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"Jewish Antiquities" as Hellenistic Targum

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In this article author researches the specific of the text of ancient Jewish Historian Josephus Flavius (1 A.D.) "Jewish Antiquities" in comparison with other ancient texts such as The Bible, Midrash, Talmud, texts of Greek and Roman writers. The purpose of the work is analysis of structure of Josephus' text with its historical-cultural context. Author has chosen culturological, philosophic and linguistic analysis of text of "Jewish Antiquities" as method of research. In results the author revealed interrelation between method of presenting of material in this book and tradition of rabbinic commented translation (Targum). However translation itself meets the rules and norms of antique historiography, which gives premise to classify "Jewish Antiquities" by Josephus as "Hellenistic Targum".

Keywords: The Bible, Targum, Josephus Flavius, Midrash, Mishnah.

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1. Value of traditional texts for understanding of the historical concept of Josephus Flavius and for culture as a whole.

It is necessary to emphasize importance of traditional religious texts for culture. This article is devoted to the analysis of synthesis of Judaic religious thought and Hellenistic culture in Josephus' works. This synthesis has resulted further in Christianity and consequently in forming of the mentality of the Medieval West which has affected all modern world civilization.

Josephus writes that his attitude to the material presented by the Scriptures is an attitude of respect, "adding nothing and nothing diminishing". However, it is not always so.

Many authors had discussed this subject¹, and it seems to be the common approach of writers

in antiquity. By such statements, the various writers apparently wanted to tell their readers that they would not repeat in verbally. Since Josephus regarded himself as a commentator, the changes he made in the text are still no more than reliable presentation of the tradition². An interesting polemic on this question can be seen in the editions of Kazan Theological Academy. According to the teacher of Kazan Theological Academy professor A.Smirnov, in the manner of Josephus the features of following of Scripture letter are reflected. Palestinian exegetics, unlike the Alexandrian exegetics, were based not on allegorical interpretation, but on literal understanding of the Bible text³. Other teacher of Kazan Theological Academy, the ordinary professor P.Yungerov had disagreed

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with this opinion, believing that an allegory is also presented in Josephus' interpretation⁴. However, according to A. Smirnov, the tradition of Palestinian exegetics highly appreciated value of the text of Torah which, according to rabbis of that time, meant much more, than its simple sense. That has led to creation of Haggadah⁵. Let's consider more in detail how had Josephus interpret the Bible in "Jewish Antiquities".

Josephus' opinion on some facts frequent coincides with the Talmud version. So, Josephus tried to attribute to the Jews the majority of gains of civilization. He writes that Abraham had imparted to Egyptians the knowledge on arithmetic and astrology, being the intermediary between the impudent persons possessing this knowledge, and Egypt (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* I, 8, 2; Baba Batra 16 b). The report of "Jewish Antiquities" about high intellectual development of three-years old Moses is also present in the Talmud (Yalkut, I, 166). Josephus' moral estimation of Saul's modesty also corresponds to Tosefta (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* IV, 4, 5-6). Josephus, besides, adds the enthusiastic story about his military valor that made this king greater in the opinion of Romans. From these examples it is obvious that, most likely, Josephus' deviations from the Bible text should be put into the category of the exegetic stratifications which had been wide spread in the I century A.D. which have something in common with philosophical world view of epoch of postmodern, when the person is affirmed in the world of the text by means of doubt and returning. In that case the Bible text continues to exist in culture by itself, separately from religious context, and becomes a space of the human freedom reflected in interpretations by Josephus.

2. Targum as a genre of Rabbinic literature. The perception of the world based on traditional texts is archetypical and is implicitly present in the Jewish culture. Since Age of II

Temple in the Jewish literature there had been a genre of the Bible paraphrase – Targum. The fragments of books of Leviticus (4Q156) and Job (4Q157), found in Qumran, are actually Targums. They were literal translations from Hebrew to Aramaic. In the end of Age of II Temple the Jews practically didn't speak Hebrew⁶. Targum was used during service in synagogue. After fragment of the Bible text had been read aloud, the translator explained meaning of it (Megillah 23b-25b). Most often the known translations were used, such as Targum of Onkelos.

Targum of Onkelos became an official Targum of Babylonian rabbinic school. It has been written and edited in the 3rd century A.D. and is ascribed to proselyte Onkelos (Megillah. 3a). Targum of Onkelos is the most literal of all known Torah translations. Nevertheless numerous cases are known when the text of Targum doesn't coincide with the original. Sometimes translation is replaced with retelling, and the places where literal translation is impossible according to the translator's opinion (especially places with anthropomorphic description of God) are stated allegorically. In Haggadah and Halakha sections of Targum of Onkelos we can see influence of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbis from Babylon named Onkelos' Targum "our Targum". In 1949 Targum Neophyte I (Biblioteca dei Neofiti) has been found out in Rome in library of Vatican. Its paraphrases considerably differ from Targum of Onkelos. The whole sections are added. Targum Neophyte I is called Palestinian Aramaic, while Targum of Onkelos is Babylonian Aramaic. Both Targums are created at the same time.

