LATIN JOSEPHUS PROJECT

Pseudo-Hegesippus

De excidio Hierosolymitano

English translation by R. M. Pollard

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Prologue and all five books

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Prologue

Online text and commentary

[Prol.1] I too have set out in writing, in the form of a history, the four books of Kingdoms contained in sacred Scripture, down to the captivity of the Jews, the destruction of the wall, and the triumphs of Babylon. The prophetic account also briefly recounts the deeds of the Maccabees. Josephus is an outstanding narrator of the remaining events, in historical style, down to the burning of the temple and the spoils of Titus Caesar. If only he had been as attentive to religion and truth as to investigating events and restraint in expression! For he showed himself a partner in the faithlessness of the Jews even in the account he made public of their punishment. Though he deserted their arms, he did not abandon their sacrileges: he tearfully lamented their misery, but did not understand the cause of that very misery.

[Prol.2] Hence we have taken it upon ourselves, relying not on the resources of talent but on earnest faith, to press a little further into the history of the Jews beyond the sequence of sacred Scripture. Like people seeking a rose among thorns, we seek to draw out, from amid the savage crimes of the impious, paid for at a price worthy of their impiety, something of reverence for the sacred law or of the marvel of the sacred order: things that afforded protection in adversity or honour in prosperity even to unworthy heirs. At the same time, let it be clear to everyone that they themselves were the authors of their own disaster, a sign of wickedness within their own ranks. First, they drew the attention of the Romans, who were occupied with other concerns, towards themselves and invited them to learn of their kingdom, though it would have been better for them to remain unknown to the Romans. They sought friendship without intending to keep faith, violated the peace though unequal in valour, and finally made war when all their hope lay in walls rather than strength. For being shut in under siege is pitiable for anyone; even when a siege goes well, it tends more often to increase dangers than to reduce them.

[Prol.3] And lest anyone think that we have undertaken a task devoid of faith and superfluous, let us therefore consider the whole Hebrew people through their rulers, so that it may become perfectly clear whether, from the loins of Judah onward, the succession of his descendants never faltered, or whether it stumbled in the sequence of rulers but endured in him for whom all things remained in store, and who was himself the hope of the nations. From this, then, I shall begin.

Book I

Chapter 1

Online text and commentary

[I.1.1] Resentment at sacrilege sparked the Parthian war, which was long and repeatedly fought between the Maccabean leaders and the nation of the Medes, with victory passing from side to side. For King Antiochus, called the Illustrious, son of King Antiochus, once he had added Egypt too to his dominion, grew arrogant because the uncertainties of war had turned out well for him. He had ordered that the rites of the Hebrews be disregarded and their mysteries profaned, and had dared enact this at the request of very many of the Jews.

[I.1.2] Mattathias the priest could not endure this. He not only abstained from the sacrilege himself and refused to obey the royal edict, but also came upon one of his own people offering sacrificial victims to idols and ran him through with a sword. Gathering a band and taking the Hasideans as allies, he and his sons killed some who violated ancestral custom and the ordinances of the law, and drove out many more. He also advocated taking up arms on the Sabbath, lest they too be deceived by the same device: many of them had already fallen unavenged when enemies attacked them, because they refused to engage in war on the Sabbath. Successful deeds gave him power, and to the end of his life his zeal for defence and the vigour of his devotion persisted. But when he understood that his last day was upon him, he summoned his fellow citizens and, with his children standing beside him, urged them to defend their homeland and the worship of the temple. He left Judas Maccabaeus as their leader, to succeed to his care and concern.

[I.1.3] It is not the business of the present work to recount how often he, vigorous in war, sound in counsel, and keener than all the others in faith, routed countless enemy forces with a small band. In brief, however, this much may be told. After repeated successes, he roused a great multitude of enemies against himself. Surrounded by them on every side, he thought retreat shameful; as his companions fled, he rushed into battle. He killed those he had advanced against, but was surrounded from the flank and slain, yet not before avenging his own death.

[I.1.4] Jonathan succeeded him, his equal in valour no less than his brother by birth. After many exploits in war and services in sacred matters, witnessed and approved in the purification of the temple, he was shut up in an enemy city under a fraudulent assurance of friendship and killed not long afterwards. John too, the elder brother, and Eleazar, younger than the others, did not shrink from death for religion.

[I.1.5] After them Simon assumed supreme command. He came to it no novice, but already proved by the triumphs he had shared with his brothers. If only he had been as perceptive in guarding against deceit as he was strong of hand and thoroughly tested in the arts of war! For after his valour had won him treaties of friendship with Roman commanders and the kings of nations, he was treacherously invited to a banquet by his son-in-law Ptolemy. Amid

the tables and cups, he was surrounded along with the two sons present with him, stripped of his weapons, and given over to impious slaughter.

[I.1.6] But John, Simon's son, called Hyrcanus, forestalled the plot and hurried to the walls of a neighbouring city. There the people were awaiting him because of his father's outstanding services, and also out of hatred for the enemy's crime. He had scarcely entered the city when Ptolemy was already there. But when Ptolemy tried to enter by another gate, he was repulsed and decided to yield to the crowd. Jonathan at once assumed his father's priestly office. From the worship of divine things he proceeded at once to the duties of family devotion and the care of protecting his kin, wishing to rescue his mother and brothers from danger.

[I.1.7] Though he prevailed in battle, rightful feeling prevailed over him, preventing him from taking the fortress where they were confined. For whenever Ptolemy saw himself hard pressed, he placed the young man's mother and brothers on the walls, to be thrown down at once unless Jonathan abandoned the war he was waging. The young man, who conquered by summoning his courage, was conquered by the fear born of family devotion; pity for his kin checked the anger roused against his enemy. His mother, however, ready for torture, stretched out her hands, pleading not for help to save her but for the consolation of vengeance. She feared that her son would fear more for his mother than he would devote himself to avenging his father. Such a death would take the place of immortality for her, avenging her husband and making her impious son-in-law pay the penalty for his monstrous crime. But the young man fought more within his own self than against his enemy. Whenever he thought of his father, he flared up; then again, when he saw his mother being beaten and made ready for death, he softened. He checked his attack, drew back his step, because feeling pulled him back. During the delays of the siege, the year of rest prescribed by the law arrived: the seventh year. Family devotion yielded to religious observance; the siege was lifted. But Ptolemy's savagery was all the more aroused: he ordered that the very people whose exposure had saved him from destruction should have their throats cut. He immediately put himself beyond reach of vengeance by fleeing to Zeno, called Cotylas, king of Philadelphia, to protect himself with his support.

[I.1.8] Nor did Antiochus remain inactive: he resented the fact that his armies had been made a mockery of by Simon, Jonathan's father. Eager to extinguish Jonathan's power while it was still beginning to rise, he came with a great force and besieged Jerusalem and Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus repelled with gold the man whom he could not repel with iron. Opening David's tomb, as Josephus attests, he took out three thousand talents of gold; of these he paid three hundred to Antiochus, so that he would lift the siege and go away, bought off by the payment. And to lessen the odium of the deed, Hyrcanus is said to have been the first to establish guesthouses with that money, to receive poor travellers on their arrival.

[I.1.9] He also took advantage of the difficulties Antiochus faced in making war on the Medes, avenged his loss, and brought many cities of Syria under his control. He also surrounded Samaria, where Sebastia was later founded, with siegeworks and entrusted its capture to his sons Aristobulus and Antigonus. Their protracted siege drove those shut inside to dreadful hunger and the hideous diet of human corpses. Driven by this necessity, they decided to seek help from Antiochus, called Aspondius, and drew the man who brought them aid into

sharing their misery. For, defeated in battle by the brothers, he escaped death by flight. The Samaritans, however, were enslaved when their city was captured and destroyed in a sudden siege. Spurred on by this course of successes, Aristobulus and Antigonus did not let their onslaught cool, but continued, by war, to compel neighbouring peoples to join them, until envy arose and a savage war flared up: the inhabitants of the region conspired together and mustered a strong force. Defeated, however, that force gave John profound tranquillity thereafter, and itself repose.

[I.1.10] In the thirty-first year, Hyrcanus ended his days, having enjoyed the benefit of a long peace and leaving five children alive, something many count a blessing. An outstanding ruler, admirably self-controlled, he never left even chance events any opportunity to cast a shadow over his deeds. He entrusted the affairs of supreme power to his wife, judging that she would direct public affairs more prudently; he held, with a certain inward foreknowledge, that his sons would not last long.

Chapter 2

Online text and commentary

[I.2.1] Nor was his judgement mistaken. For Aristobulus, the eldest of the brothers and the most headstrong in mind, turned the primacy of the priesthood into royal power. He was the first to take it upon himself to wear a diadem, four hundred and seventy-five years and three months after Israel, returning from Babylon and freed from servitude, had regained its own land. In his arrogance, unwilling to assign his other brothers a share, he favoured Antigonus alone with the appearance of honour, because he seemed to love him. His mother had complained that she was excluded from power and deprived of what her husband's judgement had awarded her; he put her in chains. Fierce in his murderous hostility to his kin, he went so far in inhumanity that he kept both her and his brothers, bound in the same way, under close guard. They would have been driven almost to the very extremity of death by hunger, had Aristobulus not paid sooner for his wicked murder of kin. First his savage mind was roused against Antigonus himself and turned from love to hatred: he would kill before all the others the one man whom he promised a share in his rule. So little is affection worth among the wicked that evil suggestions soon wrench it away.

Chapter 3

Online text and commentary

[I.3.1] It is therefore fitting that we should not pass over the course of his cruelty, so that John's judgement may be vindicated even after his death. He had by no means thought that supreme control of public affairs should be entrusted to his eldest son, whom he foresaw departing with such frenzy from the law of family devotion and the rule of justice. I do not know whether this was from observing his character or through a grace innate in the chief priests, whereby some knowledge of things to come was imparted to them even when they were less than worthy. A pitiful crime, that there were people who begrudged brothers the love of nature! From this the first taint of evil arose; envy was followed by fabrications of this kind.

Chapter 4

Online text and commentary

[I.4.1] At first they had devised other accusations, which Aristobulus did not believe. Out of love he softened the slander, attributing the bitterness of the accusation to envy. They therefore mingled falsehoods with truths, so that the details they had taken up to give an appearance of truth might ensnare him despite his resistance.

Chapter 5

Online text and commentary

[I.5.1] The Feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated in the lands of the Jews in accordance with the law: a festal day, that is, full of reverence, on which the customary sacrifice was offered. On that day Antigonus returned home, distinguished by his military exploits, and on his arrival happened to find his brother unwell. At once he made for the temple—for what would he put before religion?—still girded in his military dress and surrounded by an escort similarly equipped. There he prayed earnestly to the Lord for his brother's health, and then hastened diligently to his brother. From this a slander was concocted with bitter gall, and a still more bitter outcome prepared.

Chapter 6

Online text and commentary

[I.6.1] For at once these thoroughly wicked men approached the king and stirred up his resentment: Antigonus had arranged a procession of armed men more splendid than was customary for private persons, to make a show before the crowd and ensure that no one dared oppose his designs. So great a display, they alleged, sought nothing but the king's murder and the power to seize his rule. A sick mind, worn down by an ailing body, was easily induced to find credible what was asserted as true, especially since a day consecrated to religion excluded suspicion of a lie, the procession stirred resentment, illness added fear, and the band of armed men completed his conviction that the crime would be committed.

[I.6.2] Accordingly, before any attempt at the crime of murdering his kin had been proved to him, he ordered his guards to take their places, armed, in a dark underground passage. They were to strip Antigonus of his armour as he arrived and, without awaiting the king's command, kill him on their own authority. A message had, however, been sent ahead ordering him to come unarmed. Aristobulus's wife reversed the sense of this instruction. Through the messengers, whom she had bound to her conspiracy, she had Antigonus informed that his brother had been delighted by the beauty of the arms in which he had recently appeared, but had been unable to examine them closely because of his illness. He now asked him to bring to his brother all the military attire he had assembled for himself: it would please the king if he came armed.

[I.6.3] Antigonus did not foresee the deceit. He obeyed the message all the more eagerly because he wished to please both his king and his brother. Aristobulus lay ill in the fortress first called Baris and later Antonia, a name bestowed from Antony the triumvir, together

with the status of a city. When Antigonus drew near and entered that dark passage, the king's guards saw that he had come armed. Suddenly attacking the young man, they carried out their orders and overwhelmed him unawares.

[I.6.4] The place was called Strato's Tower, and it is widely believed that this name deceived Judas, who was an Essene by origin. An ancient account records that, whether through the uprightness of his life or through mystical observance, he had often foretold things to come.

Chapter 7

Online text and commentary

[I.7.1] When, as we have learned, he saw Antigonus passing by to visit his brother, he said to those numbered among his disciples: "Ah! Now it is good for me to die, since truth has died for me. Antigonus is alive, though he must be killed today; but the place appointed for his murder is Strato's Tower, six hundred stades from here. It is already the fourth hour of the day. The time therefore rules out belief in the foretold death." After saying this, he began to ponder more intently how his judgement had deceived him. Not long afterwards word came that Antigonus had been killed in the underground passage at Strato's Tower. This place was customarily called by the same name as the one on the coast at Caesarea.

[I.7.2] Once this crime had been committed, Aristobulus reflected on the wickedness he had perpetrated and fell ill. The murder of his kin was before his eyes, turmoil in his mind; there was no respite in which he could disregard it. Grief lodged deep in his entrails. Envy turned to pity because he had killed an innocent man in violation of the bond between brothers. The enormity of so great a crime ulcerated his mind: no sleep was granted to his eyes, no rest to his mind. The wound crept onward with unseen pain; cares and anxieties seethed in his sick heart and wounded his feeble limbs. All too deep sighs shook him with repeated groans.

Chapter 8

Online text and commentary

[I.8.1] Thus, through excessive grief, the violence of his illness reached the point where his entrails convulsed and he vomited blood from his mouth. A court boy attending to the king's needs carried it outside. Unwittingly, for what happened was by chance rather than by design, he came to the place where Antigonus had been killed. There, on the still-wet stains of the slain brother's blood, he poured out the slayer's blood. At once there was a cry and groaning from the onlookers, because it seemed that, by some profound dispensation of the Lord, the blood of this most wicked murderer of his own kin had been poured out as a libation to the slain man. Aroused by the sound, he asked the cause. When silence met him, he drew it out by persistent questioning and an outburst of indignation. When he learned it, his eyes flooded with tears, and, groaning with all the strength he had, he said: "A fitting return is being paid for what I have deserved. For I, the deviser of so impious a crime, could not escape God's eye. Vengeance follows hard upon the outrage, and the fitting price for my murder of kin is already being exacted from me. Farewell, body. How long will you hold a soul forfeit to my brother and mother? Why do I pour out my blood to them little by little? If there is any family devotion, let all hands hurl their weapons against me; let all sons and brothers pierce me with the sword that avenges family devotion. Let this victim, guilty of murdering his kin, be slaughtered and sacrificed to the violated bond of kinship; let the guilty flesh vomit all its blood at once. Let the demon that drove me to dare so impious and savage a crime not be sated by the torments of my entrails and a slow wasting away." With these words, his reign and his life came to an end, after he had exercised royal power for scarcely a year, the power for which he had not shrunk from murdering his kin.

Chapter 9

Online text and commentary

[I.9.1] At once the woman released the dead man's brothers and freed them from their chains. She made Alexander king, since both his greater age and his moderation were thought to favour him. As soon as he gained the kingdom, he killed the brother whom he had perceived to be too eager for it. The remaining brother, intent on life and safety rather than kingship, he spared and left free from public business.

[I.9.2] Immediately, as restless character will do, he exchanged peace for war. In an encounter with Ptolemy Lathyrus he killed very many of the enemy, but victory fell to Lathyrus. His mother Cleopatra, however, deprived him of the fruit of victory: he was compelled to withdraw into Egypt to escape his mother's threat. Alexander seized upon his absence. While seeking to invade parts of his kingdom, he also turned Theodorus against himself, for he had annexed the most important parts of Theodorus's possessions. In a sudden attack, therefore, Theodorus seized the royal wealth and routed ten thousand Jews in battle. Alexander nevertheless rose above the blow, added still more of the enemy's territory to his dominion, and subjected the peoples of the captured cities to servitude.

[I.9.3] Domestic sedition interrupted these successes in war. A quarrel arising at banquets developed into war—a plague of a kind familiar among Jewish men, that they rouse themselves to arms from the sport of feasting. Had foreign auxiliaries not been at hand for the king, the sedition would have prevailed. With difficulty, however, it was suppressed by the foreign force, and nearly eight thousand Jews were killed. From there he made for Arabia; some of its cities were subdued, and tribute was imposed on the Moabites and the Gileadites by right of victory. Returning from there to Amathus, he found the fortress empty of defenders, Theodorus being stupefied by his many successes, and took it without delay.

[I.9.4] Obodas, king of the Arabs, did not remain wholly inactive, however, nor did he long allow his kingdom's losses to go unavenged. By laying an ambush at the right place, he destroyed Alexander's entire army, trapping it in the depths of a valley and crushing it beneath a great column of camels. Alexander nevertheless escaped. Fleeing from the battle, he sought refuge in the city of Jerusalem, hated by his own people: those whom fear of his power had previously held down had seized the occasion of his misfortune to renew their hatred. Their discord was neither concealed in silence nor expressed in words alone. They fought not one battle but many, in which nearly fifty thousand Jews died, killed by Alexander. He was more destructive to his own people than to his enemies, and victory brought him the greater loss, since in conquering he had worn down the strength of his own kingdom. Hence even he no longer delighted in his victories. Turning away from battle, he dealt craftily with his subjects, no longer to oppress them with arms but to press them with words, and to dispel their various grievances through speech alone. He nevertheless made no progress in winning favour, since his crimes outweighed his pretences. Those who had suffered his savagery regarded his sudden turn to repentance and the inconsistency of his character with suspicion.

Chapter 10

Online text

[I.10.1] Finally, thinking that his feigned gentleness was meant to ensnare them, they stirred King Demetrius to war against Alexander, to come to their aid. Battle was at hand and was not deferred, although Alexander alone had to contend against two armies with inferior numbers. Accompanied by a thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry whom he had hired, and summoning to war ten thousand Jews united in his cause, he met the enemy near the city of Shechem. They had three thousand cavalry and forty thousand infantry. Each side tried to win over the other's force. When Demetrius saw that the hired men would not abandon their allegiance, and Alexander found that none of the Jews whom Demetrius had joined had laid aside their hatred of him, they judged that the matter must be decided by arms.

[I.10.2] Demetrius gained the upper hand in war, though at the cost of much of his own men's blood. For the hired men on the opposing side fought outstandingly, maintaining their valour and allegiance to the point of death. Seeing himself abandoned, his bands cut down, Alexander withdrew into the mountains. But, contrary to both men's expectations, the appearance of victory came to one, its fruit to the other. Demetrius was stripped of his

support by the departure of the Hebrews who had invited him into the alliance, and six thousand of them joined Alexander: adversity, in a way characteristic of human nature, inclined them to pity. Demetrius therefore yielded to the man he had defeated in war, seeing him now fit for battle as the Hebrews gradually flocked to him, while he himself was left with few men.

[I.10.3] Demetrius's victory stirred fear of domination in those accustomed to freedom. Alexander's savagery returned along with his security. His rule over his own people and the practice of war were restored. When he asked them what he could do to win the goodwill of the people, they replied that he should die. After suffering such grievous things, they would scarcely perhaps be reconciled even with him dead, so as to lay aside their hatred of the deceased. Roused by these words and their habitual rebellion, he killed many and forced the rest into the city called Bemeselel. Its capture brought a scourge more bitter than usual, with cruelty carried to such a savage extreme that he crucified eight hundred of their number in the middle of the city and ordered their wives and children to have their throats cut before their eyes. [1]

Chapter 11

Online text and commentary

[I.11.1] He watched this reclining amid his concubines, cheerful among wine and cups, but drunk more on blood than on wine. By this deed alone he terrified the people more than by war, so that the following night eight thousand Jews departed beyond Judaea, their flight to end only with Alexander's death. Horror at so great an evil brought quiet to the kingdom.

[I.11.2] But when there was respite from domestic battles, Antiochus's expedition against the Arabs became a cause of disquiet to him: he considered it a source of terror and danger to himself. This was the Antiochus also called Dionysius, Demetrius's brother, the last in the line from Seleucus. Wishing to deny him passage, Alexander dug huge trenches between the city of Antipatris and the coast at Joppa, raised a very high wall, and set wooden towers upon it. He wasted his efforts, at great labour to his own men and no hindrance to the enemy, for the trenches were easily filled and the towers burned. Alexander himself also took thought for his safety by flight. He was all the safer because he was by no means considered important enough for the victor to pursue him as his first priority. Vengeance for the affront of obstructing his route was reserved for later; Antiochus directed his march straight against the Arabs. Their king had taken up a position favourable for battle. Then, suddenly turning their cavalry about, they attacked with overwhelming force and numbers the enemy squadrons rushing on loosely and without order. The fighting was fierce as long as Antiochus stood firm: he held out even though his army was being slaughtered like cattle. But when he too fell—for he was accustomed to expose himself to danger before the others—all turned to flee. Most of them scattered in aimless flight and were killed. The rest were driven into a village called Ana and perished from lack of food; scarcely a handful of them survived so great a disaster.

Chapter 12

Online text and commentary

[I.12.1] Following this success, Aretas was also sought as king by the people of Damascus, to rule Coele-Syria and exclude Ptolemy, whom they pursued with the bitterest hatred. Nor did he leave Judaea untouched by invasion. Although victorious over Alexander, he withdrew from it in accordance with an agreement between the two sides and returned to his own lands. Alexander, however, destroyed Pella and made for Gerasa, intending once again to annex some of Theodorus's possessions, and claimed it for himself by war. Advancing from there into Syria, he destroyed Gaulane, Seleucia and Gamala, avenging the humiliation of the previous war, and demolished Antiochus's fortifications themselves. From these places he turned his march towards Judaea and, contrary to expectation, was received with joy by the whole nation because of the remarkable success of his deeds. There, respite won from warfare brought the onset of illness. For a while he suffered recurring quartan fevers. When his illness eased briefly, he resumed military affairs without keeping any moderation; stronger in spirit than in body, he wore down all the vigour of his health and exhausted his strength, and so died.

[I.12.2] Thus for twenty-six years, with varying fortune, he held his kingdom against countless upheavals of war and died leaving two children alive. Judging them unequal to steering the kingdom, he entrusted supreme control to the care of his own wife. He knew that she was more acceptable to the people and had won everyone's favour because she too had always thought it necessary to keep herself apart from her husband's inhumanity: she not only shunned complicity in his crimes but, by resisting his injustices, turned the goodwill of the whole people towards herself. Nor was her husband's judgement improvident. The woman exercised the right of rule without giving offence and without any hindrance from her sex, and gained favour in governing through observance of the sacred law. For while closer care was devoted to the temple and neglect of its services incurred blame, the vigour of her rule grew. Her desire for kingship was not, however, broken by maternal affection. One of her two children was chosen to have the appearance of kingship, but not its power: Hyrcanus, the elder by birth and the more easy-going in temperament. Aristobulus, more spirited in mind, she kept from power and subdued through the lowly status of a private person.

[I.12.3] The Pharisees attached themselves to the woman: a class of men practised in the teaching of the law, cunning in disposition, eager for business, and hungry for money. Using their knowledge of divine law, they played upon the conceited little woman and won her over by flattery, so that she entrusted even many affairs of the kingdom to them. They brought in whom they wished and excluded whom they wished, stripping them of service at court. What more need be said? They insinuated themselves so far that the fruit of every advantage came to them; the woman alone bore the expense and trouble. Nor was the woman's spirit slight: she dared the greatest undertakings and planned battles beyond the condition of her sex. She prepared a force of the finest of her own men and assembled vast numbers of foreign troops, so that she would not only be safe at home in complete security of

rule but would also be formidable to foreign powers. Yet she who surpassed all the rest obeyed the Pharisees as though their inferior. [2]

[I.12.4] There was in her kingdom a Diogenes who, as one of Alexander's most powerful friends, had remained close to him. They attacked and slaughtered him, recalling that it was on his advice that Alexander had crucified those eight hundred in the middle of the city. Orders were given that vengeance should proceed against the other instigators of the crime as well. Thus those whom the Pharisees designated were killed, not those whom complicity in the crime had implicated. Terrified by this fear, many who were threatened with such dangers, especially those outstanding in wealth or rank, begged Aristobulus to intercede. He was to turn his mother from carrying out the excessively severe order to milder measures. Wishing to win favour for himself, he did not refuse. Reluctantly though she did so, the woman nevertheless yielded to her son's plea: out of regard for the honours held by those exposed to such odium, the sentence of death was to be mitigated. She was merely to order out of the city those she suspected of bearing responsibility as instigators of the crime. Having obtained assurance of their lives, they dispersed through the countryside.

Chapter 13

Online text and commentary

[I.13.1] At the same time an occasion arose for sending the young men to Damascus, since Ptolemy was wearing down its inhabitants with frequent incursions. The demands of this affair occupied a strong force from Alexandra's army. Tigranes, who ruled the Armenians, had also shut Cleopatra within the city called Ptolemais under siege. Alexandra sought to appease him with gifts, to turn him away from herself. By invading the lands of the Armenians, Lucullus forced him to return without accomplishing his purpose: he judged it wiser to protect his own possessions than to annex those of others.

[I.13.2] Intent on so many affairs, Alexandra fell ill. Aristobulus seized the occasion for his schemes. He gathered a force, joined in conspiracy by those whom ardour of spirit had brought to his side in his eagerness to dare every reckless undertaking, and seized the treasures. With their resources he invited volunteers to military service and bought their agreement to maintain allegiance in whatever he wished; he put on the insignia of kingship. Troubled in mind, Hyrcanus appealed to his mother in tears. Breathing ferocity, she shut Aristobulus's children and wife in the fortress first named Baris and later called Antonia, which we mentioned above. Alexandra's undertakings were left unfinished by her swift death.

[I.13.3] Hyrcanus succeeded to the whole inheritance; while his mother was still alive he had assumed the dignity of the priesthood. Aristobulus excelled in valour and wisdom. Matters were brought to a dispute and then to an encounter. When battle was joined, most deserted Hyrcanus and followed the other, who was the better man in war. Accompanied by those who had survived the battle, Hyrcanus fled into Antonia. Finding Aristobulus's children and wife there, he secured his safety through these hostages, since Aristobulus took precautions by agreement lest anything harsh be done to his family. The brothers' agreement was as follows: Hyrcanus was to relinquish the kingdom, and the whole right of rule was to pass to

Aristobulus. Aristobulus was not, however, to leave Hyrcanus without honour; though excluded from the kingdom, he was to be allowed to hold another honour that Aristobulus himself would bestow. This settlement, also consecrated by the sanctity of the temple, secured the voluntary assent of both. They then parted in goodwill. After greeting one another, Aristobulus withdrew into the royal palace, and Hyrcanus went calmly into Aristobulus's house.

Chapter 14

Online text and commentary

[I.14.1] But this change of affairs brought fear to some who remembered that they had taken sides against Aristobulus, and above all to Antipater. He was Idumaean by origin, distinguished among his people through his ancestors, a man of no small wealth and therefore of very great power. He was remarkably skilful at disregarding money in order to win favour. His counsels terrified Hyrcanus: a man who had relinquished rule could have no secure hope for his safety unless he sought protection by taking refuge elsewhere. Once he had bent Hyrcanus to his schemes, he suggested to King Aretas that help should be given to a man who had been ensnared into relinquishing his kingdom. It would be becoming to a king, he argued, to act as arbiter in restoring rule, and much finer still to order the restoration of what deceit had taken from a defrauded man to whom the birthright of kingship belonged. The one brother was shrewd and cunning, and therefore suspect to his neighbours; the other gentle and quiet. He would accept as the greatest benefit whatever an outsider bestowed on him, when even his brother had deprived him of the right to rule. Announcing to Hyrcanus that he had secured King Aretas's favour, Antipater held out hope of flight and showed the way: Hyrcanus should go with him to Petra, situated in the territory of Arabia, where they would approach the king. Won over by Antipater's pleas and gifts, the king gave Hyrcanus a very large force of fighting men to restore him to his kingdom. They numbered about fifty thousand infantry and cavalry. Driven back by them at the first encounter, Aristobulus fled to Jerusalem. Even there he was unsafe against so great a multitude of enemies: they would have captured him within it had Scaurus, commander of the Roman army, not lifted the siege on the occasion of another war, waged against Tigranes. He had been sent by Pompey, in whom fierce vengeance for the reception of Mithridates had blazed up, together with a resolve to carry the war against Tigranes' father-in-law. For this reason he had ordered Syria to be ravaged by Scaurus, while he himself pressed Tigranes and Armenia.

[I.14.2] As Scaurus approached Damascus, which Metellus and Lollius had utterly destroyed, the brothers' envoys met him, each side begging for the support of Roman aid. Although inferior in strength, Aristobulus nevertheless outweighed his opponent by the money he offered. The decision of the contest in war was sold for three hundred talents, and the justice of the claim was weighed by its price. Once this money had been counted out to him, Scaurus ordered Hyrcanus and the king of Arabia to withdraw from the siege: if they remained, they were to know that they would have to fight a war against Pompey and the Romans. This threat dissolved the siege. Aretas made for Philadelphia, and Scaurus returned to Damascus. Aristobulus, who had scarcely been capable of warding off danger a moment before, gathered a force and pursued the enemy. At Papyron, as the place was called, he routed six thousand

of the enemy in battle, together with Antipater's brother Phallion. The hopes of Hyrcanus and Antipater collapsed: all their confidence had rested in the forces of Arabia.

Chapter 15

Online text and commentary

[I.15.1] But when Pompey the Great began to travel through Syria and arrived at Damascus, they sought help from the Romans, whose aid to their opponents had broken them and snatched victory from their hands. They approached Pompey as an arbiter of justice with no greed for money. They therefore began to rely on arguments, not gifts as before: a mind proof against the corrupting power of money was not caught in the snares of avarice and could hate, without payment, a man who had plotted against his brother's honour. So they approached him with complaints calculated to arouse odium against Aristobulus for unworthily seizing what belonged to another, and to win favour for Hyrcanus. The right to rule belonged to him whether by the merit of his life or by the claim of his age, supported above all by his mother's authority: she had had both the judgement to choose and the right to confer it. Aristobulus did not stay away long. Though he saw nothing in the Great man's mind that would suit his schemes, he nevertheless presumed upon his purchase of Scaurus and boasted of their association. He therefore came clad in royal attire and surrounded by a more extensive display of pomp than usual. Distrusting the justice of his case, he meant to prevent any presumption that he would acquiesce and deny any hope that he would obey. But he could not long endure the Roman consul's exalted position: though without a kingdom, the man was accustomed to command kings. When they reached the city called Diopolis, Aristobulus withdrew elsewhere, his swollen royal pride scorning the haughtiness of Roman dignity.

[I.15.2] Aristobulus's withdrawal gave no small cause for offence. The consul was so deeply stirred that Roman arms were immediately turned against Judaea, joined also by many Syrian auxiliaries. When Aristobulus learned that he was approaching the city of Scythopolis and then Coreae, where the territory of Judaea began, he fled into Alexandrium, a strongly fortified stronghold on a very high mountain. Learning this, Pompey ordered him to come down. But Aristobulus considered it unbecoming to obey a command as though from a master; immoderate in spirit, he thought he should face danger rather than obey an order. Looking down, however, upon the Roman camp packed with men, and warned by his followers not to provoke those to whose name and power almost the whole world had submitted, he came down. He used many arguments to establish that the kingdom had rightfully passed to him: it was owed to him by the bond of birth, or by the army's judgement in following the stronger man and deserting the coward, or by the outcome of battle, or by the agreement of the treaty. He then returned to the fortifications. Again, when Hyrcanus had approached the consul, Aristobulus was summoned to judgement and presented himself. But seeing that the hearing was still being deferred, he returned to the stronghold. Poised between hope and fear, he thought that by obeying Pompey's commands he could turn him to favour himself; yet he kept withdrawing into Alexandrium lest he again be forced to relinquish his rule. The king's cunning did not escape the Great man. He ordered him to leave the fortifications and bind himself to do so by letters given to each of their keepers.

Aristobulus obeyed commands he did not dare reject, but immediately hid himself within the walls of Jerusalem and began to prepare war against the Romans.

[I.15.3] Pompey in turn pursued him as he fled, pressed him within his defences, and gave him no time to make preparations for war. News that Mithridates had ended the war by his death focused the Great man's attention. Pompey was in the territory of the city of Jericho when word of the matter arrived. Near the city is a place where balsam is produced, growing upon shrubs which the farmers' boys cut with sharp stones; through these incisions liquid drips, beautiful in its dew-like tears. From there the veteran soldier arranged his ranks and moved camp towards evening. At first light he stood before the walls of Jerusalem and unexpectedly poured in his armed forces.

Chapter 16

Online text and commentary

[I.16.1] Astonished by the sight of the deployment, the strength of the men and the eagerness of the soldiers, Aristobulus came forward of his own accord to beg pardon, offering money, the city and himself. Bending his words to a humbler tone of supplication, he had softened the consul's indignation. But his plea proved fruitless because fulfilment of his promise was lacking: not only was the money refused, but Gabinius, who had come to claim what had been offered, was even shut out of the city. War descended upon them.

[I.16.2] For the Great man placed Aristobulus under guard and began to survey the city walls and examine more closely where he might attempt an entry by force. But he observed the strength of the walls, which could not be stormed, and that the temple within the city was surrounded by fortifications hardly inferior to them. Those who entered would face a double danger, from the temple's defenders and from the men holding the walls' defences. For some time he hesitated, doubtful in mind and uncertain in judgement. Suddenly sedition arose within the city: Hyrcanus's allies wished to admit Pompey, while Aristobulus's defenders resisted. The former sought to open the gates to the Great man, the latter to bar them and wage war to prevent the Romans from taking away their king.

[I.16.3] But those on the weaker side yielded to the greater number, whose ranks fear of Roman power had swelled. They withdrew into the temple and broke down the bridge that lay between city and temple, joining them by an open passage. The Roman army was thus admitted into the city, and with their own hands the Jews opened its gates to those who would soon storm both city and temple. David's words were fulfilled: "God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple." Thus they voluntarily handed over their royal quarters and relinquished the palace buildings. Piso, a man distinguished among his own people and experienced in military service, was charged with holding the royal palace and the rest of the city with a strong force. He carried this out diligently, as though he had led the Roman army there to defend these places rather than to occupy them.

[I.16.4] For the assault on the temple, however, since resistance was stubborn, the Great man prepared the Jews—Hyrcanus's allies, that is—so that, if possible, the Romans would not

profane another people's mysteries, and so that the Jews would fill the ditches with their own hands. In impious service and shameful obedience, their hands laboured at the basket, their minds at sacrilege. Yet the heaping up of material achieved nothing, since Aristobulus's supporters resisted from the walls and hindered the work from above. Pompey's first efforts would have been fruitless had he not, when the sacred days of religious observance came round, ordered his men to press on with heaping up mounds of earth. On those days it was the Jews' ancient observance to refrain from all work. For only the practice of engaging in hand-to-hand combat had become customary even on the Sabbath: if battle was forced upon them and their lives faced the utmost peril, the Jews thought they must decide the matter by the sword; against other forms of conflict they had a religious scruple. Already the rampart had risen, already the siege engines had been brought up. The king's men fought back, emboldened by the height of the walls; even when engaged in combat, they did not give way as the Great man came nearer.

