

TWO TRANSLATED ARTICLES ON JOSEPHUS

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In this volume of *JGRChJ*, we engage in a practice that we have not undertaken before. We are including the translations of two articles on Josephus by the important Italian scholar Raimondo Bacchisio Motzo. We are very thankful to Professor Tommaso Leoni of the Department of History of York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, for making these translations from Italian and offering them to us. In their English form, these articles make a significant contribution to Josephus scholarship that will be of use to those interested in the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds of the New Testament.

Raimondo Bacchisio Motzo, the author of the two articles, was born 1883 in Bolotana, on the island of Sardinia, an island of Italy, and died in Naples in 1970. He was a well-known Italian historian and philologist, specializing in the study of Hellenistic Judaism, including Josephus, Philo and related topics. He began his scholarly career as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church but left the priesthood in 1923. The majority of his scholarly career was spent at the University of Cagliari, located on the southern coast of Sardinia, where he was professor of Greek and Roman history from 1925 to 1953, also serving as the dean of the faculty of letters at his university. Motzo published numerous articles during his career, as well as a number of monographs. These monographs illustrate the range of his scholarly interests. They include: *Saggi di storia e letteratura giudeo-ellenistica* (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1924), later reprinted with additional articles as *Ricerche sulla letteratura e la storia giudaico-ellenistica* (ed. Fausto Parente; Rome: Centro editorial internazionale, 1977); *Studi di storia e filologi* (Cagliari: University of Cagliari, 1927); *La versione Latina di Ester secondo i LXX* (Bologna: Stabilimenti Poligrafici Riuniti, 1928); and *Caesariana et Augusta* (Rome: University of Cagliari, 1933); among others, along with writing and editing some volumes on a

number of other subjects especially related to Sardinia. Motzo was honored in 1953 with a celebratory volume published by his university.

As readers will appreciate from the two translated pieces included here, Motzo has much to offer contemporary Josephus scholarship. However, his work has clearly been neglected for a number of apparent reasons. One of these is that, from what I can determine, very little of his scholarship was ever translated into English. There has long been a vibrant Italian scholarly tradition, especially in ancient studies of Greece and Rome, extending into such areas as historiography, philology, papyrology and epigraphy. However, such scholarship always runs the risk of being overlooked by those scholars—and unfortunately English-language scholars are clearly among these—whose language capacity does not extend to Italian. Even if such scholars might know German and possibly French, Italian is often not one that they pursue. Hence, they miss out on a range of important scholarship. The second reason is that most of Motzo's work appeared during a difficult time and place in European history, mostly in the period leading up to and then immediately after the second World War in what became Fascist Italy. On top of this, he worked in Sardinia, which was also geographically isolated from the main paths of scholarship. With the rise of Fascism in Italy, the destruction of the war, the aftermath and how that affected scholarship throughout Europe, especially in making the published scholarship that survived the war not widely available, it is not surprising that Motzo has not been widely known to New Testament scholars of later generations.

The two pieces published here, appearing here for the first time in English translation, were both published in the volume, *Ricerche sulla letteratura*, that drew together both Motzo's first book and some of his later articles. Both articles deal with sources in Josephus and are in one sense studies in source criticism. Both also have some characteristics of book reviews, the first being a critical assessment especially of the work of Richard Laqueur and the second an actual review of a book by Hugo Willrich. The first article contains a discussion of Josephus's use of sources in his *Life*. Motzo is responding in particular to the theories of the German historian and philologist Richard Laqueur in his book, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (1920). Laqueur taught at a number of different German universities but was dismissed in 1936 from his position because of National Socialism, after which he went to the United States and then eventually returned to Germany after the war. In this article, Motzo takes up a number of points raised by Laqueur to explain Josephus's use of sources in the *Life*, defending Josephus's

expansion of his works by one of several means. The second article is formally a review of Hugo Willrich's *Urkundenfälschung in der hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur* (1924), published in 1926–1927. I say formally because Motzo's primary emphasis is upon examining Josephus in order to show that Willrich, the German ancient historian and educationalist, is wrong about nearly all of the Jewish sources being false. Motzo, despite his recognizing the ingenuity of Willrich, clearly does not have nearly so much respect for his scholarship. I find it interesting that Willrich's claims regarding Jewish sources appear to be consonant with his later National Socialist leanings, something that Motzo would not have known at the time but that he in some of his comments might well be anticipating in his judgments.

There are many strengths of these two articles. The first is that they introduce to English scholarship a number of scholars otherwise unknown and destined to remain so otherwise. Motzo is seen through these two essays as a sharp and able critic of the source-critical work of other scholars, in particular Laqueur and Willrich, both of whom are reasonably obscure in classical scholarship even though they were at one time better known. The second is that these essays introduce not just the scholars involved but German and Italian scholarship that would otherwise be relatively inaccessible. Few if any of the works of these scholars have been systematically translated into English, no doubt for many reasons, some of them mentioned above. In some ways, these essays are typical of that era of scholarship in that they are concerned with text-critical and source-critical problems. A third strength of these articles is the role that they play in the history of scholarship regarding Josephus, the various criticisms involved, and the authors and now their ideas contained within the articles. These articles not only contain useful analyses of their respective source-critical questions, but they open a window onto a previous era of scholarship, in particular regarding Josephus and the ancient world, from which New Testament scholars can benefit.