

MARTIAL MOSES IN FLAVIAN ROME: JOSEPHUS'S *ANTIQUITIES* 2–4 AND  
EXEMPLARY ROMAN LEADERSHIP

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*Introduction*

A great deal of ink has been spilled exploring Josephus and Hellenistic culture. In the last decade, however, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to understanding Flavius Josephus and his works in their Roman political and cultural milieu.<sup>1</sup> The resulting scholarship is more or less evenly split between studies exploring the social position of Josephus and his audience in the capital and articles investigating the Josephan corpus in the context of Roman cultural and literary trends.<sup>2</sup>

1. The catalyst for this burst of new scholarship came largely from the fields of Roman history and classics. Mary Beard challenges the pervasive assumption among classicists that 'Josephus is somehow off limits, that his work is "about" Jews and Judaea, not Rome and the Romans' (Mary Beard, 'The Triumph of Flavius Josephus', in A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik [eds.], *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], pp. 543-58 [545]). Jonathan Edmondson avers, 'since all of Josephus' works were written in the city of Rome, it seems appropriate to shift the focus to explore the extent to which his Roman situation affected his view of the world he wrote about' (Jonathan Edmondson, 'Introduction', in Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason and James Rives [eds.], *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], pp. 1-36 [14]). For one of the few earlier projects seeking to situate Josephus in his Roman context, see Martin Goodman, 'Josephus as Roman Citizen', in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 329-38. Edmondson provides a review of major scholarly works focusing on the interaction between Hellenism and Judaism in Josephus (Edmondson, 'Introduction', p. 14).

2. Regarding previous social-historical studies, a number of scholars contend that Josephus attracted an elite or semi-elite audience and enjoyed a more or less respectable social position in Rome. See Luuk Huitink and Jan Willem van Henten, 'The Publication of Flavius Josephus' Works and their Audiences', *Zutot* 6 (2009),

Contributing to the latter line of inquiry, my article will focus on Josephus's narrative presentation of Moses in *Antiquities* 2–4 in light of a popular pedagogical discourse in Flavian Rome—the Roman discourse of exemplarity.<sup>3</sup> Beginning with an overview of this Roman

pp. 49-60; John Curran, 'Flavius Josephus in Rome', in Jack Pastor, Pnina Stern and Menahem Mor (eds.), *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 65-86; Goodman, 'Josephus'; cf. Glen W. Bowersock, 'Foreign Elites at Rome', in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 53-62; John M.G. Barclay, 'Judean Historiography in Rome: Josephus and History in *Contra Apionem* Book 1', in Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 29-43; Steve Mason, 'Figured Speech and Irony in T. Flavius Josephus', in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 244-88. On the other hand, Jonathan J. Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', in Sievers and Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History*, pp. 101-18, and Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, 'Josephus' Roman Audience: Josephus and the Roman Elites', in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 53-62, view Josephus as excluded from elite political and literary circles and thus, along with his audience, largely socially inconsequential in the capital. For more discussion of these socio-historical questions, see Curran, 'Flavius Josephus', pp. 66-76; cf. Edmondson, 'Introduction', pp. 31-32. A handful of projects examine the Josephan corpus in its Roman cultural and literary context. Mason observes several characteristically Roman concepts, images and values assumed in *Antiquities*, including emphasis on 'constitution' (πολιτεία) rather than on covenant (Steve Mason, 'Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines', in Boyle and Dominik [eds.], *Flavian Rome*, pp. 559-90 [568]), Josephus's scorn for Greek ways, and the presence of literary similarities to famous Roman accounts (Mason, 'Flavius Josephus', p. 589). In a second article, Mason demonstrates Josephus's participation in many of the language games current in the elite circles of Flavian Rome. In particular, he identifies Josephus's use of figured speech and irony (including ironic praise for Domitian's martial prowess or Titus's clemency, subtle equations of the Jewish and Roman civil wars, and a veiled comparison of Romulus and Moses [Mason, 'Figured Speech', pp. 252-73]). Along these lines, Erich Gruen reads Josephus alongside Polybius, an earlier conquered foreigner writing in Rome under Roman patronage. He observes, for example, that both authors include subtle and not-so-subtle criticisms of Rome's brutality. Gruen also notes both authors' implicitly subversive placement of Rome on the broader chronology of rising and falling empires. See Erich S. Gruen, 'Polybius and Josephus on Rome', in Pastor, Stern and Mor (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 149-62.