[I.16.5] Pompey marvelled at the men's fierce spirits, the wall's beauty and size, and the priests' duties, nowhere relaxed amid the fury of war, as though there were profound peace. Nothing was lacking in the customary sacrifices. Amid the warriors' missiles and the deaths of the slain, the blood of sacrificial victims was poured out; a victim was placed upon the altars. Those stationed before the altar were struck down. A third month already found the contest still undecided. Faustus, son of Cornelius Sulla, was the first, along with two centurions, one named Furius and the other Fabius, to break into the temple after a tower in the walls had been knocked down. Each had his band following him. Surrounding the temple's interior on every side, they ran through with their swords whomever they found. Those fleeing were cut down; others, resisting, were slaughtered.

[I.16.6] There was no mercy. Yet this savagery of the combatants did not interrupt the priests' service. The enemy stood over them with drawn swords, but they carried out their accustomed duty without any disturbance. No kind of duty was suspended. Whatever belonged to the customary rites of purification, whatever concerned the observance of sacred worship, was fulfilled. So great was their care for their service—and if only it had been in the service of true devotion and faith! Still greater dangers also arose from their own people, which the Hebrews inflicted on one another. Inside, the fighting was fiercer, and the danger from the rebels nearer and twofold. A foreign enemy pressed from the front, a domestic one from the rear and the sides.

Chapter 17

Online text and commentary

[I.17.1] Thus, shut in on every side, some hurled themselves down, while others were consumed in the fires of their homeland. The priests, however, persevered in their duties to the very end, urging one another not to put the duty of religion below the protection of their lives. It would be well for them to give to devotion what was owed to necessity, and most noble if they could be buried in their homeland's bosom. What good would it do to escape and outlive religion? Rather, to die together with their sacred service was a glorious deed. If anyone abandons it through fear of danger, that is sacrilege; if he fulfils it, that is sacrifice and the victory of devout suffering. Thus the priests, wearing their sacred fillets, were sacrificed among their own sacrificial victims; clad in their priestly robes, they lay on the ground among the bodies of the slain. Twelve thousand Jews were cut down there; few Romans were killed, more were wounded.

[I.17.2] Yet amid that misery the Jews lamented nothing more deeply than that those previously hidden sacred mysteries had been uncovered and made manifest to the nations. Indeed, Pompey set aside such superfluous concerns. As he toured the burned ruins, intent rather on triumph, followed by many of his men, he saw the second tabernacle, which was open only to the chief priest on his customary entry. Looking inside, he saw the lamp, the table, the incense burners, the tablets of the covenant and the cherubim above them, a great quantity of spices scattered about, and two thousand talents of sacred money. Although these included a great deal of gold, he remained free of all greed and ordered that the treasure, and any sacred vessels also found, be kept untouched. On the day after the destruction he ordered the temple attendants to cleanse the temple's interior and celebrate the customary sacrifices. He also gave Hyrcanus the primacy of the priesthood, having used his ready assistance in the exigencies of the siege. For though unfaithful to his own people, he was faithful to the Romans so that his own homeland might be stormed—but I think no one can be called faithful who has been unfaithful to his own people. Thus, in his own war, he gave far from perfunctory help to the enemies of his own people, if only by drawing away from Aristobulus's alliance the multitude outside the walls that was supporting him. To all the ways in which Pompey proved an outstanding commander, whether in forestalling Aristobulus and diminishing his authority or in bringing the war swiftly to an end, he added this distinction: he kept moderation in victory. He bound the conquered to himself more by kindness than by terror, and executed only the instigators of the war with the axe. He also imposed tribute on the conquered, appointed a commander for Judaea, and fixed its boundaries.

[I.17.3] Judaea was thus confined within its own boundaries. He also restored Gadara, which the Jews had destroyed, at the request of Demetrius, who had asked this favour for his homeland from his patron. In this matter, as in many others, Demetrius held a standing with the Great man beyond the usual measure of freedmen, even to the point of arousing envy. Pompey decided to take Aristobulus, his children and his father-in-law with him to Rome as captives. But one of the royal offspring escaped his guards on the journey and returned home. His name was Alexander; he was older than his brother and had two sisters. Thus the

younger Antigonus and his sisters were taken to Rome; Pompey made for Cilicia and thence for Rome.

Chapter 18

Online text and commentary

[I.18.1] Meanwhile Scaurus, who held command in Syria, recovered the cities the Jews had invaded: inland, Scythopolis, Hippos, Pella, Samaria, Jamnia, Maresa, Azotus and Arethusa; on the coast, Gaza, Joppa, Dora and the place formerly called Strato's Tower, afterwards named Caesarea under Herod's rule, when he both adorned it and changed its name. Scaurus was preparing war against the Arabs. Holding Judaea between the Euphrates and Egypt under his jurisdiction, and Syria too, restored to its own boundaries, he wished to invade Petra, the capital of the kingdom of Arabia—whether from a desire for plunder, as I am more inclined to think, or for the sake of extending dominion. Hampered by the difficulty of the terrain, he could not break into it, but devastated many places both near the city and far away. While his army lingered in those places, hunger overtook it. A pitiful disaster would almost have occurred had Hyrcanus not supplied food to the struggling Romans through Antipater, and had he not, on Scaurus's advice, urged Aretas to end the war with money. Thus the Arab rid himself of the enemy with three hundred talents: he bought off Scaurus. This was the price of his withdrawal. The affair strengthened Hyrcanus's alliance with the Romans and fostered the security of profound peace, since through his efforts the Roman army had passed from severe scarcity to an abundance of grain in hostile territory and had found help at hand.

Chapter 19

Online text

[I.19.1] But Alexander, having escaped the Great man's chains, first secretly gathered a suitable force over some time, then began openly to range through Judaea. Hyrcanus was thrown into alarm and lost confidence in his position; the Romans were pressed by concern lest the war grow. For Alexander had even resolved to rebuild the wall at Jerusalem that the Great man had destroyed. He had almost begun the work when Gabinius, who had succeeded Scaurus, energetically disposed of the other matters by which he had spread the terror of his name, and judged that Alexander's attempts must be met. Alexander too thought he should not withdraw, but dared to decide the matter in battle with ten thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry. He also repaired the strongholds of Alexandrium, Hyrcania and Machaerus, to serve as refuges for himself if circumstances demanded, or as obstacles to the enemy, since Arabia, not altogether faithful to the Romans, was nearby.

[I.19.2] To meet him more quickly, Gabinius sent Mark Antony ahead with part of the army, to hinder the enemy's march until he himself arrived with the entire force. Antipater came with picked men; Malichus and Pitholaus, supported by separate bands of Jews, also joined their strength to Antony's. When Alexander saw them assembled—for Gabinius too was now present—he changed his plan and decided to fall back. But when he was no longer far from Jerusalem, he was forced to engage in battle, defeated, and fled. Nearly three thousand of his

men were killed; the rest were captured or scattered. Scarcely a few remained with Alexander, to share his flight rather than dare further rebellion.

[I.19.3] Finally, seeking peace from Gabinius, he even handed the strongholds over to the Romans, so that they would have no cause for suspicion. In this war Antony's valour shone outstandingly, though everywhere he gave a distinguished demonstration of his courage.

[I.19.4] Gabinius divided Judaea into five districts, to diminish the power from which arrogance arose in whoever gained control of affairs. The honour of the priesthood remained with Hyrcanus because of his gentle temperament, but Gabinius entrusted the care of the whole district of that region not to one man but to the people of Jerusalem in common. The other districts were assigned in the same way, apportioned among the leading citizens of Gadara, Amathus, Jericho and Sepphoris. Thus nothing would be left to the power of individuals, and the discharge of the districts' duties, which called for public oversight, would not falter. This was welcomed both by the Romans, to relieve their fear of rebellion, and by the Jews, to lay aside resentment: the Hebrew people would live not under a king but under leading men, on the model of the Roman republic. There no single man commanded; rather, the best men, to whom office had fallen by lot, governed in turn, without kingdoms but arbiters of kings.

Chapter 20

Online text and commentary

[I.20.1] This was thought a prudent measure against the nation's restlessness. But Aristobulus's escape and return to Judaea stirred up very great disturbances. Many flocked back to him, attracted by the favour of an old friendship or by desperate circumstances for which they sought a remedy in public discord: they wished to mingle the lowest with the highest, and their other hopes had failed. On his return he began to build fortifications and repair Alexandrium. Learning this, Gabinius sent Sisinnius, Antony and Servilius with part of the army and stopped the work that had begun. For Aristobulus abandoned the fortifications and prepared for war. Since the force he led was greater in numbers than in experience, he rid himself of the burden of the unarmed multitude and mustered only eight thousand armed men. Pitholaus too joined him, having come voluntarily from Jerusalem with a thousand men. Battle followed—for the Romans were upon his neck—and for some time the fighting was vigorous. Roman valour nevertheless prevailed. Five thousand Jews were killed; Aristobulus broke through the line with a thousand men and withdrew into the defences of the stronghold of Machaerus, while two thousand scattered elsewhere. The Romans attacked the stronghold, but were held off for nearly two days, since Aristobulus fought with all his strength in the extremity of danger. Yet he could not hold out longer. Captured with his son Antigonus, whom he had taken with him when escaping from captivity, he was sent to Gabinius, and by him they were sent on to Rome. The senate put Aristobulus under guard but sent his children away to Bithynia. Gabinius is said to have indicated in letters that this had been promised to Aristobulus's wife, to reward her diligence in handing the fortifications over to him.

Chapter 21

Online text and commentary

[I.21.1] After these events in Judaea, Gabinius thought he should dare some undertaking and prepared an expedition against the Parthians. But threatening developments on King Ptolemy's side turned his advance back. For Gabinius changed his route from the Euphrates to Egypt, using in every matter the necessary services of Antipater and Hyrcanus—but Hyrcanus through Antipater. They helped the army with money, grain, arms and auxiliaries as well. Above all, the engagements around Pelusium would easily have deterred Gabinius had the Jews, familiar with the terrain and every aspect of that kind of warfare, not attended to everything. But while the army lingered, Alexander, Aristobulus's son, was again preparing to throw himself into the other Syria as though into an unoccupied province. He would have done so had Gabinius not been stirred by the reports to hasten his return and send Antipater ahead to draw very many Jews away from Alexander's alliance. Relying on their numbers, Alexander was preparing to destroy all the Romans he had found in the region. Even though many of the Jews had dispersed through Antipater's intervention, he had not laid aside his audacity. He attacked with thirty thousand men around Mount Itabyrion, but fled when ten thousand were cut down. The scattering of the remainder ended the war. Gabinius arranged the public affairs of Jerusalem at Antipater's discretion and departed. He subdued the Nabataeans in battle and secretly released Mithridates and Orsanes, who were fleeing from Persia; publicly, however, he told the soldiers that they had escaped by flight.

[I.21.2] Crassus succeeded Gabinius. Before setting out for the Parthian war, he took away all the gold in the temple at Jerusalem and ordered that the two thousand talents Pompey had left untouched should also be removed. His joy did not last long: once he crossed the Euphrates, he lost his army and was himself killed.

[I.21.3] Elated by this success, the Parthians thought they should cross into Syria. Cassius vigorously met them with an ambush and drove them from the boundaries of the province entrusted to him, inflicting no small loss upon the enemy. They had come on without restraint, thinking that no one would dare oppose them, and he had got ahead of them and caught them in narrower places. Thus, after many of their men had been cut down, they abandoned the war. Having repelled the enemy and secured the province, Cassius rushed into Judaea. He destroyed Tarichaeae and sold thirty thousand Jews into slavery. He also ordered Pitholaus to have his throat cut, suspecting him of a deceitful design to support Aristobulus's side. Nor was Antipater uninvolved in that decision: he wished to exclude a rival for power as completely as possible.

Chapter 22

Online text and commentary

[I.22.1] He took as his wife a woman named Cypris, born to the most illustrious rank among the women of Arabia, and by her had four male children and one female. The males had these names: the first was called Phasael, the next Herod, the third Josephus, the fourth Pheroras; the daughter was Salome. For this reason a man outstandingly fitted to win the alliance of the powerful through gifts and friendship had secured the favour of the king of the Arabs above all others: he invoked the bond of kinship through the wife he had taken from the lands of Arabia. When preparing to fight Aristobulus, he sent his sons to the aforesaid king of the Arabs as pledges of mutual love. The king received them as an inviolable deposit, kept them in his house with the same care as his own children, and later returned them to their father when they were requested.

[I.22.2] But while Aristobulus, defeated in war, was held in chains, his son Alexander refrained from battle under the terms of peace by which Cassius, about to return to the Euphrates, had bound him. The frontiers of Persia were troubled by no Parthian incursion, and an appearance of soothing tranquillity in the regions of the East relieved human anxieties. Caesar poured into Italy from the regions of Gaul beyond the Alps and drove Pompey and the senate across the Ionian Sea. Excluded from Italy, the Great man made for Emathia and ordered Roman forces from various places to follow him there, to prepare for war. Intent on these affairs, he had left Aristobulus in chains at Rome. Caesar was between the city of Rome and Pompey, following the Great man by short routes from the Flaminian Way to the Appian Way, to catch either the man himself or his army. He released Aristobulus from his chains, gave him military units as well, and sent him to Syria to bring Judaea to his side and press Pompey from the rear. But at the beginning of his attempts, once he reached the place, Aristobulus was killed by poison and left the undertaking unfinished. His death was attributed in common report to Pompey's supporters. Thus Caesar's arrangements were frustrated and Aristobulus's ambitions defeated, in a strange variety of reversals: he had been safer as an exile among enemies, a captive in chains, than among his own citizens, master in his chamber, king at a banquet.

[I.22.3] When Pompey learned that Aristobulus had tried to renew war against him in Judaea, he also ordered Aristobulus's son Alexander to have his throat cut, deeply suspicious of his support for Caesar's side. He gave the order to Scipio. In obedience, Scipio brought the accused before the tribunal to display the appearance of a trial. Accusers were also produced, and sentence was pronounced against a man who had disturbed the Roman republic by arms. Thus he was to be thought convicted of rebellion and struck with the axe, in the manner of enemy commanders, by the authority of law rather than in execution of an order.

Chapter 23

Online text and commentary

[I.23.1] When the deaths of both became known, Ptolemy, who had taken in Aristobulus's brothers and his wife Alexandra, sent his son Philippion to the city of Ascalon to summon those mentioned. On arriving, Philippion received Antigonus and his sisters to take them to his father. Through familiarity and companionship a little flame of love stole upon the young man—surely forgivable, if tyrants knew how to forgive—and he took one of the sisters as his wife. His father Ptolemy could not endure this: he killed his son and married his own daughter-in-law. An outstanding censor of morals, who condemned in his son a marriage for which his consent had not been sought, so that he himself might be defiled by murder of kin and incest! Affairs changed when Pompey was killed: fleeing Caesar's arms, he had offered his head to be cut off by an Egyptian eunuch. Yet he presented his head with the endurance fitting for a man who had so often conquered so many peoples. Seeing in his defeat the lot of an exile, a plaything of human reversals, he offered his neck to the sword, to receive death as his thanks from the man to whom he had given a kingdom.

[I.23.2] After his death a change took place: many of the Great man's friends sought Caesar's friendship, and above all Antipater, endowed to an incredible degree with the ability to win the friendship of anyone he wished. For everyone needs resources, especially in preparations for war, when men who were enemies and opponents very often become all the dearer.

Chapter 24

Online text and commentary

[I.24.1] For Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had broken faith and was being pressed by Caesar himself in the gravest warfare. Mithridates of Pergamum, repulsed with all the force he had brought by the obstacles at Pelusium, had settled in the city of Ascalon. Despairing of passage and with his attempt frustrated, he no longer dared commit himself to battle on unfavourable ground and with inferior strength. Antipater first enlisted the Arabs to help him, then brought with him a strong, well-armed force of three thousand Jews. He also roused the powerful men of Syria to his aid: Ptolemy, who lived in Lebanon, Iamblichus, and another Ptolemy. Relying on their alliance, other peoples too were stirred to war. Supported by these additional forces, Mithridates approached Pelusium and, when denied passage, began a siege. There Antipater gave a distinguished demonstration of military ability. While the townspeople resisted and both sides fought with all their strength, he was the first to break into the city with his men, through a breach in the part of the walls where he himself was fighting, and he captured it.

[I.24.2] Yet this was not the end of his labour and assistance. As the army advanced further inland, the Egyptian Jews around the district called that of Onias wished to resist and block its passage. Antipater again not only averted battle but brought it about that the very people who had prepared arms against them supplied the army with the necessities of human life. Hence the people of Memphis too turned their minds from battle and willingly joined Mithridates's alliance. Having passed beyond the more suspect places, Mithridates thought

he must engage the remaining Egyptians. The ground was more open, but the men of that region, whose settlement was called the Army of the Jews, were stronger. He fought so vigorously that he put himself in headlong danger and would almost have been killed had Antipater not seen the whole right wing, where Mithridates was, hard pressed by the enemy and enclosed on another side by the river, with no escape for the men. From the left wing Antipater rushed upon those pursuing the retreating Mithridates and pursued them until the entire body of the enemy was destroyed. In that battle Antipater lost only eighty of his men, Mithridates more than eight hundred; his own escape was beyond expectation. This disaster befell in a single moment. Antipater received many wounds in his body and won outstanding testimony to his valour before Caesar, particularly from Mithridates, who not only gave an account of his deliverance but proclaimed Antipater's courage. [3]

[I.24.3] Greatly delighted by these things, Caesar received Antipater with honour among his friends, as was fitting. Then, after arranging what needed to be settled in Egypt and advancing into Syria, he bestowed on him honours of the Roman state. He also granted exemption from taxes and imparted other pledges of his favour, as to a man he had found worthy. At Antipater's recommendation, he also willingly confirmed Hyrcanus in the high priesthood.

Chapter 25

Online text and commentary

[I.25.1] Antigonus too met Caesar in Syria. It would have been fitting for him to lament either the misfortune of his father, who had been killed by poison at the hands of Pompey's friends, or the execution of his brother, whom Scipio, with the utmost cruelty, had struck down with the axe as though he were a criminal. Instead, he sought to arouse hostility rather than express grief. With the most vehement complaints he piled up accusations that Hyrcanus and Antipater were occupying the possessions of others, which had been criminally wrested from himself and his brothers. He had been made an exile from his father's dwelling; the land where he was born was denied him. Yet the wrongs done to him seemed more tolerable: far more bitter were those Hyrcanus and Antipater inflicted upon the whole nation of the Jewish people. They claimed favour for their successes in Egypt, although no diligence arising from an innate goodwill towards Caesar had prompted their service in helping Mithridates. Rather, fear arising from the consciousness of their alliance with Pompey had wrung it from them, to provide a shield against offence.

[I.25.2] Against these charges Antipater offered not words in return but the proof of deeds. He tore his clothing and, bare of garments but covered in wounds, displayed the signs of his proven valour to the eyes of those around him, his cloak ripped open. "Look," he said, "let these testimonies to my ill will towards Caesar defend the accused: they shine like lights of the soul. These scars, Caesar, I offer you as hostages for my inward intentions. These are the pledges of my faithfulness I deposit; I bear the written characters of my heart. If citizens are not believed, let the enemies be asked for whose sake I received those wounds. What else were they attacking in me but the faithfulness I showed you? Yet he reproaches me with Pompey's favour. I confess, Caesar, that I was a friend not to a man but to the Roman name,

and made it my particular endeavour to devote my services to your republic. Thus I served not one man but all. Let Pompey have been dear to me: he began to be my friend before he was Caesar's enemy. He was your son-in-law, and you his father-in-law. When he was in the regions of Judaea, I helped him as a Roman commander; yet I did not receive for him the wounds I received for you. For you I have staked my life and borne the blows of enemy weapons. What wonder if a captive does not know the glory of wounds, and a fugitive does not know what faithfulness is? What can a perpetual enemy bring against me except your friendship? It certainly seems strange that Antigonus should approach the Romans to accuse anyone, when he is accustomed to assail them in war, and should complain before them that he has been stripped of rule. He desired its exercise and business not for his own power or his family's distinction, but to challenge Roman arms and avenge his father's and brother's deaths. Ungrateful for his safety, he does not fear the Roman tribunal but dares attack it of his own accord, knowing that his partner in rebellion paid the penalty there."

[I.25.3] When Antipater finished speaking, Caesar pronounced Hyrcanus more worthy of the priesthood, but offered Antipater his choice of power. Antipater asked that same man to be the arbiter and regulator of his honour, leaving the measure of the honour to the man who bestowed the honour. Quite shrewdly, he gained both the credit of modesty and an increase of power: he was made procurator of all Judaea. He did, however, ask to rebuild the walls of Judaea that had been destroyed in the war. Confident in the assurance given him, he both requested and obtained so great an undertaking. As was customary for Roman commanders, the distinctions Caesar judged should be conferred on Antipater were recorded at his discretion on the Capitol, so that testimony both to his own justice and to the man's services would remain for posterity's knowledge as well.

[I.25.4] After escorting Caesar, Antipater turned his course from Syria to Judaea. First he restored to its former state the wall Pompey had destroyed. Then he suppressed disturbances, addressing each man with a father's affection, now with milder warnings, now with threats. They should choose the ways of peace rather than war, and not exasperate the king's mind: if he remained unoffended, he would show himself a fellow citizen; if he were roused, a tyrant. Although Hyrcanus was gentle by nature, they should take care not to embitter him by insult. For his own part, Antipater too was eager to provide for the common good out of devoted concern, not an assertion of power. But if they attempted any changes, he would not lack the will to punish. They should experience the Romans' friendship rather than their domination. For who could doubt that the Romans would turn from friendship to arms if they learned that the man whose kingdom they themselves had confirmed had been stripped of it? At the same time, Antipater knew that Hyrcanus's mild temperament made him slow in attending to the demands of public duties. He thought that the care of protecting the region should be divided between his sons, since Hyrcanus was unequal to so great a burden and command. He therefore put Phasael, the elder of his children, at the head of Jerusalem and in command of its army. Herod too, younger and still very young, he placed over Galilee with equal honour. As soon as he gained power, Herod, naturally more vigorous in attending to affairs, at once found scope for his temperament.

Chapter 26

Online text and commentary

[I.26.1] For Syria was suffering from the incursions of the bandit Hezekiah, who, as leader of a band of raiders, harassed the whole province and appeared as an enemy everywhere. Herod seized him and ordered his throat cut, and killed many of the raiders. This won him the greatest glory for valour and abundant favour among the Syrians. Hence he was celebrated by the voices of singers in cities and villages, as a man who had restored peace and public quiet after a long interval. This acclaim, amid the people's favourable talk, stirred Phasael to seek praise like his brother's in a spirit of devoted emulation: he would equal in kindness of mind his younger brother, whom he could not equal in valour. He selected for leading positions men outstanding in goodwill, who would temper severity with favour. Thus the greatest honour was paid to Antipater as a father of the community; he himself nevertheless changed nothing of the goodwill and faithfulness with which he had been accustomed to attend upon Hyrcanus.

[I.26.2] But it is difficult to be free of envy in prosperity. At first Hyrcanus was silently stung by the young men's praises. The reports of Herod's outstanding deeds nevertheless embittered him more violently: he saw that Herod had advanced beyond the laws of the Jews and the bounds of a private person, to claim all power for himself, his brother and his father, and to strip the king of every honour. Nothing remained to the king but a name which, devoid of power, presented an empty appearance. Indeed, very many had been put to death without consulting him and killed without royal orders, men whom the ancestral law did not permit to be put to death. Hence many said that Herod ought to be called to account, to explain why he had violated the law that forbade putting men to death unheard. Hyrcanus ought to rouse himself and test, at least by this means, whether Herod was acting as a king or a private person. If he failed to appear when summoned to judgement, it would be clear what his great insolence had aspired to.

[I.26.3] Through these and similar words of the king's attendants, Hyrcanus was gradually set ablaze with envy. They pressed home the shame of his cowardice: he had relinquished his right to conduct royal affairs and transferred power to Antipater and his children, making them masters while diminishing his own freedom to rule. Roused by them, he resolved that Herod should appear before his judgement to clear himself of the alleged usurpations contrary to law. Though indignant at being summoned to judgement, Herod nevertheless came, whether through his father's warnings or a calmer decision of his own, having first secured the fortifications in Galilee. He came neither with a force that would arouse resentment and seem to threaten war, nor with protection so insecure that he would betray his safety. He was also supported by the favour of Sextus Caesar. Fearing that a plot might be laid against the young man, Sextus had given Hyrcanus stern written orders to spare him the danger of a severe judgement. Herod therefore attributed his acquittal more to Sextus than to Hyrcanus's goodwill, although Hyrcanus, despite yielding to the accusers in calling him to account, had acquitted him willingly: he preferred to preserve Herod rather than pursue him.

[I.26.4] But Herod, smarting at the affront in the heat of youth and ungrateful for his acquittal, went to Sextus with the settled intention of disobeying if he were summoned again, and gave his detractors grounds for accusation. Although Hyrcanus did not rise to seek vengeance, seeing that Herod was stronger, Herod was nevertheless roused by the recollection of his injury, which is nourished by dwelling upon it. Gathering an army, he made for Jerusalem to abolish all Hyrcanus's power. He would almost have succeeded had his brother and father not broken his impulse and worn it down. They begged him to think it enough that he had risen up and to set the limit at threatening vengeance, but refrain from destroying the ruler under whom he had gained no small favour and attained such great power. He seemed to have been injured by his summons to judgement, but in turn he had received favour in being acquitted. It was excessively harsh to pursue an injury and be ungrateful for his safety. Moreover, the outcome of wars was doubtful and uncertain, and the burden of odium heavy when he took up arms against his own ruler, a man who had cherished him with a father's affection, often helped him and never injured him, except when, following bad counsellors, he had raised a shadow of injustice by which Herod thought himself injured.

Chapter 27

Online text and commentary

[I.27.1] With these and similar arguments they broke the young man's impulse. Civil war was removed from Judaea, but transferred to the slaughter of the Romans and turned against them. For Sextus Caesar was treacherously killed by Caecilius Bassus, and afterwards Julius Caesar, having held perpetual power for three years and seven months, paid a heavy penalty in the senate because he had exceeded the condition of a private person. Cassius and Brutus were the instigators. Then Julius, the adopted son, gathered forces and, with Antony joined to him, resolved to avenge his father's death. Since Herod was thought to have helped with the greatest part of the war by sending auxiliaries, he was entrusted with responsibility for governing all Syria. This became the cause of Antipater's fatal end.

Chapter 28

Online text and commentary

[I.28.1] For Malichus feared Antipater's power, which Herod's valour was increasing. He bribed one of the royal servants and prepared poison for Antipater. Having drunk it, Antipater died immediately after the banquet: a man of tireless spirit in other matters, and above all vigorous in seeking and establishing Hyrcanus's rule.

[I.28.2] Herod took his father's death hard. Calling his army to action, he promised to act as avenger. But his brother's advice restrained him, lest Judaea be afflicted by civil war between Herod and Malichus. Malichus was prepared to resist and, above all, concealed his complicity in Antipater's death. Herod was easily brought to another form of vengeance: accepting an assurance that Antipater had not died through any deceit of Malichus, he invited Hyrcanus and Malichus to dinner.

[I.28.3] With the approval of Cassius, who had also entrusted the affair to his own men sent to exact vengeance, the centurions and officers of the Roman army were ready. They met Hyrcanus and Malichus together on the shore and, drawing their swords, surrounded both. Malichus alone they stabbed with many wounds, slashed and slaughtered. Overwhelmed by the terror, Hyrcanus lost consciousness and collapsed, all vigour of mind and body gone. When he had recovered a little, he asked Herod who had ordered Malichus to be killed. Learning from the officers that he had been killed on the orders of Cassius, the Roman commander, he immediately replied: "Cassius, then, has saved both me and my homeland by killing the man who plotted against us both." But whether Hyrcanus said this out of fear or really thought it is not clearly apparent and cannot be determined by our judgement.

[I.28.4] Elichus had risen up, wishing through the bond of brotherhood to avenge Malichus's death. But since he did not dare provoke Herod, he thought he should attack Herod's brother Phasael. Learning this, Herod wished to set out but was held back by bodily weakness. Meanwhile Elichus had occupied several fortifications, especially Masada, and installed garrisons in them.

[I.28.5] But when Herod's vigour and health returned, he recovered everything and let Elichus himself go from the fortress of Masada at his entreaty. Antigonus, Aristobulus's son, had challenged his power with the support of his father-in-law Ptolemy. Herod routed them in battle and, having expelled Antigonus, returned victorious to Jerusalem. He also enjoyed great favour for his recent triumph, and especially for his new marriage. First Dosis had been joined to him as his wife, and by her he had a son, Antipater. Afterwards, in a second marriage, he had taken Mariamne, born to Alexander, Aristobulus's son, a close relative of Hyrcanus and thus endowed with royal nobility.

[I.28.6] Yet he did not escape the odium of having aspired to snatch the kingdom from Hyrcanus. For when Caesar and Antony had overwhelmed Cassius and the Bruti in the Macedonian war, one of the victors hastened to return to Italy, while the other thought he should hurry to Syria. Amid the many embassies flocking in, the leading Jews came to meet Antony and proceeded into Bithynia, accusing Herod and his brother Phasael. They had violently seized control of all affairs, leaving Hyrcanus only the name as an appearance of honour. But Herod's presence and favour prevailed: he had bound Antony's mind to himself not with a little money but with lavish gifts. Hence, without receiving even a word of censure from Antony, he nullified the odium raised against him by the embassy.

[I.28.7] Again, nearly a hundred Jewish men travelled as far as Antioch with no less spirit to bring accusations. At Daphne they found Antony, already wholly given over to Cleopatra's love and serving her lust, and there began to denounce the brothers' intolerable power. Messalla argued against them, with Hyrcanus present, and denounced the insolence of the nation: roused by a faction of a few, it rejected its own and sought outsiders, making Hyrcanus's injury a pretext when Hyrcanus had preferred what was advantageous to the citizens. After hearing the arguments of both sides, Antony asked Hyrcanus whom he considered better fitted to preside. Hyrcanus's preference was for Herod and his brother. Finding the answer in accord with his own wish, Antony was greatly delighted, for he was joined to the brothers by a bond of hospitality through their father: when he had come into

Judaea with Gabinius, Antipater had received him most warmly as a guest and honoured him with many services. He appointed Herod and Phasael tetrarchs and ordered them to undertake the administration of all Judaea.

[I.28.8] From this too the number of complainants increased. Although some of the envoys had been imprisoned and others insulted, a thousand envoys were later ordered, after sedition arose in Jerusalem, to go to Antony, who was staying in the city of Tyre. They did not fail their fellow citizens' will. Although the protesters had been harshly punished, they dared raise their clamour again. Antony sent the governor of the Tyrians to rebuke those guilty of insolence. The governor, together with Herod and Hyrcanus, sought to prevent them from bringing the heaviest punishments upon themselves, and disturbances and causes of war upon their homeland.

[I.28.9] When nothing was achieved and everything began to fall into confusion through irrational strife, Antony sent armed men. Some were killed by them, and many were gravely wounded. From Hyrcanus, however, the dead received the benefit of burial, and those who had managed to escape the benefit of medical care. They thus furnished an occasion for a twofold display of humanity, through which his goodwill towards his fellow citizens became manifest. The others who had escaped so exasperated Antony by keeping the city in turmoil that he ordered the execution even of those whom he was holding in chains.

Chapter 29

Online text and commentary

[I.29.1] Insolence had yielded to severity, but when almost two years had passed, a Parthian army poured into Syria, with Pacorus, the king's son, and Barzaphranes, the Persian satrap, leading the barbarian host. Lysanias, Ptolemy's son, joined them as an instigator. After the death of his father, whose surname was Mennaeus, he had already been stripped of power. Through the satrap just mentioned, he solicited Pacorus with a promise of a thousand talents of silver and five hundred women, to give Antigonus the kingdom and dissolve Hyrcanus's priesthood. Pacorus gave part of the cavalry to a royal servant to cross into Judaea, act on Antigonus's behalf and support his endeavour, since he himself was detained by rebellions within Syria.

[I.29.2] But this too would have made little progress had it not been proposed, on Antigonus's advice, that the Jews should receive Pacorus as a mediator of peace, while they were fighting one another under Herod and Phasael on one side and Antigonus on the other. Phasael, in his easy-going disposition, approved this at the time, despite Herod's opposition. Soon, finding it ruinous to himself, he learnt that barbarians were unfaithful by nature.

[I.29.3] For he was sent to Barzaphranes as though to an agent of peace, and, setting out with Hyrcanus, met the satrap, who was cunningly concealing his ambush beneath an appearance of kindness. Indeed, he gave them gifts as they prepared to leave, and made his arrangements for their entrapment. Men accompanied them more to keep them under guard than to share their dangers. Reports arrived that the Parthian had been bought for a thousand talents to destroy the men just mentioned.

[I.29.4] Ofellius too urged flight, since he had learnt from Saramalla, the wealthiest of the Syrians, that a plot had been prepared against them. Yet even so Phasael was not persuaded to abandon Hyrcanus and look to his own safety. Instead, he assailed the satrap with bitter abuse for betraying trust for a price and valuing money more than justice: he himself would give more for their safety than Antigonus was paying for the kingdom. But the Persian tried by perjury to win back the trust he had betrayed and dispel suspicion, and not long afterwards carried out the deception. For when he had departed to Pacorus, those to whom they had entrusted this business seized Phasael and Hyrcanus. Since the captives could now do nothing else, they sought by curses to avenge the barbarians' perjuries and the faithlessness of their betrayal.

[I.29.5] The cupbearer sent into Judaea had likewise laid out his deceptions to capture Herod. But Herod had long suspected the barbarians' ambushes, and grave concern kept him on his guard; he remained within the fortifications. Nor did he think he should leave the walls and entrust himself to conversations with the enemy in response to feigned instructions from Pacorus, by which the cupbearer would approach Phasael's brother about Phasael and his insolence.

[I.29.6] When he learnt that his brother and Hyrcanus were being held, he sent his people ahead into Idumaea at night, and himself with his servants routed the barbarians in pursuit. After killing many, he hastened to Masada, finding the Jews who had pressed upon him in flight more troublesome than the Parthians. Having avenged himself upon his pursuers, he settled his people within the fortifications. He himself left a garrison to protect his mother and younger brothers, and made for Petra in Arabia.

[I.29.7] The Persians poured into Jerusalem, breaking into the houses of those who fled. Everything was turned to plunder, war and tumult. The outrage went so far that the kingdom was handed over to Antigonus, and Phasael and Hyrcanus too were delivered into his power, to undergo whatever he pleased. He could restrain himself no longer, but immediately attacked Hyrcanus and bit off his ears with his own teeth, so that no change of circumstances should ever open the way for his return to the priesthood. For the high priest must be unmutilated, and it is clear that the law does not permit anyone with a mutilated body to perform the supreme office of the priesthood.

[I.29.8] Phasael forestalled humiliation by swiftly bringing death upon himself, dashing his head against some rocks that happened to be at hand. He disdained to be preserved for mockery or to die at another's command, when, even with his hands bound and denied a sword, he could find a way out of life. Yet another account of him also circulated, that Antigonus brought a doctor to the wounded man to pour poison into the wound as though it were medicine. Whichever of these endings occurred, it had its beginning in a defiant spirit. It is alleged that in his last moments, when he was already breathing out his life, on learning that Herod was alive and had escaped the ambush prepared for him by flight, he added that he died with gratitude, leaving alive someone who would bring him vengeance.