The latest translation of Torah in Targum Neophyte I is Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. In many cases it supplies translation of verse of Torah with midrashim. Moreover, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is supplied by the explanatory which makes reverse work, translating Targum to

Hebrew and supplying it with small notes. The names of the wife and daughter of Muhammad in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (in connection with Gen.21:21) show that the last edition has been carried out after VII century. Targum Neophyte I and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan are connected with fragmentary Targums from Cairo Genizah. Initially they were a part of fuller works of VII and XI centuries. By form they are close to Palestinian Aramaic Targums. Paraphrases of books of Prophets we can see in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. Traditionally it is ascribed to Jonathan ben Uziel (Megillah 3a), though it contains fragments which precisely correspond to the paraphrases ascribed to Joseph bar Hiyya, Rabbi of IV century. Thus, in Targum Isaiah we can see the signs of nationalistic eschatology of the times of Jewish War, implicitly containing in later monuments of the Jewish culture. Targum Iona is the result of editorial work of Tannaim and Amoraim.

After the completing of Targum Jonathan the fragmentary Targums have been created. They are reflected in the Reichlin Code (Codex Reuchlinianus) of 1105. Targum on Parables is a paraphrase of the Syrian Bible translation – Peshita, and Targum on the book of Esther is directly intended for Purim⁷. Thus, the Bible paraphrases are the traditional form of rabbinic literature. We will consider, how Targum method is reflected in Josephus' works.

Paraphrases in Targum are created by the use of oral tradition, construction of author's own etymology, commenting of difficult places in order that the edited text would be more clear to audience. In our opinion, "Jewish Antiquities" by Josephus can also be called Targum because, according to Targum tradition, Josephus intertwines the Bible narration with rabbinic comment, that allows to consider "Jewish Antiquities" as a monument not only of Greek-Roman culture, but also of Jewish one.

3. "Jewish Antiquities" as Targum

The analysis of the method of text by Josephus was made by many authors. So, for example, T. Loeni describes all the works of the Hebrew author⁸ in details. In this article "Jewish Antiquities" will be considered as Hellenistic Targum.

To find out whether "Jewish Antiquities" by Josephus is actually Targum, we will consider one of Josephus' numerous comments. In Gen. 10:2 in Massoreth text it is written: "Sons of Iafet: the Homere, Magog, Mada, Iavan, Fuval, Mesheh and Firas" in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan this text is : "Sons of Iafet: the Homere, Magog, Mada, Iavan, Fuval, Mesheh and Firas, and names of their areas are Phrygia, Germany, the Midia, Macedonia, Bithynia, Asia and Thrace" In Josephus' text the paraphrase is even more detailed:

"Japhet, the son of Noah, had seven sons: they inhabited so, that, beginning at the mountains Taurus and Amanus, they proceeded along Asia, as far as the river Tansis, and along Europe to Cadiz; and settling themselves on the lands which they light upon, which none had inhabited before, they called the nations by their own names. For Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians, [Galls,] but were then called Gomerites. Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians. Now as to Javan and Madai, the sons of Japhet; from Madai came the Madeans, who are called Medes, by the Greeks; but from Javan, Ionia, and all the Grecians, are derived. Thobel founded the Thobelites, who are now called Iberes; and the Mosocheni were founded by Mosoch; now they are Cappadocians. There is also a mark of their ancient denomination still to be shown; for there is even now among them a city called Mazaca, which may

inform those that are able to understand, that so was the entire nation once called. Thiras also called those whom he ruled over Thirasians; but the Greeks changed the name into Thracians. And so many were the countries that had the children of Japhet for their inhabitants. Of the three sons of Gomer, Aschanax founded the Aschanaxians, who are now called by the Greeks Rheginians. So did Riphath found the Ripheans, now called Paphlagonians; and Thrugramma the Thrugrammeans, who, as the Greeks resolved, were named Phrygians. Of the three sons of Javan also, the son of Japhet, Elisa gave name to the Eliseans, who were his subjects; they are now the Aeolians. Tharsus to the Tharsians, for so was Cilicia of old called; the sign of which is this, that the noblest city they have, and a metropolis also, is Tarsus, the tau being by change put for the theta. Cethimus possessed the island Cethima: it is now called Cyprus; and from that it is that all islands, and the greatest part of the sea-coasts, are named Cethim by the Hebrews: and one city there is in Cyprus that has been able to preserve its denomination; it has been called Citius by those who use the language of the Greeks, and has not, by the use of that dialect, escaped the name of Cethim" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*I,6,1).

It would be possible to name such a comment "midrash", a classical for Judaic religious philosophy method of interpretation of the Bible. According to L.Feldman, the use of definition "midrash" for not-rabbinic exegetics isn't absolutely correct, because it implies too close connection between rabbinic and an earlier form of interpretation of Scriptures⁹. However if we should consider the given text typologically, it comes under the definition of

midrash, which in turn is the basic method of writing of Targum.

Midrash had been used as a sacred way for textual engagement. Also, in the case of homiletic text, it offers a narration for the Jews revealing relevant, true meaning of God. Rabbinic text referred to Egyptian cultural icons, which served to demarcate rabbinic Judaism from Egyptian and other non-Jewish cultures and religion¹⁰.

Josephus gives great attention to the philological analysis of the text of the Bible. So, Josephus writes that the word "Pharaoh" is never mentioned in the Bible after mentioning Solomon's father-in-law (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* VIII,2,5). Also Josephus gives etymology of the name of Moses, as "rescued from the water" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* II, 9,6). The name of land Mar Josephus connects with bad quality of water, from a word מר (bitterness) (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III,1,1). Josephus also gives the detailed description with interpretation of the construction of Tabernacle (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III, 6 cp.) and of clothes of the high priest (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III, 7 cp.). An origin of the word "manna" Josephus deduces from a question מה זה (What is it?) (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III,1,6). Josephus, according to the principles of the writing of Targum, gives his own etymology of words from the Bible text.