3. For the only work looking at Josephus's (or any author's) presentation of biblical heroes in relation to the Roman discourse of exemplarity, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, 'The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the *Testament of Abraham*', *JSJ*

moral conversation and a brief digression on the premier leadership characteristic celebrated in discourse on exemplary leadership in Flavian Rome (martial prowess), this article will argue that Josephus's presentation of Moses aligns well with both the narratological form and characteristic moral content of Roman exemplarity. In the end, my article will further situate Josephus in his Roman discursive environment and will offer a contextually specific explanation for his narrative presentation of a particularly martial Moses.<sup>4</sup> Beyond Josephan studies, furthermore, this case study will contribute to our understanding of the robust participation of provincials in the literary and political discourse of Flavian Rome.

### *The Roman Discourse of Exemplarity*

For most of the twentieth century, studies dealing with 'example' (παράδειγμα or *exemplum*) in Greek and Roman antiquity focused primarily on its use in formal rhetoric.<sup>5</sup> More recently, however, Matthew

40 (2009), pp. 185-212. There, Reed investigates Josephus as a Jewish author appropriating an originally Hellenistic discourse, and she compares this with the adoption and adaptation of the same Hellenistic discourse by Roman authors. My article, instead, will argue that Josephus encounters and appropriates exemplary discourse as manifested in its conspicuously Roman form. To be sure, Christina Kraus explores Roman exemplarity in a volume on Josephus, but she never actually discusses Josephus's work. See Christina S. Kraus, 'From *Exempla* to *Exemplar*? Writing History around the Emperor in Imperial Rome', in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 181-200. Finally, Mason aptly notices, though only in passing, the 'distinctive traits of Roman historiography' in *Antiquities*, describing the work as a 'character-driven history, a story of exempla that invites the author's and audience's moral-rhetorical evaluation of each individual as a guide for present conduct' (Mason, 'Flavius Josephus', p. 69).

4. Tuval argues that not only was Rome the cultural and literary environment for Josephus's re-telling of the biblical narratives, but it was the location where 'he mainly appears to have learnt the Bible and its exegesis' (Michael Tuval, 'A Jewish Priest in Rome', in Pastor, Stern and Mor [eds.], *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 397-411 [408]).

5. For works treating rhetorical *παράδειγματα/exempla* in detail, see Kristoffel Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study of Rhetoric and Hermeneutics* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996); Elizabeth Bisbee Goldfarb, 'Transformation through Imitation: Biblical Figures as Moral Exempla in the Post-Classical World' (unpublished PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2005); A. Lumpe, 'Exemplum', *RAC*, XLVIII, pp. 1229-57; Bennett J. Price,

Roller has directed scholarly attention to the broader social and cultural context of the Roman deployment of *exempla*. In a seminal article exploring the Roman habit of mining the past for behavioral models, Roller has outlined the main features of what he calls ““exemplary” discourse in Roman culture”.<sup>6</sup> The cultural phenomena that collectively constitute this discourse, and are omnipresent in our extant Roman textual and material evidence, include four components: (1) actions, (2) audiences, (3) commemoration and (4) imitation.<sup>7</sup>

The *action* of a narrative or visual depiction is ‘held to be consequential for the Roman community at large’ and is ‘regarded as embodying (or conspicuously failing to embody) crucial social values’.<sup>8</sup>

‘*Paradeigma* and *Exemplum* in Ancient Rhetorical Theory’ (unpublished PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 1975); Hildegard Kornhardt, *Exemplum: Eine bedeutungsgeschichtliche Studie* (Göttingen: Georg-August-Universität, 1936); Arthur W. Robinson, ‘Cicero’s Use of People as “Exempla” in his Speeches’ (unpublished PhD diss., Indiana University, 1986); Mark van der Poel, ‘The Use of *exempla* in Roman Declamation’, *Rhetorica* 27 (2009), pp. 332-53; Michael R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); Hélène Pétré, *L’exemplum chez Tertullien* (Dijon: Imprimerie Darantiere, 1940); Vernon K. Robbins (ed.), *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement* (Semeia, 64; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

6. Matthew Roller, ‘Exemplarity in Roman Culture: The Cases of Horatius Cocles and Cloelia’, *Classical Philology* 99 (2004), pp. 1-56 (4). Roller’s initial piece has been followed up with two articles; see Roller, ‘The Exemplary Past in Roman Historiography and Culture: The Case of Gaius Duilius’, in A. Feldherr (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Historiography and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 214-30; and Roller, ‘The Consul(ar) as *Exemplum*: Fabius Cunctator’s Paradoxical Glory’, in H. Beck and F. Pina Polo (eds.), *Consuls and ‘Res publica’: Holding High Office in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 182-210. Roller claims to stand on the pioneering shoulders of Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, who initiated an approach to the study of Roman exemplary discourse that brought ‘discrete cultural phenomena, such as the “theatricality” of Roman society or the “messages” of images, into focus as part of a larger whole’ (Roller, ‘Exemplarity’, p. 9). See Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, ‘*Exempla* und *mos maiorum*: Überlegungen zum kollektiven Gedächtnis der Nobilität’, in Hans Joachim Gehrde and Astrid Möller (eds.), *Vergangenheit und Lebenswelt: Soziale Kommunikation, Traditionsbildung und historisches Bewusstsein* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1996), pp. 301-38.