[I.29.9] Herod, meanwhile, hastened into Arabia, hoping to obtain money, which he believed was the only means of bending barbarian greed, to ransom his brother from captivity. If he

found the Arab either forgetful of his father's affection or too tight-fisted to repay his gifts, he would ask for a loan to pay the ransom, pledging in return the son of the man to be ransomed, a boy of seven whom he had brought with him for this purpose. But Phasael's death forestalled the endeavour of devoted brotherhood, and Herod was carrying out his brotherly duty with such diligence, all in vain. Yet before he learnt of his brother's death, he found Bocchus, king of Arabia, hostile, though he had believed him a friend. For Bocchus changed his faithfulness with the times, and forbade Herod to enter when he was already approaching Arabia's borders. He fabricated a story that Parthian envoys had warned him not to think of receiving their fugitive into the kingdom of Arabia and bringing a most grievous war upon himself.

[I.29.10] Offended at this, Herod at once replied with the words that the pain of his just indignation brought forth, and turned from there towards Egypt. Soon, however, Bocchus regretted the violation of their friendship and sent men to recall him, but Herod had gone on ahead. When he entered the regions inhabited by the Rhinocorites, reliable reports made known to him his brother's death and the captivity of Hyrcanus, who had been taken in chains into Parthyene. He took on as much grief as he laid aside anxiety, and prepared for flight instead of war. He hastened with all eagerness to Alexandria, where Cleopatra received him with honour, thinking that a man of such renown should be sought as a commander for her side. Disregarding the queen's requests, he sailed from there for Rome. He judged the storms of winter and the disturbances he knew of in Italy less serious than the waves he dreaded in Cleopatra's inconstancy, more grievous than any shipwreck.

[I.29.11] Setting out without waiting for the winds, he encountered danger around Pamphylia, but escaped. Changing ships, he reached Brundisium first, and from there Rome. There, with the advantage of his father's friendship, he approached Antony. He lamented his own misfortunes and those of his family, who were under siege and for whom he had come to Rome to plead, and moved Antony to pity at so great a reversal of circumstances. A king until recently most powerful, who had often brought aid to the Roman state, had suddenly changed his home for exile, like a shipwrecked man destitute of everything and lacking the help he begged for his people in danger.

Chapter 30

Online text and commentary

[I.30.1] Although Antony was strongly inclined towards him by the bond of hospitality he had shared with his father Antipater, and especially because, in making him tetrarch, he had left him destined for kingship, Caesar was still more generous in his natural goodwill. He cherished all the more Antipater's service in Egypt in all his father Caesar's battles and their bond of hospitality, as though the pledges of favour had been renewed. Yet he regarded with suspicion the king's cunning disposition, perversely intent on the advantage of his own affairs rather than on what was fair and good. Herod was granted access to the senate. Before it, Messalla and Atratinus set forth his father's good deeds and Herod's own services to the Roman state. By the senators' authority it was decreed that Herod's kingship appeared advantageous to Roman rule, since, as Antony supported the proposal, it would be useful in waging war against the Parthians for the Romans to gain the alliance of the king just mentioned. When the senate was dismissed, Caesar, Antony and Herod left the senate house together and were escorted by the magistrates' attendants. On the first day that kingship was conferred upon Herod by the senate's decree, Antony prepared a banquet and invited the king.

[I.30.2] At about the same time, Josephus, Herod's brother, had arranged to flee at night because of a shortage of water. But suddenly so great a rain flooded the land that it filled all the water channels. Abandoning the escape he was preparing to the Arab nation, he routed the forces of Antigonus, who was besieging him, partly by ambushes and partly by engagements and open battle. Yet he too often withdrew into the fortress after an adverse outcome.

[I.30.3] And now Herod had arrived unexpectedly from Italy at Ptolemais, a city of Syria. Disembarking swiftly, he advanced against Antigonus with a great force of citizens and foreigners. Ventidius and Silo, commanders of the Roman army whom Antony had ordered to assist in escorting Herod, came to meet him. Dellius, sent by Antony for this purpose, had persuaded them to come from nearby to meet him, at least for appearance's sake, though their sympathies were opposed, since Antigonus had bought them both off. Ventidius was staying in the neighbouring cities to suppress the disturbances of the Parthian war; Silo, stationed within Judaea, was making money in open alliance with Antigonus. Yet Herod did not need help: all the Galilaeans except a few had joined him. His purpose was to rescue his people from the siege at Masada as soon as possible, and he took Joppa by fighting. It lay on the way and was full of enemy troops, whom he did not wish to leave behind him as he advanced further. Although Antigonus wanted to obstruct his march, he recovered Masada without difficulty and rescued his people from danger.

[I.30.4] Then he went to Jerusalem. He did everything to avoid the necessity of fighting, declaring that he had undertaken war on behalf of his fellow citizens against rebellion, not against his own people. When Antigonus's supporters provoked him with arrows and lighter missiles, he forced those assailing him from the wall to flee.

[I.30.5] There would have been no delay in victory had Silo, commander of the Roman force, not suborned soldiers to complain of shortages. They alleged that everything around the walls was devastated, that supplies were difficult to obtain and food scarce, and that the time had now come when they should withdraw to winter quarters. They threatened to disobey orders unless their demands were accepted. The mutiny would already have gained strength had Herod not placed himself among the centurions and Roman soldiers alike and begged them not to abandon the man whom Caesar, Antony and the senate had entrusted to their protection, especially since he promised that nothing they needed would be lacking. When he had finished speaking, he went out into the countryside and suddenly had an abundance of everything supplied to the army, leaving Silo no excuse.

[I.30.6] With everyone's spirits thus raised, he recovered Idumaea with two thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry, while the Roman force was now at rest in winter quarters. Josephus was chosen to lead the undertaking, a lighter task, so that he would not think he should attempt anything against Antigonus at greater risk.

[I.30.7] Herod himself transferred his people from Masada and settled them in Samaria, providing what he believed would serve for their protection and use. In the icy winter, when all the country was covered with snow, he arrived ahead of the report of his coming and entered without a battle the place called by its ancient name Sepphoris, which they later named Diocaesarea. He thought it suitable for restoring those wearied by the winter frosts and journeys made harsher by ice, for there was also an abundance of food there. When his soldiers had recovered there with food and a spell in camp, he decided to undertake battle against the brigands who ranged throughout the country and wore down its inhabitants no less than an invasion in war. He therefore first sent a detachment of cavalry and infantry ahead to the village of Arbela, and himself arrived with the remaining force forty days later. The brigands were not frightened by the sight of the army, but thought they should meet it in arms, displaying military discipline and the audacity of brigands. When battle was joined, Herod's left wing gave way, but he quickly restored it, brought up reinforcements and steadied his men, struck the pursuers and broke the attacks of those

[I.30.8] who could not withstand Herod fighting at close quarters. He pursued them as they turned away, as far as the Jordan, and put them to death. All the rest were scattered beyond the river, so that Galilee was freed from all fear of raids. Only those who concealed themselves in hiding places and, as it were, buried themselves in caves remained, delaying victory.

[I.30.9] On the steep mountain slopes, in the hollow recesses of the rocks, there were fearsome caves among rugged crags, inaccessible from every side and impossible to approach except for the inhabitants of the place. They used cross-paths and narrow tracks, the only usual approaches, and their familiarity with danger made them safer against the danger of being caught. Within were the dark recesses of the caves. In front of them a rock projected like a continuous ridge down to the deep bodies of water, excluding any hope of approach, with slippery ground on every side, water falling from the mountain brow and the crashing course of streams. The rush of the falling waters and the rock overhanging the ravines thus made the precipice more terrifying. For some time the king hesitated in uncertainty, unable

to discover how to overcome nature. Later he used the following contrivance: he enclosed his strongest men in protective structures fashioned like chests and lowered them, armed, by ropes to the very mouths of the caves. They easily began to slaughter the unarmed and kill them with all their kin and offspring, and to burn alive any who dared resist by casting fire upon them. There was no place for pity. Indeed, even when Herod wished to rescue many from death and give them confidence to take refuge with him, he drove them further away. No one joined Herod voluntarily, and those compelled by force preferred death to captivity. One of the older men, who had seven sons and a wife with him and could have provided for their safety, killed them all in the following way. Ordering each one to come forward in turn, he stood at the entrance and killed each of his sons as he emerged. Seeing so grievous and pitiable a deed, Herod was gripped by the bond of fatherhood. He tried to stop him with his hand and begged him in words to spare his children, promising immunity. But the man was not moved at all by these words. He even abused the king, killed his wife as well as his sons, and, after throwing his sons' bodies down from the height, finally hurled himself headlong into the depths.

[I.30.10] Antigonus was terrified that Herod had so easily overcome the multitude of brigands and the difficulties of the terrain. He avoided his presence, but turned against Ptolemy, whom Herod had placed over part of the army. A man most adept at the stealthy devices of war, he used those accustomed to disturbing Galilee to have Ptolemy killed in a sudden attack.

[I.30.11] He also destroyed Josephus, Herod's brother, while his brother was occupied in other regions. Josephus resisted vigorously with the Roman soldiers who had come to his aid, hastily assembled.

[I.30.12] Not content with so great a triumph, he added to his victory a grievous insult to the dead man, leaving him with his head cut off. Pheroras, the slain man's brother, offered fifty talents for it, but did not obtain it. This victory again turned the sympathies of many in Galilee towards Antigonus, and the business of war was renewed.

[I.30.13] Herod had made for Antioch and was resting there in the very pleasant place called Daphne. On receiving news of his brother's killing, he groaned briefly at his suffering, deferred his grief and prepared vengeance. Antigonus could not face his raging sorrow, but hid himself within the fortifications.

[I.30.14] Herod burst in to pursue the authors of so great a crime, and easily drove back the forces that met him. Very many were killed. The roads were blocked with the bodies of the fallen, so that the very routes were filled with the corpses of the slain. The battle would have been finished, with everyone put to flight, had Herod thought he should march straight to Jerusalem. Antigonus had cast away his spears and dreaded the final punishment.

[I.30.15] All were so confounded by fear that, when the harsh winter had recalled Herod from pursuit and he laid aside his arms and entered a bath accompanied by a single servant, three men with drawn swords met him, and then more, who had fled the battle and were seeking hiding places. On seeing the king, they were thrown into confusion by fear, passed him and hurried to the exit of the bath to escape, although they could have killed the king and ended

the war. Indeed, there was no one to seize them as they fled. Inferring from this how great the enemy's fear was, Herod pressed on with the fighting and killed Pappus, the very commander of the opposing force, and ordered his head to be cut off, because he had killed Josephus, the king's brother.

Chapter 31

Online text and commentary

[I.31.1] Meanwhile Antigonus, who had prepared to flee, delayed. As he lingered, Herod surrounded him with his army and besieged him, pressing upon the side in front of the temple, where Pompey too had broken into the city. The king was now so confident of victory that, after beginning the siege, he turned aside to take Alexander's daughter as his wife, exchanging the battle trumpet for wedding songs and mingling marriage with war. Having gained the opportunity for the union from the occasion of battle, he returned from the festivities to the war.

[I.31.2] Sossius too arrived, sent by Antony to aid the king. Their forces were thus united. Although the Romans excelled in experience of war and military discipline, and strove eagerly to please the king, the city was only broken into in the fifth month, when Herod's men dared to climb the wall and the Roman centurions burst in. Then there was countless slaughter, and everything around the temple was devastated. Some were cut down as they fled to the temple, others gathered inside their houses. There was no pity for old age, none for infancy or women's weakness. Antigonus presented himself and, forgetful of his position, threw himself at Sossius's feet. Sossius, whom so great a reversal of circumstances ought to have reminded of pity, abused the prostrate man and called him Antigone. Yet he did not spare him as a woman, but cast him bound into custody.

[I.31.3] Herod wavered over how to rescue his homeland from Roman hands, how to preserve the temple undefiled by the gentiles. For the Romans hurried to inspect the inner mysteries and profane the holy of holies. The king drove them away one by one, now with pleas, now with threats, judging victory worse than flight if any of the sacred mysteries were divulged. The Romans pressed on towards plunder; Herod resisted, lest they leave him an empty city and nothing of his kingdom but a desert. Sossius, on the other hand, claimed the plunder of the captured city for the soldiers. But the king promised to give the soldiers money from his own resources, and thus bought back with money what remained of his homeland. To fulfil his promise, he received the soldiers most hospitably, treated the commanders as befitted them, and rewarded Sossius himself with royal generosity. No one left ungrateful. Sossius offered a crown to God and departed, taking Antigonus with him to Antony, who had him struck with an axe as a man of ignoble spirit.

Chapter 32

Online text and commentary

[I.32.1] Herod also bestowed very many gifts upon his own people. He gave very many to Antony and his friends, yet could not buy his own security from Antony. For Antony, mortgaged to his love for Cleopatra, was already her servant and, enslaved to her lust, attended upon her. Yet he could not overcome the greed of a woman, especially one practised in killing her relatives: once they were dead, she had added their possessions to her own as spoils. With the same avarice and cruelty, she had any Syrians she heard were particularly wealthy put to death. With Antony already enslaved to her desires, she thought that the kingdoms of Judaea and Arabia too could be added to her avarice, once the rulers of both nations had been killed.

[I.32.2] But although drunk with lust and heavy with sleep, Antony came to his senses in this matter and refused to destroy such men and most powerful kings at the command of a most wanton woman. Yet, so as not to let them go unscathed, he struck down their friends, took away the greatest part of their possessions, especially the land that produced balsam, and awarded all the cities on this side of the river Eleutherus, except Tyre and Sidon, to Cleopatra's greed. Appeased towards her husband by such a payment, she accompanied Antony as far as the Euphrates when he set out against the Parthians, and returned through Judaea. There Herod did not neglect to win the queen's goodwill towards himself, especially with gifts and presents. Success increased her arrogance, so that her womanly lack of restraint exalted itself beyond measure. Indeed, not long afterwards Artabazes, king of the Parthians and son of the most powerful King Tigranes, was given to her as a gift. Antony held him captive with all the Persian plunder and spoils. Though owed to a triumph, he was assigned to a woman like a worthless slave, so that the more glorious the victory had been, the more shameful was the gift that dishonoured kings with such mockery.

[I.32.3] Yet the man who did not know how to use success did not enjoy it for long: through a woman's insolence, he roused Augustus against himself. Thus the Actian war was being prepared with great movements on both sides. The king was most eager to enter the war with Antony, since Judaea was free from hostile disturbance and he had recovered Hyrcania, long held by Antigonus's sister. Yet in this too Herod was most fortunate, being begrudged a share in others' dangers. Cleopatra therefore wished to estrange Antony's mind from the kings and turn it away. She persuaded her husband that Herod should wage war against the Arabs, so that, if he prevailed, Arabia would fall to the queen, and, if he was defeated, Cleopatra's dominion would extend into Judaea.

[I.32.4] Whichever won would destroy the other. This plan inclined in Herod's favour in its outcome, rather than its intention. As soon as he began battle, his superior cavalry drove the enemy back, but in the end he was overcome by the enemy's multitude and surrounded by their numbers. His adversaries' forces had gathered at Canatha, and he wished to draw up his line closely against them. But his men's spirits were elated by their earlier success, and for that reason they rushed out against the enemy, leaving him unsupported. Above all, this came through the treachery of Athenion, whom Cleopatra had attached to the commander to

abandon Herod at the very moment of need, not to help him. The Arabs then attacked his abandoned army in rocky and inaccessible places, struck it down in grievous slaughter and routed it, pursuing the fugitives to their places of refuge and destroying them.

[I.32.5] Herod arrived, later indeed than the need demanded, but nevertheless avenged the disaster. In subsequent battles he so afflicted the Arabs that they repeatedly lamented that single victory of theirs. Added to this was a grievous loss of heart caused by an earthquake, in which very many livestock and about thirty thousand people perished. Yet the entire military force remained unharmed, since it lived in the open air. This too raised the enemy's spirits: they thought they could more easily invade a deserted Judaea and afflict those stricken by such portents. Herod therefore thought that his men must be roused to their own defence, especially because he had learnt that the envoys he had sent into Arabia had been treacherously killed. He addressed them in their fear with these words:

[I.32.6] "After so many successful battles on our side, the enemy's fortunes have been broken, even by their own admission: driven by frenzied grief, like defeated men, they murdered our envoys. It therefore seems strange to me that an irrational fear has so shaken you that you set the accidents of the elements above the known successes of valour. There has been no encounter in which the Arabs did not immediately give way and turn to flight, thinking they must retreat. As is the way with the stealthy devices of war, they sought remedies in deceit and ambushes, not to win themselves, but to delay our victory. In place of the confidence this should have brought, agitation has arisen, as though the war were terrifying, because the earth shook, although the very men who wage war were alone unharmed. Or, if we wish to consider whom it harmed, we shall judge it to be the Arabs rather, whom it brought back to war so that they should not escape stronger men by fleeing. For I see that they have returned to the battle line relying not on their arms and strength but on the loss of our livestock. Yet frail is the hope that depends not on confidence in one's own valour but on another's misery, since nothing on earth is so changeable as prosperity or adversity. For the state of human affairs is renewed by slight turns; prosperity does not endure, nor does hardship persist. Thus neither misery nor its contrary is perpetual: fortunes frequently alternate and vary even for the same people. Indeed, we may take an example from events. In the earlier clash we had the advantage, but as the battle advanced our fortune changed, and we were defeated by those we had defeated. We too therefore have grounds to hope that those who defeated us will be defeated by us. For excessive confidence is always incautious and careless of itself. Fear, however, warns us to look ahead and teaches diligence. In prosperity, audacity steals upon us, and unthinking rashness does not know how to await the commander's counsel. Indeed, it was when you advanced against my judgement that Athenion's wickedness found an opportunity to do harm. Now your trembling pledges me the first claim to victory. Raise your spirits, then, and exalt the Jews' ancient greatness of soul. Do not let the disturbances of insensible things terrify you, nor think that movements of the earth indicate some other disaster. The disturbances of the elements have their own harm: fear nothing other than the injury that lies in them. For an earthquake and the destruction of living creatures are not signs of dangers, but the dangers themselves. There is therefore no reason for us to fear as though we were about to suffer grievous things, when we have already suffered the most grievous. He who has exacted punishment can now be favourable, and gentler than if he had

not exacted it. What remains after earthquake and pestilence but mercy, since we have paid twice over for our sins? Yet we have intact what is useful for war. For pestilence carried off those outside the war, while our victory took from the enemy those they had chosen as fit for war. Moreover, our livestock have died, but their judgement has died: they thought the envoys we sent should have their throats cut against human and divine law. They have transgressed the law of all human beings, even of the barbarians themselves. Even among those who know nothing of humanity, envoys are held inviolable, through dread of heavenly vengeance and fear of God as the avenger of so great a crime. Our adversaries have therefore committed what neither human nor divine laws leave unavenged. Let us go out, then, to fight not for territory or spoils, but for an injury to God. Let us be roused to war not by love of wife or children, but by our confidence in God's protection. We carry out not our own decisions, but the sacred precepts of divine law, to exact vengeance for those whom religion requires to be inviolable. Amid hostile arms, an embassy alone mediates peace; one who serves as an envoy lays aside the character of an enemy. Their blood now cries out to God and demands vengeance. Let us hasten to battle, then, while we have God as avenger, vindicator of the slain. They fight better on our behalf and, surrounded by legions of angels, stand before us in the battle line."

[I.32.7] Having exhorted his soldiers with such words, he rushed upon the enemy, seeking every opportunity to fight. The Arabs were superior in number but inferior in spirit, and when battle was joined about five thousand of them fell. The rest withdrew into a fortification and were wearied by a shortage of water, so that they sent an embassy to ask for peace at a price. But when they saw that they were being put off and thirst burned still more fiercely as the water ran out, many came out and offered themselves voluntarily to the enemy, preferring to perish by the sword rather than by thirst. Herod kept them bound, lest there be any ambush. Thus in five days about four thousand were received; when others came out to fight, about seven thousand men were again killed. Humbled by the king through this blow, the Arabs were as superior in judgement as they were inferior in valour: they asked for the very man they had as an adversary to be their defender and helper.

Chapter 33

Online text and commentary

[I.33.1] But greater anxiety struck him in victory. Having subjected something to himself, he now dreaded imminent danger not to his territory but to his entire kingdom, for Antony, whom faithful friendship had bound to him, had been defeated. Indeed, Augustus Caesar, victor in the Actian contest, did not yet think Antony overcome while Herod survived the victory. When the anxious king learnt from a reliable report that Caesar had reached Rhodes, he sailed to him, lest rumour outstrip his journey by land. On arrival, he laid aside his diadem and presented himself in the dress of a private man, but with a king's spirit. Withholding nothing of the truth, he maintained his firmness and preserved his authority. "I confess, Augustus," he said, "that I was Antony's faithful ally, since I received my kingdom from him and still do not deny that I am his debtor. I would have proved this by arms had Cleopatra not begrudged it and the Arabs not prevented it. It was through that necessity that I did not bear arms against you, not as one who deserted a friend or feared battle, but as one occupied with affairs at home. Yet Antony did not find me ungrateful to him: although absent, I sent him reinforcements for his army and countless supplies of grain. Nor would you, Caesar, have judged me ungrateful for his benefits had I taken part in the Actian war. See how I withhold nothing. I am more afraid of appearing before you ungrateful to your enemy than an enemy to you. Your judgement weighs more heavily upon me than war, for before you it is crimes that are put in jeopardy, not the deserts of excellence. I too prefer to plead my case before you for faithfulness rather than faithlessness. See, Caesar, how I did not desert Antony when he was unharmed: I did not flee from him when defeated. You defeated Antony, Caesar, with your greatest legions; you defeated him with your counsels; you defeated him with the strength of the Roman dominion, which he abandoned and which he disowned. He was truly defeated by your excellence, but more by his own conduct. His wife Cleopatra defeated him; Egyptian love defeated him; Canopic luxury defeated him. It defeated him because he preferred to be defeated with Cleopatra rather than win without her. A woman more hostile to her own people than to her adversaries defeated him. I had advised the woman's death, if he wished to look to his own interests. I had promised help to restore him in his affliction, promised forces to protect him in flight, and offered myself as a partner in war; but his mind had been blocked by his desires for Cleopatra. He was defeated because he would not listen to me. I too was defeated with Antony, yet with less disgrace, because Cleopatra defeated him, Antony me. He did not abandon a barbarian woman, I a friend. With him I laid aside my diadem, but I have come to you retaining the credit of a faithful friend. I have put away the insignia of kingship, but have not cast aside the consciousness of excellence. Judge as you will; yet, whatever the outcome of your judgement, I shall take this away with me: what sort of friend I have been will be recognised."

Chapter 34

Online text and commentary

[I.34.1] Caesar answered these words. “Greetings,” he said, “and now enjoy your kingdom all the more, for we do not envy excellence but delight in it. You deserve to rule over more people, since you so defend friendship that you neither disown a man in adversity nor blush to acknowledge him as your friend. But undertake to attach yourself to the more fortunate, and to preserve in prosperity the faithfulness you have amply proved in adversity. Antony may have defeated you, but I shall not consider defeated a man whom friendship has made equal to the victors. We seek you for this reason, that no outcome of war changed you, since you did not desert Antony: Antony deserted you first, trusting himself to Cleopatra rather than to you. His folly gained you for us, because he chose the woman most ruinous to him and rejected a faithful man. Nor is it strange if Antony, defeated, clings to Cleopatra, by whom he was captured in victory. Why are you surprised that Cleopatra made Antony break with you, when she parted him from me and made an enemy out of a partner in rule? You too, therefore, were rejected with us, and so reign with us. Nor is it without benefit that, while we were occupied in civil wars, you subjected the untamed Arab nation, for we count the enemies of the Jews as our own. Those who assail you bear arms against us. You therefore served us as a soldier when you won for yourself, and so we reward you, that your kingdom may be confirmed by our gift. For now, our favour is to have diminished nothing; for the future, we shall endeavour to ensure that you do not miss Antony. For it is not fitting that we should fail to surpass in goodwill the man whom we surpassed in war.”

[I.34.2] When he had said this, he placed the diadem on Herod’s head, adding attentiveness to his gift. Encouraged by this mark of Caesar’s regard, Herod wished to rescue Alexas, one of Antony’s friends and a man at whom Caesar was most indignant, from disfavour. He lamented with many pleas, but Caesar’s excessive indignation left no room for pardon. When Caesar departed from there for Egypt, Herod accompanied his journey, supplying everything that would be useful to him or his army. By winning the greatest favour for himself, he secured the commander’s affection, especially because, in the more arid places as far as Pelusium, his royal foresight provided an abundant supply of water. Through these services he inspired such love for himself in everyone that he was judged to have deserved more than he had received, and the power of his kingdom to be less than the generosity of his hospitality. Hence, after events in Egypt had gone as he wished and Antony and Cleopatra were dead, Caesar not only restored what had been taken from Herod, but, besides what Cleopatra had diverted, granted him Gadara, Hippos and Samaria. He also gave him the coastal cities of Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa and Strato’s Tower together. He granted the king four hundred bodyguards from Gaul, surrounded by whom Cleopatra used to walk, to guard his person, and many other things. But the king valued above all these gifts that Caesar loved him more than anyone except Agrippa, and Agrippa loved him more than anyone except Caesar.

Chapter 35

Online text and commentary

[I.35.1] In the fifteenth year of his reign, then, to respond to his good fortune and favour, uplifted by so great a course of successes, he turned his attention to devotion. To show himself grateful for the heavenly benefits flowing upon him beyond measure, he adorned the temple. He surrounded the whole circuit of ground around the temple with a wall and enclosed a doubled area, with immense expenditure on building and exquisite beauty. The great porticoes around the sanctuary, which he erected from their foundations, bore witness to this. His concern to protect it was no less than his concern to adorn it: he fortified the stronghold facing north, which he called Antonia on account of Antony's favour, inferior to none of the earlier palaces. Within the citadel itself he also added two dwellings for the royal house, of the greatest extent and marvellous beauty, with whose charm you would think nothing could compare. One was named Caesarium, the other Agrippium, so that the lasting memory of such great friends might be celebrated in his own buildings.

[I.35.2] He also not only built up the city of Sebaste but filled it with inhabitants. Not to pursue every detail, he scarcely passed over any site of an ancient city without renewing what was falling into decay or adorning it by adding the buildings it seemed to lack. Extending his generosity even to the five-yearly contests, he enriched that worthless class of men by pouring out his wealth.

[I.35.3] He also built a temple of white marble to Caesar at the sources of the Jordan, so forgetful of religion that he dedicated a temple to a man and introduced the practice of the nations into Judaea. The place is named Panium. There a mountain of lofty height stretches aloft with its highest summit, and in its side a shadowy cavern opens, through which the depth of a foul-smelling chasm exhales a fierce stench. Within was a body of water, a great mass utterly still, so that its profound depth could not be estimated. Outside, however, springs gush out around the roots of the mountain itself. Hence many have thought that the Jordan rises there; yet we think that what the truth holds should be disclosed later.

[I.35.4] On the coast there was a city called Strato's Tower, already worn out by frequent wars and inclining towards ruin through age itself, but outstanding in the convenience and charm of its site. He renewed it in white stone and adorned it with palatial buildings, expressing in it the strength of his greatness of soul and the elegance of his work. For it lies midway between two coastal cities, Dora and Joppa, and on either side is hemmed in by a shore without harbours, so that all who wish to sail from Egypt past Phoenicia are tossed on the open sea. For the sea there is often roused by winds, especially the blast of the south-west wind. Even when it blows more moderately, a wave rises; striking the projecting rocks and rebounding with its force broken, it makes the wild sea rougher as it retreats. Thus the king, setting no limit to expense, overcame nature by greatness of soul and established a harbour larger than Piraeus. Within it, penetrating the vast mass of rock, he made safe anchorages.

[I.35.5] He also measured out a space suited to the size of the harbour and cast enormous rocks into the sea, many of them fifty feet in height, others even taller. He marked out the

harbour itself with very great towers, one of which he called Drusion, to weave the name of Drusus, who was among Caesar's ancestors, into his own conspicuous works.

[I.35.6] He also inserted shorter flights of steps at more frequented places, by which ships could be hauled up without great labour, and embellished the whole charm of the harbour with three enormous colossi. Again he founded a temple to Caesar on a higher site, and in the middle of the temple set a colossus bearing Augustus's name, as his image, no smaller in size than the image of Olympian Jupiter or Argive Juno. You would not know whether to think that beauty amid such great difficulties excelled more, or the strength and protection of the work amid such great splendour, since the work remains indestructible against both sea and age. Thus manifold benefits came together in a single work: a very great city was added to the province, a harbour for sailors, and honour for Caesar, from whose name it is called Caesarea to this day.

Chapter 36

Online text and commentary

[I.36.1] The pursuit of marriage to a single woman brought low this royal power, which abounded in prosperous successes, and broke it with bitter sorrows, from the time when, contrary to law and right, he thought marriage should be measured by rank of birth rather than love, in a certain royal fashion. He had as his partner a woman of Jerusalem named Dosis, who had been joined to him earlier when he was a private man. She should have been all the dearer because she had brought her husband good fortune: it was with her that he had attained the heights of kingship. But, forgetful of his debt of gratitude, he cast Dosis aside and married Mariamne, Aristobulus's granddaughter and Alexander's daughter. Thus, in pursuing noble birth, he fell into turmoil: his own household would not be at one with him, although the manifold people of different provinces obeyed him. Antipater—for that was the name of the young man born to Dosis—was expelled not only from his father's house but from the whole city, lest the sight of him in the house offend the new bride in her stepmotherly hatred. He made way for the ill-fated marriage, which his father celebrated with the exile of his only son, and was scarcely summoned even for the celebrations on feast days. Seeing her husband comply with her wishes even when it brought his family devotion into disrepute, the woman turned to arrogance. A further cause was added that justly inflamed her spirit: she had learnt that her grandfather Hyrcanus had been killed through her husband's plots, falsely suspected of desiring the kingdom. He is the man we mentioned above, whom Barzaphranes, who commanded the Persians, had carried off captive when he occupied Syria. He had first been detained in Parthia; then, pitying his fallen lot, Barzaphranes had handed him over at the request of the Jews who lived beyond the Euphrates. If only, just as he had been granted to those who entreated for him, he had also trusted those who warned him not to let the power of his relatives tempt him, in the manner of human nature, to go over to Herod. That power would endanger him, since a man eager to preserve his kingdom harassed none more than those closest to him and guarded against his relatives. But, weary of living abroad and longing for his own people, he crossed the Euphrates and returned to Judaea. This sank deeper into Herod's heart than anyone had thought, not because Hyrcanus had aspired to the kingdom, but because it was thought uncertain whether a man of royal birth, with the privilege of power long exercised, could refrain from it. His granddaughter's marriage was therefore the snare of death for Hyrcanus. For its sake he hastened to Herod, unaware that captives lived more safely with an enemy than relatives with a king. Thus, without even a slight suspicion that he sought to reign, he was killed for this reason alone: the kingdom seemed to belong to him.

[I.36.2] Meanwhile he loved Mariamne with lavish love and did not wish her to be offended. Her many children had increased his favour towards her. For she had borne him five children, but the youngest of the three males had died in Rome while being instructed in the liberal arts. The other two were honoured with royal splendour beyond the measure of private men. The young men were supported by their mother's noble birth and their own birth into kingship, since they had been born when their father was already reigning. Above all, however, they were supported by his love for Mariamne, which inflamed the king more

and more each day. Although his wife repaid him with no love in return, he nevertheless took care not to sadden her spirit in anything. The woman's hatred and the man's love contended against one another in an evenly balanced scale. Yet Mariamne had better cause to hate the husband who loved her than Herod had to love Mariamne, who did not love him. The woman drew hatred from his crime, confidence from his love: she recoiled from the one with a granddaughter's grief, while the other exalted her through her lover's submission. She therefore did not refrain even from reproaching him with his crimes: he had wickedly robbed her of her grandfather Hyrcanus and her brother Jonathan. The one was his grandfather by marriage, the other his brother-in-law; the former should have been spared because of the frailty of old age, the latter at least because of his youth. It was an unworthy deed: he had entrusted the high priesthood to a young man of seventeen, and immediately upon conferring honour on him he inflicted death, for no other reason, as we have learnt, than that the people suddenly burst into tears when he first approached the altars on a sacred feast day, clad in priestly robes. Herod found this so suspicious that he believed the people had wept for joy and thereby betrayed their affection for the youth. Those tears revealed their wish; the people's enthusiasm endangered him, since they had shown from their inmost hearts what enthusiasm they felt for the young man's dignity. That noble grandson of a king, son of an unrestrained woman, brother of a most insolent queen who disdained her royal husband, would burst forth into power unless he were removed all the sooner. He possessed beauty and the charm of comeliness, so that he was thought rightly to deserve preference over everyone. Herod therefore resolved to kill the young man. The young man's mother troubled him: most keen in investigation and most vehement in vengeance, she allowed nothing to remain hidden or unavenged. For that reason he considered drawing back and restraining himself. Yet the daily increase in everyone's love for the young man and the danger to his kingdom troubled him in turn. Hence, roused by headlong fury, he resolved to look to his own interests by whatever means.

Chapter 37

Online text and commentary

[I.37.1] The young man was sent by night to the city of Jericho. There, where he was accustomed to delight in swimming, many gathered as though for play; submerged beyond all measure, he was killed in the pool.

[I.37.2] His sister did not bear this in silence. Out of affection for her brother, she made it known in reproaches and repeatedly charged her husband with having her brother taken from her at his command. She had been bereft of everyone; her husband's house was a house of mourning for her, for he had first taken her grandfather from her and afterwards killed her brother. Wretched woman that she was, she had brought destruction upon her own people. She called down dreadful curses upon her husband, her mother-in-law and the king's sister: the crime was common to them all. She called upon God as avenger, that so great a deed should not be left unpunished. Herod bore this, captive to love and devoted to her every nod, but the women raged. They could not bear her curses as she reviled them or her arrogance in indignation, especially since Herod, overcome by his admiration for her, could not rise against the woman he loved. Thus, to arouse him all the more in his love, a scene of

adultery was devised and a charge of this kind was fabricated against the woman: she had sent her portrait to Antony in Egypt. What lack of restraint she had shown, offering her beauty for sale to an absent man prone to lust and, moreover, powerful, one who used power as his right, auctioning off her beauty! In the commerce of this novel auction she had prostituted herself, whether through the force of love or hatred of her husband, whose peril she had demanded as the price of adultery. Through this invention of the women, therefore, Mariamne was assailed before Herod all the more grievously the more she was loved. Yet the accusation itself, although made by indignant women, was not wholly alien to truth. It was nearer the truth to believe that her mother Alexandra, furious that another was being preferred to her son Aristobulus for the priesthood—for she preferred her son Jonathan to be called by this name, to recall that her grandfather had been king—had asked Antony to grant her son the priesthood through a certain musician who acted as intermediary for the letters; and then that, when Antony's friend Gellius came to Judaea, the young man, upon becoming known to him, had aroused his admiration through the charm of his exceptional comeliness. Mariamne had done so no less: the more illustrious her rank, the more brilliant her reputation. Perhaps he had come to know her through a certain habit of human nature, by which men too wish to show how dear they are to their more intimate friends by allowing them to share a hospitable table with their relatives also present.