The problem of Josephus' silence concerning some Biblical scenes and subjects is important. Joseph had been excluded from the Bible text some stories which could present the Jews disparagingly to reader's audience. Here we see a consequence of collisions in the situation of meeting of Greek-Roman and Jewish cultures. A lacuna is a unit possessing following signs: incomprehensibility, unusualness, strangeness, discrepancy or an inaccuracy. All national-specific elements of culture in which the text is created, are lacunas. Coming into contact to another culture, the recipient estimates it in codes of his own culture that leads to inadequate

interpretation of features of another's culture. To avoid this and in conformity with Targum method of interpretation of the Bible text, Josephus gives his own etymology of words from the original text. However he not only adds the comment to the Bible text, but also doesn't retell some moments. So, sale of primogeniture by Esau (*Gen.* 25:29-33) was excluded from Josephus' narration. It is obvious that cunning of Jacob couldn't be pleasant to the Romans who were well-known for their frankness. Also Josephus keeps silence about the episode with circumcision of inhabitants of Shechem with capture of this city by Simeon and Levy. Instead Josephus writes that there was a celebration and townsmen were drunk, therefore brothers captured the city with easiness (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*I,21,1). Failure to mention the circumcision of the inhabitants of Shechem had several causes.

According to Josephus when God had promised that Abraham and Sarah would have the son, he had wished that the Jews wouldn't mix up with other nations and would make the circumcision of newborns on the eighth day (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*I,10,5). Negative interpretation of this phenomenon is given by Tacitus. He writes that Jews:

"share neither food, nor bed with others; being a tribe extremely lewd, they abstain from communications with alien women; between themselves everything is allowed; to be different from strangers, they have entered circumcision" (Tacitus, *Historiae*, V,5,2).

Hence, circumcision for Romans was the evidence of particularism of Jews, and actually regarded as a mean, contemptible sign. Here we see socio-cultural collisions of civilization and cultural values. It is because of negative attitude to circumcision anti-semitic Apion of Alexandria interprets the origin of a word "Sabbath". Josephus writes:

"When the Jews had traveled a six days' journey, they had buboes in their groins; and that on this account it was that they rested on the seventh day, as having got safely to that country which is now called Judea; that then they preserved the language of the Egyptians, and called that day the Sabbath (σαββω), for that malady of buboes on their groin was named Sabbatosis (σαββαττωσις) by the Egyptians" (Josephus, *C.Ap.* II, 20-21, 25).

M. Sheller states that σαββαττωσις - is "designation of illness when the sick person has characteristic ulcers in groin"¹¹. In general negative attitude to Judaic religion prevailed in Rome, since for such greatest representatives of Antique civilization as Cicero it was no more than "barbara superstitio".

Juvenal expressed the blames of Romans concerning Jews most distinctly. In the satire devoted to problem of bad influence of parents' vices on children he writes:

Quidam sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem
Nil praeter nubes et caeli numen adorant,
Nes distare putant humana carne suillam,
Qua pater abstinuit, mox et praeputia
ponunt;
Romans autem soliti contemnere leges
Iudaicum ediscunt et servsnt ac metuunt
ius,
Tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine
Moyses:
Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra
colenti,
Quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere
veros.
Sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit
lux
Ignava et partem vitae non attigit ullam.¹²

The proselytes which have completely accepted Judaism differed from semi-proselytes ("reverent of God") who didn't adhere to Judaic

tradition in everything, for example, didn't do circumcision. Augustine in the context of Romans' discontent of Judaic missionary work results known expression: *victi victoribus leges dederunt* ("The won gave the law to the winners") (Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, VI, 11). That's why the circumcision of inhabitant of Shechem could be seen as the expansion of the Judaism which has ended with punishment over neophytes. From the point of view of postmodernistic interpretation of the event the given text of the Bible in intertext of the Greek-Roman culture was read distinctly from the Jewish interpretation. Therefore Josephus has decided to keep silent about the given fragment.

There is one more reason of keeping silence about circumcision of inhabitants of Shechem. At the time of Joseph Shechem was inhabited by Samaritans who had departed from traditional Judaism. Therefore in the Last Will of Levy Shechem is called as "a city of fools". In the same text it is told that men from Shechem intended to steal Sarah, exhausted Abraham and in general were extremely inhospitable that contradicted statements of Samaritans hostile to the Jews¹³. Josephus writes about Samaritans: "when the Jews are in adversity, they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* XI, 8, 6). Therefore the story of circumcision which makes Shechemites almost coreligionists of the Jews, not only would discredit the Jews in the opinion of other nations, but also would cause undesirable hints on historical and cultural realities contemporary to Josephus.

Stories about slaying of an Egyptian by Moses (*Ex.* 2:12) and worshipping the Golden Calf (*Ex.* 32:1-6) are also excluded from Josephus' narration. Probably, it is connected with two blames to the Jews from the Alexandrian anti-Semites. In Roman Empire the opinion about xenophobia of the Jews became a platitude. Tacitus wrote: "Among their own people fidelity is unshakeable and readiness for compassion is invariable, but

they hate all other people as enemies" (Tacitus, *Historiae*, V, 5, 1). The most terrible charge was that (according to the stories of Alexandrian anti-Semite Apion) Antiochus IV Epiphanes had found a Greek prepared for sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple (Josephus, *C.Ap.* II, 8), which became a prototype of all subsequent blames of the Jews in human sacrifices. Therefore Josephus avoids a mention of this murder and explains flight of Moses by envy of Egyptians to him after his victorious campaign to Ethiopia (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* II, 10, 2-11, 1). According to Josephus the founder of the Jewish religion shouldn't be the murderer whereas the authors of the Bible told about both virtues and sins of the heroes.