7. See Roller, ‘Exemplarity’, pp. 4-5.

8. In a later elaboration of this model, Roller clarifies that such action is generally ‘before members or representatives of the Roman community, which

The members of the primary *audience* observing the action in the narrative ‘place it in a suitable ethical category...and judge it “good” or “bad” in that category’.<sup>9</sup> Matthew Leigh avers: ‘An exemplary deed needs an audience or it cannot become an *exemplum*’.<sup>10</sup> While such emphasis on audience evaluation can be traced from the late Republic, the Roman preoccupation only intensified with the Flavian multiplication of monumental architecture, especially the massive Flavian Amphitheatre—a structure that Andrew Zissos rightly calls a ‘cultural institution’ that ‘fully captured the popular imagination’.<sup>11</sup>

The *commemoration* of the deed, its communal effects and its primary spectator evaluation can appear in the form of anything from a narrative, a statue, or a nickname to even an exposed scar. Such commemoration is designed to encourage secondary audiences to ‘form their own judgments in full knowledge of what the primary audience thought’.<sup>12</sup> Sites like Augustus’s Forum or Vespasian’s Temple of Peace, among others, would serve as conspicuous venues popularly commemorating the imperial family’s exemplary accomplishments.<sup>13</sup>

consists of those who share a particular set of practices, orientations, and values (i.e. the *mos maiorum*)’ (Roller, ‘Exemplary Past’, p. 216).

9. Examining Roman narratological trends, Kraus likewise highlights the frequent ‘construction of an internal audience to focus our attention on the figure who is *spectatus*’ (Kraus, ‘From *Exempla*’, p. 189).

10. Matthew Leigh, *Lucian: Spectacle and Engagement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 184.

11. Andrew Zissos, ‘Spectacle and Elite in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus’, in Boyle and Dominik (eds.), *Flavian Rome*, pp. 659-84 (660-61). Kraus highlights the pedagogical function of *exempla* and spectacle entertainment in the Flavian era: ‘The process of evaluation and imitation happens through thoughtful viewing, that is, spectacle used creatively, as entertainment and education at once’ (Kraus, ‘From *Exempla*’, p. 188). Turning to epic literature in this era, Zissos identifies the ‘narrative...proliferation of internal audiences’ as one of the primary developments. See Zissos, ‘Spectacle’, p. 663.

12. Roller, ‘Exemplarity’, p. 5.

13. Kraus recounts Augustus’s exploitation of *exempla* as well as his energetic commemorative legacy: ‘Not only did he habitually collect and copy out *praecepta et exempla* for his friends and associates (Suetonius, *Aug.* 89.2), but he lined his forum with statues “with their triumphal ornaments”, in Suetonius’ words, “of the leaders [*duces*] who had found the empire of the Roman people small and left it great...also proclaiming too in an edict that he had done this so that he himself, while he lived, and the rulers [*principes*] of later ages would be required by the Roman people to take the lives of these men as their model”’ (*Aug.* 31.5; Catharine

Finally, Roller distinguishes the implicit (and sometimes explicit) mandate for *imitation*. He summarizes this mimetic aspect as follows: ‘any spectator...whether primary or secondary, is enjoined to strive to replicate or to surpass the deed himself, to win similar renown and related social capital’.<sup>14</sup>

Understanding this discourse, according to Roller, ‘exposes what Romans from the late Republic onward took to be the normal or normative way in which social values were established and instilled, deeds were done and evaluated accordingly, and social reproduction occurred’.<sup>15</sup> Thus, when Roman writers, orators, leaders or parents wished to articulate or inculcate their conceptions of virtuous ‘Roman’ leadership, they consistently deployed *exempla* as rhetorical vehicles of the *mos maiorum*.<sup>16</sup> But what were the hegemonic Roman *mores* with respect to leadership and authority in Josephus’s Rome?