[I.37.3] There too, Alexandra was said to have been given an opportunity to speak with Sossius, although, as a widow rather free in her conduct, she could not have lacked another opportunity to become acquainted with the guest, especially since she sought occasions and people of this kind. Then, after consulting together, they had decided that portraits of both should be sent to Antony. Dazzled by the splendour of the portraits, and especially by Sossius's testimony, Antony had written to Herod to send Aristobulus to him without delay. Sossius, acting as a pander to excite Antony's far from sober desires, had declared that he had never seen anything like them on earth and that their charm was divine, not human. He had passed over Mariamne because she was married to Herod, not because he was accustomed to conceal his lust even for women living with their husbands: he could enjoy them without danger and commit disgrace without shame. Rather, he guarded against Cleopatra's indignation. She took offence at a rival of either sex, but more so if she discovered a woman attached to Antony, since she thought herself more beautiful than all other women. Upon reading the letter, Herod had therefore excused himself on the grounds that he could not tear the noble young man away from his people without their rising in sedition and the whole nation being thrown into turmoil. To satisfy Alexandra, he had promised Aristobulus the priesthood. But, thinking the promises were being delayed and that she was being cunningly deceived, Alexandra had prepared a ship. While she was making ready to flee, her plan had become known through Sabbion and she had been brought back with her son. Moved by these things, Herod had concealed the affront for a time and hastened the grant of the priesthood to Aristobulus, so as to veil the odium of the murder he had prepared beneath the appearance of honour. [4]

[I.37.4] Once the murder had been carried out, as we have said, he was shaken as though struck by lightning, and at the same time by the charge fabricated by his own people that she had sought an adulterous lover. He knew that Antony was prone to lust and, because of his

very great power, inflamed his unconcealed desires for every kind of love affair. He also knew that Cleopatra's implacable resentment, especially of rivalry, and her savagery had killed very many men whom she had found too slow to restrain their wives' lack of restraint. He shuddered at the danger not only of losing his wife but of facing death as well. He therefore resolved to go himself to Egypt to sway Antony or Cleopatra, whom he feared most. Others report that he went there after being summoned by Antony's letter to give an account of the young man's killing.

[I.37.5] Before setting out, however, he privately disclosed to his brother-in-law Josephus, whom the king's sister Salome had married, that he feared being killed because of desire for his wife's beauty, which the woman was accused of having made known by sending an image of her comeliness. He entrusted this task to him as his brother-in-law: if he himself were killed by Antony, he was to kill Mariamne, so that no reward for the disgrace should survive. Josephus, by no means, I think, from a desire to betray him, but to soothe the woman's complaints against her husband, in which she said that in her affliction she burned with hatred for him, revealed the instruction. He interpreted it as a lover's affection: not even in death would Herod allow himself to be separated from his union with his wife. But, far differently from what Josephus had supposed, the woman took it as proof of his still unappeased cruelty towards her. He had charged his own brother-in-law with carrying it out even after his death. He wronged her in his hostility: he did not test his suspicions against any evidence of truth but pressed them through to the destruction of headlong death. There would be no end to hatred that extended beyond the very end of life and safety. But Josephus, forgetful of trouble at home, inflamed his own wife's suspicions against him while seeking to reconcile another man's wife to her husband. She thought that her own husband's conversations with Mariamne and his lingering in the royal palace should not be taken lightly. Indeed, when her brother returned, she did not delay her accusation, adding her own injury to the insults against the king: Mariamne had taken her husband from her too. But Herod, although shaken, was at first by no means greatly moved. He did not show himself hostile to his wife; indeed, broken by the force of love, one day he began to swear to the woman that he loved her with such affection that he had never burned with desire for another woman. He had cast them all from his mind so as to remain faithful to his wife. But she said: "You showed your love for me well enough in the instructions you gave Josephus, ordering him to kill me. How can a man love who can kill?" [5]

[I.37.6] The king immediately lost his senses when he heard that his secret had been betrayed. He therefore began to think that Josephus would never have betrayed him unless, captive to love for the woman, he had sought in illicit intercourse the reward for betrayal. What had long been hidden was now revealed; the crime was in the open, the debauchery beyond doubt. His sister had not been roused without reason, for she had detected the injury to her household before anyone else. Thus, raging with excessive indignation and beside himself, he leapt from the bed, fleeing the contamination of shameful debauchery, and the palace could not contain his fury. His sister heard him shouting and at once seized the moment for an accusation, an opportunity to do harm, and confirmed his angry suspicions. Impelled by the pain of the injury and his sister's accusation, he therefore ordered both to be killed.

[I.37.7] Not long afterwards, remorse for his deeds followed. When anger fell away, love succeeded it and passion was revived. Such a heat of desire blazed up that he did not believe she was dead and, out of his mind, spoke to her as though she were alive. He sent servants to her as to a living woman, asking her to lay aside their quarrels, come to him and restore herself to their conjugal affection. Only after much time and instruction did he finally believe that she had died. In his love, he had thought that a woman of such immortal beauty could not die. So great was his affection for the dead woman. Indeed, he is said afterwards to have grown savage and, embittered by hatred of those around him, to have killed many, and to have suffered not only from sickness of mind but also from a grave illness of the body, which they said he had contracted also from the pestilential air. For the corrupted atmosphere brought pestilence upon very many. Hence, after consulting those skilled in medicine, he withdrew into the seclusion of the woods. As his vigour gradually returned, hunting restored both his bodily health and his sobriety of mind.

Chapter 38

Online text and commentary

[I.38.1] These things too he added to the wonders with which he revered the dead woman's charm: he had paid the penalty for his unjust crime, and the destruction of such beauty had been expiated by the sickness of the elements. The death of one woman had been avenged by the world's ruin and a plague upon peoples, yet with an unequal recompense, as the earth refused its fruits and famine increased the pestilence.

[I.38.2] Mariamne met this end with composure, chaste towards her husband but insolent in her awareness of her beauty. She had magnanimity in excess but lacked attentiveness, so that she disdained her husband's caresses, confident that she could suffer no destruction at the hands of one who loved her beyond measure.

[I.38.3] She not only found vengeance for the present but also transmitted hereditary hatred into the future. Her sons succeeded her as executors of their mother's grief, with an affection indeed devoted to their mother but impious towards their father, although the right of nature should have been discharged towards both parents with equal service. Grief did not find them untrained. For, educated for a long time in Rome in Latin and Greek letters alike, they had acquired no small cunning. On learning of their mother's death while absent, they were embittered by the many who incited them to hatred of their father. Even upon their return, reverence for their father's presence had not instilled attentiveness in them; malice grew with age. Marriage added to their presumption: Salome's daughter, Herod's niece, had been joined in lawful wedlock to one, and the daughter of Archelaus, who held the kingdom of Cappadocia, to the other. The nobility of these unions had lent authority to their hatred. Herod therefore took offence even at his sons' unspoken disposition, more agitated than a father's family devotion could bear, which is often wounded even by a look. Further provocations were added by those who repeatedly warned him, as though out of concern, to guard against his sons' plots, asserting that they were arming their hands to avenge their mother's death.

[I.38.4] Terrified by these warnings, Herod began to prefer Antipater, Dosis's son, to his brothers and, with more abundant affection, to draw him into his favour. The royal palace began to burn with greater hatred and to be shaken by rivalry between the brothers, as the others resented a private woman's son being preferred to them, who had been born into kingship. Cunning in flattery, the lower he saw his maternal standing to be, the more eagerly Antipater commended himself to his father. He did not cease assailing his brothers with fabricated accusations until, by himself and through others he had attached to him, he excluded them from their father's affection. Indeed, he took away all their hope of reigning, so that in a publicly drawn-up will he alone was designated successor to the rule. Sent to Caesar in Rome, he was supported with every royal adornment and splendour except the distinction of the diadem. Returning from there to Judaea with increased favour from Caesar and very many illustrious men, he gained so much influence in a very short time that he even restored his mother to marriage with his father. With the twin weapons of skill in flattery and cunning in accusation, he began to press his brothers so hard before their father that their father prepared death for his sons.

[I.38.5] Indeed, beside himself with fury, he went to Rome, dragging Alexander with him, and arraigned him before Caesar on a charge of magic directed against him. Given the opportunity to lament his misfortune and all his afflictions, Alexander saw that he had the support of so great a judge, who could neither be swayed through favour by Herod nor deceived by Antipater. Thinking nothing should be passed over, he touched upon his father's crimes with a certain restraint, so as neither to appear to press them as an accuser nor allow them to remain hidden, since it would greatly help his case if he showed that his father's hatred assailed him because of his grief at his mother's murder. For in trials of this kind nothing weighs more heavily upon children than nature's family devotion and the authority of that devotion. If these are discredited by some crime, the prejudgement is diminished and the privileged claim removed. When he came to his father's charges, however, he refuted them with powerful assertions and first showed that his brother had no part in the crime. He shared his dangers, and Alexander groaned that an innocent man was being accused. The force of his pleading and his skill in speaking supported his clear conscience. He lamented most bitterly that no honour remained to himself and his brother: everything had been taken away through their brother's wickedness and their father's pliancy. Death was being inflicted upon him, and his father so eagerly awaited it that he added a charge and attached a crime. With these words he brought everyone to tears and turned the course of the trial so that Caesar rejected the accusation and his father embraced reconciliation. It was most pleasing and distinguished for the Roman ruler not only to have given a kingdom to an illustrious king but also to have restored his children. It was therefore determined after a just examination that reverence for the father's right should remain inviolate and the sons' innocence safe. The children were to obey their father, as was fitting, and he was to show his sons the unimpaired affection of nature; nevertheless, he could leave the kingdom to whom he wished.

[I.38.6] Alexander returned from the city of Rome with his father, acquitted at trial more than cleared of suspicion. For Antipater did not allow Herod's mind to be free of hatred for his sons. He himself was the very material of that hatred; yet, out of regard for the reconciler, he

restrained his purpose so as not to betray the scene he had staged against his brothers and expose his plots. When they reached Cilicia and put in at Eliusa on their voyage, Archelaus received them with a sumptuous banquet, giving thanks on behalf of his son-in-law Alexander, whom Herod had considered worthy of reconciliation as well as rescue from danger. He himself had also asked his friends, in letters sent through his own people, to assist his son-in-law's defence. At Herod's departure he offered thirty talents as gifts of hospitality and accompanied the king as far as Zephyrium.

[I.38.7] Upon returning home, the king immediately summoned the people and addressed them in this manner.

Chapter 39

Online text and commentary

[I.39.1] “Hebrew citizens, my reason for going to Rome proved both useful and fruitful: Caesar was to judge my sons, so that I, who was angry, should not hear the case alone. I went to Caesar so that the man who had restored my kingdom might pronounce upon my successor. He added to his benefits by doing what was difficult: restoring almost lost sons to their father, and restoring to brothers concord, which stands above kingship. I therefore return richer than when I set out. I have learnt to be a better father, because my sons have learnt to be better children, through Caesar’s benefit. For he determined that my sons’ succession should depend upon my decision: lest the privilege of succession engender arrogance, I myself should appoint as my successor the man I chose, the man who had deserved it, the man who had honoured his father more. I shall imitate Caesar, for by acquitting my younger sons he made them equal to my elder son. Thus today I appoint my three children kings together. Age supports the one, noble birth the others. Let their number trouble no one: the greatness of the kingdom is abundant enough for even more. Let God first judge my decision; then you too should join in. Honour fittingly those whom Caesar has united and their father appointed, so that their honour is neither excessive nor too low. The one inflates, the other exasperates. Let each be granted what is appropriate to his share. For a man does not so much please the person he honours beyond measure as wound the person to whom he denies his due. Often both are offended where flattery shows preference. I am certainly father to them all: honour paid to my sons is surely a favour to their father. Yet if anyone honours my children beyond measure, he is answerable to me also on my children’s behalf, for he brings about their downfall. Excessive honour supplies the means for audacity. Do I envy my children? Far from it. But I prefer them to have less power with goodwill than very great power with sedition. What belongs to arrogance or rapacity soon slips away; what belongs to goodwill is held for a long time. I shall therefore take care to attach relatives and friends to my children as guarantors of concord, through whose exhortation they may clothe themselves in mutual affection. For, while every evil utterance readily infects the hearer’s mind, continual conversations and prolonged familiarity especially tend to pour a plague into minds, which soon passes, as by contagion, into the conduct of those living together. Even if their conduct is tranquil, just as a pool, though calm, can rise in surges when stirred by winds, so a good nature is tossed by wicked advisers. I therefore think that each man ought to place his greatest hope for himself in me, for what accrues to my children is not lost to me. Each tribune or soldier should show greater reverence to the father of his commanders. I am the one, I am the one who will repay you all even for what you have bestowed upon my sons. If I observe upright efforts, I shall reward them in deeds. Ill will will receive its price, losing its reward even with the man it thought it should flatter. But you, good sons, consider first the sacred obligation of nature, whose affection binds even beasts and compels even wild creatures to love their kin. Mutual love remains among untamed animals, and beasts redeem their own by endangering themselves. Revere Caesar too, who has made you friends instead of enemies; and thirdly myself, who prefer to ask when I can command. Remain brothers; do not cast off what you were born. I give you the dress and splendour of rulers, but more precious is the inviolate seal of your love that I urge upon you.

If family devotion remains, kingship delights; if affection is absent, rule is worthless and often harmful. Thus, while I put you to the test, for the present you have the honour of kingship, not the kingdom. If you love your father, the right will follow. Yet demonstrate your love for me among yourselves: as rulers you will enjoy everything by which kingship usually delights, while the burdens of rule and the mass of affairs will await me alone, even if I am unwilling. It is therefore to your advantage to wish what I wish, since I both wish for what is yours and consider it mine." With these words he kissed his sons, so as to bind them to one another with a single kiss of love. Having done so, he dismissed the assembly.

Chapter 40

Online text and commentary

[I.40.1] Many departed happy, pleased by the concord between the brothers, but discord returned with the brothers, all the graver because their greater rank aroused more envy and supplied greater power to do harm. Mariamne's sons resented being placed on an equal footing with the son of a private woman whose lineage knew nothing of kingship. Antipater, on the other hand, disdained having the hope of kingship divided between himself and his brothers, and envied his brothers, for whom even a lower place was scarcely reserved instead of the first. But he concealed and veiled himself, covering his hatred with a show of favour, while their every design lay open in their speech even to those who did not seek it, their tongue too ready and lavish with secrets. Whatever they had said reached Antipater at once; much that they had not said was also fabricated. The messenger added a great deal by way of amplification. Antipater was the architect of everything by which his brothers were assailed. His life was nothing other than a meeting place of cunning devices, a stage of wickedness, a plot of crimes, a mystery of disgraceful deeds. He planted informers, suborned witnesses and feigned a defence, carrying about the mask of a brother as though in a theatre, so as to shake off the lighter charges and yield to the graver ones, thereby deceiving his father more and stirring him more violently against his brothers. Above all, he skilfully aggravated the odium of a plan to kill their father and seize the kingdom, matters more suspicious to kings through fear of danger. Yet, lest the charges seem less credible to the king without anyone to rebut them, he first attempted to refute them himself and then wished to appear constrained by manifest evidence of the facts. With the case pleaded on both sides, as though nothing had been lacking in the trial, their father would be roused all the more against his sons as men convicted. For nothing lent greater credibility to the assertions than that Antipater was thought to be his brothers' defender. Through this fraud he courted the favour of very many and inclined even his father's mind towards himself.

[I.40.2] Whatever was daily taken from his brothers' share of their father's affection was transferred to him. He drew away the king's friends and relatives, and especially estranged the king's brother Pheroras and his sister Salome from their nephews, so that they not only failed to defend them but also assailed and hated them. Alexander's wife Glaphyra added material for hatred. With womanly insolence in her present circumstances, she had begun to exalt herself in proud disdain because she surpassed everyone in the distinction of her lineage. Thus she set herself above everyone in the royal palace as though their mistress, habitually boasting that her father and grandfather were kings, and especially that Darius

Hystaspes was the summit of her maternal line. She insulted the king's sister Salome and his wife Dosis for their low birth, which caused them grief and brought hatred upon herself. She similarly exasperated the other women joined to the king for their beauty rather than the nobility of their birth. For Herod delighted in very many women, not only according to royal custom but also by the practice of the Jews, as though with a certain licence for error: they use the figures of their ancestors as a cover for their own vices. Alexander was therefore burdened by his wife's insolence.

[I.40.3] Aristobulus too assailed his wife with the same words as Glaphyra: she was of lowly standing, could not be compared with royal offspring and was unequal to Glaphyra. It was a reproach to him that his brother enjoyed marriage to a woman of royal birth, while he himself had fallen below his birth by cohabiting with a private woman. Madman, to disturb his own bonds of kinship with abuse! Stung by these insults, Aristobulus's wife reported them to her mother in tears. Salome in turn reported to King Herod what she had learnt through her daughter.

[I.40.4] But he, thinking it better to warn his sons than destroy them, summoned them. In part he terrified them with a commander's authority, in part he urged them with a father's affection to love their brother and not be divided as enemies, forgiving past offences and threatening correction for future ones. Lamenting that they were assailed by many fabricated accusations, they pleaded and at the same time promised that henceforth their very deeds would lend credibility to their defence, if only their father would look at what was done and not rashly believe what he heard. For wicked informers would not be lacking so long as a credulous listener was available.

[I.40.5] With these and similar words they softened their father. Although for the moment they drove away the fear that threatened them, they nevertheless increased their sorrow, seeing themselves pressed by Pheroras and Salome: the one their paternal uncle, the other their father's sister, plotting against those whom they should have defended. For a grave fear was added by their very great influence with their brother. Except for the diadem, Herod had shared almost the whole power of the kingdom with his brother, and had bestowed no small wealth upon them both, especially Pheroras. Indeed, he put away a hundred talents each year, apart from the region situated beyond the Euphrates that multiplied his abundant revenues. He had also been appointed tetrarch by Caesar at Herod's request and granted kinship with the king's wife, since he had taken the queen's sister in marriage. After her death, with the king's elder daughter betrothed to him, he would have gained the favour of a son-in-law had he not, captive to love for a young slave woman, declined marriage to the royal girl. Exasperated by this affront, Herod gave his daughter to a man who later died in the Parthian war.

[I.40.6] Nevertheless, when Pheroras was accused before him of having assailed his brother's life with poison—a suspicion from which he had not been free even while his wife was alive—Herod willingly acquitted him after an interrogation first of very many people and finally of his friends had found him innocent of the deed of which he was accused. He also pardoned his planned flight: the confessions of his household disclosed his intention to carry off the slave woman he loved and flee to the Parthians. Alexander had breathed a little more

freely while Pheroras was being assailed and Pheroras himself was assailing Salome for having promised to marry Syllaeus, Obodas's man, who was the king of Arabia's procurator and most hostile to Herod.

[I.40.7] But when both were pardoned their offence, the storm of the household settled upon Alexander and enveloped him in grave danger. For Antipater, the savage plague and tempest of the whole palace, raged, bearing down upon his brother by every means and even through the concerted action of his relatives. His father's sober state of mind was so disturbed that he loudly declared Alexander was standing over him with a sword. A scene of this kind had been brought forward: Alexander had enticed three eunuchs with more lavish gifts into his favour and participation in a shameful deed. One of them habitually served the king's drinks, another brought in the dishes at dinner, and the third watched over the royal bed and never went away once Herod had lain down. When this was revealed, the eunuchs were compelled by torture to disclose the degrading acts of obscene lust. Unable to conceal the amorous promises either, they disclosed the words with which they had been solicited and the reward for illicit intercourse, so that a plan to murder his father might be believed beneath the disgrace. Through the charm of youth he possessed beauty of form and the strength of his years, whereas Herod was weak and already burdened by old age, dyeing his hair lest he reveal his years. Alexander could transfer the right to reign from Herod to himself whenever he wished. He promised immense rewards, and so they should place their hope in a young man, not in a decrepit old man whose end nature itself was hastening.

[I.40.8] These things moved Herod deeply, but above all the eunuchs' disclosure that had informed him that a body of soldiers, commanders of the army and centurions were conspiring with Alexander. Indeed, he was so agitated that he thought no kind of cruelty should be passed over, trusted no one and suspected everyone. Punishments were swifter than the investigation of crimes, and the death of the accused preceded judgement. Everywhere those assailed by any suspicion were seized for punishment. False accusations raged. Many, wishing to please the king, denounced the accused; but immediately the very men who had denounced others were themselves denounced and led to the place of punishment with those they had accused. Thus Herod had grown savage towards everyone, so that anyone left alive was suspect, the king thinking himself safe only if the human race should fail. He was irreconcilable towards the accused, distrustful of friends, arrogant towards his household, pitiless towards those on trial, fearful of everything, so that he frequently changed his quarters and spent sleepless nights. Exasperated by all these things, he suddenly bound Alexander in chains, surrounded him with guards and summoned his friends for interrogation. Those who denied the charges died under torture; those who remained silent in turn were torn with wounds to the very end of life because they confessed nothing that agreed with the suspicions. Yet some, overcome by the bitterness of the tortures and punishments, asserted that the young men had resolved to kill their father while he was intent upon hunting and to go to the city of Rome without delay, so as to evade punishment by flight. Although this was supported by no evidence, their father turned it to the consolation of his savage purpose, wishing to have just grounds for his son's chains.

[I.40.9] Alexander therefore considered that his father's ears were barred against every defence of him, and that matters could in no way be brought to the point where Alexander could rely on his own innocence, assailed as he was by so great a mass of false accusations. He thought he should meet the most wicked informers with similar skill, deceiving the fraudulent fabricators of false accusations by cunning and arraigning on a false charge those by whose false accusations he believed himself oppressed. He therefore wrote four booklets in which he confessed the invented crime of having assailed his father's life, and named as accomplices in plots of this kind many of those by whom he himself was assailed. In the same booklets he named Pheroras and Salome especially: she too had broken into the young man's bedroom in the dead of night, enticed him against his will and compelled him, despite his resistance, to commit incest. He sent the booklets to the king as though disclosures of his own crimes, implicating in them all the king's most powerful companions and friends. Archelaus arrived hastily in Judaea at the right moment to bring his son-in-law and daughter whatever help and support he could. But, foreseeing that access to a lawful defence was barred before the most hostile father, he restrained his agitation by cunning. For as soon as he entered the royal palace, already within Herod's sight and hearing, he began shouting loudly as though beside himself with fury: "Is that sorcerer, my son-in-law, still alive, still enjoying this light? Where is he, I ask? Where shall I find that murderous creature who plotted against his father, so that I may tear him apart with my own hands? A kinsman must kill the man who wished to kill his kin. What will he do to his father-in-law if he has not spared his father? Who will point him out? I shall first tear out the scoundrel's entrails, then add my daughter to her fine bridegroom. Even if she was not an accomplice in the crime, she is not free from its contamination, since she enjoyed marriage to a would-be murderer of his father. I do not acknowledge a daughter who failed to detect her husband's devices and failed to show herself such a daughter-in-law to her father-in-law as to make his son subject to him. I joined her to him not to serve crime but to share marriage, so that she should show herself a coheir of favour, not a helper in crime. I am surprised at you, Herod, if that Alexander, who plotted against his father, still lives. I thought he had already paid the just penalty and should not have been put off: why should a man who has confessed to attempting his father's murder be kept alive any longer? But perhaps this too belonged to divine providence, that the judgement of both parents should condemn the man who, in you, violated the family devotion of both. I shall not refuse to act as avenger, though I was preparing to proclaim the vengeance already exacted. Nor do I except my daughter, whom I myself betrothed in that ill-fated marriage, relying upon you as guarantor. For I entrusted her not to her husband's character but to your faithfulness. Let her give an account of why she disregarded her guarantor and loved her husband. We must now judge them both. If you are resolute in exacting satisfaction for so great a grief, gird yourself. Father, set family devotion aside: it is indeed no task for fathers to wish for, but neither one to disregard. If family devotion softens you and nature bends you, let us exchange roles, so that I may act upon your son and you upon my child in the execution of this mutual service."

[I.40.10] Blustering in this manner, Archelaus swayed Herod and gradually softened his furious resolve, so that Herod entrusted himself to Archelaus as one who shared his suffering and his mind, and gave him the booklets Alexander had written to read. Attending to each

detail, Archelaus understood that they had been piled together from grief rather than founded on truth. With deep calculation he began gradually to diminish the odium of the attempted murder of a father and to transfer responsibility for the charges to those named, especially Pheroras. Thus, when he perceived that the king was not averse to his opinion, he said: “We must consider whether the young man has perhaps been assailed before you by the plots of so many wicked men, rather than you by the young man. For what reason had he to assail your life, when you had granted him the honour of kingship and reserved for him the right to reign and the hope of succession? Why should he seek what he already had, or how could he be ungrateful for such great gifts? What else would he achieve by your death but seek his own danger, which he could not fear while you lived but would fear once you were dead, from those very men by whom, even while under his father’s protection, he dreaded the destruction of his own life? That age lies open to deceit: it is readily deceived and circumvented by the plots of fraudulent men. Old age scarcely withstands cunning, and yet often even the prudence of the old is ensnared by the devices of deceivers. Therefore, if more mature experience has often been assailed, what wonder if a less mature age could not come to its own aid when it was pressed by throngs of conspirators?” Those men, then, were the disturbers of the royal house, the inciters of the young men, the sowers of discord. They had brought the young man to despair of his safety, so that he had indulged his anger, aimed at vengeance rather than acquittal, and yielded something to his agitation.

[I.40.11] With these words Herod had begun gradually to relent and soften his indignation towards Alexander, but to be moved more violently against Pheroras, since the four booklets portrayed him as the agent of every crime and architect of the whole scene. Seeing that the king had inclined his mind towards Archelaus and bestowed upon him above all others the favour of intimate friendship, Pheroras went to him, begging him to restore the king’s mind to reconciliation with him. But Archelaus said that he was entangled in very many bonds of crime, by which he was clearly proved to have plotted against the king and assailed the young man. There was no room for pardon unless, laying aside the cunning of denial, he did not hesitate to confess the charges to the brother who loved him and ask his forgiveness. Archelaus would not fail such a course with whatever efforts he could make.

[I.40.12] So, changing his clothes and bathed in tears, a pitiable sight, he clung to his brother’s feet, begged pardon and confessed his wickedness. He did not deny anything of which he was accused but acknowledged it all: madness had caused so great a fall, since excessive fury of love for the woman he cherished had blazed up within him. With Pheroras thus established as both accuser and witness of his own crimes, Archelaus, as though in reward for the fabrication of an argument that would serve his own purposes, entreated Herod to soften his anger out of regard for nature and forgive his brother, setting the right of nature above vengeance. Nor was it strange if, in very great kingdoms as in great bodies, some part often became inflamed: it should be treated with gentler medicines, not cut away. His own brother too had laid much graver plots against him, but for the sake of kinship he had remitted what was owed to his grief. The more he lightened the ungrateful man’s punishment, the more he aggravated his case.

[I.40.13] By adding these and similar arguments, he did indeed soften Herod into forgiving his brother, but himself remained seemingly implacable towards his son-in-law. Indeed, he threatened to tear his daughter away from him and raged with such violent indignation that Herod himself thought his son's offence against him sufficiently expiated. He begged the avenger of his injuries and himself intervened for his own accused son before his father-in-law, asking him to renew the marriage afresh. Archelaus persisted: Herod could join his daughter-in-law to anyone else he wished except Alexander, on whose account even his wife was discredited. By this device he impelled Herod much further, so that he thought his son would be restored to him if his marriage were not dissolved. Alexander dearly loved his wife, by whom he had also had children, sweet to their grandfather and dear to their parents. This would be the gift of a son restored to him, since to no small extent a good wife restrained her husband's errors or compensated by her attentiveness for the odium of his crimes. If she were torn away from him, her husband would have no remedy to keep him from rushing headlong into every wickedness. For criminal audacity was usually softened when checked by affection at home. At length, with difficulty, Archelaus relented, was himself reconciled to his son-in-law and reconciled his father to him. By this design he rescued his son-in-law from death, receiving his acquittal as a reward while pretending to condemn rather than intervene. Had he thought to plead for him, he would undoubtedly have obtained nothing. Archelaus added that Alexander ought to go to Rome to clear himself of what his father had suspected in him, since Archelaus himself had written everything to Caesar. I think this too was contrived, so that in this way, when Alexander had cleared himself, he might be commended to Caesar and the plots Antipater had prepared against his brothers might be exposed.

Chapter 41

Online text and commentary

[I.41.1] By this design the faction was dissolved and there was a change to joy. A banquet was renewed as a sign of the reconciliation achieved. Archelaus, its author, was presented with seventy talents, a golden seat adorned with gems and chosen eunuchs, with royal magnificence. A concubine named Pannychis was also given and accepted as a gift. At the king's prompting, his relatives likewise bestowed most splendid gifts upon Archelaus. Nor did any of his companions go without a gift: Herod bestowed very much upon all these men of his, according to each man's deserts. As Archelaus returned to his kingdom, Herod also accompanied him with his powerful men as far as the most splendid city in Syria, named Antioch.

[I.41.2] Alexander would have escaped had a man far more practised in devices than Archelaus not thrust himself into Judaea: a Laconian by birth named Eurycles, excessively greedy for wealth yet ready to disdain it as business required whenever the hope of gaining more shone forth. Indeed, not content with the resources of Laconia, he had set his mind on royal lavishness. Skilled in the hunt, he approached Herod with rich gifts, preparing the way for the most ample repayment. Although he obtained far more than he had offered, he was still not satisfied unless he became bloodstained and bought the king's favour through impious intrigues. Thus, in a manner and practice familiar to Greeks, by flattering the king

and praising everything about him—not only what had no claim to praise but even what was entangled in vice—he soon attained his most intimate friendship, so as to be chosen among the foremost confidants of his secrets. The privilege of his homeland also supported him, since the Jews regard the Spartans as brothers, joined to them by kinship of descent.

[I.41.3] Once he knew the vices of the royal house, the father's suspicious mind and the brothers' hatred of one another, he used novel devices to pretend he was dear to everyone and was regarded as faithful to each. But he shaped his efforts according to the king's disposition or the value of gifts, so as to be more closely attached to Antipater and circumvent Alexander by cunning and plots. With a show of friendship he exasperated both: the kingdom was owed to the one by the privilege of age, while the other, endowed with the nobility of his maternal line, was rightly superior and had no equal partnership with the offspring of the vilest debauchery. Captivated by these words as a younger man, delighting in what was said to him without weighing what in turn was being fabricated about him before Antipater, Alexander poured himself out to Antipater's hireling and his own betrayer. With an unsteady disposition and incautious affection, he opened his mind, complaining that his father was the author of his troubles. He had taken his mother from him and dishonoured the kingdom, which he wished to divert from Alexander although it was owed to him through his grandfather and the distinctions of his ancient lineage. The legitimate sons were being defrauded of their right of succession, and a bastard preferred as the reward for illicit intercourse. But God's judgements would not long remain still: the man who had killed an innocent wife would himself soon be deprived of the rule he had gained through his wife. The Laconian conveyed these things to Antipater without delay, having also deceived Aristobulus into being caught in the snares of the same complaint. For a price, he brought them before the king in an accumulated heap, saying that he could not keep silent about so monstrous a deed and that, in return for the gift of hospitality, he was repaying the benefit of the light of life, which the sons were proceeding to take away. Had he himself not called them back by pretending to offer more faithful counsel, their father would long since have been killed by Alexander's sword and the kingdom left vacant for unworthy heirs. Nor did Alexander feel a religious scruple about the atrocity of killing his father, since he considered it the greatest crime that they still held their grandfather's and mother's deaths unavenged. The complaints of the slain confronted and pressed him, demanding that they avenge so terrible a deed: funeral offerings for the slain were required of him; blood was demanded. Their succession ought not to be contaminated by his receiving the kingdom from the man who had killed their forebears. He would renew the proceedings before Caesar, not with the same reverence as before, but so that Caesar himself might learn all the king's secrets: wealth acquired through blood and a province undermined. He would recall his grandfather from the underworld and set forth his mother's most bitter murder, so that an outsider might be appointed successor to the kingdom.

[I.41.4] Eurycles had roused the king, but Antipater, thinking little of one man's report, also suborned other accusers against his brothers. They were to say that a conversation had taken place with Jucundus and Tyrannus, former commanders of the cavalry, and that plots had been laid against the king out of grief at their removal: danger was at his neck unless he took precautions quickly. Herod did not delay: he had them seized at once and interrogated them

severely, but they were found to have confessed nothing of the charges. Since such grave things could be fabricated with impunity before a man who professed himself an avenger of crimes but disregarded false accusations, there was no lack of people to devise plots of this kind, believing they would be more acceptable to the father. For a letter was also produced as though sent by Alexander and Aristobulus to the commander of a fortress, asking him to allow them to take refuge there after the king had been killed, until they could defend themselves with arms against their pursuers and prepare protection with other resources. The fortress commander was tortured and confessed nothing.

[I.41.5] Nevertheless, although no evidence of the intended crime existed, Alexander and Aristobulus were placed in custody as though guilty. Eurycles was rewarded with fifty talents and regarded as the author of the king's safety and life.

[I.41.6] It is fitting not to pass over the Coan either. He had crossed to Judaea in Eurycles's time and was one of Alexander's most faithful friends. Thinking that he knew of Alexander's attempts, the king considered that he should be questioned about whether what the Spartan had disclosed about the young men agreed with the truth. But, pledging an oath, he gave assurance that he knew nothing of the kind about them; yet it did the young men no good. Herod put an end to the questioning, lest the man, if questioned more severely, diminish the odium of the denunciation and undo Eurycles's deceit by denying it. Thus he was excluded by Herod as though unworthy of belief. For the good father gladly heard his sons accused but did not allow them to be defended; he delighted when they were assailed and took offence when they were cleared. The Spartan, however, enriched by royal rewards, paid the price of his false accusations once he reached Achaea.

[I.41.7] Salome could not clear herself of having agreed to marry Syllaeus the Arab. But when she betrayed her son-in-law's confidential warning to look to her own safety and escape her brother's agitation, since she was being accused on suspicion of reporting the king's plans to the Arab in the hope of their future union, she obtained pardon for her offence and turned the entire storm of royal savagery upon the young men. Submerged in that final and inescapable shipwreck, they paid the penalty. They were therefore bound, and, what was harder for them than chains, the brothers were separated from one another. Volumnius, master of the soldiers, and Olympus, a man among the king's friends, were sent to accuse them before Caesar. Although offended that a father sought the punishment of his sons, Caesar nevertheless thought a father should not be denied authority over his children and granted him licence. But he added advice: it would be better to assemble a council of the king's relatives and the provincial governors, and for the inquiry to proceed by their common judgement as to whether the sons had laid any plots against their father. If they were proved to have attempted their father's murder, they should be put to death; but if accused of flight or lighter offences, the punishment should be more moderate.

[I.41.8] Granted this power to kill his own children, but on condition of a trial and with an admonition to moderation, Herod immediately hastened to the city of Berytus, which Caesar had prescribed for holding the trial. The provincial governors assembled in accordance with the instructions sent to them by the Roman ruler Caesar. Saturninus and the legates took their seats, among them the procurator Volumnius, followed by the king's relatives and

friends, Salome and Pheroras too, and the leading men of Syria. Archelaus alone, king of Cappadocia, was excluded, charged with suspect favour towards his son-in-law, while the young men's accusers and those who plotted against them constituted the court. But what semblance of a trial was there, when the accused were not allowed to appear for themselves and were accused in their absence? For Herod perceived that if they were merely seen, they would be acquitted, human nature being inclined to pity, especially where there was a privileged claim upon natural affection. Moreover, if Alexander were allowed any opportunity of defence, he would easily demolish the charges.