Worshipping the Golden Calf is excluded by Josephus since it causes hints on charges of Posidonius, Apollonius Molon and Apion that the same Antiochus IV Epiphanes has found a golden statue of an asinine head in the Temple (Josephus, *C.Ap.* II, 7). Josephus in every possible way tries to take away from the Jews the charge in worshipping the idols. However among commandments of Moses he mentions also that one which didn't exist in the Bible "Let no one blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem such" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* IV, 8, 10). That is, he lets know that Hellenes, worshipping their gods, don't offend religious feeling of the Jews, since they are gods of other state, while the Jews trust in the Most High. As a result in the story about the ascension of Moses to Sinai the narration develops in such a way, that Jews don't do anything reprehensible and Moses in turn doesn't break the tables, but shows them to the people (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* II, 5, 8). Some episodes in Josephus' paraphrase of the Bible have been modified by him just a little. So, Jacob doesn't rebuke Joseph but rejoices to the dream about the future position of his son (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* I, 2, 3), Rahab (who had helped Jews at the capture of Jericho) was not the loose woman but the mistress of a hotel (Josephus,

Ant.Jud.V,1,2), and Benjamites in Gibeah have demanded for the entertainments the wife of the Levite which has come to their city, instead of the Levite himself (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.V,2,8*). We see in this case how Josephus puts the Bible narration into Hellenistic cultural context.

The Rabbinic tradition of reading or translating of certain confusing places of the Bible holds the opinion that in synagogues it is necessary to read some places, but not to translate them¹⁴. It has to do with the case when Ruben had the intercourse with the concubine of the father (*Gen. 35:22*) and with the second story of the Golden Calf (*Ex. 32:21-25*; *Megillah 4:10*). It is especially amazing that the blessing of priests (*Numb. 6:24-27*), the relationships of David and Bathsheba and the beginning of story of Amnon and Tamar (*2 Sam. 11:2-17*) should not be not only translated but even read (*Megillah 4:10*). Along with this the event of intercourse of Judah and Tamar (*Gen. 38*) and the first story about the Golden Calf (*Ex. 32:1-20*) are to be read and translated, but Josephus omits both. The authors of Gemara (*Megillah 25a-b*) add to the list of passages, which should be both read and translated, the narration of creation (*Gen.1*), story of Lot and his daughters (*Gen. 19:31-38*), curses and blessings to Israel (*Lev.26, Deut. 27*), the story of the concubine in Gibeah (*Jud. 19-20*), the passage from Ezekiel (*Ez. 16:1*) about abominations of Jerusalem and the continuation of situation of Amnon and Tamar (*2 Kings 13:2-22*). Hence, Josephus follows the pattern of reading and translation of Torah in synagogues also in the aspect of keeping silence about some events. Therefore the work "Jewish Antiquities" can be called Targum, and it is a monument of the Jewish traditional culture.

According to S. Rappoport, Josephus in his comments to the Bible exclusively depended on written sources.¹⁵ L.Feldman states that it is impossible to define one or another midrash.

Though it is quite possible that Josephus really had access to written down midrashes in spite of the fact that the majority of exegetic comments in Synagogue Targum, in sermons or in Academies in the days of Josephus still were oral in essence¹⁶. For finding out of the sources of Josephus the cases of deviation from the Bible text L.Ranke¹⁷ compared his narration to a narration of the Antique Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria and with oral Torah. Both Josephus and Philo of Alexandria made deviations from the Bible text, and in those deviations both have divergence and similarity. For example, under a name of the first king Josephus as well as Talmud assumes a new dynasty in Egypt, and the cause of the slay of the Jewish boys he sees as a prophecy about the birth of a child who will shake the kingdom of Egypt (*Sanhedrin, 101b*). In addition to Josephus the Antique Jewish philosopher Philo informs that the Pharaoh had only one daughter who was infertile, and she worried that the kingdom would pass to enemies. Therefore she gladly picks up Moses. The same we see in Talmud. Comparison with Philo helps us to distinguish two independent legends added to the Bible in Josephus' narration. One of them has the Alexandrian origin, and another has Palestinian one. In Josephus' narration there is a characteristic difference both from the Bible and from Philo. It is the originality of the political combinations considering the person and activity of Moses from the point of view of predetermination and his overthrow of power of Egypt over the Jews. This originality of Josephus' text is the author's style.

The assumption that Josephus was acquainted with the Palestinian oral tradition is confirmed by the fact that Josephus gives certain names to unnamed Biblical characters. For example, the name of the person who has inspired others for construction of the Babel tower is Nimrod (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.I,1,4*); the name of Pharaoh's daughter who adopted Moses

is Phermuphis (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* I,9,5) and the name of a prophet who rebuked Ahab for deliverance of Ben-Hadad is Micah (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* VIII,15,4). Probably those names are taken from Rabbinic Midrashes. But the fact that details of such kind also can be found in scrolls of the Dead Sea and in Samaritan texts¹⁸ shows that we are dealing with Palestinian and not just Rabbinic tradition.