### *Martial Prowess and Flavian Rome*

Among the many leadership values praised in Roman antiquity, the virtues that are most consistently celebrated in both popular and elite Roman leadership discourse are bravery and martial prowess. Roller notes that from the middle Republic, ‘warfare was the most valorized single arena of civic performance and aristocratic competition’.<sup>17</sup> Plutarch postulates, for example, that leadership candidates would campaign in togas without tunics underneath so as to expose their noble

Edwards [trans.], *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000]). ‘The emperor himself formed the apex of this long series of exemplary leaders’ (Kraus, ‘From *Exempla*’, p. 195). Beard describes Josephus’s perspective of Vespasian’s Temple of Peace: ‘Packed with spoils, this temple complex became, as Josephus puts it, a microcosm of the whole world; men, he says, had previously wandered the length and breadth of the planet to see the treasures gathered and stored up here. Vast in scale (more than rivaling the adjacent Forum of Augustus in size), teeming with luxury, the product of a “superhuman conception”, this was the permanent memorial to the Flavian triumph, and to the new dynasty itself (*BJ* 7.158-62)’ (Beard, ‘Triumph’, p. 555).

14. Roller, ‘Exemplary Past’, p. 217.

15. Roller, ‘Exemplarity’, p. 6.

16. On the prominence of moral *exempla* in Roman stoicism in the Flavian era, see Marcus Wilson, ‘After the Silence: Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal’, in Boyle and Dominik (eds.), *Flavian Rome*, pp. 523-42.

17. Roller, ‘Consul(ar) as Exemplum’, p. 183.

scars to possible voters.<sup>18</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch's prescription for the ideal elite education, to take another example, gives preference to martial instruction. The author enthusiastically maintains, 'I am anxious to say that which is of greater importance than all the rest: it is for the contests of war that boys must be practiced' (*Lib. ed.* 8D). Similarly, though not known for his own martial prowess, Cicero perceptively advises his son, 'Well, then, the first thing to recommend to a young man in his quest for glory is that he try to win it, if he can, in a military career. Among our forefathers many distinguished themselves as soldiers' (*Off.* 2.45).

With respect to literary *exempla*, focusing on Valerius Maximus's collection, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Teresa Morgan provides a graph of the distribution of the main topics in the exemplary stories, noting their frequency of occurrence.<sup>19</sup> While several of the major categories correspond to the classical virtues shared by Greeks and Romans, Morgan concludes, 'No single conventional virtue in Valerius' collection is provided with as many exempla as courage, *fortitude*'.<sup>20</sup> One need only glance at the most celebrated Roman heroes—whether Horatius Cocles, Mucius Scaevola, the Scipiones or the Decii—to confirm Morgan's conclusion that 'courage-nearly-all-the-time was the dominant moral value in the early Empire'.<sup>21</sup>

If courage demonstrated in battle was a dominant leadership virtue in the late Republic and in the early Empire, it became a political necessity by the time of Vespasian and his sons. In the absence of a Julio-Claudian bloodline, the Flavians focused most of their political messaging on their military conquests. Such efficacious courage was, for example, commemorated before vast and socially diverse audiences in the form of *provincia capta* coins,<sup>22</sup> extravagant gladiatorial

18. Plutarch, *Mor.* 276C-D. See Roller, 'Exemplarity', pp. 13-14. For more on noble and ignoble scarring in ancient Mediterranean mindsets, see Jennifer Glancy, 'Boasting of Beatings: 2 Corinthians 11:23-25', *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 99-135.

19. See Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 159.

20. Morgan, *Popular Morality*, p. 137. For a list of the classical virtues according to Plato, see *Phaed.* 69C.

21. Morgan, *Popular Morality*, p. 17.

22. Jane Cody observes that Julio-Claudian emperors numismatically validated their 'power primarily through family connections, especially through their claims as descendants of Augustus. In contrast, the *capta* type reappears in the very first year of Vespasian's rule (69–70 CE), and recurs in numerous variations throughout

exhibitions<sup>23</sup> and conspicuous, monumental architecture—including the Temple of Peace, the Flavian Amphitheatre and the Arch of Titus. Describing Domitian’s propensity to ignore virtue in others and to monopolize glory, Tacitus notes the emperor’s inability to deny the martial prowess of Agricola:

It was, he thought, a very alarming thing for him that the name of a subject should be raised above that of the Emperor; it was to no purpose that he had driven into obscurity the pursuit of forensic eloquence and the graceful accomplishments of civic life, if another were to forestall the distinctions of war. To other glories he could more easily shut his eyes, but the greatness of a good general was a truly imperial quality.<sup>24</sup>

