, for those who survived the conspiring and uprisings towards the end of Julio-Claudian Rome, and on the other, for those who survived the subsequent civil wars.<sup>44</sup> With this in mind, the importance that στάσις takes on in the *Antiquities of the Jews* must be interpreted as an expression of contemporary concerns. When Josephus presents the theological conflict of the biblical account as a civil clash provoked by the feelings of rage among the masses, he not only shapes the biblical account in accordance with the general patterns of the Greco-Roman world, but he also includes matters alive and dominant in his own age, the Flavian age.

<sup>43</sup> Barclay 2007, lxix.

<sup>44</sup> *After 69 CE*, 4. The importance of the στάσις in Josephus and the location of this theme in the framework of Flavian literature has been underlined by several authors: see Mason 2005b. *After 69 CE* systematically analyzes the importance of the στάσις in representative authors of Flavian literature. For an exposition of the topic and bibliographical indications on it, see the introduction of the volume, especially 4-7 for the bibliography.

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