[I.41.9] Thus, with them banished to a village of the Sidonians, the accusation was directed against them as though present. Their father charged them with plots laid against him; no proof was offered, no evidence of attempts. The accuser faltered, although no one contradicted him. Unsupported on every side, he gathered together kinds of insult to arouse odium, so that those who sat in judgement might consider them graver than death. But no one discussed them, no one dared examine what was alleged by a father and commanded by a king. The appearance of family devotion prejudged the case; the right of power terrified them. He asked their opinions, confident of victory, unaware that in a trial of this kind the victor was more wretched than those so bitterly condemned. Saturninus condemned the young men because nothing else was permitted, but moderated his sentence, declaring that care should be taken lest, if two of the three brothers were killed, the death of the two be attributed to the third. Timidly, indeed, but he had stated the cause: that brother was the author of his brothers' danger. A few out of many followed him. Volumnius, however, muttered a deadly judgement, and after him everyone, weighing what the king wanted with such a man to lead them, pronounced a sentence of death, with differing feelings indeed but the same outcome. Flattery had extorted it from some, hatred instilled it in others: either they sought the king's favour, or they wished the cruelty of a murderer of his own children to be visited with a graver punishment, since in his victory he would have won so bitter a triumph over himself. Yet no one recoiled as at an actual deed and pronounced judgement as though moved by it. For it was the semblance of a stage, not the discipline of a court, to condemn absent men, to condemn without witness or informer, solely by the privilege of nature, which was usually directed towards safety rather than danger. All Syria and all Judaea were stunned, and with minds aghast awaited the end of so great a tragedy. For, although Herod's cruelty was known, no one could believe that he would persist to the point of killing his own children. But in him the savage force of his mind was restrained by neither sea nor land. Thus, as though celebrating a triumph, he dragged his sons from place to place, going to the illustrious city of Tyre and from there crossing by ship to Caesarea, carrying about the wretched spectacle of the murder of his own children, until some pretext could be found for their most bitter death.

[I.41.10] The whole army was moved, but fear restrained their indignation. There was in the royal army a man of long service named Tiro, who had a son attached to Alexander. He was a most indulgent father and for that reason dear to his child, since family devotion has a certain universal charm and especially draws one's own people to love. He was also more inclined in his attachment to the king's young sons because they loved his son. Overcome by indignation beyond measure and troubled in mind, he began to cry out that justice was being

oppressed, truth excluded, religion abolished, the rights of kinship confounded and natural affection overwhelmed by injustices. At last, advancing into the king's very presence, he charged him to his face with being wretched for thinking that the most wicked men should be believed against his sons. Pheroras and Salome were chosen as counsellors: what faithfulness could come from those who knew that they had very often been condemned to death by the king? What else were they doing but looking to vengeance, so that, bereft of suitable successors, he would incline towards the one weaker than the others, who could easily be removed? The royal army itself would pursue with hatred the man to whom the death of his two brothers had been paid. There was no one untouched by pity for innocent youth. Moreover, many of the commanders were no longer restraining their indignation but making it known.

[I.41.11] After giving their names, he finished speaking. They were immediately seized with Tiro. Tryphon, one of the servants of the royal palace, who possessed the skill and practice of a barber, suddenly made a disclosure against himself through some foolish impulse. He asserted that Tiro had devised a plan and persuaded him to press his razor into Herod's throat until he killed him while shaving his beard as usual. It would bring him a very great reward, which Tiro promised from Alexander's gifts. Tiro was brought forward with his son, and the informer was interrogated at the same time. They denied the charge, while the informer offered nothing further. Since there was no manifest assurance of the facts, no supporting argument and no indication to serve as proof, Tiro was ordered to be tortured more violently. Then his son, pitying his father's sufferings, promised to disclose everything if his father's safety were granted him. When the king promised pardon, he declared that his father had prepared the king's murder at Alexander's instigation. Many thought this had been contrived for the occasion to save Tiro through such a disclosure by his child; others said it had been given as the truth. But Herod adjudged the doubtful as certain, as though afraid that the opportunity to murder his own children might escape him.

[I.41.12] He therefore summoned the people and assembled the commanders, poured forth his complaint about the plots discovered with the gravest agitation, and roused the populace to kill them. There Tiro, his son and the barber were killed with stones and clubs.

Chapter 42

Online text and commentary

[I.42.1] Alexander and Aristobulus too were sent to the city of Sebaste, which was not far from the city of Caesarea, and strangled at the king's command. Such was the end of Mariamne's sons.

[I.42.2] Antipater did not rejoice long in their death. With them removed, he flattered himself that his succession was beyond doubt; but the grave hatred of the whole nation soon blazed against him, since it was plain to everyone that his brothers had fallen through his intrigue. No small fear also followed as he considered how numerous the offspring of the slain grew day by day. Alexander had left his sons Tigranes and Alexander, born to him by Glaphyra; Aristobulus was survived by Herod, Agrippa and Aristobulus, born of Berenice, Salome's daughter, and by two daughters, Herodias and Mariamne, whom their sex would not hinder

and desire for the kingdom would stir. Terrified by these things, Antipater placed his hope in fraud and cunning and tried to bind each man to himself more and more with gifts and presents, even attempting to buy the favour of Caesar's friends and household. But, on the contrary, even affairs at home turned against him. For, with the passage of time, the king gradually softened towards his grandchildren born to Alexander and Aristobulus and displayed remorse for his deed, pitying those whose parents he had killed.

[I.42.3] Indeed, one day he gathered his friends and relatives and, his face bathed in tears, said to them: "I see my years advancing, and I cannot look without tears upon these little ones, the offspring of unhappy fathers, whose grief I have caused. Let me not leave them in a worse condition than that in which I took away their parents. Some affliction robbed me of their fathers, but nature and pity commend these children to me more and more: the one because they are my grandchildren, the other because they are bereft of their parents. My sons may have wronged their father: what have my grandchildren done to their grandfather? I have been an unhappy enough father; I ought to be a more attentive grandfather. I shall try to provide for my grandchildren after my death. If only I had also provided for myself in my sons! But the deceit of our common enemy and adversary may have crept upon them. We must take care that their perils do not involve these children too, and that I have not at one stroke both lost my sons and struck down my grandchildren. Let us provide defenders for those from whom we took them away. I shall therefore betroth your daughter, Pheroras, to the elder of Alexander's sons, and appoint you as his father; and Aristobulus's daughter to your son, Antipater, so that in this way you may become a father to the orphan girl. Her sister too shall marry my Herod, born to me by Mariamme, Hyrcanus's daughter. This," he said, "is my decision: that the successive generations of my posterity should be joined to one another by marriage, so that none may be suspect to another and I myself may look upon my grandchildren with more tranquil eyes than I looked upon their parents."

[I.42.4] With these words he joined the right hands of those mentioned and, kissing each, burst into tears. While the others rejoiced, Antipater took this so hard that he immediately betrayed his grief even in his face. No small anxiety gripped him as he saw that Alexander's sons had stronger support than the others, backed as they were by King Archelaus and Pheroras, who held the tetrarchy. He perceived that hatred of himself was growing, while pity supported the grandchildren.

[I.42.5] Nor could he receive Aristobulus's daughter into his house, lest the continual sight of her, evidence of his crime, offend him. He did not dare approach his father, lest he provoke a man susceptible to every suspicion by suggesting that the bonds of the agreed marriages should be dissolved. Yet he subtly ventured to beg his father to look to his interests, so that he should not be exposed, powerless, with the bare name of kingship, against the resources of two powerful men, a king and a tetrarch. He should at least support the honour he thought fit to confer upon his son, so that the appearance of kingship should not pass to Antipater and its strength to them. Nor did he suspect only the sons of Alexander and Aristobulus: he thought everyone stood in his way who, born of Herod's different wives, seemed even in silence to lay claim to the succession to the kingdom. They were numerous. For nine women enjoyed marriage to the king, of whom only two were childless; the others had offspring.

Antipater raised up his mother Dosis, Herod his mother Mariamme. Antipas and Archelaus were the sons of Malthace, a Samaritan woman, and she also had a daughter, Olympias, who was joined to Josephus in lawful marriage. Cleopatra of Jerusalem too had borne Herod and Philip to Herod, and Pallas had borne Phasael. The king also had other daughters, Roxane and Salome, whose mothers were respectively Phaedra and Elpis. The full sisters of Alexander and Aristobulus, whom Mariamne had borne to Herod, also survived, as we mentioned above.

[I.42.6] Fearing Herod's numerous offspring, therefore, Antipater finally succeeded, though with difficulty, in having Aristobulus's daughter joined to himself and his own son to the daughter of his paternal uncle Pheroras. At his first attempts the king had been greatly moved that he should begrudge the marriage alliances arranged for the grandchildren bereft of their father's help. Such was his influence through flattery that he dissolved the agreed marriages.

[I.42.7] Salome, by contrast, when she wished to marry Syllaeus, could not obtain this from her brother even with the support of Livia, Caesar's wife, but was unwillingly married to a certain Alexander, one of the king's friends.

[I.42.8] With the king's arrangements overturned, therefore, Antipater exulted in spirit as a man who had provided for himself as he wished, and surpassed everyone in cunning. Yet he could in no way suppress the hatred against him; instead he inflamed it, since he sought to secure protection for himself through terror.

[I.42.9] He had attached his father's brother Pheroras to himself as a fellow worker in his intrigues. Not long afterwards Herod expelled Pheroras from his house when he refused to be torn from his own wife, towards whom Herod was particularly hostile because of the injuries that woman had inflicted upon his wife Dosis. Pheroras, however, embraced the affront and withdrew to his own territory, over which he presided as tetrarch, firmly resolved never to return to Herod while Herod lived. Indeed, even when he learnt that Herod was afflicted by a grave illness and repeatedly begging him to come, since the king thought he had certain things to entrust to him as a dying man, Pheroras did not think him worth visiting. Although struck by this injury, when the king recovered from his illness against expectation, he nevertheless came to Pheroras with a brother's affection on learning that he was ill. He shared his suffering attentively, and, when he died, conveyed him to Jerusalem and conducted his funeral with much weeping and splendid pomp. Yet these signs of attentive love did not dispel the opinion that he had attacked him with poison. Such was his cruelty even towards his own family. Nor was it difficult to believe that a man who had killed his sons could have killed his brother.

Chapter 43

Online text and commentary

[I.43.1] Thus one of the killers of Alexander and Aristobulus found this end to his wickedness. Beginning with him, punishment passed to Antipater, the author of the crime. For Herod was stirred by the complaints of the freedmen, who asserted that their patron had been killed with poison. In his more diligent inquiries he learnt that Pheroras had received from his wife a drink made from Arabian juices, thought to be a love potion, and that it had been poison, supplied through Syllaeus's efforts and immediately turned to destruction. He therefore proceeded to interrogate very many people.

[I.43.2] Hence one of the slave girls cried out under torture that almighty God should transfer every torment to Antipater's mother, the director of all the crimes. Through her, Antipater and Pheroras had held secret meetings day and night and drunk to intoxication, so that on returning from the king's banquet they drank the whole night through.

[I.43.3] It was rightly suspected that this was neither idle nor free from an attempt at conspiracy, especially since the slaves and servants had been sent away. Such prolonged gatherings were a great bond of association and an indication of conspiracy, all the more suspicious to kings in the secrecy of solitude and silence of night. There it had been arranged that Antipater should go to Rome and Pheroras to Perea. They were revealed to have been accustomed to discuss this frequently with one another, because after Alexander and Aristobulus Herod would turn to killing them. Wretched men that they were to have thought Herod hated his sons' designs against their father: he was pursuing heirs to the kingdom. Those removed were not rivals for power but partners in misery; all the danger and hatred had passed to themselves. He would not spare even women's sex, since he had not spared his beloved Mariamne or the children born of her. They had no remedy except to withdraw somewhere further away, so as to escape the fury of so great a beast at least by flight. Frequent complaints by Antipater to his mother were added: he lamented that he burned under the odium of the royal succession, since the savagery of kingship had fallen chiefly upon himself, so that he could no longer endure it. Devoted to the most abject services, he was pressed by the utmost dangers. Not only had the right to reign been lost to him, but the course of the years of his life had also run out. He was of more mature age, his head already grey, while his father grew young again. It was vain to hope for the inheritance of a man who might perhaps be preserved long enough even to outlive him. What advantage would the succession bring him as an aged heir, when the numerous offspring of Alexander and Aristobulus sprang up before him like a hydra whose severed heads grew again? His father's will had deprived him even of the common right: given the appearance of kingship, which he would hold temporarily as a deputy, he could appoint none of his sons to succeed to his rule but would be obliged to hand the kingdom over to Herod, Mariamme's son. Thus he had been given the appearance of kingship to endanger him, not to benefit him, making him suspect to his predecessor and burdensome to his successor. Finally, the king himself, vigorous in his prolonged old age and intent upon slaughtering his own family, was the executor of his own will, so that no one should survive who could succeed. He was borne by grave hatred against his sons and no less against his brother: he had given Antipater a hundred talents not to

speak with his uncle. Pheroras had replied: “For in what have we injured him? Am I too a successor?” Antipater was said to have answered that Herod had no grounds for offence but fabricated them himself. He was a savage beast, not sated even by deaths, who could not endure any love remaining between relatives. “If only, with everything lost, we could escape him stripped of everything but our lives! But that is impossible.” Therefore they needed secret conversations for the present. A time would come when they would employ manly vigour of mind and alertness of judgement, and the service of an avenging right hand.

[I.43.4] These answers were given by slaves under torture, and Herod believed them, especially because he had spoken of the hundred talents to Antipater alone and no intermediary had been present at their conversation. Ablaze with indignation, he therefore dragged very many, including the innocent, to torture, lest any of the guilty be left behind.

[I.43.5] Antipater the Samaritan was summoned for torture because he was Antipater’s procurator, and was tormented in various ways. The interrogation revealed that poison had been sent from Egypt through a certain Antiphilus, a companion, and that he had given it to Antipater’s friend Theudion, through whom it was delivered to Pheroras. The king’s son Antipater had entrusted Pheroras with carrying out the deed: while he himself was in the city of Rome, his father Herod was to be killed, so that at that time no suspicion of the murder would fall upon the absent man. But Pheroras had entrusted the poison he received to his own wife for the time being. A second accusation of poisoning thus returned against Pheroras’s wife. The king immediately ordered her to come and bring the poison. The woman went out as though to bring what was requested, and threw herself from the top of the buildings to escape the burden of the double charge and forestall disclosure of the matter and the bitterness of interrogation by her death. But since deadly vengeance for the intended murder of his father was being hastened for Antipater, she did not fall on the crown of her head, which would readily have killed her, but landed on another part of her body, so that death was postponed. Nevertheless, the woman was unconscious and stunned, since she had fallen from a high place. Herod ordered that she be given a little time to recover until she came to herself, and promised pardon if she would disclose the sequence of events plainly. It was not for nothing that she had thrown herself down: conscious of a great crime, she had sought a shorter way through punishment. If she confessed, all her crimes would go unpunished; if she denied them, torments would be heaped upon her and even burial denied.

[I.43.6] When she had recovered a little, she said: “For whose sake should I still keep silent about these secrets, now that Pheroras is dead? To him I owed faithfulness in keeping silent, and for his sake I would not have refused torments had they been necessary. But he is now free from torture, and, if correction of an error may win pardon, free from guilt. What, then, compels me to wrap truth in lies? Or should I do so to comply with Antipater’s wishes? Am I to spare him and not myself? A fine reward indeed we owe the man who has brought us all to these torments through his crimes! Hear me, king, with God presiding, who alone is the judge of my truthfulness, for I have resolved to conceal nothing. Hear me, I say, but first recall how you sat weeping beside your brother in his peril and fulfilled every duty of devoted brotherhood towards Pheroras. Moved by these things, as soon as you departed he called me back to him and said: ‘Woman, I have strayed no little distance from affection and concern

for my brother. I hated one who loved me so, and wished to kill one so unable to bear grief at my peril. He cannot bear a death that comes by chance, though I was pressing an undeserved death upon him. I was deceived, I confess, by Antipater's cunning, but I shall pay the price of his design. Quickly bring the poison you have, which he left for me, and pour it out before my eyes, so that at least I may not carry a murderous intention against my kin to the underworld. Let repentance be a correction of what it was criminal to prepare. Quickly, I say, woman, so that I may at least forestall death, since I could not forestall guilt.' Then I brought the poison and emptied it before him. Yet I kept a little of it for myself, since I feared you, so that, if it were disclosed, there would be a remedy: poison prepared for that use."

[I.43.7] With these words she produced the box containing the poison that remained. Antiphilus's mother and his brother were subjected to interrogation. They confessed that Antiphilus had brought the box full of poison from Egypt, having received it from his brother, who was living in Alexandria as a physician. Mariamme too was discovered to have known of the plots being prepared against her husband, and this was made plain by her brothers' confessions under torture. Hence the younger Herod paid the price of his mother's audacity: his father, who had appointed him to follow Antipater in the succession to the kingdom, thought he should be erased from the will. This was indeed no small error on the elder Herod's part, to punish one person for another's discovered crime; yet the younger Herod's punishment was not unjust either. For it seems that divine foresight provided for his exclusion from kingship, not yet as deserved by his deed but as the price of his future wickedness. For who could have endured him as king, when as tetrarch he was so insolent as to be intolerable?

[I.43.8] Another kind of poison was also added, which Antipater's freedman Bathyllus brought to Pheroras and his wife, compounded from the juices of serpents and the venom of asps, so that if the first had not proved strong enough to kill Herod, they could use the second.

Chapter 44

Online text and commentary

[I.44.1] Letters fabricated against his brothers Archelaus and Philip were also found. These were sons of the king being educated in Rome. Antipater assailed them especially because he saw that they possessed no small wisdom and that the king's fatherly affection inclined towards them; indeed, he had summoned them by letter to return home sooner. Antipater therefore thought that they stood in the way of his interests, and set to work with his own stratagems, so that by pretending to place his hopes in the young men he might conceal all the efforts of his faction. He therefore composed letters in the names of powerful men whom he had drawn into his friendship while in Rome, and also paid others to write that the young men were assailing their father with hostile hatred and lamenting the deaths of Alexander and Aristobulus with excessive complaint.

[I.44.2] As he secretly put letters of this kind before his father through the courtiers who served his crime, he used the same cunning as before to pretend to plead for his brothers, so as to weave the impious murder of his kin beneath the pretended protection of family devotion. When all these things were brought forward, the interrogations revealed most

clearly that his father's life had been assailed, and the letters that his brothers' deaths had been sought. It was therefore decided to exact punishment from the author, whose later false accusation had betrayed that he pursued his brothers as rivals for the lawful succession, not as would-be murderers of their father: he was not defending his father but preventing anyone from sharing his kingdom. Meanwhile, although seven months elapsed between the evidence of his crimes and Antipater's return, no indication of events became known to him, so fiercely did everyone's hatred burn against him. Thus, knowing nothing of it all, he wrote from the city of Rome that he would soon be there and had been dismissed by Caesar with the highest honour.

[I.44.3] Herod replied to this letter that he ought to hasten back, assured of his father's affection. Not only had it diminished in no way through his absence, but so much favour had been added that for his sake his mother's offence would be lessened. For, after discovering her complicity in her son's devices, he had again expelled her from his house, stripped of the gains of royal generosity. He wrote as though he would relent in his indignation towards her, fearing that Antipater, on learning of his mother's expulsion, would grow suspicious and take precautions. On reaching Tarentum, Antipater first learnt of Pheroras's death and there mourned greatly. Some attributed this to family devotion, thinking he could not bear the grief of his uncle's death. But he was groaning at the loss of the agent of his attempted murder of his father. Not only had the preparation of the crime failed; the poison had also remained, and this terrified him, lest it somehow come to the king's knowledge and Herod expose the scene of the crime. He therefore crossed to the harbour of Caesarea, by no means free from graver care and anxiety, since his mother's expulsion gave no small prejudgement against her condemned offspring. But his friends urged him on, thinking that whatever served Antipater's interests should take second place to their longing for their homeland. Having also observed his disposition, by which he had been accustomed readily to sway his father through his counsels even when estranged from favour towards him, they urged him to present himself all the sooner to his father and the kingdom destined for him. No one would dare oppose him when he was present; only the opportunity of his absence had smiled upon them, so that they thought the king's mind could be turned away from him. He should therefore forestall this quickly, lest by delaying he either offend a father who longed for him or further embitter a suspicious one by betraying his own lack of confidence. Thus he trusted those who advised what they wanted rather than what he needed.

[I.44.4] But when he entered the harbour and looked about without seeing anyone coming to meet him, he sensed that his presence was being shunned like a plague: amid the greatest throng there was the greatest solitude. No one dared meet him, some through fear, others through aversion, for by then hatred too had gained the authority to cease concealing itself. He began to reckon his crimes within himself and to be troubled by the goads of conscience. No place of flight or means of escape remained to him; surrounded as though by nets, he was held captive. He drew all his confidence from shamelessness, concealing everything so as to present himself unexpectedly to his father, rush into his embrace and discharge the duties of family devotion.

[I.44.5] But his father stretched out his hands to push him away as he pressed forward and turned his head aside lest he be touched by the kiss of a would-be murderer of his father. He exclaimed that this too belonged to the madness of such a man: “To seek an embrace when you know yourself to be hated, to fill your father with horror of you and wrench away the sweetness of life by contact with your guilty body! Do not therefore touch or taint the man you have criminally assailed. First at least clear yourself, if you can; refute what has been discovered. I shall not shun a trial or allow you to be denied a hearing, nor shall I take upon myself the examination of your case, lest I leave you an opportunity for argument. Varus is conveniently here: prepare your defence before him. There is no room for delay. Tomorrow, though endowed with cunning and fraud, you have the opportunity to clear yourself.” Stupefied by fear of so great an outburst, Antipater dared answer nothing, nor could he. He went outside and wavered in spirit, since he had learnt nothing at all of what had happened and been disclosed before the king. His mother and wife later came to him and revealed everything. On learning it, he began to collect himself and prepare in his mind the means by which he would meet the accusation and lessen the offences.

[I.44.6] The next day all the relatives assembled, and Antipater’s friends were present at the examination. Everyone who had made various disclosures about Antipater was ordered to be brought in. Letters from his mother were also read, in which she had written to her son to let him know that the scene of their crimes had been betrayed to his father. He should by no means come unless some force were summoned from Caesar to surround him with its protection. Assailed by the confessions of so many, he should not entrust himself to judgement but secure himself with arms. With these things added to the earlier evidence, Antipater entered, threw himself at his father’s feet and begged him not to regard him as condemned in advance. He was confident that, if granted a hearing, he would be free of the charge, if his father wished it.

[I.44.7] His father ordered him to be silent and spoke before him in this manner: “I am certain enough that Antipater’s wickedness can seem pardonable to no just man, but I think I am all the more burdened before you, Varus. For I fear that you may hate me too for having fathered sons who would murder their father, whom not even their father could spare, although in this too I deserve pity rather, because I loved them even as they were. But I shall say nothing of those whom I myself exasperated and whose just allegations against this man I rejected. For they had no grounds for grief against me except that Antipater was preferred to them and received the privilege of sharing kingship, although he had not been born into it. I thought, however, that I was taking an elder son to protect the younger ones, but I brought in an enemy who would envy the nobler, provoke the young, deceive the weak and betray the unwary. I do not deny that they fell, but they should have been excused rather than pressed. Antipater took them from me too; this man compelled them too to plot against me. I grieved, I confess, that those to whom I had given the hope of kingship and reserved the succession devised wicked things against me. But in me they hated Antipater, not their father. Thus they died to their father’s grief and Antipater’s profit. Do you ask, Varus, who killed them? Learn whom their death benefited. The house was emptied for a stepmother’s son; the palace, which had had many successors, lay open for one man to succeed. Nor were his bloodstained spirit and impious mind satisfied by his brothers’ deaths. When he no longer

had brothers to hate, he pursued his father. I reflect within myself: I, who had secured his inheritance, seemed myself to live too long to a man disgusted with his predecessor. I taught him what to want. Having removed his rivals for the succession, I was not tolerated when I delayed him. He would not wait for the kingdom but must obtain it by his father's murder. He repaid me for taking him in when he had been cast out and preferring him to men of nobler birth. For upon which of them did I confer as much as upon him? While still alive, I yielded power to him and openly designated him heir in my will, something usually ruinous to kings: that someone should know he will succeed. I granted him fifty talents in revenues, gave him three hundred when he left for Rome, commended him to Caesar as though my only son, and kept nothing for myself for which I should fear a son who would murder his father. But this armed him all the more for his father's murder, that he saw himself superior. What crime so great had his brothers committed, whom he drove to death? What evidence of this kind was discovered against them, comparable to what is found against him? Yet the would-be murderer of his father dares interrupt and clamour, and tries to wrap the truth in cunning. Beware, Varus, I warn you, beware his feigned tears and groans artfully contrived, wrung from no grief. This is the man who robbed me of the affection of family devotion, warning me in fabricated fear to guard against Alexander. He asserted that very many minds agreed with Alexander's and that I should not rashly entrust my presence to everyone. He pretended to look about at everything, to escort me to bed, to investigate and examine each man. This was the dispenser of my sleep, the minister of my security, in whom I placed my consolation and through whose services I lightened my grief for the slain. I thought he would restore them to me too, remove my sorrow and hold family devotion before me. This was my protector, to whom I entrusted the guarding of my aged body. I do not know how I am alive, how I escaped so great a conspirator, with what allurements he deceived me, with what frauds he held me bound, so that I trusted myself to the one man against whom alone I should have guarded. It is incredible to me that I escaped. I do not seem to myself to be alive; I think it a dream. For who would believe either that he could become so ungrateful, when I had entrusted him with every power over me, or that I could escape if Antipater were unwilling? Yet I thought favour had made me safer. But what accursed misfortune is mine, that it makes those I have loved more rise against me! I lament the affliction of my house, Varus, I weep for its solitude, I groan at the force of so great a grief. Yet such is the bitterness of the crime of murdering a father that I shall allow no one to escape me who has thirsted for my blood, even if evidence of intended murder of their father is brought forth against all my sons."

[I.44.8] As he said these things, indignation and grief together cut off his voice. Antipater immediately raised his head, for he lay at his father's feet as though struck and pierced by a grave wound. Not thinking to rise, he said: "You indeed accuse me in anger, father, but I have no greater defence than the testimony of your accusation: I have always guarded your safety. In your desire to accuse, therefore, you have supplied a defence for me. For how am I a would-be murderer of my father when you yourself acknowledge me as your protector? Or how am I circumspect and cunning if, as you allege, I devised my father's murder, when it is the utmost folly to have contemplated what both is execrable among human beings and cannot go unpunished before God? At least my brothers' example could have taught me that there would be no escape from so great a crime, since a crime of this kind finds no hiding

place and evades no punishment: they too paid the penalty for such great ill will towards you. But some envy, as you say, may have impelled them to murder their father, because they saw me preferred to themselves. The nobility of their maternal line gave them the spirit to claim the kingdom as owed to them by succession from their mother and demand it back as though taken from them by you. What like this was there in me, who knew only to hope for the kingdom from you, seek your judgement and please you alone? What was there to impel me to dare anything against your life? Desire for the kingdom? But I was reigning. Suspicion of hatred? But I was loved. Grief at an injury? But I was preferred. If only fear of my preferment armed them to murder their father, I am acquitted, since those preferred know to hate the murder of a father, not to contemplate it. Unless perhaps some fear of you compelled me; yet, as your voice testifies for me, I knew only to fear for you. For what should I fear for myself, who was the minister of your security and dispenser of your rest? Or did lack of money and poverty compel me, as they commonly persuade the needy to brigandage? But you had given enough to abound not only for the present but for all time, and had sent me rich to Rome, so that the kings of kings declared that pre-eminence in rule lay with them, not pre-eminence in wealth. Indeed, I won for you that Fabatus, a director of Roman affairs and an intimate of Caesar. Though Syllaeus had courted him with immense sums to attack you, I changed him so that he became your defender and the betrayer of the man soliciting him. Through whom else, father, were those plotting against your life discovered? How then am I a would-be murderer of my father, who discovered your bodyguard Corinthus in hiding, removed him as he plotted and brought him from denial to confession? I could have avoided contemplating my father's murder and yet enjoyed its fruits, had I kept silent. But even if I had the savagery of beasts and the fury of ferocious wild creatures, I could nevertheless have been tamed by such great benefits from you, so as to place no help except in the support of your safety. For everything you gave, I could at least repay you with love alone, protect you with my body and, if it were possible, enclose you within my inmost entrails. You had preferred me, less noble in maternal descent, to sons of nobler birth; you had also recalled my mother, an exile from the kingdom, into the kingdom, and now held me as a partner in your rule rather than a successor. Wretched man that I am, upon whom your generosity poured so many good things as to kindle envy! Most foolish man that I am, to have left you, father, if an opportunity was given to envy and power to conspirators! For, while I lingered long for your safety, I betrayed my own, and yet I have nothing to impute to myself. You ordered me to depart, father. For you I was abroad, father, lest Syllaeus deceive your old age, strip you of the kingdom while you lived and assail your safety before Caesar. Rome is my witness to family devotion; Caesar too, guardian of the world, censor of all and judge of my heart, was accustomed to call me a lover of my father. Bear witness, Caesar, to what I said of my father before you, before whom alone I could have harmed him. Bear witness for me, I say, you who had pronounced upon others and thought the murder of a father should be investigated, not disregarded. If only your presence would favour me! But you are absent and far away, and without you I am condemned by my father. Yet though absent, you are present in your letters. I offer your writings, which would-be murderers of their fathers usually fear; I carry your letter, which those who wish such murder not to remain hidden usually produce. Receive Caesar's letter, father: let the man who recently avenged you instruct you himself. Receive Caesar's writings, stronger than every argument. You recently used them for

vengeance: use them now for safety. I bring these written characters as witnesses to my innocence. That right hand never deceived you; that right hand of Caesar placed the diadem upon you, it did not take it away. That mind of Caesar restored to you the kingdom you had cast aside. Caesar could have hated me first if he had found me like my brothers, but he examined me and pronounced me an interpreter of family devotion. Had I not been in Rome, Syllaeus would have won. To him I am condemned today; to him I, wretched man, pay the penalty. Remember, father, that I did not sail willingly. I already saw the pit of the conspirators being prepared for me, yet I preferred, father, that I should be endangered rather than you. Nor do I shudder at the danger to my life, but I grieve, father, to be endangered before you as though your enemy. Yet I am endangered if even Caesar's testimonies are endangered before you: these, then, are the proofs I use in my defence. I do not appeal to Caesar as a man awaiting a hearing, but implore him as one already acquitted. If you think a trial must be held, here I am, father: I came to you after Caesar; I hastened to you from Caesar. If only I had never gone anywhere away from you! But you, father, unknowingly exposed me to dangers by ordering me to go. I am here, father, and I do not think the truth about your safety should be sought lightly from witnesses of lower standing. Let neither those who can fear torments nor those who can despise them prejudge the case. Scripture says, 'Every human being is a liar.' I offer the incorruptible testimonies of the elements. I come to you over seas and lands, never having suffered anything. Had I been guilty of attempting my father's murder, I ought not to have escaped. Let heaven, which did not strike me with lightning, acquit me before you, father; the sea, which did not drown me; the earth, which did not swallow me. Through these I come to you safe, father, although even those who are not would-be murderers of their fathers often fail to escape them. The earth swallowed Dathan and Abiram in its yawning chasm, yet they had not assailed the father who begot them. The earth suspended Absalom as he fled in the branches of its tree, lest he reach his father; had he reached him, he would have escaped. I have come to you and am still endangered. David avenged the son who would have murdered him because he could not save him. I do not ask to be avenged upon my enemies and false accusers by summoning them to torture. Let them escape the penalty for false accusation. I ask one thing, father: do not trust other people's torments; inquire from me myself against myself. Hang up your accused: let the interrogation of truth proceed into my entrails, let the cords of interrogation descend into my body and its inner chambers, let the blood flow that is accustomed to cry out against the murder of a father, let fires be brought upon the guilty limbs. Why hesitate, father? If you spare me, you pronounce me innocent; if you refrain from torture, you acquit me of the crime. A man thought worthy of a simple death is no murderer of his father. Or if you spare me as your son and pity limbs begotten from yourself, those limbs are not yours that are instruments of cruelty." Having said this, he ended his speech with much weeping and lamentable groaning, and with the greatest wailing moved Varus and everyone to pity. Herod alone was moved by no tears and himself refrained from weeping, implacable towards pardon, pressing for interrogation and seeking vengeance.

Chapter 45

Online text and commentary

[I.45.1] At the king's command Nicolaus followed Antipater's speech, to answer his cunning skilfully and draw those who had been moved back from pity by turning upon Antipater the odium of his brothers' murder. He argued that, if anyone was moved by pity, they ought to pity those who had been killed by his fraud and demanded vengeance. If they acquitted one man, the whole royal house would be brought into danger: brothers, relatives by marriage, parents, the king himself, whose life he had not spared. Turning therefore to the cunning of orators, as though in a kind of peroration he summoned from the underworld the souls of the slain to fill the court benches with their pitiful complaint: they had died innocent, weighed down by suborned witnesses, fabricated letters and fraudulent words. Their father had been deceived into trusting a son whom he did not think capable of lying about his brothers. Now this man offered himself for torture, although he had not believed his brothers' torments; he had weighed them down with chains and bound them so that they could not attend the hearing. Sentence had been passed against absent men; they had been killed far away, lest their father pity them. No one would therefore be left if this man escaped, trained to pour poison for the murder of kin into his own kin's entrails and change men's minds. He had even roused Pheroras, who had always loved his brother Herod so greatly, to kill him in a deadly murder of kin.

[I.45.2] Nicolaus added very many other things to these to stir emotion. When he had finished his speech, Varus asked Antipater whether he wished to reply. He answered nothing except: "God is my witness that I have done no harm." Then Varus ordered the poison to be brought forward and given to one of those already condemned to death. He drank it and died immediately. This was reported to Caesar, and Antipater was led away in chains at his father's command.

[I.45.3] Yet he was not free from plots. For at that very time he was trying by deceit to endanger Salome. Antipater had sent letters composed in Salome's name, full of insults against the king, and had ordered them to be conveyed through Antiphilus's slave to Acme, the slave girl of Julia, who was Caesar's wife, so that Acme would forward the letters delivered to her to the king. The fraud nearly succeeded in destroying the woman, but a letter from Acme to Antipater was found that exposed the deceit. It was written in this manner: "As you wished, I have written to your father and sent those letters, and I do not doubt that the king will rise to endanger his sister.

[I.45.4] You, having obtained the outcome you desired, repay the service." When these letters were intercepted, the king was led to suspect that Alexander too had been assailed by letters fabricated by his brother with the same art, and, exasperated by excessive agitation, he contracted a grave illness. Seeing himself pressed by this danger, he named one of his sons, Antipas, as heir to his rule in his will, preferring him to his elder children Archelaus and Philip, since Antipater's deceit and falsehoods had also made them suspect to their father. He bequeathed a thousand talents to Caesar, with gifts and presents added, and allotted five

hundred to Caesar's wife and children, freedmen and friends. Nor did he leave his sister Salome without a share in his gifts.

[I.45.5] The illness grew worse and became more severe with the passage of time, while the disabilities of feeble old age aggravated it daily. For he bore a body weighed down by no fewer than seventy years and afflicted also by frequent grief of mind, wounded by so many murders of kin, which it was the utmost misery either to have discovered in his sons or to have inflicted. Yet the illness burned incurably because Antipater, still alive, was feared.

[I.45.6] He also became more contemptible day by day: images of Caesar and likenesses of animals placed upon the temple contrary to the law were being torn down. The chief instigators were Judas and Matthias, teachers of the young, who told those conspiring with them that the time had come to avenge the wrong done by violation of the law. The sacrilegious man was paying the penalty: he thought that whatever power permitted was right, and, not bowed by religion but exalted by pride, had exercised his desire to do whatever he wished in the temple's inner sanctuary as though it were a right. Although divine force was hastening vengeance, it nevertheless seemed noble that those consecrated to the temple should also demonstrate their freedom by defending the observances of their ancestral rite. No one ought to be deterred by fear of danger, since even to die for the ancestral law was a mark of immortality.