As James Packer underscores, in Flavian Rome, ‘contemporary political power...required both military success and its conspicuous visual commemoration’.<sup>25</sup>

Having reviewed the prominence and characteristic moral content of exemplary discourse in Flavian Rome, I will now turn to the depiction of a hero consistently emerging in the Josephan corpus as a (if not *the*) favorite ancestral *exemplum* of virtuous leadership, namely, Moses.<sup>26</sup> I

his reign and the reigns of his two sons’ (Jane M. Cody, ‘Conquerors and Conquered on Flavian Coins’, in Boyle and Dominik [eds.], *Flavian Rome*, pp. 103-24 [107]). Such Flavian coins, she explains, broadcast ‘the ideal of the Roman leader as a conqueror, ennobled by his victory over the barbarian foe’ (Cody, ‘Conquerors’, p. 123).

23. Zissos notes that the arena in the late first century CE ‘became an increasingly important source for glory. It provided an otherwise rare opportunity to demonstrate the cardinal Roman aristocratic quality of *virtus* in a public setting’ (Zissos, ‘Spectacle’, p. 680). For ancient descriptions of the one hundred days of spectacle put on by Titus in 80 CE, see Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 66.25; Suetonius, *Tit.* 7.3; and Martial, *Lib. spec.* Edmondson grapples with the possibility that Martial’s account may not have dealt specifically with the games of 80 CE, but concludes that they are still ‘best interpreted as poetic responses to the 100 days of spectacle that marked the opening of the Flavian amphitheatre’ (Jonathan Edmondson, “Celebrating the Inauguration of the Flavian Amphitheatre in A.D. 80?” or “An Untitled Collection of Uncertain Length Celebrating a Series of Unspecified Occasions in Honour of an Unnamed Caesar?”), *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 21 (2008), pp. 465-70.

24. Tacitus, *Agr.* 39.

25. James E. Packer, ‘*Plurima et amplissima opera*: Parsing Flavian Rome’, in Boyle and Dominik (eds.), *Flavian Rome*, pp. 167-98 (170).

26. Modern scholars have long noted the role of Moses as an *exemplum* of leadership in Josephus’s *Antiquities*. In her introduction to Josephus’s life and



will argue that Josephus's prolonged proximity to Roman cultural and political discourse colored his historiography and presentation of this ancestral *exemplum*. To demonstrate this, I will first describe Josephus's conspicuous embellishment of Moses' martial prowess throughout *Antiquities* 2–4, and then turn to a representative episode wherein the historian not only underscores Moses' skill as a general, but also seems to structure the account around many of the narratological categories characterizing the Roman discourse of exemplarity.

### *Martial Moses in Antiquities 2–4*

In light of his background and Roman milieu, it is not surprising that Josephus portrays Moses as, above all, a courageous and pious general. To begin with, while Moses is never called στρατηγός ('general') in the LXX, in *Antiquities* 2–4 he is given this title fifteen times (2.241, 268;

works, for example, Tessa Rajak identifies both the historian's concern for leadership and the role of Moses in addressing this concern: 'Embedded in Josephus' narrative, and particularly in his biblical history...appear thumbnail sketches of political skill in action and of the correct or faulty exercise of power. It is once again Moses who stands out unchallenged as the perfect model' (Tessa Rajak, 'Josephus', in Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield [eds.], *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], pp. 585-96 [592]). Seth Schwartz likewise notes the significant role of Moses in Josephus's history: 'For its part, the *Antiquities* was written to celebrate Moses, but also to show that when the Jews followed God's laws, they prospered, and when they neglected them they suffered' (Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010], p. 92). Feldman similarly underscores the central position of Moses in Josephan historiography: 'Inasmuch as the reputation of a nation depended so heavily upon the qualities of its leadership...it was particularly effective for Josephus to glorify the personality of Moses' (Louis H. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses: Part Three', *JQR* 83 [1993], pp. 301-30 [326]). Furthermore, in light of the burgeoning discourse of exemplarity in the late Republic and early Empire, Edmondson observes that Josephus's presentation of Moses was penned for 'Romans from the city of Rome, who looked to history to provide moral *exempla* for good and bad conduct' (Edmondson, 'Introduction', p. 6). Finally, after rightly identifying the argumentation of "'character" (ἦθος, *ingenium, mores*)' as 'a leading function of Roman history-writing' (Mason, 'Flavius Josephus', p. 569), Mason summarizes Josephus's overall aim in the *Antiquities*: 'In keeping with his moral quest, Josephus tells the story of Judaeian history through the lives of great individuals' (Mason, 'Flavius Josephus', p. 570).