The assumption that Josephus used an oral form of legend is confirmed by the fact that many texts of Haggadah had been written down by him for the first time. A.Shinan¹⁹ tells that Josephus was the first who recorded Haggadah version of the birth of Moses. He comes to this conclusion on the basis of coincidence of records of Josephus with the Babylonian Talmud (Sotah 12a). The story about Solomon's magic power (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* VIII,2,5) came into the text of "Jewish Antiquities" from Haggadah. The legend about Moses' throwing down of Kushites is present both in Judaic (Sotah 57,7) and in Muslim legends²⁰. A.Shinan asserts that the description of war with Kushites Josephus took from writings of Hellenistic Jewish writer Artapan.²¹ Moreover, S.Rappaport shows 299 examples where Josephus gives parallels of Midrash legends which haven't been written down earlier, and they are written much later.²² Thus we can see that Josephus used the oral tradition.

Haggadah texts are present in Jewish culture archetypically. We have noticed that in the majority of texts of Josephus it is possible to track the influence of Haggadah just according to one phrase inserted by Josephus in the Bible text. So, for example, in "Jewish Antiquities" Josephus writes:

"This his (Abraham's) opinion (that the One God rules the Universe. – J. M.) was derived from the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun, and moon, and

all the heavenly bodies" (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* I,7,1).²³

Let's compare this text with Haggadah: "(Abraham had been hidden by his parents in the cave from the wrath of King Nimrod until he was 3 years old) Then he arose and walked about, and he left the cave, and went along the edge of the valley. When the sun sank, and the stars came forth, he said, "These are the gods!" But the dawn came, and the stars could be seen no longer, and then he said, "I will not pay worship to these, for they are no gods." Thereupon the sun came forth, and he spoke, "This is my god, him will I extol." But again the sun set, and he said, "He is no god," and beholding the moon, he called her his god to whom he would pay Divine homage. Then the moon was obscured, and he cried out: "This, too, is no god! There is One who sets them all in motion" (Bereshit Rabbah 38.13).²⁴

Haggadah story which we can see is much more colourful and more detailed than Josephus' dry message which, nevertheless, is based on folklore text significant for the Jewish culture. It is interesting to compare the colorful Haggadah story about King Og and the reserved description of this legend by Josephus. In the Bible this event is described without too many details. It is written only that God gave the army of Og into hands of the Jews (*Numb.* 21:33-36; *Deut.* 3). Og himself is not described. He is just said to be the last of Rephaim (who had been the giants according to legend). Here is the version of Haggadah:

"On the following morning, however, barely at gray dawn, Moses arose and prepared to attack the city, but looking toward the city wall, he cried in amazement, "Behold, in the night they have built up a new wall about the city!" Moses did not see clearly in the misty morning, for there was no wall,

but only the giant Og who sat upon the wall with his feet touching the ground below.

Og met his death in the following fashion. When he discovered that Israel's camp was three parasangs in circumference, he said: "I shall now tear up a mountain of three parasangs, and cast it upon Israel's camp, and crush them". He did as he had planned, pulled up a mountain of three parasangs, laid it upon his head, and came marching in the direction of the Israelite camp, to hurl it upon them. But what did God do? He caused ants to perforate the mountain, so that it slipped from Og's head down upon his neck, and when he attempted to shake it off, his teeth pushed out and extended to left and right, and did not let the mountain pass, so that he now stood there with the mountain, unable to throw it from him. When Moses saw this, he took an axe twelve cubits long, leaped ten cubits into the air, and dealt a blow to Og's ankle, which caused the giant's death" (Bereshit Rabbah. 54; Niddah 24)²⁵.

Haggadah story is much more colorful, expressive and fabulous, than Biblical narrative.

It is unknown whether Josephus used this legend or some very similar one, but his narrative is:

"Og, the king of Gilead and Gaulanitis, fell upon the Israelites... ..did he resolve still to come and fight the Hebrews, supposing he should be too hard for them, and being desirous to try their valor; but failing of his hope, he was both himself slain in the battle, and all his army was destroyed... Now Og had very few equals, either in the largeness of his body, or handsomeness of his appearance. He was also a man of great activity in the use of his hands, so that his actions were not unequal to the vast largeness and handsome appearance of his body" (Josephus, *Ant. Jud. III, 5, 3*)²⁶.

If classic Targum with the help of Haggadah legends widens the Bible text, Josephus compresses Haggadah legend to one or two phrases and returns it in such compressed form back to the Bible narration. It reminds a Talmudic method, so-called "remez", implicitly containing in texts of Judaic religious culture. Probably Josephus didn't consider Haggadah stories as equally reliable to the facts taken from the canonic text of the Bible. Therefore he makes only a hint at Haggadah. Since the judgments of Haggadah are not so carefully verified, the discussion is conducted in more metaphoric, poetic form. Many things mentioned in Haggadah actually have symbolical meaning, where the unequivocal understanding is impossible. However the use of Haggadah plots makes the text of "Jewish Antiquities" close to Targum, as to the text traditional for the Jewish culture, by the methods of interpretation of the Bible.