[I.45.7] They were the first to attempt to tear down the golden eagle fixed above the top of the gate. They were seized and brought before the king, and when asked whom they wished to obey in attempting so great a deed, they answered: "The ancestral law." When he asked again what they trusted in, that they appeared so cheerful when summoned to the danger of death, they replied that they trusted in the rewards of devotion and dedication, the recompense for which would be paid to those who sought death for the ancestral rite.

[I.45.8] He could no longer bear the firmness of the reply. Raised above his illness by indignation, so that he overcame his weakness, he went out into the assembly of the people. There, bringing them before the people as guilty of sacrilege, he began to accuse them on the grounds that graver things were suspected from such deeds. Even if these were not proved, everyone nevertheless feared for himself and pleaded that the instigators who had been seized should pay with punishment and that proceedings should not be extended to the rest, lest the interrogation trouble more people, including those uninvolved and innocent. Thus entreated, he passed sentence upon those present, that they should be burnt alive.

[I.45.9] His infirmity increased from this, and the force of a graver illness consumed his whole body with various sufferings. His fever was violent, his itching intolerable; there were continual pains in his inner entrails without any interruption, and he was tormented by colic in his middle. Dropsy weighed down his feet, his private parts swarmed with worms, and spasms of the whole body, heavy breathing and deadly gasps were signs to anyone that he was being made to pay the penalty for the unjust murder of his kin and the sacrilegious sentence. Yet he did not yield in spirit, and in his desire to live struggled against his sufferings. The hot waters of Callirrhoe, which he sought across the Jordan, had done him no good. At Lake Asphaltites, healing for very many, he lay ill without any improvement. There,

while he was being soothed with copious oil, his body relaxed and lost its strength; he turned up his eyes in the manner of the dying, his voice failed and he lost consciousness. But, roused by the noise of those crying out, he recovered.

[I.45.10] Wishing to return to his own lands, when he reached the region of the place called Jericho he devised a monstrous deed, driven by black bile and in a manner threatening death itself, so that peoples might be sent as funeral offerings to him. For he had already ordered the nobler men to be gathered from all Judaea, so that they should assemble from each village in one place. When his command was obeyed, he ordered them to be shut inside the hippodrome. He summoned Salome and her husband Alexas and entrusted to them a legacy of blood. He asserted that his death would bring joy to the peoples of the Jewish nation, and that he had therefore devised a way for his funeral commemoration to be celebrated most splendidly. He demanded of his family that, when he had breathed his last, they should immediately order all those confined there to be killed. Thus there would be no one in all Judaea or in any house for whom his death would be unmourned, since he would have left everyone an inheritance of mourning at home. As they bewailed the murder of their own kin, they would seem to be paying the king his funeral dues, and thus the joy of public wishes would be hindered by private griefs. Lest the wicked commands fail to be carried out, he ordered fifty drachmas to be given to each soldier, so that, with such a reward for crime set before them, the soldiers would not refuse the deadly service, offsetting the horror of carrying it out with the gain of the reward.

[I.45.11] He was already almost yielding to the torments of so great an infirmity, but he awaited the replies brought by the deadly embassy. It reported that Acme had been put to death in response to Herod's complaint, and that Antipater too had been convicted of attempting his father's murder and condemned to death. Yet, if his father wished to grant him the opportunity to flee, expelled from his homeland and kingdom, Caesar would give the order, passing sentence upon the crime but leaving the decision to family devotion. Nature had removed the necessity of killing kin. For, briefly revived by the power granted him to act as he wished, while he considered the manner of death, he was racked by pains and had desired to forestall the day of his own death. He therefore asked for an apple and a sword together, to take some refreshment by cutting the fruit with it as he was accustomed to do. Raising himself a little and leaning upon his elbow, he lifted his right hand, wishing to strike himself. But Achiabus rushed up and prevented the blow. The whole house rang with mourning, so that outside it was thought that Herod had died. Antipater exulted at the sound of lamentation and asked the guards to release him from his chains. But the man in charge of that duty not only refused the request but also reported it to the king. Exclaiming that he was being mocked while still alive, Herod sent assassins to kill Antipater and ordered him to be buried in Hyrcania after his death. He changed his will again and appointed Archelaus, the elder of the brothers, king, leaving Antipas as tetrarch.

[I.45.12] Thus he survived Antipater by five days and died, having held the kingdom for thirty-seven years from the time when the Romans ordered him to rule. From the time when he removed Antigonus, his rival for the kingdom, he spent thirty-four years in power. If only he had been as happy in life at home as in his public successes! For abroad prosperity

favoured him so much that he was raised from private station to kingship and, after enjoying it for a great many years, died with his power intact, a difficult thing, leaving his children a succession to rule that he himself had not received from his own family. But within his house he was most unhappy and filled it with the bitter bloodshed and mourning of his own family. Yet he found no one to carry out his final cruelty. In this one act Salome effaced the disgrace of her earlier crimes: she released all those whom the king had ordered to be killed, saying that the king had afterwards repented of the deadly command, revoked his earlier instructions and ordered that they should all be sent home.

Chapter 46

Online text and commentary

[I.46.1] Then, after the soldiers and the rest of the people had assembled in the amphitheatre, the king's death was announced. Ptolemy came forward, a man who had remained one of the king's most faithful friends to the very end. Bearing the ring he had drawn from the dead man's finger, he praised the king and urged the people to remain calm. He opened a letter in which the king appealed to the soldiers most faithful to him and exhorted them to show goodwill and favour to his successor. The tablets of the will were also opened and read: Philip was named heir to the region of Trachonitis and neighbouring places, Antipas tetrarch, and Archelaus king, on condition, however, that his ring should be conveyed to Caesar and that the judgement and confirmation of all his arrangements should be reserved to him. His will was to be valid only if Caesar approved it. He ordered the remaining provisions to be observed according to his earlier wills.

[I.46.2] At once the soldiers acclaimed and applauded Archelaus. He was immediately surrounded by a ring of guards; they promised goodwill and pledged allegiance. After this the funeral was fittingly and magnificently arranged, with the whole display of royal wealth sent ahead and the splendour of a funeral procession. The bier was adorned entirely with gold and gems, its covering shone with purple dye, and the body was covered by a double purple robe fastened with a clasp glittering with precious stones. A diadem clung to his head with a golden crown above it, and a sceptre was in his right hand, so that one might think him alive. A band of Thracians went before him, and the Germans and Gauls, the royal guards, kept military order. Armed alike as though going out to war, they followed with sorrowful faces, as if grieving. The rest of the force went ahead in their usual equipment and accustomed dress, their commanders and centurions accompanying them. Fifty slaves and freedmen of the royal household also sprinkled spices, so that the whole road was fragrant with a sweet scent. The king's sons and a very great crowd of relatives surrounded the bier. He was buried in Herodium, as he himself had commanded, two hundred stades from the place where his life had ended. Over so great a distance everyone escorted him with great ceremony, but not with equal affection from all. For fear had wrung out duty, not willing service; grief at least kept its judgement free within itself. Such was Herod's end.

Book II

Chapter 1

Online text and commentary

[II.1.1] Once Herod was buried, the people freely brought out their judgements, as is usual against the dead: he had been oppressive and intolerable to them; he had exercised unjust rule over his fellow citizens, a tyrant, not a king; a murderer of his own kin at home, a plunderer in public, he had left nothing to anyone. Tribute had been added, everything exhausted, foreigners enriched and Jews emptied of their wealth. He had brought an enemy into the temple and contaminated all its sacred things with sacrilege. Happy were those who had died, since the living never lacked torments. In a few years under Herod's rule, after their captivity had been cast off, Judaea had endured more evils than it had borne in captivity itself under a barbarian enemy, when the kings of the Babylonians ruled over them. Exile under those kings had been more tolerable than dwelling at home under Herod: those kings had sent them back to their own homes, but he had driven them away. He had been more merciless than Darius, prouder than Artaxerxes, more rapacious than the Medes. They had hoped for an end to their evils, that they might leave exile if he ended his days, but Archelaus had added himself to the misery of their slavery as a self-appointed successor, reproducing Herod and adding new evils. It was a misery in kingdoms that a master was chosen, and a greater misery that he was imposed upon the unwilling. It seemed a consolation in slavery if they chose their own master, since he became kinder if rule was conferred upon him, prouder if he usurped it. Archelaus would therefore be far more intolerable than Herod, since the former had assumed kingship, while the latter had received it.

[II.1.2] These things were not only discussed frequently in Judaea but also thrown in Archelaus's face at Rome, as he stood before Caesar and the senate and his accusers pleaded their case. There was a long contest there over confirming or revoking Archelaus's kingship. When a place had been assigned for the hearing in the temple of Apollo, which Caesar had founded and embellished with many ornaments, Salome's son Antipater, a powerful speaker, developed the arguments we have given above and many others. He marvelled that Archelaus made a show of seeking kingship from Caesar, when by a reckless usurpation he had long since acted as king in Judaea without consulting Caesar. For what else were the golden chair and the diadem brought before him but the insignia of kingship? With what arrogance had he presumed to sit upon the royal throne? From a lofty seat he greeted the people, surrounded by close ranks of soldiers. The diadem was brought out according to the custom and practice of emperors, although it ought to have been reserved for Caesar's judgement, both because of the authority of Roman rule and because of the legal force of the will. For Herod could not have forestalled Caesar or the senate in a matter in which he himself had either received authority from the senate or received it back from Caesar. In his earlier will he had expressed a sufficiently clear indication of his own wishes, declaring with sound judgement and considered counsel that Antipas should succeed him in the kingdom.

In his later will he had reserved everything for Caesar's judgement, although his body was already failing and, anxious at his mortal danger and no longer capable of any judgement or counsel, he had dictated what was put before him rather than what he himself thought. The man who had forestalled the grant of rule had therefore pronounced upon himself that he did not deserve to be appointed to the kingdom by your judgement, Caesar; for, had he been conscious of his own merit, he would have hastened to ask rather than to seize. By usurping what depended upon a petition instead of petitioning for it, men commonly prejudiced their case even in financial disputes, so that litigants who reversed the proper order lost their suit. Here, however, the charge concerned no monetary gain: the rights of Roman rule had been violated, its dignity despised, its authority spurned. The senate of the Roman curia, accustomed to give and take away kingdoms, had been judged unworthy to preserve, together with Caesar, its ancient prerogative of conferring rule. What would he, who had grown insolent even before his reign, do once he began to reign lawfully? Very many had also been killed because they had sought relief for their exhausted resources and a lightening of tribute. War had been imposed upon those asking for a remedy; nine thousand Jews had been killed in the very celebration of Passover, revered among their people; human beings had been sacrificed in place of animals; the blood of the consecrated, who had gathered for the temple's festivals, had been poured out—a pitiable spectacle. Anyone who surveyed the slaughter of the dead would think that the Babylonians had returned. How much more cruel were deeds committed by a fellow citizen that would be judged full of monstrous savagery and impiety even in a barbarian enemy! This was the dole given to the citizens; with this sacrifice Archelaus had commended the beginnings of his kingship. Caesar and the senate ought to pity the remnants of Judaea, once supported by free peoples, which now wished for slavery, if only it could endure a tolerable slavery under a just king. Archelaus was far from possessing the right to rule, since among the Jews kingship belonged to no one except a man descended from Judah, as the law said. But this man, of Idumaean stock, with no connection by birth to the royal line, had crept into an honour not owed to him. Antipater had been grandfather to both the speaker and Archelaus, outstanding in wealth and powerful in other accomplishments, especially in his friendship with the Romans, and proven in war to the elder Caesar. Although he could have claimed kingship for himself, he had never sought it; indeed, he had preferred to defend it for others rather than obtain it for himself. He had deservedly been regarded as the best of fathers, having won freedom for Judaea by his wounds, without bringing it into slavery. Herod had aspired to kingship through the testimony of Antony, his father's guest-friend. From that time the fortunes of the Jews had declined: Herod had acted as an enemy, not a ruler. Since he himself had been an adulterer of kingship, how could a lawful king have been created by him? They did not, however, plead to be free of kingship, but asked to be under Roman rule, whose favour had already been secured for them in the days of the Maccabees. Through the later usurpation of kingship they had declined so far that they were much inferior to those against whom they had sought alliance with Rome. Finally, he said that they begged, "Grant Judaea government by a provincial governor on the same terms as Syria, so that our devotion may be put to the test: whether we, who are called seditious and rebellious, can obey moderate judges."

[II.1.3] Replying to these arguments on Archelaus's behalf, Nicolaus maintained that a most unruly nation had paid the penalty for its insolence, lest Archelaus should above all incur the odium of an inexcusable crime if they disturbed the peace by sedition and withdrew in mind and arms from alliance with the Romans. On the question of which will should take precedence, he asked who could doubt it, "when a later will is usually preferred to earlier ones, and this one ought to be regarded as much stronger than the rest, since in it Caesar's prerogative of confirming the royal judgement has been preserved? By this the dignity of the Roman name is increased rather than diminished, if you, Caesar, do not deny kings what private persons are allowed—that their wills should be valid and that in their last writing they should name the person they most wish to succeed them—and if kings in turn preserve this honour for you, that confirmation of their judgement should be sought from you, so that the man whom his father has chosen and you have approved should succeed. When, then, did Herod show greater judgement: when he preserved your prerogative, Caesar, or when he passed you over? Where Antipas is appointed successor, Caesar is passed over; where Archelaus is appointed, Caesar is brought in. Without a foundation nothing is stable. Thus, by divine judgement, where justice was lacking, neither pretence nor intention had a foundation; but where fairness of mind was present, strength was sought to confirm the judgement. Consider, then, whether the man who chose you did you an injury, or whether what he left to be ratified by your arbitration ought to be annulled, when you are lord of all things, to whom even kings rightly yield power. For he who knew whom to choose to confirm his judgement certainly knew whom to choose to rule; nor could he be mistaken in his successor when he was not mistaken in the person who would confirm his judgement. For the man who appointed you arbiter certainly knew that he must appoint a successor whom you would not be displeased to appoint."

[II.1.4] After hearing both sides, Caesar deferred his sentence. Then, after consulting the senate, he placed Archelaus over the nation, to discharge the office of ruler without the honour of kingship. He nevertheless promised to grant him kingship too, if he conducted himself so as to win approval. Attempts at revolt among the people of Israel were already being reported. He appointed two of Herod's sons as tetrarchs, Philip and Antipas, who had contested the kingship with Archelaus. He preserved the bequest to Herod's sister, whose name was Salome, and himself added other gifts. He also judged that the thousand talents left to him should be divided between Herod's two daughters, added another six hundred thousand, and decreed that they should be joined in marriage to Pheroras's children.

Chapter 2

Online text and commentary

[II.2.1] Meanwhile, a young man pretended to be Alexander, claiming that those whom his father Herod had charged with the killing had taken pity and, substituting others in his place, had released him together with his brother Aristobulus. He made for Miletus and from there for Rome, so that it would be harder to recognise him among strangers.

[II.2.2] There he would easily have stirred up the Jews, who were most ready for political change, had Caesar not learnt the facts and ordered a certain Celadus, who had known

Alexander thoroughly, to bring the man to him at once. When Celadus saw the young man, he hesitated, deceived by the resemblance; but, seeing that the other signs did not agree, he asked where Aristobulus was. The man asserted that he was staying on the island of Cyprus to guard against plots, because it would be easier to kill the brothers if they were together. Then, when he was brought before Caesar, on a promise of impunity he immediately disclosed that, relying upon his resemblance in appearance, he had pretended to be Alexander so as to obtain countless gifts from the Jews as a king's son. Caesar laughed at the deceit, but let the man himself go unpunished and pronounced those who had given him gifts beyond the measure due to a private person, as though he were a king's son, sufficiently punished by the immense losses they had borne in unnecessary expenditure.

[II.2.3] Archelaus, however, after going to Judaea, was accused before Caesar of obscenity in his conduct and insolence. When the case between the parties had been heard, he was banished to Vienne, and his wealth was added to Caesar's treasury.

[II.2.4] He deservedly paid this price, for he had not restrained his desires even from his own brother's wife. When Alexander died, delivered to death at his father's command, his wife Glaphyra, daughter of Archelaus, king of the Cappadocians, as we have mentioned above, was joined in a second marriage to Juba, king of Libya. When Juba died, she returned to her father. On seeing her there, Archelaus—thinking that, as her husband's brother and her children's uncle, he could hardly be shunned consistently with family devotion—began to love her so desperately that he cast out his wife Mariamme and put Glaphyra in her place. Not long afterwards, when the woman had returned to Judaea, she saw Alexander in a dream and wished to embrace him. But he seemed to withdraw from her embrace like an indignant man and to say: "Is this, Glaphyra, faithfulness to your promise? Is this how you have preserved my love for you, which you ought to have remembered? But let it be so: as a very young woman you had not refused a second marriage. But even a third? Even your husband's brother? Did the injury to me so delight you that you were not ashamed to return to my house married to a third husband? But I shall see to it that my dishonour, your pollution, does not last longer. Nor will the incestuous man long rejoice in his brother's marriage." The woman rose and told her household the dream. By dying herself two days later, she confirmed that marriages of this kind do not go unpunished either by the laws of the living or by the wishes of the dead.

Chapter 3

Online text and commentary

[II.3.1] Archelaus himself also saw in a dream nine large, full ears of grain being devoured by oxen. When he inquired, an interpreter answered that the nine ears signified the nine years in which he had enjoyed the fullest and greatest power. In the ninth year of his rule, therefore, a change would come upon him, since oxen, which were accustomed to turn the fields with the plough, signified a laborious change that would devour and swallow up his former achievements. On the fifth day after he learnt this, a man came from Caesar to take him to Rome for judgement. Condemned there and driven into exile, he fulfilled his dreams also in death.

[II.3.2] The dominion over the nation that had belonged to Archelaus was given the name of a province. This was the name the Romans gave to regions situated far away when they brought them under their authority by conquest. Yet the tetrarchs remained as before, Philip and Herod, the latter having changed the name by which he had previously been called, Antipas. For Salome, at her death, had left the places she held and authority over her people to Livia, Caesar's wife. Such was the state of Judaea when Caesar died, leaving as successor to the rule of Rome his stepson Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia by an earlier husband. In his honour Herod founded Tiberias. Philip too thought that a city should be called Livia after the name of Tiberius's mother.

[II.3.3] And since our purpose is to reveal the causes by which the Jewish people revolted from Roman rule and hastened their own destruction, events show that Pilate, the governor of the province, gave their ruin its beginning: he was the first of all who did not hesitate to bring images of Caesar into the buildings of Jerusalem. The people were stirred to resist, and since he held that the images must be admitted, he drove very many to their deaths.

[II.3.4] While these events were taking place in Judaea, Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, came to Rome, wishing to contest his case against Herod the tetrarch in a hearing before Tiberius. But, spurned by Tiberius, he remained at Rome and won very many friends, especially Gaius, Germanicus's son. Whether he thought Gaius dear to the people through the favour attached to his father's name, or closest to imperial power through his connection with the royal family, or acted from some foreknowledge, he cultivated him more eagerly than either his age or his rank warranted. Thus one day he raised his hands and prayed that Tiberius might die sooner and that he might see Gaius as emperor. When this was disclosed by his freedman Eutychus, Agrippa was led into chains at Tiberius's command and cruelly tortured. He was not released before Tiberius ended his days. Yet Tiberius's reign, foul with outrages, and his retreat on Capri, intolerable in its indolence, roused no man capable of effective action to kill him—because, I think, of reverence for the recently established rule of Rome, or of terror at his most savage cruelty, since harshness is very often safer the more oppressive it is.

Chapter 4

Online text and commentary

[II.4.1] During his reign, the notorious outrage against Paulina, a woman of a most distinguished family, became widely known at Rome. She had an outstanding reputation for chastity among everyone, and was of surpassing beauty and eminent charm. Though assailed by the solicitations of Mundus, a commander of cavalry, she did not yield; but through the fault of excessive superstition she laid herself open to deception. The priests of Isis were suborned to bring her what purported to be a message from Anubis: he invited her to the temple, and, delighted by her devotion and chastity, asked for a night, having something he wished to entrust to her in secret. On receiving this, she joyfully reported to her husband that the god favoured her prayers, that the god asked for her presence, and that she could not refuse obedience. So, with both her own and her husband's approval, she went to the temple of Isis and spent the night there. With witnesses removed far away, she lay down on her bed as though about to receive knowledge of a sacred mystery, thinking that her god would come to her in sleep and reveal himself to her in a vision. But when some of the night had passed, so that the woman could more easily be deceived while sound asleep, Mundus came in the face and dress of Anubis, lifted her clothes and rushed to kiss her. When she awoke, he told her that he was Anubis and displayed the face of Anubis. She believed him to be the god and declared herself blessed because her lord and god had deigned to visit her. She did not refuse when he sought her embrace, but asked whether a god could mate with a human being. He brought out examples: Alcmena had received Jupiter, the highest of the gods; Leda had enjoyed intercourse with him, as had very many other women who had given birth to gods. He also persuaded the woman that a god would be born of himself and her, and had intercourse with her. She returned to her husband happier still, saying that she, a woman, had mated with a god and, according to his promise, would bear a god. Her husband felt immense joy at the woman's violation. Afterwards Mundus met the woman and said: "Paulina, blessed in your intercourse with a god! Great is the god Anubis, whose mysteries you have received. But learn not to refuse human beings any more than gods: the gods grant them what you have denied, since they do not disdain to give us either their forms or their names. See, the god Anubis called Mundus too to his rites, to join him to you. What good did your harshness do you, except to cheat you of the gain of the twenty thousand I had offered? Imitate the more indulgent gods, who grant us without payment what we could not obtain from you at a great price. But if human names offend you, it pleased me to be called Anubis, and the favour attached to this name helped to bring about the result." Stunned by his words, the woman understood that she had been deceived. Grieving at the injury to her chastity, she confessed the deceit to her husband. He had no grounds for anger against his wife, to whom he had himself given permission to sleep in the temple, and, knowing her marital chastity, he brought a complaint before the emperor. Moved by the dishonour done to a powerful man and by the contrivance of an atrocious crime, the emperor dragged the priests from the temple, subjected them to torture and, after they confessed, killed them. He sank the statue of Isis in the Tiber. Mundus was allowed to flee, because, overcome by the force of love and the charm of beauty, he was thought deserving of a lighter penalty for his deeds.

Chapter 5

Online text and commentary

[II.5.1] I therefore thought that I should not pass over the outrage that occurred while Tiberius ruled, so that the emperor's depravity might be inferred from it. For just as a good ruler's life is a kind of rule of probity and a pattern of living for everyone, so an emperor's filth is a law of crimes. Pilate, sent by him to Judaea, a wicked man who made little of lying, deceived the Samaritans into going to the mountain named Gadir, which was sacred to them, on the claim that he wished to learn their mysteries. Going up, he forestalled the people with cavalry and infantry and struck them down on the fabricated charge that they had prepared to revolt from the Romans and seek a meeting place of their own.

[II.5.2] For what would he not dare, who had even nailed to a cross Christ the Lord, coming for the salvation of the human race, pouring out upon human beings the grace of his mercy through many divine works, and teaching nothing except what would make peoples obedient first to God and then to emperors? Madman, to be the minister of sacrilegious fury and kill the author of salvation! From that time, therefore, the fortunes of the Jews were ruined; from that time destruction was hastened for the nation and ruin for the temple. For if Herod, who delivered John to death, paid the price of his faithlessness and cruelty by being cast down from his kingdom and given over to exile, how much more must we understand the man who killed Christ to have been driven by headlong furies?

[II.5.3] I shall briefly explain the cause of John's death. We have shown above that Philip and Herod, who was previously called Antipas, were brothers; Philip's wife was Herodias, whom Herod joined to himself by an unlawful and unspeakable bond of marriage. John did not tolerate this and said to him: "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Then Herod, angered, thrust John into prison. Not long afterwards he killed this just man, a steadfast enforcer of divine law. For John had rebuked the incest of a brother's bed not only as a preacher of the gospel, but also, as an enforcer of the law, had condemned the transgressor of the law who had taken away his living brother's wife, especially when she had offspring by that same brother. Hence arose the hatred of almost all the Jews against Herod, and his punishment was hastened.

[II.5.4] Herodias brought this about. Seeing that Agrippa had become very influential with Caesar, she compelled Herod to go to Rome to win the emperor's favour, taunting him with the disgrace of idleness: by shunning exertion and lingering at home, he allowed men unworthy of comparison with himself to be preferred to him. Since Agrippa had been made king from private station, how much less would Caesar hesitate to confer kingship upon him, who had long been a tetrarch! Unable to bear the woman's reproaches, he therefore set out for Rome. While seeking Gaius's friendship, he was accused by Agrippa and lost even the tetrarchy he had received from Julius Augustus. Fleeing to Spain with his wife Herodias, he was consumed by grief of mind.

[II.5.5] On Tiberius's death, Gaius succeeded him. Wishing to be regarded and called lord and god, he gave the Jews grounds for most grievous sedition; had his rule not come to an early end, he would have brought the Jewish nation to an earlier end. For not only did he fail to

restrain his own men from unlawful acts, but he even threatened those sent to Judaea with the ultimate punishment unless they carried out by arms every act against the law and sanctity of religion. Agrippa was very powerful during his rule, but, wishing to enclose Jerusalem with a very great wall so that the Romans could not take it—for he foresaw the impending ruin—he was overtaken by death and left the work unfinished.

[II.5.6] He exercised no less power under Claudius, since he had also taken part in the beginnings of his rule. When Gaius had been killed and Claudius himself had been raised to imperial power by the soldiers, the senate resisted him out of weariness with kingship. He sent Agrippa as an envoy, through whose mediation a pledge of moderation was given, goodwill established and peace agreed. In place of Agrippa the father, his son Agrippa was appointed king by Claudius Caesar.

Chapter 6

Online text and commentary

[II.6.1] Won over by the persuasions of his wife Agrippina, Claudius himself too, as he was dying after thirteen years, appointed Nero emperor over the Roman dominion. Her deceit proved so powerful that she deprived the emperor's son Britannicus, designated successor by the very right of nature, of any share in imperial power. She soon repented of this cunning: in providing for her own son, she had denied the emperor his, unaware that, exalted by power, her son would not even acknowledge his mother and would turn the reward for her benefit into her destruction. Yet he was married to Claudius's daughter Octavia, a son-in-law preferred to a son in a reversal of the proper order, because the evils of the commonwealth weighed more heavily. It deserved a murderer of kin, a sacrilegious, incestuous man, so that crimes, not the merits of any good pursuit, should reign in him.

[II.6.2] Under such an emperor, whether in view of his conduct and in contempt for his indolence, or because the protection of the most high God had been withdrawn from the Jews for their grave sacrileges and ultimate destruction was being prepared for them, their insolence erupted into grave seditions, brigandage and dissensions. Eleazar, the chief of the brigands, had ravaged them most grievously for twenty years. At last, however, he was captured by Felix, who governed Judaea, and sent to Rome, where he paid a heavy penalty.

[II.6.3] Not even so was the people inhabiting Judaea broken by the great number of the slain. In Jerusalem itself another kind of brigand sprang up, called Sicarii. No longer hidden in secluded places or lying in wait in the darkness of night for travellers without protection, they struck in daylight, in the middle of the city and the press of the crowd, at anyone whom they approached. Carrying short swords in their hands and mingling with the crowded people, they stabbed someone beside them, and the unsuspecting victim fell with an unseen wound, death forestalling his cry. The corpse was in plain sight, but the killer was hidden. Anyone moved by another's wound was brought nearer to his own and became one of the slain. Thus, whether through fear of danger or concealment of the crime, the Sicarius was not caught: such was the speed of those lying in wait and their skill in concealment. The priest Jonathan was killed; many were added each day. The fear of the living was heavier than the misery of the slain. Each day everyone went out as though to battle, but under a

harsher condition: an enemy can be seen beforehand, whereas the Sicarius lurked unseen. Death was before their eyes, fear in their minds. No one believed that he would return, and not even friends were trusted while the Sicarius was feared.

[II.6.4] Terrified by this, many made for the desert. They were indeed innocent of the crime of brigandage or association with the Sicarii; their hands were innocent, but their judgement was weaker. Yet, while looking to their own interests, they aroused a fear of revolt, from which first suspicion of war against the Romans, and then odium, flared up. Moved by this, the ruler of the province sent cavalry and infantry and slaughtered a very great multitude.

Chapter 7

Online text

[II.7.1] An Egyptian false prophet also arrived, versed in the magical arts, and boasted that he proclaimed heavenly oracles through a prophetic spirit. He attached about thirty thousand Jews to himself and gathered them at the Mount of Olives. In repeated assaults he penetrated Jerusalem, even attacking the Roman guards who were stationed there to prevent any disturbance by the people.

[II.7.2] When this insolence too was suppressed, another part became more grievously inflamed, as in a sick body. Very many openly cried that they must revolt from the Romans and prefer freedom to slavery, and those who lacked food went out into the countryside and sought it by force.

Chapter 8

Online text and commentary

[II.8.1] Finally, in the city of Caesarea, grave sedition arose between Jews and gentiles. The Jews claimed possession of the whole city on the grounds that it had been founded by Herod, a Jew. The gentiles resisted: its founder had indeed been a Jew, but he had given it Caesar's name; moreover, he had built temples within it and set up statues, and so it seemed to have been assigned rather to gentile uses. The sedition arising from these disputes turned to blows, because the leaders of the Jews could not restrain their own people who were bent on sedition, and the gentiles thought it a disgrace to concede that they must yield to the Jews. They therefore roused Felix; as he sought to suppress the unyielding crowds on both sides, recourse was had chiefly to arms, since no other remedy was possible.

[II.8.2] Festus succeeded him and, after capturing very many brigands, delivered no small number to death. Albinus too, entrusted by the Romans with the same power, left no kind of wickedness untried. He was a wicked plunderer: anyone who had not given money was dragged into chains, though innocent; anyone who had given it was acquitted, even if guilty. Greed bred pride, so that he showed himself a tyrant to the poorer and a slave to the richer.

[II.8.3] Yet, just as he had surpassed his predecessors in wickedness, so he was surpassed and left behind by his successor Florus, as though idle and slow in crimes: next behind him, but at a great distance, he could be thought blameless in comparison with a worse man. Those who had at first complained of their affliction afterwards longed for Festus as a good judge. He

had stripped individuals; Florus plundered cities, most polluted in his obscenities and most cruel in his savagery, disturbing everything with arms and sowing battles from battles. He neither forgave when begged nor spared when sated.

[II.8.4] In the sight of Berenice, King Agrippa's sister, who had come to the temple for religious observance, he raged against the people in a most bitter slaughter. He did not think he should yield to her entreaties, though he saw her devoted to religious observance, standing barefoot, and treated her prayers with disdain. Hence she too wrote to King Agrippa, and the Jewish people sent to beg assistance for their freedom.

[II.8.5] As he returned from Egypt, many came to meet him, going out more than sixty stades from Jerusalem. They led him around the city, proved the truth of their complaints, and began to insist that they should send envoys to Nero. He himself pitied their grief as that of fellow citizens. Yet, discerning with deep prudence that attempts at war against the Romans were being set in motion, he gathered the people together to prevent odium from falling upon himself and the utmost danger upon the people. At the place called the Xystus, near the temple and separated by a bridge, he gave the following speech.