3.2, 11, 12, 28, 47, 65, 67, 78, 102, 105; 4.82, 194, 329).<sup>27</sup> *Antiquities*, furthermore, includes a profusion of extra-biblical comments promoting Moses' general martial ability.<sup>28</sup> To take one example, Josephus elaborates that, in readying the Hebrews for a hostile encounter with the Amalekites—the 'most warlike of the peoples in those parts' (*Ant.* 3.40)—Moses 'passed a wakeful night instructing Joshua how to marshal his forces' (*Ant.* 3.51).<sup>29</sup> As the form and content of *Ant.* 2.238-257 will demonstrate as well, when Josephus significantly diverges from the LXX, he does so to showcase the military credentials of his *exemplum*.<sup>30</sup>

27. See Louis H. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses: Part Two', *JQR* 83 (1992), pp. 7-50 (13). Damgaard reviews many of the martial components of Moses in *Antiquities*; see Finn Damgaard, 'Brothers in Arms: Josephus' Portrait of Moses in the "Jewish Antiquities" in the Light of his Own Self-Portraits in the "Jewish War" and the "Life"', *JJS* 59 (2008), pp. 218-35 (220-24). Damgaard concludes, 'the most conspicuous change is the way Josephus has recast Moses as a στρατηγός' (Damgaard, 'Brothers', p. 226).

28. Josephus, for example, embellishes the biblical account by having Moses mention his combat credentials to Pharaoh (*Ant.* 2.282; see Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', p. 21), and by reporting the Israelites' 'praises of their general' and Raguel's (Moses' father-in-law's) admiration for 'the gallantry (ἀνδραγαθίας) which he (Moses) had devoted to the salvation of his friends' (*Ant.* 3.64-65). Furthermore, Josephus showcases the martial *exemplum*'s capacity to organize the camp effectively for combat (*Ant.* 3.5, 48-51), and he further explains that the Hebrews' military preparedness was one of Moses' top priorities (*Ant.* 3.287).

29. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of *Ant.* 2-4 cited in this article are those of H.St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). Feldman notes that, as illustrated in the above reference to the unparalleled 'warlike' nature of the Amalekites, Josephus regularly exaggerates the peril the Israelites were in, so as to enhance Moses' military leadership and victory (Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', p. 22).

30. To be sure, it is unlikely that Josephus invented the Ethiopian story out of whole cloth. Artapanus, to the degree that Eusebius accurately preserves his work (*Praep. ev.* 9.27.1-39), centuries earlier recounted Moses' leadership against the Ethiopians. Nevertheless, Josephus's account is far more detailed and, as Frulla notes, particularly affords 'the occasion to show everybody [Moses'] military cleverness' (Giovanni Frulla, 'Reconstructing Exodus Tradition: Moses in the Second Book of Josephus' *Antiquities*', in Pastor, Stern and Mor [eds.], *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 111-24 [116]). For more discussion of Artapanus's account of Moses, see Frulla, 'Reconstructing Exodus Tradition', p. 113. For a lengthy discussion of Josephus's source for *Ant.* 2.238-257, see Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', pp. 15-18.

*Martial Moses in Antiquities 2.238-257**Introduction to the Episode*

This episode recounts Moses' defeat of the Ethiopians while he was a general in Egypt. Introduced as a 'signal proof' to the Egyptians of Moses' 'merits' (τὴν ἀρετὴν),<sup>31</sup> this story first embellishes the power of the invading Ethiopians (*Ant.* 2.240) before describing the valorous military leadership of the Hebrew hero. The narrative elements comprising the episode, moreover, correspond well to Roller's four-fold outline of the Roman discourse of exemplarity.

*Action*

In terms of specific actions demonstrating Moses' valor (ἀρετή), the historian includes both his paragon's sagacious generalship as well as his personal courage in battle. Regarding the former, Josephus describes Moses' orchestration of a 'marvelous stratagem' (στρατήγημα θαυμαστόν), whereby he bravely leads the Egyptians through dangerous terrain to facilitate a successful surprise attack against the Ethiopians.<sup>32</sup> Following this victory, we are told that Moses proceeds to assault additional cities. This all results in the 'great carnage of the Ethiopians' (*Ant.* 2.248). Moses' personal courage is paraded in the detailed story of the siege of Saba (*Ant.* 2.249-252).