Josephus' comments are not always made in Rabbinic manner. Josephus' explanation of Jewish concept shows that his work "Life" had been intended to be read mainly by non-Jewish readers, and, moreover, that he wished to be seen as a positive public figure, as a person who fits the standards prevailing in their society²⁷. So, in order to deserve the trust of contemporaries, Josephus in "Jewish Antiquities" tried to avoid the description of miracles in the Bible stories. At the first sight, doing so, he follows the traditions of the Greek-Roman intellectual culture. According to Lucian, it is possible to include a myth in a text, but it is not necessary to trust it undoubtedly; it is better if the author would not solve this question himself, and let everyone judge as he or she wants (Lucianus, *Quo Modo Hist. Sit Cons.*, 60). So, Josephus compares the transition of the Jews through the Red Sea to Alexander the Great's transition through the Pamphilite sea and adds: "However, in this respect everyone can have his own opinion"

(Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* II,16,5). Thereby, giving his own explanation of the miracle, Josephus remains in the course of ancient culture. However this is not only one possible explanation of the reason of the exclusion of miracles from the Bible paraphrase.

For the further research of the description of miracles in Josephus' works it is necessary to define, what is miracle in the Bible. According to Y.Kaufman²⁸ the miracles which are made in the Bible resemble the technical magic of Egyptians. However, unlike pagan ideas, there is no mythological basis in this magic. For religious consciousness a miracle is the work of "the right hand of God". Theologically the Bible miracles can be divided into three kinds. These are miracles as a matter of fact, in their essence (quoad substantiam), which have nothing in common with forces of the nature. These miracles are present at Josephus' narration indirectly, it is difficult to track their presence. In this connection it is possible to mention creation of the world by God, which the book "Jewish Antiquities" begins with (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* I,1,1).

The miracles of second kind are the actions accessible to forces of the nature, but not in the given subject (quoad subjectum). Josephus tries to avoid this kind of miracles. For example, the sign given by God to Gideon (*Jud.* 6) is omitted, because it can't be explained rationally. Also Josephus doesn't write about raising from the dead of the widow's son by prophet Elisha (2 *Kings* 4:32-36). Also about the rapture of prophet Elijah to Heaven Josephus writes:

Now at this time it was that Elijah disappeared from among men, and no one knows of his death to this very day²⁹. And indeed, as to Elijah, and as to Enoch, who was before the deluge, it is written in the sacred books that they disappeared, but so that nobody knew that they died" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* IX,2,2).

Josephus tries not to confuse the reader belonging to Hellenistic culture by the description of miracles inexplicable from the point of view of physiophilosophy of that time.

The third kind of miracles includes actions possible for the nature, but not in such a way (quoad modum). Transition of the Jews through the Red Sea, already mentioned by us, belongs to the given kind of miracles (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* II,16,5). The Plagues of Egypt which also can be regarded as miracles of the given kind, are described as acts of nature (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* XIV). Telling about one more miracle with manna, Josephus writes that "even now, in all, that place, this manna comes down in rain" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III,1,6).³⁰ At transition of the Jordan by Joshua the river, according to Josephus, hadn't parted as in the Bible text (Joshua 3:13), but shoaled (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* V,2,3). The hailstones at Joshua's battle at Gibeon were not stone but simply very large ones. And instead of telling according to the Bible how Joshua had stopped movement of the Sun over Gibeon, Josephus writes that God had prolonged daytime (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* V,1,17). So Josephus tells about only those miracles which could occur naturally, and he rationalizes explanations of the phenomena described in the Bible. Rational interpretation is put by him in lips of the Bible heroes (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* VI,1,2). Josephus refers to the Jewish original when it is impossible to give any rational interpretation to miracles (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.* III,5,2).

Inclusion of certain miracle in Josephus' work is connected with its perception in culture of Roman Empire of the I century AD. So, for example, in a case of Daniel, Josephus emphasizes that the lions didn't begin to eat the prophet because of wonderful intervention of the Lord, but not because of their satiety. In our opinion, the specification occurs because the inhabitants of the Empire had possibility to observe gladiatorial fights with lions, who, according to rules, should

be hungry. To survive in this situation was a miracle. It was important for Josephus to make the text of "Jewish Antiquities" clear for the Roman audience and causing their sympathy.

Other interesting aspect in the description of miracles by Josephus we can see in the episodes connected with fire. A case of burning and not burning down bush from which The Most High spoke to Moses (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*I,9,1), competition of the prophet Elijah with the priests of Baal in process of which the Lord sends fire from heaven on the sacrifice offered by the Jewish prophet and covered with water (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*VIII,13,5), and also the episode with surviving of Daniel's friends in the heated furnace (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.*X,10,5) are given by Josephus without essential changes. It is possible to make the conclusion that the supernatural phenomenon connected with fire couldn't confuse readers. It is known that Nero patronized to Mazdaistic cult, and at the time of Josephus' staying in Rome the Persian religion, anyhow connected with worship to fire, was known in the upper class of Empire.³¹

In this context it is interesting to notice the absence of any mentioning of Hanukah miracle. An episode when ritually pure oil burned eight days instead of one (it should suffice only for one day) isn't included in texts of Josephus' work, because of reason mentioned above. Rationalistic interpretation of miracles is focused on a Hellenistic reader. Similar change is made by Josephus in order to make the Bible text clear to non-Jews. It closes the text of "Jewish Antiquities" to Targum. If Aramaic Targums made the Bible text clear to Babylonian Jews, Josephus tries to make the text understandable to representatives of the Greek-Roman culture.