Chapter 9

Online text and commentary

[II.9.1] "Although in many cases heedless grief, intolerant of counsel and restraint, makes some seethe with bitter complaints, when counsel is taken the feeling of grief is set aside. For if I had found all this people ready to avenge their injuries and make war upon the Roman dominion, and had not found the better and calmer part minded to choose peace and prefer quiet, I would not have dared either to come to you or to offer counsel. It is pointless to advise what ought to be done when the listeners favour the worse course. But some have no experience of the evils of war; others have a superficial hope of freedom, very sweet to seek but often unreasonable to expect to obtain—for many, in seeking freedom, heap up slavery, and everything is often snatched away from those who had at least the name of freedom left. Others, dissatisfied with their present circumstances because of their low standing, are attracted by change, and disturbance is reckoned a gain. I therefore thought I should deliberate with you, so that the sobriety of the more prudent should not be overborne by the audacity of the more insolent, or so that those who do not know how to judge rightly might at least learn from my admonition that they must yield to wiser counsellors. I therefore think you should grant me silence, so that I may set out what I believe is to your advantage, and that none of you should raise a disturbance if he hears anything against his wishes. For no one can judge the nature of what is said unless he has first heard it. Since he himself will decide whether to approve or reject it, he pointlessly raises a disturbance to avoid hearing it. Even after deliberation, each is free to hold the opinion he holds and, if he chooses to dissent, to maintain his ill-considered resolve even after sober warnings. But someone asks why I should wish to be heard in vain if those who hear me will not agree. Because, if they refuse to agree when they have heard, only part of my audience, not the whole people, will be endangered; but if they refuse to hear, even when only part of the audience raises a disturbance, the whole people is deprived of the benefit of hearing. My speech will therefore die even for those who wish to hear, if silence is denied me in any part of the assembly. For the whole speech is cut off and falls, as it were, lifeless, when the uproar of the assembly and its restless noise obstruct and kill it. There are therefore two things to which I think I must first reply, which carry the greatest weight in the complaints: that many cry out about the injuries inflicted by governors, and that many lament the loss of their freedom. These propositions seem to me to have been joined together and need to be separated. For if the governors are wicked, what need is there to raise the cry of freedom? You must not seem to accuse the governors as agents of domination out of loathing for slavery, rather than because they deserve it. Or, if slavery is intolerable, the complaint about the governors is needless. For even if they show restraint, slavery is still shameful. Let us therefore consider whether each of these provides substantial grounds for war. What is more foolish than to complain of injuries and weave a war out of them, exchanging insults for dangers, fleeing a judge and bringing in an enemy, when an unjust judge is often an interpreter of the law, whereas even a just enemy always seeks your life? A judge should therefore be soothed, not exasperated; an enemy should be avoided. Do not embitter the one and summon the other, since the one becomes gentler through soothing, while the other must be avoided so that he cannot harm you. In dealing with judges, then, take care that the complaint is not greater than the injury,

and the odium of the charges heavier than the price of the offences. For often those who at first offended with some restraint become more insolent when accused, and those who previously stole in secret afterwards practise brigandage openly. Nothing so aggravates the heat of a wound as impatience in bearing it. Indeed, even with wild beasts, the tightest bonds press into them if they struggle and loosen if they remain still; and the severe force of fevers is lessened by endurance and increased by restlessness. If wild creatures know how to look to their own interests, forgetting their nature to relieve their pain, how much more has repeated experience taught human beings that the endurance of the injured has put those who injured them to shame, so that without an accuser they corrected what they would not have amended under accusation! But let it be granted that the insolence of Roman judges has been intolerable: which, then, is more tolerable, to endure them all or one? And what justice is there in making war upon all when one has injured you? Are all the Romans responsible for the injury? Is Caesar himself? Or was a wicked man deliberately chosen to be sent to you? They cannot keep watch across the seas and direct their eyes from west to east, to see there what is being done here, nor can they readily hear it: even if their concern demands it, distance denies it through the difficulty of obtaining evidence. Will one man’s guilt, then, tear the Roman world apart, when redress is swift even without your complaints, with none of the odium of an accusation and none of the toil of a journey? For Roman magistrates are changed in annual rotation, so that an insolent man does not remain long and a more restrained one soon succeeds him. Remaining quiet will therefore do no harm, since a remedy is brought even to those who remain quiet. But to weave together causes of war is ruinous, because war against anyone is a harsh condition; against the Romans it is fatal. If you wish to flee them because you cannot overcome them, you must leave the world. But you put forward your desire for freedom. That deliberation comes late. You should have fought to avoid losing freedom, rather than to demand it back once lost. The experience of slavery is harsh; therefore either it should not have been accepted at the outset, or, once accepted, it must be borne calmly. The proper time to resist was when you were being summoned to servitude. That was the more just struggle. But anyone who has once given himself into slavery, even if he later wishes to withdraw, is not defended as a lover of freedom but condemned as a disobedient slave. Where was this defence of freedom when Pompey invaded your regions and entered the city as its lord? Where were the arms for freedom? Why were they laid down by our fathers? They were certainly stronger than we are. They were vigorous in spirit, abundant in resources, eager to resist, but they could not withstand a small portion of the Roman army. They were conquered but spared. They acknowledged the yoke of slavery so as not to endure the punishment of captivity. Why do you, their heirs, refuse what you owe by right of succession? Your fathers’ dealings bind you. How do you shun obedience when you are so much inferior to those who obeyed? Or what will remain for you when you rouse Caesar and all Roman strength against yourselves? How can you withstand those who have triumphed over all and are now helped by all who serve in their armies? The Athenians, for the freedom of all Greece, gave their homeland to the flames, exchanging their homes for exile so that Xerxes should not rule them. He sailed on land and walked upon the waves; neither the seas could contain him nor the land bear him, since his march encompassed the whole expanse of Europe, and the bounds of the lands were narrower than the passage of his army. Yet they pursued him in his flight so closely that,

fleeing in a single ship and in need of help, he barely escaped captivity. But those very men who crushed all Asia for tiny Salamis, and in a most glorious battle drove Xerxes to flight in the very element he thought subject to him, though he ruled the waves and subdued the seas, now serve the Romans. The Athenians, leaders of all Greece, obey Italian commands, and Athens, which gave laws to others, now serves under foreign laws. The Lacedaemonians too, after Thermopylae and the triumphs of the dead Leonidas, after Agesilaus the explorer of Asia, now love their masters. Macedonia and Africa, which through two most powerful commanders had brought dominion over the whole world into their own right and possession, do not resent its transfer from them. Content with so great a change in their circumstances, they desire the favour of those whom they sought to enslave. The Macedonians are stirred neither by Philip's riches nor by Alexander's triumphs. They think these commanders not undeserving of being called the wisest of all, because the one kept within Greece, while the other, fleeing Roman arms, came victorious as far as the Caspian kingdoms, the limits of conquered Persia and the hidden places of the Indians. He won the name 'Great' because he did not challenge the greatest of all. Although an early death withdrew him from a Roman triumph, he too serves in his descendants. For them the spoils of the East were acquired not as a support for dominion but as the price of slavery, so that the nobility of those who served might pass into the victor's wealth. Great was Alexander's valour; yet what wonder is there in that? He extended victory to the Ocean; the Romans extended it beyond the Ocean. Britain bears witness: situated outside the world, it was brought into the world by Roman valour. Those unknown to an earlier age became known through Roman victory. Even those who did not know what slavery was now serve: born for themselves alone and always free in their own right, separated by the intervening Ocean from greater powers, they could not fear those whom they did not know. It was therefore a greater thing to cross over to the Britons than to triumph over the Britons. For what could they do when the elements were already subject to Roman rule? The Ocean taught them to endure slavery after it too, as Roman ships crossed it, had acknowledged a slavery to which it was unaccustomed. For what need is there to recount Hannibal's story? Victorious over so many regions, he too served the Romans by the triumphs with which he opened the Alps, paved the way and subdued cities to be acquired by his conquerors. Though often victorious, he never cut off the hope of the defeated; defeated once, he could not recover. He yielded of his own accord to his conquerors, whom he could not withstand even as victor, and, casting away his victorious arms, withdrew to King Prusias: from commander to mercenary, from triumphant general to fugitive. I shall come to the peoples inhabiting Gaul, fierce by nature and fiercer because of their natural walls. To the east they are protected by Alpine ridges, not masonry walls; to the west the Ocean encloses them. To the south the precipices of the Pyrenees, and to the north the streams of the Rhine and vast Germany, were thought to have made them unconquerable and inaccessible through the benefit of these barriers. Yet nothing was impassable to the Romans, travelling above the clouds and extending their dominion beyond the Pillars of Hercules: so easily was the hidden enemy found and the resisting enemy conquered. At their unexpected arrival Germany believed that the mountains had subsided and the Rhine dried up. Stronger than others in the size of their bodies and their contempt for death, the Germans had previously thought the Rhine a restraint upon themselves; now they thought it a defender of their safety. Thus it is now

filled not with German skiffs but with Roman Liburnian galleys. Ranging through the whole course of the two-horned river as far as the sea, they press once free nations into slavery, so that those who formerly presumed that dominion over the whole world would be theirs now pay the price of their own slavery. What benefit did the Illyrians gain from the gold dug from the veins of their lands, when it was not enough for their battle for freedom? How much more precious is Roman iron, which Pannonian gold serves! The Pannonian therefore pays a tribute of gold and willingly transfers his wealth to the Roman treasury, to be safer in slavery. Nor has the water of Pactolus, turbid with gold, lifted its inhabitant into pride: he willingly serves those whom he sees kingdoms serving. Nor does the Indian marvel at his gem, or the Seres at their wool: these things are produced for their masters' use, not as proceeds of trade but as dues of tribute. We hear of the proud dominions of the Persians, but we also see their hostages. Although they rule very many nations, they nevertheless offer their children and rejoice that their nobility serves the Romans as a pledge of peace, and also so that by serving they may learn to rule their own people. They offer garments, necklaces, even elephants. One thing has been granted to the Romans: to impose kings. Let us add Egypt, abundant in its own resources and needing no rain from heaven, since it generates its own rains and creates the abundance of showers. Although hotter than all other regions, it alone does not complain of drought, and, with a resource that no other place possesses, it nourishes its crops by irrigation. Ships sail through the sands, ships sail through sown fields where rain is unknown. Yet its extraordinary endowment and natural fertility serve the Romans, so that it feeds its masters for four months. What shall I say of the city itself, bearing the name of a most valiant king? Enclosed by a river as its wall, it knows no siege. The greatest of all rivers, spreading its bed through the expanses of the land, both removes the hindrances of a siege and supplies relief by carrying in what is needed for use. What land could have been more readily stirred to rebellion than Egypt? It counts seven million five hundred thousand people, apart from the inhabitants of Alexandria, enrolled under the Roman fasces. Yet, though it has so great a multitude, it prefers to labour under the tributes of Roman rule rather than to wage war at its own expense. I shall not pass over the Cyrenaeans, of Lacedaemonian stock. They once contended with the Carthaginians over boundaries and dominion, proposing death as the end of the contest. Defeated by this offer, though they had nevertheless avenged the injury, they conceded victory to the Philaeni brothers. Nor shall I pass over the Syrtes, terrible even to hear of, since they draw everything towards themselves and whatever approaches sticks fast in the shallow sea. Those versed in such matters have declared that a third part of the whole world is bounded by the Atlantic sea and the Pillars of Hercules on one side, and the Red Sea and the Ethiopians on the other. Who could number the peoples of so many nations? Supported by them, Carthage could not withstand Scipio's hand, and preferred to feed Rome against itself for two-thirds of the year rather than rely on others' resources to rebel against the Romans. Crete too, renowned for its hundred cities, displaying most fertile kingdoms, surrounded on every side by sea and accustomed to repel an enemy with its waves as with mountains, fears one man of consular rank; and very many peoples bow in fear before the rods of six fasces. Asia, Pontus, the Heniochi, the nomadic Scythians, the Tauroscythians, the Maeotian kingdoms and all the Bosporans are subject to Roman rule, and forty ships keep that formerly unnavigable sea at peace. For what shall I say of Armenia? It not only preserves the peace of its own frontier but

also, intent on guarding the Gates, watches diligently lest anyone creep in to disturb the peace. All, then, are eager to serve the Romans. Do you alone disdain to be subject to those to whom everyone is subject? What arms do you trust in? What troops make you proud? Where is your fleet of ships to blockade the straits and range through the Romans' seas? For even the elements have come under their name, as the world too has passed to them. It is enclosed and bounded by the Roman dominion; indeed, many call it the Roman world. For if we seek the truth, as I said above, the earth itself lies within the Roman dominion. Roman valour has advanced beyond it, seeking another world for itself beyond the Ocean, and has found in Britain a new possession remote from the confines of the lands. Indeed, those denied the right not only of Roman citizenship but almost of human fellowship itself are sent there, to live there as exiles from the world. The Ocean has yielded its borders; the Roman knows how to seek its inner secrets. Your war will be against the very men against whom even nature cannot maintain its own right. That Euphrates, formerly inaccessible to all but its own inhabitants, is now Roman on both banks, and shows that the whole East is under Roman rule. In the northern regions the Ister, flowing among savage and innumerable nations, receives hostages and restrains enemies. The southern tract, as far as it can be inhabited, ploughs for the Romans and gathers its harvest for them. In the west the coast of Gades, once the limit of the lands, receives new guests to bring their tribute to the Roman dominion, and has somewhere to send its own merchandise too. Where it formerly imagined only shipwreck, it now conducts trade. Since everything belongs to the Romans, where will you seek support against the Romans? From what uninhabitable region will you call for allies? For all who are in the world are Romans. Or will you send an embassy beyond the Euphrates to the Adiabenes? But they have no leisure to abandon their own affairs, nor does the Parthian allow the peace he sought for himself to be broken, lest he himself be held guilty of rebellion in his neighbours. Do not think this war like battles you might wage against Arabs and Egyptians: Roman arms are different, their resources are different, acquired throughout the world. Nor let the protection of Jerusalem's walls flatter you: they have broken the stronger wall of the Ocean. But do you presume upon the aid of religion, when Jesus' disciples have already filled the Roman world? Or do we think that without God's will that religion grows and the city of Rome extends its dominion over all regions? Indeed, our religion abandoned us long ago, because we abandoned faith and often sought things forbidden by heavenly commands. How did the Egyptian come against us? How did we become captives of the Assyrians? Did Scripture not say that these things would happen? Was it not written that all the sacred mysteries of the temple would be profaned? Now repeatedly profaned, they no longer manifest their power and the full grace of the mysteries. The temple has been defiled with human blood, the shrines filled with corpses, the altars drenched with gore. Battle has been fought on the Sabbath; transgression has been committed, since the temple is defended not by its own observance and the solemn keeping of holy days, but by bloody battle. And this, indeed, it says again. How, then, can we merit divine aid as though against enemies hostile to religion, when we ourselves transgress against our own religion? What remedy is there, then, when neither human resources support us nor divine grace comes to our aid? One or the other of these commonly invites people to war; you lack both. What therefore remains but manifest destruction? If you do not turn aside from it while there is still time to take care, you yourselves will do nothing but burn your homeland, set fire to the temple, and

give your wives and children over to death. You will be responsible for their utter loss, when the inconsolable addition to all evils is that what we suffer should be ascribed to our own fault. Moreover, other cities' wars end with the destruction of their own inhabitants; your rebellion will destroy the whole religion, which, spread throughout the world, has scattered its people everywhere, and in every city there is a portion of us. All Jews will therefore be involved in your battle, and there will be no region free of our blood. Or, if the Romans are such that they do not persecute Jews even when provoked by war, how unjust it is to make war upon those whose humanity you may hope for! It is good, dearest friends, it is good, while the ship is still in harbour, to foresee the coming storm. Let no one expose himself to imminent dangers, lest, once you have put out into the deep, you can no longer avoid shipwreck. Often, indeed, a storm arises suddenly, and war is encountered even if it is not begun; but there is a difference between provoking an enemy and receiving his attack. He spares more readily when unprovoked, and necessity excuses insolence; but when someone plunges into sheer danger, he is also burdened with reproach. This is not an enemy you can avoid by flight. Wherever you go, danger will follow you; indeed, you will find it there. For all are friends of the Romans, and whoever is outside Roman friendship is the enemy of all. Let love of your homeland enter your minds. If regard for your children and your wives does not restrain you, let the sight of the most sacred temple restrain you. Spare religion at least; spare the most holy priests, whom the Romans will no longer spare, nor the temple itself. They regret having spared them, since all nations have long wished to extinguish our religion; yet Pompey, though he could have extinguished it, spared it. I have omitted nothing; I have given every warning that concerns your safety. I advise you to take the course I choose for myself; consider what is to your advantage. I desire peace with the Roman people for you and for myself. If you refuse, you yourselves deprive yourselves of my alliance. Either we shall share favour, or you shall face danger without me."

[II.9.2] As he said these things he wept, and so did his sister Berenice, for she too was in the upper part of the Xystus. Agrippa had moved them greatly with his tears, so that the Jews said: "We are not rebelling against the Romans, but think that war must be waged against Florus, who has done things that deserve war." Agrippa answered: "But this is to make war upon the Romans; your deeds aim at injuring the Romans. Tribute is being withheld from the Romans, not Florus; from Caesar, not Florus. The soldier in the fortress called Antonia belongs to the Romans, not Florus. You have separated the temple from that fortress by demolishing and cutting off the porticoes, so that the guard should be kept apart. Restore the former state. Let the tribute owed to Caesar be paid to Caesar, lest Florus report that you have repudiated Caesar's rule, not himself."

[II.9.3] The people had agreed to these words: they went up to the temple with Agrippa, began to rebuild the porticoes as they had been, and collected the tribute. Industrious agents were sent for this task, and in a short time the forty talents lacking from the tribute payment were gathered. All the tumult of war had been suppressed, but Agrippa wished to add that they should obey Florus until a successor came to him from Caesar. He so exasperated the people that they did not refrain even from insulting him; when he was driven from the city, it is uncertain whether some struck him with stones they threw. Moved by this injury, the king

had those responsible among them arrested and sent them to Florus. He himself withdrew to his kingdom.

Chapter 10

Online text and commentary

[II.10.1] On his departure, the instigators of war laid an ambush and occupied the fortress of Masada, killing the Roman guards and installing their own. Eleazar too, the son of the chief priest, a man of reckless audacity, urged that no gift or sacrifice from any foreigner should be accepted. This was the trumpet of war against the Romans and roused everyone to tumult.

[II.10.2] All the leading men, therefore, seeing that this would cause a reckless revolt, argued with the people that not only was war being brought upon Caesar, but the institutions of religion were also being violated and reverence for the temple diminished. The traditions of the fathers, who had adorned the temple with foreigners' gifts, were being arraigned and condemned. Its wealth had increased far more through the contributions of the nations and the gifts of diverse and innumerable nations. The ancestors' sacred practices were being obliterated, the sacred rites changed. What would become of the things already given, if gifts from the nations were forbidden to be offered in the same way in future? Or, if the Romans alone were forbidden what everyone else was allowed, what an incitement to war this would be! Lastly, it was impious if only among the Jews were foreigners permitted neither to sacrifice nor to bring gifts. They ought to consider that Caesar's peace would be broken. Offended by such a disturbance, he would undoubtedly deprive the Jews of all practice of sacrifice, so that those who had rejected Caesar's sacrifice would not even sacrifice for themselves. This must be forestalled promptly: if such decisions reached Florus, and thence undoubtedly Caesar, they would bring ruin upon the Jewish nation.

[II.10.3] At the same time, wishing to support these points with the testimony of the priests, they asked whether a sacrifice of the gentiles had ever been rejected by their ancestors. Those bent on sedition raised an uproar to prevent this; not even the attendants dared to intervene in so great a dispute among the contending parties. Only one remedy seemed to remain: that Florus and King Agrippa should come with a military force, so that at least fear might make those desist whom counsel could by no means dissuade. But Florus wished the sedition to increase, so that there would be no room for pardoning the Jews: if they were caught up in war, all opportunity for them to press charges over his plunder and grave offences would be extinguished. He allowed the frenzy of war to grow and gave the envoys no reply. Agrippa, whom the embassy of his kinsmen Cylus, Antipas and Costobarus entreated most earnestly, was benevolent towards all. To preserve the Jews for the Romans, religion for the Jews, the temple for his homeland, the city for its citizens, and for himself the honour of rule and the tranquillity of his kingdom, he sent three thousand cavalry, with Darius and Philip as commanders of the squadrons, so that the advocates of the good cause, relying on this assistance, might exert themselves more readily.

[II.10.4] From this confidence arose among the good and indignation among the wicked. War grew: one side was stirred by a juster cause, which nevertheless gave no help in armed conflict, the other by frenzy and the size of its multitude. The fighters' battle lines were

divided. The chief priests and the portion of the people that desired peace, together with the royal cavalry, occupied the upper part of the city; the others, stationed in the lower parts, claimed for themselves the temple and the places near the sacred precincts. At first they provoked war on both sides with stones, rocks and volleys of missiles, and fought with arrows; afterwards, when the need for combat happened to arise, they came to grips. The royal troops excelled in skill and experience and wished to keep the instigators of war from approaching, lest they defile the temple. Eleazar and his men, by contrast, were intent on invading even the upper city, which was called Zion. Battle was fought for seven days without any interruption.

[II.10.5] The eighth day—a festival day on which everyone was accustomed to lay wood on the altars so that the fire should never fail, since it had to remain unextinguished—increased their frenzy, so that all the attendants were excluded from the temple. As the Sicarii rushed forward more boldly than usual, the royal troops yielded and did not dare to hold their ground even in the upper parts. The houses of Agrippa and Berenice were burned and all the royal furnishings plundered. Fire was carried around, so that even the debt notes stored in the public archives were burned, so that the poor might rise more insolently against their moneylenders. Thinking themselves released from every bond, they set fire to the city with their own hands. The sinews of the city were burned away. The fortress called Antonia was stormed, all the guards found there were killed, and it was afterwards burned.

[II.10.6] Menahem, son of Judas the Galilean, also hastened to Masada. An acute sophist, practised in unsettling affairs, he seized the armouries and armed the unarmed. Returning to Jerusalem with bodyguards attending him in royal fashion, he had become so immensely insolent that, rising above private station, he thought he need not refrain even from unlawful acts that free peoples could not endure. Many rose against him, denouncing him as a tyrant and master who, supported by royal attire, had weighed upon the citizens' freedom. He paid a heavy penalty: tortured first, he died under his torments. Yet war was not removed, for a much graver disturbance arose.

[II.10.7] Finally, Metilius and the Roman soldiers begged leave to depart. A pledge of faith was given and oaths were sworn. When they had laid down their arms according to the agreement and were departing without fear, Eleazar and the members of his faction slaughtered them unavenged. The Roman soldiers thought they should neither resist force nor beg, but cried out only against the violation of faith and the perjury of the faithless. All were therefore killed; Metilius himself, the prefect of the soldiers, alone was spared by pleading and supplication, at the same time promising to become a Jew even to the point of circumcision.

Chapter 11

Online text and commentary

[II.11.1] All Judaea was in flames, and the whole province of Syria too was roused to war. The people of Caesarea killed all the Jews they had among them. Roused by this grief, the Jews attacked very many cities of Syria and rose in revolt. Nowhere was there law, nowhere religion; the man who had plundered more was more highly honoured, as though piling up rewards of valour. It was a pitiable spectacle: unburied bodies lay everywhere in the cities, old men mingled with children, women too, without even coverings left to hide their private parts out of regard for the onlookers' sense of shame. Everything was foul and full of pitiable sights. Although these grievous and wicked cruelties went beyond ghastly horror, they nevertheless threatened one another with still worse. There was monstrous brigandage between Jews and Syrians, since there was no hope of safety unless they forestalled one another. For what city did not contain Jews and Syrians mingled together? Days were passed in blood, nights in fear; neither hatred nor greed had any limit. For besides the differences of sect and worship, which had erupted into a public calamity so that each side wished the other destroyed, greed for possessions and the desire to plunder had seized their minds. They thought that no one should be spared whom they had assigned to death in their pursuit of plunder.

[II.11.2] Why speak of smaller numbers of the slain? For, apart from the people of Antioch, Sidon and Apamea, scarcely any people failed to persecute the Jews living among them. The people of Gerasa, however, even escorted those who wished to leave as far as their own borders, so that they might depart without any treachery.

[II.11.3] At Alexandria, however, a dispute arose between gentiles and Jews. When the Hebrews demanded vengeance and, seizing torches, threatened to burn the gentile people gathered in the amphitheatre, they drew the attention of Alexander Tiberius, the prefect of the place, who was occupied with other concerns, towards themselves. At first, indeed, he tried to restore public concord with peaceful words.

[II.11.4] But when he perceived that they mocked his earnest warnings and that so great a sedition could not be removed in any other way, he gave the soldiers permission to attack them. Attacking those crowded around, they made a very great slaughter throughout the city, killing some as they resisted, others as they hid in their houses. No pity for small children, no reverence for the aged, no regard for women came over them. Fifty thousand Jews were therefore killed. The streets swam in blood; everything was filled with corpses. Flames crackled in a savage fire throughout the city: kindled in the Jews' houses, they also devoured the neighbouring buildings. At last Alexander relented and ordered the soldiers to desist and sound the retreat, but the mob's anger, once it had gained the power to kill, was by no means assuaged.

Chapter 12

Online text and commentary

[II.12.1] For they were paying the penalties for their own crimes: after crucifying Jesus, the arbiter of divine things, they went on to persecute his disciples. Yet many Jews and very many gentiles believed in him, drawn by his moral precepts and by an outpouring of works beyond human capacity. For them not even his death put an end to faith or grace; rather, it increased their devotion. They therefore laid murderous hands on their own kin and led the author of life to Pilate to be killed, and began to press the reluctant judge. Yet Pilate is not excused by this; the Jews' madness is compounded, since he ought not to have condemned a man against whom he had found no guilt, nor ought they to have doubled their sacrilege with the murder of kin, so that the one who had offered himself to redeem and heal them was slaughtered by them. On this the Jews themselves also bear witness, since Josephus, the writer of histories, says that at that time there had been a wise man—"if indeed," he says, "the creator of marvellous works ought to be called a man"—who had appeared alive to his disciples three days after his death, according to the writings of the prophets, who foretold both these and countless other things about him full of wonder. From him arose the congregation of Christians, and it spread into every race of humankind; no nation of the Roman world remained that had no share in his worship. If the Jews do not believe us, let them at least believe their own. Josephus said this, whom they themselves esteem the greatest; yet even in the very thing in which he spoke the truth, he was so errant in mind that he did not believe even his own words. He spoke for the sake of the faithfulness of his history, because he thought deception impious; he did not believe because of hardness of heart and obstinacy in faithlessness. Yet his failure to believe does not prejudice the truth; rather, it added more to the testimony, because, even unbelieving and unwilling, he did not deny it. In this the eternal power of Christ Jesus shone forth: even the leaders of the synagogue acknowledged as God the one they had seized for death. And indeed he spoke as God, making no exceptions for anyone and fearing no death, and announced that the temple too would be destroyed. Yet they were moved not by the injury to the temple but by his rebukes for their outrages and sacrileges. Hence their anger blazed up, so that they killed one such as no age had possessed. For while others had won by prayer the ability to do what they did, he had the power to command whatever he wished to be done.

[II.12.2] Before Jesus' death, John the Baptist had been killed, a holy man who never held that true salvation lay in prosperity. Indeed, in addition to all the things full of righteousness that he taught, by which he invited the Jews to worship God, he had also instituted baptism for the purification of soul and body. His freedom of speech caused his death, because he could not endure Herod's violation of his brother's marriage rights and his taking his own brother's wife away. For when this same Herod was going to Rome, he entered his brother's house as a guest. His brother's wife was Herodias, daughter of Aristobulus and sister of King Agrippa. Forgetful of nature, he dared to solicit her to leave his brother and marry him when he returned from the city of Rome; with the woman's consent an incestuous compact was made. News of this affair reached King Aretas's daughter, who was still married to Herod. Indignant at a rival, she conveyed to her husband on his return her wish to be sent to the

town of Machaerus, on the frontier between the Petraean king and Herod. He suspected nothing. Moreover, since all his affection for her had already waned, he agreed to her departure, so that he might more easily keep faith with Herodias in their compact if he sent his wife away. But when she approached her father's kingdom, she disclosed what she had learnt to her father Aretas. By an ambush he destroyed Herod's whole army, which had been drawn into battle, through betrayal by those who had joined Herod from the people of Philip the tetrarch. Herod therefore brought his complaint to Caesar, but God's indignation prevented the vengeance ordered by Caesar, for in the midst of the preparations for war Caesar's death was reported. We find that the Jews judged and believed this, with Josephus as a competent authority against himself: Herod had lost his army not through human deceit but through God's anger, and justly indeed, in vengeance for John the Baptist, a righteous man who had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have that woman as your wife." [6]

[II.12.3] Yet we are weaving this account as though the Jews had kept lawful usages even among their own, when among them the right of the high priesthood had perished, destroyed either by greed or by the insolence of the more powerful, who thought that whatever they wished to do was lawful. For at the beginning Aaron was high priest, and in accordance with God's will he transmitted the prerogative of the priesthood to his sons by lawful anointing. From them, in order of succession, were appointed those who held the primacy of the priesthood. Hence it became established by ancestral custom that no one should become chief priest unless he was of Aaron's blood, since the right to this kind of priesthood had first been conferred upon him; a man of another lineage, even a king, could not lawfully succeed. Thus Uzziah, because he usurped the priestly office, was covered with leprosy and cast out of the temple, and spent the rest of his life without rule. He was certainly an excellent king, but he was not permitted to usurp religious office.

Chapter 13

Online text and commentary

[II.13.1] From the fathers' departure from Egypt to the building of the temple founded by Solomon there were therefore thirteen chief priests, amounting to six hundred and twelve years, since at first the man who was chief priest remained so until death and no one was substituted in the place of the living. Later men were appointed in their place even while they lived. These thirteen, then, obtained the priesthood by succession; in their times there were aristocracy, the monarchy of judges and the power of kings. Again, from Solomon to the time of the captivity, when the people migrated into Syria after the city was captured and the temple burned, there were eighteen chief priests over four hundred and sixty years, six months and ten days. The people were in captivity for seventy years. Afterwards Cyrus, when he released the people from the region of the Assyrians and gave them permission to build the temple, also allowed the chief priest Josedec, who had been carried away with them, to return, so that the observance of the old rite might be restored through an experienced priest's knowledge. He himself and his successors, fifteen men in number, fulfilled the office in order of succession from the people's return to Antiochus Eupator, and held the primacy of the priesthood for four hundred and fourteen years. Antiochus, whom we mentioned above, and his commander Lysias first appointed Jacimus to the priesthood in place of the chief priest Onias, whom they had killed. Although he was of Aaron's line, he was not of that same house. Ananias, the brother of Onias, therefore went to Egypt and petitioned Ptolemy Philometor—who had introduced rites of observance modelled on the solemn worship at Jerusalem into the religious practices of the city of Alexandria—and Cleopatra, Philometor's wife, to be appointed chief priest there, since Jacimus did not have the lawful succession to the priesthood. Yet this same man died after three years; he who had abolished the observance of lawful succession did not deserve to have a successor. The city was therefore without a chief priest for seven years. Up to this point in the period of the fathers' return from the land of the Assyrians, it had maintained democracy, because the Jewish people recognised that it had been led into captivity through the wickedness of kings. Afterwards the Hasmoneans obtained the power to govern the people and appointed Jonathan chief priest. Having discharged the office he had received for seven years, he met his end through Tryphon's treachery. His own brother Simon succeeded in his place, as though by hereditary right, yet by election. We have learnt that he was killed at a banquet through his son-in-law's treachery. From him the prerogative of the priesthood passed to his son Hyrcanus, whom flight had rescued from danger. Hyrcanus was succeeded by Aristobulus, who also added kingship to the office just mentioned so that he shared in both; Aristobulus was succeeded by Alexander. Both kingship and priesthood remained with Alexander until the last day of his life, for twenty-seven years, though often in an uncertain state: victory hung in the balance between him and Demetrius, and the citizens' hatred was immense.

[II.13.2] As he was dying, Alexander saw that the hatred he had incurred would be a dangerous inheritance for his sons. He wished his wife Alexandra to take the helm of the kingdom: she was trained by experience of rule and the habit of shared counsel, yet more

favoured by the people, because she had often protected those endangered by her husband's cruelty and restrained her husband. At the same time he appointed her to decide which of his sons in particular should be entrusted with the high priesthood. She put Hyrcanus in his father's place in the priesthood, either because of the prerogative of his greater age or because, being of a gentler disposition than his brother, he seemed unlikely to cause his mother any trouble over the affairs of the kingdom. She entrusted no public office to Aristobulus, but even while his mother lived he took advantage of her illness to play the king in remote and more strongly fortified places. Offended by this and anxious over Hyrcanus's complaints, his mother aggravated her illness. Her rule lasted no more than nine years, and she left Hyrcanus heir to everything, not because she expected him to keep it, but so as not to help an unworthy man or encourage a usurper's insolence by a more favourable judgement.

[II.13.3] But Alexandra's death also took the priesthood and kingship from Hyrcanus. Defeated in war, he withdrew to more strongly fortified places and detained Aristobulus's wife and children, whom he had found in the fortress. He welcomed a change of status: all power and the priesthood were to pass to Aristobulus, while he himself, as a private citizen, was to withdraw to Aristobulus's house.

[II.13.4] Yet he did not long remain content to have exchanged the royal palace for a private house. Stirred by Antipater, he first made for Arabia, as though protesting the injustice of the agreement. Then, when he saw that the Arab king's assistance was weak against the Romans, whom Aristobulus had enticed into his alliance through Scaurus, he brought his complaint to Pompey as he approached.

[II.13.5] Aristobulus, now in the third year of his rule, was evading Pompey. Pompey assailed him in war, seized him by his authority and placed him under guard before victory. After overcoming his people and taking the city, he ordered Aristobulus himself to be sent captive to Rome with his sons, restored the dignity of the priesthood to Hyrcanus, and appointed him to preside over the citizens, but without a diadem or the insignia of kingship. He was generous in honour but concerned for quiet, lest peace be disturbed by the spirit of Aristobulus's insolence. Thus Aristobulus, though captive, stripped Hyrcanus of kingship; Hyrcanus afterwards spent twenty-four years in power, greater in practice than in name.

[II.13.6] Yet the end of Hyrcanus's power was not the end of his life. The rest of his life was spent in dishonour, as we mentioned above. Defeated in battle as the Parthians crossed the Euphrates, he was captured and put into the power of Antigonus, Aristobulus's son. Even with his ears cut off, he had not yet endured the full bitterness of his pitiable suffering. For after these events he was also carried into exile in Parthia, a feeble old man who became a laughing-stock for the barbarians. Later, on learning that Herod ruled, to whom his granddaughter Mariamme was married, he returned to Judaea. There he was at first received with the greatest show of honour, so that a veil might be drawn over the plots; not long afterwards he was killed on the fabricated charge that he wished to regain power.

[II.13.7] Herod had thus obtained the kingdom, which he had received from the Romans as the reward for attacking or betraying his homeland. In the place of Antigonus, who had held power for three years and three months, he appointed successors to the priesthood, not men

of the Hasmonean lineage, whom we have learnt to have been of more illustrious ancestry, but any obscure men whom his whim or chance offered. Yet, worn down by the entreaties of his mother-in-law Alexandra, or frightened by her accusations, he appointed Jonathan, his wife's brother, a young man of seventeen, as priest. Soon he himself put him to death, suspecting him of seeking rule, because each day he saw immense favour for him growing among the whole people. Passing over Anhelus, whom he had already appointed to the priesthood from among the obscure before Jonathan, he then chose the rest in succession, men of such a kind that he had nothing to suspect of them. For how would he not guard against in strangers what he had been unable to endure in a relative by marriage? Archelaus followed similar practices in such appointments: under the guise of his father's custom he maintained the outlook of a narrower mind, following a sort of habit innate in mortals, among whom the sluggishness of duller men arouses less suspicion than the favour enjoyed by good men. Yet a weak mind is more insolent in prosperity, while a wiser one knows how to repay benefits.

[II.13.8] Thus from Herod's reign to Roman rule, which had added Judaea to the other provinces after Archelaus was deposed, and thence to the destruction of the temple and the triumph of Titus, there were twenty-eight chief priests over a hundred and seventy years. Most of them, indeed, only discharged the duties of the dignity; a few also held the right to exercise power. It is therefore clear that succession from the lawful lineage did not continue among the chief priests, for not all were descended from Aaron or from his sons, who were put in his place and left for the others the pattern of the prescribed succession. Thus, when the ancestors' institutions had been corrupted by the greed or faithlessness of their own people, the laws of religion violated and the safeguards of antiquity torn apart, divine aid abandoned them not undeservedly. They were consequently assailed with every kind of injury as a people left defenceless: in domestic seditions they turned their hands against themselves, were afflicted by grievous brigandage, and received the vilest judges as their lot, so that men worse still succeeded the wicked.

[II.13.9] Albinus, indeed, was regarded as the worst of the earlier governors, but with Florus as his successor he was ranked among the good. Florus raised the torch of war and kindled battle between the Romans and the Jews, which caused the final destruction of the temple and the city.

Chapter 14

Online text

[II.14.1] For when Cestius, who had received supreme military command in the regions of Syria from the Romans, learnt that the Jews were ablaze with the fury of war, he took up arms in the twelfth year of Nero's reign to avenge the killing of the Roman soldiers who had been entrusted with the duty of restraining insolence and preserving peace. Having gathered the allies' auxiliaries too, he entered Judaea. The inhabitants of the city named Zabulon had scattered in fear, leaving it full of riches which their owners had been unable to carry with them when they fled to the higher parts of the mountains. He allowed his army to plunder it. He also admired the beauty of its public works and ordered it to be burned.

[II.14.2] As though this were too little for vengeance, he sent his army ahead to prevent anyone from escaping destruction by flight and seized Joppa, the men he had sent breaking in by land and sea. Eight thousand men and nearly four hundred more were killed; once its spoils had been plundered, the city was burned. He also laid waste the country near Caesarea, plundered what he found and burned the villages.

[II.14.3] Sepphoris checked his onslaught, for all its inhabitants came out to meet Cestius. Soothed by their favour and goodwill, he left the city free from disaster. A band of brigands was active in these parts, but on the army's arrival they had withdrawn to the mountains. They boldly attacked and harried Gallus, commander of the twelfth unit, as he advanced to battle, killing about two hundred Romans. But when the Romans occupied the higher ground, the brigands could not withstand the infantry at close quarters; as they fled, the cavalry easily surrounded and killed them. More than two thousand were therefore slain, and a few were put to flight who managed to hide in the steep parts of the mountains. The whole region was cleared of brigandage.

[II.14.4] Gallus returned to Caesarea; Cestius marched to Antipatris with his whole force. There the Jews had massed no small multitude. But before they joined battle, they scattered in different directions, leaving the countryside and villages to plunder and fire.

[II.14.5] Lydda too was found empty of inhabitants and burned. Gabao, which lay fifty stades from Jerusalem and was plainly visible, roused the Jews to arms when it received the Roman army. Disregarding the celebration of the Sabbath, which they solemnised with ancient worship and customary observance, they sprang upon the Romans with such force that they would have routed the whole army had the cavalry not come to the aid of the hard-pressed infantry. Five hundred and fifteen Romans were killed, but all had been in grave danger; twenty-two of the Jews were lost in battle. Here the valour of Monobazus and Cenedaeus shone forth. On learning that the Jews were rising against the Roman battle lines, they attacked from the front, drove back many and forced them to return to the city.

Chapter 15

Online text and commentary

[II.15.1] Simon too stripped the Romans of their baggage as they advanced up towards the city. For this reason Cestius remained in the district for three days. During this delay the enemy surrounded them and, stationed on higher ground, watched every approach so that no one could break in with impunity.