*Audience*

It is Josephus's concern to meticulously record the primary audiences' observations of and reactions to Moses' martial actions that most clearly suggests the historian's appropriation of a specifically Roman narrative approach. In this episode, the primary audiences evaluating Moses' martial prowess include (1) the Egyptians, (2) the Hebrews and (3) Tharbis, an Ethiopian princess. While the Egyptians grow increasingly envious and the Hebrews increasingly hopeful, the fascinating description of Tharbis's emotional evaluation proves the most

31. *Ant.* 2.238. Polybius describes elite Roman funerals—including their displays of images and the *laudationes*—as advertising ancestors likewise renowned for such martially proven ἀρετή; see his *Hist.* 6.53.10.

32. Specifically, Moses chooses a shorter, albeit snake-ridden, route for his troops. He protects the Egyptians from deadly bites by releasing ibises (*Ant.* 2.248).

colorful.<sup>33</sup> ‘Tharbis... watching Moses bringing his troops close beneath the ramparts and fighting valiantly (μαχόμενον γενναίως), marveled (θαυμάζουσα) at the ingenuity of his manoeuvres...[and] fell madly in love with him’ (*Ant.* 2.252). Viewing Moses’ martial performance from Tharbis’s admiring vantage point encourages Josephus’s readers also to marvel at Moses’ courageous leadership.<sup>34</sup>

### *Commemoration*

The primary ‘monument’ commemorating Moses’ value-laden action is the very text of *Antiquities*.<sup>35</sup> We can also observe two commemorative events in the story itself. Moses’ courageous action, for example, was crowned with his marriage to Tharbis. Secondly, Moses commemorates

33. Regarding the Egyptians, Josephus narrates how in the sight of Moses’ feats, the Egyptian priests ‘after having spoken of putting him to death as an enemy, were now not ashamed to crave his succour’ (*Ant.* 2.242). More significantly, we are told how ‘the Egyptians, thus saved by Moses, conceived from their very deliverance a hatred for him...suspecting that he would take advantage of his success to revolutionize Egypt and suggesting to the king that he should be put to death...he [the king]...alike from envy (φθόνου) of Moses’ generalship (στρατηγίας) and from fear of seeing himself abased (ταπεινώσεως)...was prepared to lend a hand in the murder of Moses’ (*Ant.* 2.255). Thus, rather than Moses’ murder of an Egyptian prompting the Pharaoh’s dislike (Exod. 2.11-15), in *Antiquities*, it was the Egyptians’ malevolent observation of Moses’ superlative military assistance. The ‘Hebrew hierarchy’, unlike the Egyptians, esteemed Moses’ performance, foreseeing in it ‘the possibility of escape from the Egyptians with Moses as their general’ (*Ant.* 2.243).

34. The portion of Artapanus’s account of Moses’ Ethiopian exploits—the only other narrative of Moses as a military leader in Egypt—lacks such emphasis on the viewing audience. See Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.27.1-39.

35. Describing Josephus’s presuppositions with respect to the commemorative purpose of biblical histories, Schwartz summarizes that, for Josephus, these narratives ‘serve as monuments to the benefactions (*euergesiai*) and great deeds (*aretai*) of the founders of our nation... So far, then, Josephus appears to have embraced the idea of memorialization: benefactors and saviors can reasonably expect to have their deeds remembered and their memories perpetuated. Here, those doing the remembering are the general membership of the community of Israel, and such commemoration takes two forms, which in Josephus’s account are scarcely distinguished from one another: oral recitation and inscription in text’ (Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society*, p. 96). Additionally, according to Roller, the commemoration of a deed, its communal effects and its primary spectator evaluation can often appear exclusively in the form of a narrative. See Roller, ‘Exemplarity’, pp. 4-5.

God's hand in his success by publically rendering thanks (*Ant.* 2.252-253).

### *Imitation*

Finally, as is the case for the balance of the Josephan exemplary discourse elsewhere in *Antiquities* 2–4, though the historian does not explicitly enjoin his readers to follow Moses' courage or to share Tharbis's adoration, such imitation is implied throughout the account.<sup>36</sup> In her study of Roman exemplary discourse in Josephus's portrayal of Abraham, Annette Reed points out that the absence of explicit calls to follow an *exemplum* 'is consistent with the genre conventions of narrative prose history in Roman literary culture of the time'. Citing the example of Livy's *History of Rome*, she further comments, 'explicit appeals to exempla are only sometimes found in the narrative accounts of historical events'.<sup>37</sup> In this light, Josephus's reluctance to exhort his hearers directly toward imitation does not preclude his robust participation in the mimetic dimension of the Roman discourse of exemplarity as it was commonly instantiated in ancient historiography.