The full publication of the scrolls from the Judean Desert has given impetus to reflections on the history and development of the biblical text during the period of Second Temple Judaism. Hans Debel critically reviews the major contributions

to the debate and finally makes a plea to extent Ulrich's hermeneutical model³² to some Septuagint text that are usually not included into his "variant literary editions". His main argument, that these texts are the evidence of the same dynamic process of the interpretational tradition, merely because they are not written in Hebrew, reveals an unwarranted bias towards the Masoreth Text³³. Considerable deviations from Massoreth Text (in an explanation of certain words, a transcription of the proper names and the chronological data) and Hellenistic coloring of narration of "Jewish Antiquities" lead to thought that Josephus had a copy of the Septuagint before his eyes. It is Hellenistic coloring which distinguishes "Jewish Antiquities" from Targums of Onkelos or Pseudo-Jonathan. Josephus was not the first one who wrote in Hellenistic tradition. So, Ezekiel writes tragedies in the style of Euripides, Philo the Senior writes epic poems³⁴, Demetrius and Eupolemes write secular history of Jews, Aristobulus and Apollos have found their place in Hellenistic philosophies³⁵. However only philosopher Philo of Alexandria and Josephus Flavius have taken a worthy place both in Hellenistic and in later Christian culture of the West.

Resume

Josephus Flavius in "Jewish Antiquities" retells the Bible text according to Rabbinic traditions, but adapts it in some places for the Antique civilization of gentile Roman Empire. Josephus' text by its content does not always correspond to the original. By its form "Jewish Antiquities" resemble Targum (Bible paraphrases in Aramaic language which was used during service in synagogues). The fragments of books Leviticus and Job, which has been found out in Qumran, are actually Targums. The most known Targum is Targum of Onkelos. It the most literal of all known translations of Torah. Targum Neophyte I considerably differs from

Targum of Onkelos because the whole sections are added to it. The latest translation of Torah is Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and after finishing of it fragmentary Targums have been created. Thus Targum is a traditional form of Rabbinic literature, and its technique of interpretation of the text is used by Josephus, that makes his works the heritage of the Jewish culture.

There are signs which unite all writings of Targum genre. Paraphrases of the Bible text in them are created by the use of oral tradition, construction of author's own etymology, commenting of difficult places in order that the edited text would be more clear to audience. "Jewish Antiquities" by Josephus Flavius also can be called Targum. We are lead to this conclusion by the following observation.

Josephus intertwines the text of the Bible with the Rabbinistic comment. It is possible to name such a comment "midrash". In conformity with Targum method of interpretation of the Bible text, Josephus gives his own etymology of words from the original text. However he not only adds the comment to the Bible text, but also doesn't retell some moments. So, Josephus had excluded from the Bible text the stories which could present Jews disparagingly. For example, he had kept silence about circumcision of inhabitants of Shechem. It is connected both with negative attitude of Romans to tradition of circumcision and with Josephus' unwillingness to cause undesirable hints on contemporary historical and cultural realities concerning the relation of the Jews and Samaritans. The slaying by Moses of the Egyptian and worshiping the Golden Calf, which are connected with anti-Semitic charges in idolatry and human sacrifices, are also excluded from Josephus's narration. Some episodes in the Bible paraphrase have been modified by Joseph just a little. All this is connected with the fact that Josephus in the aspect of keeping silence follows the pattern of reading and translation of Torah

in synagogues, where, according to cultural norms of the Age of the Second Temple, some fragments of the Bible weren't subject to reading or translation.

Josephus' narration has characteristic difference not only from the Bible texts, but also from the texts of Philo of Alexandria. It indicates not only that Josephus had his own style of narration, but also that he was acquainted with Palestinian oral tradition. It is confirmed by the fact that many texts of Haggadah had been written down by him for the first time. In the majority of texts of Josephus it is possible to track the influence of Haggadah just by one phrase inserted in the Bible context. The use of Haggadah plots makes the text of "Jewish Antiquities" close to Targum by its methods of interpretation of the Bible.

However Josephus' comments do not always have Rabbinic character. He tried to avoid the description of miracles in the Bible stories. Theologically the Bible miracles can be divided into three kinds. These are miracles as a matter of fact, in their essence (quoad substantiam), which have nothing in common with forces of the nature. These miracles are present at Josephus' narration indirectly, it is difficult to track their presence. The miracles of second kind are the actions accessible to forces of the nature, but not in the given subject (quoad subjectum). Josephus tries to avoid this kind of miracles. The third kind of miracles includes actions possible for the nature, but not in such a way (quoad modum). It is this kind of miracles which Josephus describes in his text, and he rationalizes the Bible miracles. Inclusion of certain miracle in "Jewish Antiquities" is connected with perception of it in culture of Roman society. The miracles of only one kind, which Josephus doesn't exclude and doesn't modify, are the miracles with fire. It is connected with spreading of cult of Mitra in Rome.

Josephus wrote "Jewish Antiquities" according to Hellenistic tradition. Hence, Josephus tries to make the text of "Jewish Antiquities" clear to a Hellenistic reader. This fact lets us classify "Jewish Antiquities" as a "Hellenistic Targum". In that way Josephus tried to reconcile traditions of Greek-Roman and Jewish cultures.

- ¹ See Feldman L. H. *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible*. Detroit, 1996; Inowlosky S. (2005). Neither adding nor omitting anything': Josephus' Promise not to modify the Scriptures in Greek and Latin context, *JJS* 56, 48-65.
- ² Avios M. (2008). Josephus' Rewriting of 1 Samuel 25, *JJS* 59, 71-85.
- ³ Smirnov A. Messianskie ozhidaniia I verovaniia iudeev okolo vrem'en Iisusa Khrista (ot Makkaveiskikh voyn do razrusheniia Ierusalima riml'anami. [Messianic expectations and beliefs of Jews of times of Jesus Christ (from Maccabean wars before destruction of Jerusalem by Romans)]. Kazan, 1899, 171.
- ⁴ Yungerov P. Otzyv o sochinenii protoiereia Alekseia Smirnovapod zaglaviem "Messianskie ozhidaniia I verovaniia iudeev okolo vrem'en Iisusa Khrista (ot Makkaveiskikh voyn do razrusheniia Ierusalima riml'anami)" [Review of the composition of Protoierei Alexey Smirnov under the title "Messianic expectations and beliefs of Jews of times of Jesus Christ (from Maccabean wars before destruction of Jerusalem by Romans)"]. Kazan, 1899.
- ⁵ Smirnov, 175.
- ⁶ Shinan A. *The World of Aggadah*. Tel-Aviv, 1990, 103, Alexander P.S. (1988). Aramaic translations of Hebrew Scripture, *Mikra*. 7, 217-253.
- ⁷ Bowker J. *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretation of Scripture*. Cambridge, 1969; Chester A.N. (1986) Divine Revelation an Divine Titles in the Pentateuchal Targumim, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* (Tubingen).
- ⁸ Leoni T. (2009).The text of Josephus's works: an Overview, *JSJ* 40, 149-184.
- ⁹ Feldman, 67
- ¹⁰ Ulmer R. (2010). The Egyptian Gods in Midrashic Text, *HTR*103:2, 181-204.
- ¹¹ Scheller M. *Clotta. XXXIV*. Berlin, 1955, 298 sq; Lewy J. (1946). Latomus σαββω und σαββατωσις, *Zion* 5, 339 sq.
- ¹² Some who have had a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine's flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of man; and in time they take to circumcision. Having been wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practice and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses committed to his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites, and conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain. For all which the father was to blame, who gave up every seventh day to idleness, keeping it apart from all the concerns of life. (Juvenalus, *Saturae*, XIV, 96-106) (Translated by G. G. Ramsay)
- ¹³ Bickerman E.J. *The Jews in the Greek Age*. London, 1988, 208.
- ¹⁴ Feldman, 69-74
- ¹⁵ Rappaport S. *Haggadah und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus*. Wien, 1930
- ¹⁶ Feldman, 69-74
- ¹⁷ Ranke L. *Weltgeschichte*. Leipzig, 1883, III, 15-18.
- ¹⁸ Feldman, 69-74.
- ¹⁹ Shinan, 49.
- ²⁰ Geiger A. *Was hat Mahammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?* Leipzig, 1900, 157.
- ²¹ Shinan, 52-54.
- ²² Rappaport, 1-71
- ²³ Translated by William Whiston
- ²⁴ Ginzberg L. *The Legends of the Jews*. Philadelphia, 1968, I, 189.
- ²⁵ Ginzberg, 345-346
- ²⁶ Translated by William Whiston
- ²⁷ Stern P. (2010). "Life of Josephus": The Autobiography of Flavius Josephus', *JSJ* 41, 63-93.
- ²⁸ Kaufman Y. Religiiia Drevnego Izrailia.[Religion of ancient Israel]. *Bibleiskie issledovaniia. Sbornik statei. Sostavitel B. Shwarts*. [Bible researches. The collection of articles. Comp. B.Schwarz]. Moscow, 1997, 63-64
- ²⁹ In spite of the fact that Josephus knows the text of 2 Kings 2:11
- ³⁰ Translated by William Whiston
- ³¹ Cumont F. *Die Misterien des Mitra*. Darmstadt, 1963, 76-94.
- ³² Ulrich E.C. The Qumran Scrolls and the Biblical text, *Dead Sea Scroll Fifty Years after Their Discovery: Proceeding of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20-25, 1997*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2000.
- ³³ Debel H. (2010) Greek "Variant Literary Editions" to the Hebrew Bible?, *JJS* 41, 161-190
- ³⁴ See German translations of Philon and Ezekiil in Philipson L.M. *Ezechiel und Philo*. Berlin, 1830.
- ³⁵ See German translations of fragments in Fredenthal J. *Alexander Poligistor und die von ihm erhaltene erste judischer Geschichtwerke*. Breslau, 1874-1875.

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"Иудейские древности" **как эллинистический таргум**

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В данной статье автор исследует специфику текста древнееврейского историка Иосифа Флавия (I в. н. э.) "Иудейские древности" в сравнении с другими древними текстами, такими как Библия, Мидраши, Талмуд, тексты древнегреческих и римских авторов. Цель работы – проанализировать взаимосвязь структуры текста Иосифа Флавия с его историко-культурным контекстом. В качестве метода работы автор избрал культурологический, философский и лингвистический анализ текста "Иудейских древностей". В результате автор выявил взаимосвязь метода подачи материала в данной книге с традицией раввинистического комментированного перевода (таргума). Однако сам комментарий соответствует правилам и нормам античной историографии, что позволяет классифицировать "Иудейские древности" Иосифа Флавия как "эллинистический таргум".

Ключевые слова: таргум, Иосиф Флавий, Мидраш, Мишна, Библия.

Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология.