To sum up, without failing to bolster his *exemplum*'s high birth, eloquence and pious patronage throughout *Antiquities* 2–4, Josephus liberally appropriates and redeploys the Roman discourse of exemplarity to create secondary audiences that could confess with him: 'As a general [Moses] had few to equal him' (*Ant.* 4.329).<sup>38</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In the end, this study seeks to contribute as much to our understanding of the presentation of Moses in *Antiquities* as it does to our understanding of the participation of provincials in the literary and political

36. The praise for the hero elsewhere in *Ant.* 2–4 in conjunction with the snapshots of Moses equipping Joshua for military leadership carries strong mimetic implications. For passages explicitly celebrating Moses' exemplary leadership, see *Ant.* 2.205, 216; 4.312-331. On Moses training Joshua, see *Ant.* 3.49-51.

37. Reed, 'Construction', pp. 195-96. To be sure, though the calls to imitation remain implicit in *Ant.* 2–4, Josephus does explicate the mimetic aim of his project elsewhere. See, for example, *Ant.* 6.343.

38. Though not exclusively focused on Moses' martial prowess, several additional portions of the narrative align neatly with Roller's fourfold framework; see, for example, *Ant.* 2.334-348; 3.9-22, 23-32.

discourse of Flavian Rome. Regarding the former, my study builds on and adds a significant dimension to the primary studies of Josephus's martial Moses, which are almost exclusively focused on literary parallels. Feldman (the scholar who has written the most on Josephus's Moses), for example, sees the martial contours of the protagonist as shaped by the currents of popular Hellenistic and Greco-Roman literary portraits.<sup>39</sup> In perhaps the most thoroughgoing study of Moses as a general in *Antiquities*, Damgaard explains the idealized military portrait as governed by a different literary source—namely, Josephus's own self-portrait in the *Jewish War*. The arc of his detailed argument contends that the similarities between Josephus's own military performance and that of Moses were 'meant to direct the readers to *recognize* the parallels'.<sup>40</sup>

While I do not call into question the likelihood that Josephus shaped his Moses, in part, to reflect his own autobiographical details conspicuously, my reading of *Antiquities* 2–4 in its Flavian discursive context helps explain why the historian desired to color his own life and his Moses in such a martial hue in the first place. Combined with this military emphasis, moreover, the fact that the narrative framework for many of Moses' exploits fits the four-fold framework of Roman exemplarity—a pattern never prescribed in rhetorical handbooks or extant Roman literature—further suggests that Josephus was not simply imitating a literary style in *Antiquities* 2–4. Rather, the narratological approach suggests that he was producing and parading his ancestral *exemplum* under the influence of one of the imposing discourses of daily life in the capital. In other words, without denying the robust role

39. In discussing Moses' courage in *Antiquities*, Feldman asserts, for example, that Thucydides is 'Josephus' model' (Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', p. 13; cf. pp. 22, 27, 28 n. 123), and he notes that Josephus's 'stress on Moses' military achievements is in line with Lucian's singling out of military knowledge and experience as qualifications necessary for the historian' (Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', p. 14). Other authors mentioned as possible sources or parallels include Virgil and Xenophon (Feldman, 'Portrait: Part Two', pp. 20–21). For more of Feldman's literary studies on the Josephan Moses—although they do not significantly focus on his martial characteristics—see Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses', *JQR* 82 (1992), pp. 285–328; Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait: Part Three'; Feldman, 'Parallel Lives of Two Lawgivers: Josephus' Moses and Plutarch's *Lycurgus*', in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (eds.), *Flavius Josephus*, pp. 209–42.

40. Damgaard, 'Brothers', p. 220. For Damgaard's discussion of the parallels between *Jewish War* and *Antiquities*, see 'Brothers', pp. 218–35 (220–29).

of Josephus's literary context, reading *Antiquities* in light of the Roman discourse of exemplarity recognizes a much broader sphere of influence that takes into account the pedagogical ambiance produced in the complex and value-laden interplay of the statuary, oratory, architecture, politics, religion, entertainment *and* literature of Flavian Rome.

Finally, the foregoing analysis contributes to our understanding of the utility of Roman exemplary discourse for provincials constructing and advertising 'non-Roman' ancestral *exempla*. Specifically, *Antiquities* 2–4 provides a case study for examining how an author, raised in a 'most notable' family 'in Jerusalem' (*Life* 7), navigated and participated in the ubiquitous Roman discourse of exemplarity as he contended for his particular understanding of ideal 'native' leadership. It is my hope that by better situating Josephus's Moses in his Flavian discursive milieu, this study joins the work of Mary Beard and others in fortifying the scholarly 'bridge between Josephus and the classical world'.<sup>41</sup>

41. Beard, 'Triumph', p. 545 n. 5.