[II.15.2] King Agrippa, seeing that this could not be attempted without great slaughter on both sides, sent his men Borcius and Phoebus to tell the people that whatever outrage they had committed against the Romans could be pardoned, if only they would lay down their arms and take thought for their safety in future. He judged that he should either persuade them all to renounce battle or detach a portion from the rest. The rebels, by contrast, fearing that one or other of these aims might succeed, attacked the envoys and killed Phoebus; Borcius was wounded and barely managed to escape.

[II.15.3] Seeing disputes of this kind in the city, in which some rose against the envoys while others urged that the Romans should be received into the city, Cestius tried to force his way in. He drove those who resisted back as far as Jerusalem, and himself approached with his army to within three stades of the city. He spent three days there; on the fourth he attacked, entered Bethesda and immediately burned it, along with Caenopolis. As he pressed on towards the upper parts of the city and the rebels fled further inside, had he decided to force his way into the city, the whole war would undoubtedly have been ended.

[II.15.4] Indeed, Ananus son of Jonathan had stationed many men to call out invitations to the Romans as though they were about to open the gates. But while Cestius was either being held back by Priscus and many centurions, who had been bribed by Florus and wanted the war to grow, or placed too little trust in the invitation, Ananus and his men were driven from the wall. When they fled to their homes, the rebels occupied their position. For five days the Romans tried different approaches. When they saw that they could not force an entry, they selected the strongest men and the archers and attacked the temple from the northern side. The Jews were not idle either: they fought bravely and grew prouder as they repeatedly drove back the enemy. At last, however, some were wounded by the multitude of arrows, others struck and terrified, and they yielded to the Romans, who had begun to undermine the wall and set fire to the temple gate.

[II.15.5] Great fear had come upon the rebels, and a kind of bewilderment of mind. Many fled as though escaping the city's imminent destruction. By not daring to stand their ground, they had given confidence to the people: with the departure of those whose multitude had hemmed them in, they now felt free and released from a sort of siege by the wicked. They poured around the gates to open them and receive Cestius as though he had come to defend the city, not to attack it. But Cestius himself was also suddenly seized by a kind of stupor, so that he noticed neither the desperation of the wicked nor the eagerness of the common people. Had he persisted a little longer in what he had begun, he would have put an end to the war and captured the city. But, as far as we are allowed to understand, God's will, hostile to the Jews, postponed the imminent end of the war until ruin should engulf very many, indeed almost all, of the Jewish nation. The wait, I think, was for the enormity of their crimes to grow into every kind of wickedness and, with the increase of impiety, to reach the full measure of the worst outrages.

[II.15.6] How was it that, when he ought to have pressed hard, Cestius suddenly recalled his army and raised the siege? This sudden change of circumstances, contrary to expectation, broke the spirits of the good, while the brigands took heart and gained confidence. Turning from flight to pursuit, they attacked the rear of the column and slaughtered many cavalry and infantry there as they rushed about in confusion. The day was already declining. Cestius therefore feared the approach of night and the gloom of darkness, on which men who knew the country would rely all the more to press from every side upon those unfamiliar with the region. He built a rampart outside the city. On the following day, by withdrawing from the enemy, he roused them to arms against himself, so that they took fear to be the cause of his departure. Surrounding the Romans on the flanks and from behind, they killed the rearmost men and harassed the marching army with javelins. A mass of missiles hurled into closely

packed ranks did not easily miss its mark. If anyone dared to strike back, he exposed himself to a wound; if anyone turned against his assailant, he was left by his own men and surrounded by the enemy. The pursuer is always better protected than the man ahead of him: the one covers his breast, while the other exposes his back to the enemy. Thus the Romans, who had come to besiege, were pressed hard as though themselves besieged. They could no longer hold out or endure. They were weighed down by their own arms, while the enemy were swifter and not easy to overtake; their greatest fear was that their line might be broken. Under these unequal conditions of combat they could not harm the enemy, although they themselves suffered grievously. Cestius hesitated, uncertain what to do, as he saw his men being worn down all along the route and many of his senior officers already stricken. He halted for two days, as though to restore the weary men. But he saw the number of the enemy growing more and more, the whole surrounding country full of adversaries, and his delay working against him because more were gathering. On the third day, seeking a quicker and easier passage, he ordered the column's baggage to be removed.

[II.15.7] The beasts of burden were killed, most of the wagons smashed, and other things of this kind, which in danger were more a burden than a help, were destroyed or hurled down, including siege equipment and kinds of missiles. Such things caused them all the greater fear, lest they arm the enemy against themselves with their own resources. When the Jews noticed that the Romans were preparing for flight rather than war, they occupied the narrower parts of the route, pressed less hard where the ground opened out, barred their way in front, hemmed them in at the sides and pressed them from behind. They drove them towards a precipice, down which they were thrown, hemmed in on all sides or losing their footing. Many covered the sky with javelins and the column with arrows, never slackening in their task, while only their opponents suffered destruction. By now even the infantry could no longer hold out. The cavalry were in greater danger: they tumbled down over steep and slippery rocks as their horses lost their footing, and could not keep their ranks, impeded by the narrow path. A cliff on one side and precipices on the other denied them room either to flee or to defend themselves. The Jews, by contrast, were fired all the more by the hope of victory. They bore down on the weary, pressed those who were stuck and mocked those in despair. They would have destroyed almost all the forces of the Roman army had night not come to its aid, its darkness obstructing battle. The Romans spent the night at a nearby place named Bethoron, while the Jews surrounded them on every side and watched the exits to prevent the Romans from slipping away.

[II.15.8] Cestius, despairing of an open passage, tried to escape by deceit. He therefore selected forty men in whom despair of escape had instilled contempt for death. He stationed them in the fortifications and ordered them to carry out their watch duties throughout the night, making as much noise as possible around the rampart. No preparations for the army's departure were to be revealed to the Jews by the usual signs through which men in confusion commonly betray themselves. All the rest were to leave in silence, while the Jews suspected nothing: hearing the customary noises of the guards, they would think that all the Romans remained in position. By this deception Cestius led out his army, and had already covered thirty stades, relying in uncertain circumstances on the faithfulness of a few. These men, facing death, preferred to make a free gift of their peril to their comrades rather than waste

it. Night had concealed the deceit, but day revealed it. When the light spread, the situation became clear and the whole place where the Romans had been appeared empty. The Jews attacked first those whose pretended duties had deceived them. After killing the forty men with little difficulty, they pursued the army, which had covered a great distance during the night and pressed on still more quickly by day, lest it again become entangled in the dangers of night. The road was full of baggage which the fleeing Romans abandoned so that no one would be delayed beneath an excessive load. Vessels, utensils and even things necessary for war lay everywhere: ballistae, battering rams and the other equipment brought to destroy the city. The pursuing Jews passed them by lest they cause delay; on their return they gathered them to use against those who had abandoned them. They pursued as far as the city of Antipatris. When they found that the whole Roman army had passed beyond it and their hope of overtaking it had vanished, they turned back, gathered the spoils of the slain and returned to Jerusalem in triumph and with hymns. So great was their joy: with few of their own lost, five thousand three hundred infantry and three hundred and eighty cavalry of the Roman army had been killed. This took place in the twelfth year of Nero's reign, as we mentioned above.

Chapter 16

Online text and commentary

[II.16.1] But not all the Jews shared that exultation. After what had been not a battle for Cestius but a calamity, there were some who longed to rescue themselves as though from the ultimate danger of a sinking ship and swim clear of the city's shipwreck. Foremost among them were the brothers Custobarus and Saul, with Philip, the commander of King Agrippa's army. They fled to Cestius and asked to be sent to Nero in Achaea. Cestius welcomed them willingly and did not refuse their request, so that through them Caesar might be told that Florus had been the cause of the war; that he himself had undertaken a war of the utmost necessity; and that the army had been surrounded by an unexpected multitude of conspirators, though it was clear that the commander's judgement had rescued it from danger rather than entangled it. They were to say that Cestius had tried to calm the hatred aroused against Florus but had been unable to do so, and had therefore encountered war, not begun it. These were their instructions: by arousing all Caesar's indignation against Florus, he hoped to lessen Caesar's displeasure with himself, which he greatly feared because he knew how badly events had been managed.

[II.16.2] Many were so terrified by the defeat of the Roman army that the people of Damascus, fearing the taint of a suspected alliance because they shared a place of residence, killed the Jews who inhabited the city with them and had been gathered in the gymnasium. The Damascenes had arranged this long before, whether from suspicion or deceit: the Jews were to be separated from the gatherings of the gentiles, lest they attempt an uprising by night, or so that they alone would be exposed to destruction. It was all kept in the deepest secrecy, so that discussion of this undertaking should not reach even their own wives, since the women too, for the most part, participated in Jewish worship.

Chapter 17

Online text and commentary

[II.17.1] They therefore attacked them all in the confined space and killed ten thousand Jews. It was easy for unarmed men, taken by surprise by armed men, to perish. A recent example of this savagery had gone still further at Scythopolis, and I think it incited the Damascenes. For when the Jews were laying waste all the neighbouring places, they came to Scythopolis. They tried to win over the Jews living there, but found enemies in those whom they had thought faithful to them, because, as is the way of human nature, concern for safety outweighed the bond of kinship among them. Putting fellowship with their tribe in second place, they preferred association with their fellow inhabitants and threatened their tribesmen with slaughter. This aroused the gentiles' suspicion, for hostility against their own people was being displayed with such ready zeal. They feared that a trap was being prepared under a pretence, and that the Jews would attack the city by night when its inhabitants were less watchful, strike down all the gentiles and regain favour for themselves among the Jews. Therefore, if they wished to prove their faith even towards the gentiles, they were to leave the city with all their families and go to the neighbouring grove. When this was done, the people of Scythopolis remained quiet for two days so that the Jewish group would lay aside suspicion and assume a sense of safety. On the third night, when their trust in assumed goodwill had removed their concern to keep watch, force was brought against them while they were unsuspecting and asleep. Thirteen thousand people were killed, and everything they possessed was plundered.

Chapter 18

Online text and commentary

[II.18.1] Simon's suffering demands an account: bitter to see and pitiable to hear, yet memorable for the unusual nature of the event. He was one of the Jewish people, born of Saul, a father of no mean standing. Endowed with boldness of spirit and strength of body, he exercised both to destroy his own tribesmen. In repeated attacks he killed very many of the Jews who had come from elsewhere. If they happened to come against him in a united body, he was accustomed to withstand their battle line alone and drive back their massed ranks. He was the knot that held up the whole battle, and often brought a reversal when the situation was desperate. As a resident of Scythopolis he rendered this military service to his fellow citizens against his own people. But the vengeance owed to kindred blood was not long delayed. For when the people of Scythopolis broke faith, surrounded those who had gone to the grove by agreement and began to press and assail them in war, they destroyed the rest of the multitude and attacked even Simon's children and parents, though from a distance, with missiles and weapons. Simon saw the countless multitude gaining an easy advantage, so that it could not be withstood much longer. He drew his sword, turned towards the enemy and cried out: "People of Scythopolis, I receive what my deeds deserve. By killing my kinsmen I testified to the goodwill I bestowed upon you, and I gave the blood of my brothers as a pledge of your favour, though faithlessness would more justly be ascribed to you. Now, by keeping faith with foreigners, I have failed to keep it with my own. I have also betrayed my children and parents; yet you ought not to have killed them, if you had considered the reward for my crime. I shall therefore die, angry with everyone, a friend to no one, since I have betrayed my own people; and with my own hands I shall first exact vengeance upon myself. I have killed the companions of my religion and those who shared my faith; I recognise the debt of my crime. I shall pay with a murder of kin worthy of so great a sacrilege, so that this may be both punishment for my outrage and glory for my valour, lest anyone else boast of wounding my family. Afterwards my right hand will turn against myself, so that my death may be seen to come from madness, not weakness. Let no one mock me as I fall. Let madness avenge the murder of kin, and the murder of kin avenge sacrilege." Having said this, he turned his gaze upon his children and parents. With indignant eyes, as pity mingled with anger was already coming upon him, he seized his father from their midst and ran him through with his sword. After him his mother was dragged forward, so that there would be no one to intercede for her grandchildren. His wife willingly offered herself next, so that she would not survive the fall of so great a husband. His children came forward, lest in death itself they be judged unworthy of so great a father. He hastened to forestall the enemy with swift strokes. When he had killed his whole family, he stood amid the corpses of his own people, as though he had triumphed over his family affections because he had seen none of his own die by another's sword. He raised his right hand so that everyone could see and, mastering the death that was terrible to all, ran himself through with his own sword as a victor. He was a memorable young man for his outstanding bodily strength and greatness of spirit; but because he gave his faith to foreigners rather than to his own people, he deserved such an end. [7]

BOOK III

Chapter 1

Online text and commentary

[III.1.1] When these events were reported to Nero, who was in the regions of Achaea, where he had gone to practise tragic songs so that he might carry off a theatrical crown from many rivals—one cannot tell which was more shameful: that an emperor appeared on stage, or that he filled the stage with his crimes, disgracing Orestes by his singing and re-enacting him by murdering his own kin—great fear seized him. He dreaded not those imitations offered by the games but the gravest dangers of war. Thus at last he recovered his senses from the obscenity of theatrical pleasures and the frenzy of his madness for the murder of kin. Turning to the concerns of the commonwealth, he growled and raged within himself that the Roman commonwealth had suffered so great a disaster through its commander's negligence rather than its adversaries' valour. He tried indeed to feign boldness, but fear gave him the lie. He also tried to put on an appearance of greatness of spirit, as though his mind stood above the distress of events, but he was racked with anxiety over whom to choose as commander to wipe away the disgrace and bring the war to an end.

[III.1.2] The final destruction awaiting Judaea pressed upon it, so that Nero put on a king's role and pronounced a sound judgement in the voice of a far-sighted counsellor: Vespasian alone was the man to whom supreme military command in the regions of the East could rightly be entrusted. He was a man seasoned from youth in triumphant military service; he had settled in lasting peace the unquiet regions of Gaul, which had fallen back into war through German unrest and the ferocity of native rashness. Britain too, still hidden amid the waves, he had acquired by arms for the Roman dominion. Through the wealth of conquered Britain, Rome was thought richer, Claudius wiser in counsel and Nero braver. Thus they had celebrated trophies over subjugated nations whose wars they had not seen. Under this commander, I say again, Nero was terrible, Nero was to be feared, powerful abroad, safe at home, with Vespasian's faithfulness and courage equally matched. How great was this man, whose arms concealed Nero's vices among foreign nations, so that this mockery of human affairs and disgrace of emasculated impurity was even made illustrious by triumphs!

[III.1.3] Thus, when battle had to be fought at the farthest borders of the Roman world, Vespasian was chosen from all men; when war had been laid aside, Vespasian above all others was taken as a companion, so that no public enemy should remain and no domestic conspirator creep in. Worthy to anticipate kingship through his military service, he taught faithfulness and displayed valour. Nero sent him unwillingly, depriving himself of his protection, but the coming punishments for his crimes constrained him to leave himself unarmed, parted from so great a commander's company. Galba would certainly never have undertaken his bid for imperial power had he not learnt that Vespasian was absent. But God arranged for a man to be sent to Syria who would both break the insolence of the Jews by the final destruction of their nation and the disgrace of captivity, and leave Nero without aid, although no man's valour can impede heaven's decrees. Yet the madman, on learning that a

strong force of the Roman army had been crushed in the Jewish war, rose up against the Christians, so that the end he deserved drew near.

Chapter 2

Online text and commentary

[III.2.1] At that time Peter and Paul, teachers of the Christians, were in Rome, distinguished in their works and renowned for their teaching. By the power of their works they had made Nero their enemy; he was captivated by the blandishments of Simon the magus, who had won his favour. Simon promised him, through deadly arts, aid in victory, the subjugation of nations, length of life and the safeguarding of his health; and Nero believed him, not knowing how to examine the nature of things. Indeed, Simon held the highest place in his friendship, since Nero even regarded him as the guardian of his health and keeper of his life. But when Peter exposed his empty pretensions and crimes, and showed that he counterfeited the appearances of things and accomplished nothing substantial or true, Simon became an object of mockery and was consumed by well-deserved grief. Although he had experienced Peter's power in other parts of the world, he nevertheless reached Rome first and dared to boast that he could raise the dead. At that time a noble young man, a relative of Caesar, had died in Rome, to the grief of everyone. Many urged an attempt to see whether he could be raised. Peter was held to be most renowned for these works, but among the pagans no belief was accorded to deeds of this kind. Grief demanded a remedy; they went to Peter. There were some who thought Simon too should be summoned. Both came. Peter told Simon, who boasted of his own power, that he was giving him the first turn to raise the dead man if he could. If Simon did not raise him, Peter himself would not fail to do his part, so that Christ might bring aid to the dead man and enable him to rise. Simon, thinking that his arts would have the greatest power in a city of pagans, proposed a condition: if he himself raised the dead man, Peter should be killed for having insulted the Great Power—for that was what Simon was called—by challenging him; but if Peter prevailed, the same punishment should be inflicted on Simon. Peter agreed; Simon began. He approached the dead man's bed and began to utter incantations and mutter baleful spells. The dead man appeared to move his head. A great shout rose from the pagans that he was already alive and was speaking with Simon. Anger and indignation turned against Peter for having dared to measure himself against so great a power. Then the holy apostle called for silence and said: "If the dead man is alive, let him speak; if he has been raised, let him rise, walk and talk." The apparent movement of his head, he said, was a phantom, not reality. Then he said, "Let Simon be removed from the bed"; not even that apparent movement would then be seen. Simon was led away from the bed; the dead man remained without any appearance of movement. Peter stood farther away and, after briefly attending to prayer within himself, said in a loud voice: "Young man, rise: the Lord Jesus heals you." And immediately the young man rose and spoke and walked and took food, and Peter gave him to his mother. When Peter was asked not to leave him, he said: "He will not be abandoned by the one who made him rise again, whose servants we are. Be at ease, mother, about your son; do not be afraid: he has his own guardian." When the people rose against Simon to stone him, Peter said: "It is punishment enough for him to know that his arts have no power. Let him live and see Christ's kingdom grow, even against his will." The magus was tormented by the apostle's glory. He collected himself and called forth all the power of his spells. He gathered the people and said that the Galilaeans had offended him and that he would leave the city he had been accustomed to

protect. He fixed a day and promised a flight that would carry him to the seats on high, declaring that heaven lay open to him whenever he wished. On the appointed day he climbed the Capitoline hill and, casting himself from the rock, began to fly. The people marvelled, and many venerated him, saying that he was the power of God, not a man, since he flew about in his body, and that Christ had done nothing of the kind. Then Peter, standing in their midst, said: "Lord Jesus, show him that his arts are vain, lest these people, who are going to believe, be deceived by this appearance. Let him fall, Lord, but so that, while still alive, he may recognise that he had no power." And immediately, at Peter's words, the oarage of the wings he had put on became entangled, and he fell. He did not die, but went off to Aricia with a broken and crippled leg and died there. On learning this, Nero grieved that he had been deceived and left without support by the fall of so great a friend. Indignant at being deprived of a man useful and necessary to the commonwealth, he began to seek reasons for killing Peter. The time had now come for the holy apostles Peter and Paul to be called. Indeed, when the order had been given for their arrest, Peter was being asked to go elsewhere. He resisted, saying that he would by no means withdraw as though terrified by fear of death; that it was good to suffer for Christ, who had offered himself to death for all; and that this would not be death but immortality. How unworthy for him to flee the suffering of his own body! He had urged many through his teaching to offer themselves as sacrificial victims for Christ; according to the Lord's word, it was his due also to give glory and honour to Christ in his own suffering. Peter wove together these arguments and others, but the people sought with tears that he should not leave them or abandon them as they were tossed amid the storms of the pagans. Overcome by their weeping, Peter yielded and promised to leave the city. The next night, after taking leave of the brethren and offering prayer, he began to depart alone. When he came to the gate, he saw Christ approaching him and, worshipping him, said: "Lord, where are you coming to?" Christ said to him: "I am coming to be crucified again." Peter understood that this was said of his own suffering: Christ would be seen to suffer in him, as he suffers in each individual, certainly not through bodily pain but through a kind of merciful sharing in suffering or through the celebration of glory. He turned and went back into the city. Seized by the persecutors and sentenced to the cross, he asked to be fixed to it with his feet turned upwards, because he was unworthy to be fixed to the cross in the same way as the Son of God had suffered. This was granted, either because it was due, as Christ had foretold, or because the persecutor is not unwilling to grant an increase in punishment. Both he and Paul were killed, one by the cross, the other by the sword.

Chapter 3

Online text and commentary

[III.3.1] But to return to our subject: Nero, disturbed by the grave news that affairs in Judaea had gone less than prosperously, placed Vespasian, a man experienced in war, in command of all the army in Syria. Vespasian acted swiftly, for there was no time for delay. He sent his son Titus to Alexandria to bring away part of the troops stationed there, while he himself crossed the Hellespontic strait and made for Syria on foot.

[III.3.2] Meanwhile the Jews, elated by their favourable circumstances, chose commanders for the war. They assigned the places over which each was to preside and the duties each was to

perform. They placed Josephus, born of Gorion, and Ananus, the chief priest, in charge of the affairs of the city of Jerusalem, and especially of restoring its walls. Eleazar son of Simon burned to have some public office entrusted to him. Although he had brought under his own control all the spoils they had taken from the Roman army, especially rich and abundant spoils heaped up by Cestius's greed and excessive plunder, they judged him more intent on establishing power for himself than on serving the common interest and decided to pass him over. But gradually, by courting individuals, giving and lavishing gifts, he contrived to have supreme control of all affairs entrusted to his judgement.

[III.3.3] Jesus, one of the priests, and Eleazar, a priest's son, were also appointed commanders and entrusted with the defence of Idumaea, while reserving every prerogative in matters of the highest importance to Niger, the leader of all Idumaea. Jericho fell to Josephus son of Simon. Manasseh was entrusted with the region of Perea, situated beyond the Euphrates; it was given its name because those travelling to that region crossed the Euphrates. John Essaeus, another John, the son of Ananias, and the rest were assigned to various districts, which they were to defend with their care.

[III.3.4] Thus each kept to the duties entrusted to him, building walls and levying a force for war. Among them Josephus, going down into Galilee, diligently took care to fortify strongholds, restore defences and enlist the strongest men of the region and those readiest for war. He kept them from brigandage, maintained daily guard in camp, trained the soldiers after the manner of the Roman army, divided the ranks, distributed centurions and placed many in command, so that discipline could more easily be exacted from all and no one who abandoned his own duties could escape notice. He also trained them to recognise the trumpet's calls to action and its calls to halt, keep their ranks, align their battle line and interlock their shields, so that these would serve as a wall against their assailants if a great force of the enemy fell upon them. He taught them to help those hard pressed, show compassion to the weary and take upon themselves the dangers of others. He not only taught the arts of war after the model of the Roman army, but also laid down before the war what would help them still more when fighting: a soldier should carry his own food and arms, fortify himself with rampart and ditch, forestall the enemy in pitching camp, obey commands and accustom himself to abstain from theft and plunder. He should reckon it his own gain if no loss were inflicted on the farmers. For what difference was there between the enemy and a man who himself carried off, in the enemy's manner, what he found, except that it was worse to attack what was one's own than what belonged to others, and to despoil allies rather than adversaries? A good conscience, he taught, was of the greatest value in war, because a man who knew himself to be implicated in no crime could rely all the more confidently on divine aid.

[III.3.5] Yet in these matters he found that envy among the wicked harmed him sooner than favour among the good benefited him. For although he had gathered about sixty thousand infantry, very few cavalry, about four thousand men who fought for pay, and six hundred chosen guards for his own body, he suffered so much from the Jews that he dreaded greater danger from his own people before the war than from the Romans in the war itself. I pass over the sedition stirred up because he was suspected of returning what had been stolen by

brigands to those who had lost it, and especially to Agrippa and Berenice, to whom it ought rightly to be returned, lest they make the king more hostile. Yet to soften the people's onslaught he said that the money, and all the things taken from Ptolemy, who had been carrying royal gold, clothes and other gifts, had been preserved for building the walls rather than compensating the owners. The Taricheans—for it was among them that this was happening—ought to consider whether they thought it should be reserved for restoring their walls or brought out for brigands to plunder. It certainly seemed shameful that he should suffer punishment because he had taken the better course.

[III.3.6] Thus, by winning their favour, he escaped both envy and danger. Again, when Tiberias sought King Agrippa's favour and alliance, Josephus rushed out of the aforesaid city of the Taricheans and shut the gates, lest a messenger go to the city of Tiberias and reveal that Josephus lacked military support. He himself gathered from the lake as many fishing boats as he could find at the time and rowed towards Tiberias. But when he reached a place where the boats could clearly be seen by those in the city, although they could not discern whether they were empty of fighting men, he ordered them to disperse over the whole expanse of the lake. Their number would thus be thought greater, and no one would suppose them empty rather than full of warriors. Terrified at this, thinking themselves too weak to face so great a multitude, the people threw down their arms, opened the gates and poured out as suppliants to Josephus, who had approached as though leading a military column.

[III.3.7] They were asked what madness had put defection into their minds, and at whose instigation they were about to hand themselves over to the enemy. At the same time he ordered the helmsmen to take those who came out to meet him to Taricheae, and there he threw about six hundred councillors and many of the common people into chains.

[III.3.8] He also summoned Clitus as the ringleader of this crime and ordered him to pay the penalty by having his hands cut off. When Clitus begged that at least one hand be left to him, Josephus ordered him to cut off one himself, whichever he chose. Clitus then seized a sword in his right hand and cut off his left. Thus Tiberias was recovered. Sepphoris too, though it had attempted defection, was nevertheless kept among the allied cities of the Jews by Josephus's vigour. For he preferred to defend what was his by more peaceful counsels rather than invade what belonged to others.

Chapter 4

Online text and commentary

[III.4.1] But Niger the Peraean, Silas the Babylonian and John Essaeus gathered all the able-bodied young men in Judaea and made for Ascalon, a large city supported by strong walls, yet in need of resources and assistance. It was separated from the city of Jerusalem by seven hundred and twenty stades and by immense hatred. The Jews therefore, wishing to destroy a city hostile to them, gathered a force and rushed upon it. Antonius commanded the city with a smaller force of the Roman army than was thought capable of resisting the Jews.

[III.4.2] But he was a man of keener judgement and an equally prudent fighter. Leading out his cavalry, he allowed the Jews, scattered and relying more on their numbers than on their

valour, to pass on towards the city. Then he charged them once they had advanced, exhausted them when they pursued, scattered them when they massed together, routed them when they fell into confusion, and chased the stragglers throughout the plain. Some, their position reversed, were pressed against the walls with their means of escape cut off; others headed in different directions, but were surrounded by the cavalry and cut down. Many fell upon one another and knocked one another down by their own onslaught. Thus, slaughtered until evening, they lost ten thousand of their men, with their commanders John and Silas killed as well. Only a few Romans were wounded in that battle.

[III.4.3] Yet the Jews' rashness was not checked but blazed up. For grief kindled their boldness, and defeat provoked their desire for vengeance. They therefore took up arms with far greater fury, while the wounds of their injured men were still unhealed, and gathered more men than on the former occasion and rushed in. But Antonius caught them in prepared ambushes and, before they could come to grips, surrounded them with cavalry and ordered the encircled men to be struck down. Another eight thousand were killed; the rest were put to flight. Niger himself escaped and withdrew to a stronghold. It was a tower surrounded on every side by solid stone, which the Romans, unable to demolish it, encircled with fires. When it was set alight, he passed from the tower into a cave of some kind, hid from the enemy and escaped the fire. The Romans were secure in the belief that he too had been consumed in the blaze, but after the third day he was restored alive and vigorous to his own men, who were searching for his body for burial. Thus he was restored to the Jews, saved from the enemy, to their great joy.

Chapter 5

Online text and commentary

[III.5.1] Meanwhile Vespasian, having crossed the Hellespont and passed through Bithynia and Cilicia, reached Syria and led the legions and other military forces he found there to Antioch.

[III.5.2] This city is undisputedly the first in Syria and is therefore regarded as its metropolis. It was founded by those who accompanied Alexander the Great in war, and named after its founder. The city's site stretches to an immense length but is narrower across, since it is hemmed in on the left by a steep mountain face, so that the space for laying out the city could not be extended further. Necessity marked out the site: the high mountain would give the Parthians, breaking in by hidden and trackless routes, a hiding-place from which they could pour out upon unprepared Syria, arriving unexpectedly and attacking more readily, unless the city lay against the mountain like a barrier and blocked the exits to those approaching. Thus, if any of the barbarians climbed up, he would immediately be seen from the very heart of the city. Indeed, they say that when theatrical games were being celebrated in that city, a mime actor raised his eyes to the mountain, saw Persians approaching and immediately said: "Either I am seeing a dream or a great danger. Look, the Persians!" The mountain so overhangs the city that even the height of the theatre does not hinder the view of the mountain. A river cuts through its centre; rising in the east, it disappears into the sea not far from the city. The ancients called it Orient from the region of its origin, so that it is

commonly thought to have given those places their name, though it received its name from them. With its streams made colder by their very rush, and with zephyrs constantly blowing through those parts, the whole city is cooled at almost every moment, so that it has hidden the East in the regions of the East. Within is fresh water; outside, nearby, are a grove interwoven with dense cypresses, and abundant springs. They call the grove Daphne because it never lays aside its greenness. The population is numerous and rather cheerful, as in most parts of the East, and wittier than almost all others, but more inclined to wantonness. The city was formerly ranked third among all the cities in the Roman world, but now fourth, since the city of the Byzantines has grown into Constantinople, once the capital of the Persians, now a bulwark against them. I think enough has been said about the city's situation, for it does not seem necessary to linger over a description of its buildings. Since I have said that the east lies behind it, it is clear enough that the south lies on its left, Europe faces it in front, and the northern nations and Caspian kingdoms lie on its right; these were formerly most ready to invade Syria. But after Alexander the Great set the Caspian Gate upon the steep face of Mount Taurus and cut off every route for the peoples of the interior, he left the aforesaid city at peace, except perhaps when it feared Persian movements.

[III.5.3] In that city King Agrippa, with his whole force, was awaiting Vespasian's arrival. Agrippa joined Vespasian's company; Vespasian did not linger long. They began their journey together towards Ptolemais. The inhabitants of Sepphoris came to meet them at that city, asking Vespasian to confirm the peace long since concluded with Caesentius Gallus. Having praised their prudence in providing for their own safety by not provoking the Romans, and accepted their allegiance, he received them into friendship and strengthened their security with additional infantry and cavalry reinforcements, lest the instigators of the war, moved by the pain of being deserted, rise against them. For, with the Sepphoritans offering themselves to the Roman dominion, a kind of barrier guarding Judaea was being opened, so that the enemy had a clear route into Judaea. Sepphoris had stood in the enemy's way, well placed to protect the whole nation. For besides its advantage of a more strongly fortified site, it was also the largest city of Galilee. This prompted us, since there are two Galilees, one upper and the other lower, connected and joined to each other, to distinguish the one from the other. But first we must speak of both.

Chapter 6

Online text and commentary

[III.6.1] Syria and Phoenicia adjoin both Galilees. Ptolemais, with the bounds of its territory, and Mount Carmel mark off Galilee on the west. Carmel formerly belonged to the Galileans but is now attached to the territory of the Tyrians; adjoining it is the city of Gabaa, which once caused the Jews grievous destruction. On the east Ippene and Gadara mark it off with their own boundaries; these same limits were also laid down in ancient times for the region of Gaulanitis and the kingdom of Agrippa. On the southern side Scythopolis and Samaria meet it, each with its own territory, and do not allow it to extend beyond the streams of the Jordan. Tyre closes its northern reaches on the right-hand side, together with the whole region of the Tyrians, whose position sets the limits of Galilee's extent. The two Galilees themselves are distinguished from one another as follows. The one called Lower Galilee extends in length from the city of Tiberias as far as the city named Zabulon, above the coastal parts of Ptolemais. Its breadth is undoubtedly drawn from the village of Xaloth, which is in the Great Plain, as far as Bersabe. From there Upper Galilee also begins, reaching as far as the boundaries of the village of Bachathe; that village also marks the limits of Tyrian land. The beginning of its length is the village of Thalla, and its end is Roth. Thalla adjoins the Jordan.

[III.6.2] From this one may understand how far Upper Galilee extends: its beginning is the Jordan, or the lands bordering it. Each Galilee, then, is distinguished by this measure of its extent. The land is rich, grassy, resplendent with diverse kinds of cultivation and dotted with trees, so that it attracts anyone by its charm and invites and rouses even one who shuns labour to the pursuits of cultivation. Indeed, not even a small portion of land there lies idle; it is thronged with many inhabitants. Cities are numerous, villages frequent, the multitude of people beyond number, so that a small village has fifteen thousand inhabitants in its district. Both Galilees are also surrounded by foreign nations on every side. Hence the people are warlike, trained from their earliest years in the trials of battle, abundant in numbers, ready in daring and prepared for all the arts of war.

[III.6.3] The region of Perea, however, surpasses them in size; we have said above where it got its name. Perea is larger, but Galilee is more productive: the whole of it is cultivated, and no part of it is barren of crops; all its land is rich and fruitful. Perea is more extensive but for the most part waste land that does not know how to be tamed by ploughing, and whose rougher furrows are not easily subdued. Yet part of it is soft for cultivation, fertile for use, pleasing to the eye, gentle to work, suited to grafted fruit trees and bearing all things. Trees set apart fringe its fields at the front, adorn them in the middle, and often protect the crops from excessive sun or cold. Above all, the land is clothed in olive trees, interwoven with vines or distinguished by palms. It is impossible to tell how beautiful it is when the rows of palms, struck by the wind, rustle together and the scents of the dates pour forth more sweetly than usual. Nor is it surprising that all the charm of greenery is there, where the fields are flooded and watered by the pleasing courses of rivers flowing down from the high ridge of the mountains, so that the land, teeming with snow-white springs, is possessed amid envy and desired with delight. Its length runs from Machaerus as far as Pella, that is, from south to north; its breadth, from Philadelphia as far as the river Jordan. That is to say, on the east it is

bordered by the fields of Arabia, while on the west it is clearly seen to extend as far as the river Jordan.

[III.6.4] The region of Samaria also lies midway between Judaea and Galilee, beginning at the village named Eleas and ending in the land of the Acrabatteni. It is similar in nature to Judaea and differs from it in no respect. For each has mountains and plains, according to the diversity of its places: neither spreads entirely over plains, nor is it broken everywhere by mountain crags, but each has the charm of both kinds of terrain. The soil is loose and soft for cultivation, and therefore suited to grain, almost second to none in its fertility and certainly ahead of all others in the ripening of its crops. For when grain is still being sown elsewhere, it is harvested here. Nowhere is the appearance and very character of the grain held to be finer. The water is fresh, fair to look at and sweet to drink, so that, judging by the excellence of these elements, the Jews thought that this was the land promised to their fathers, flowing with honey and milk, although God had pledged them the privilege of resurrection. Divine mercy had indeed bestowed both, provided that they kept faith; but both were taken away from faithless souls, here by the yoke of captivity, there by the bond of sin. The region is wooded and therefore rich in livestock and abundant in milk. Indeed, nowhere do flocks bear udders so swollen with milk; its wild and grafted fruits surpass the abundance of every other region. Both Samaria and Judaea are filled with a multitude of people, so that it seems to me that the Jews took this as the basis for their interpretation of what is written, that none among them was barren or unfruitful, although the law had laid this down concerning the fruitfulness of merits and the fertility of virtues.

[III.6.5] Samaria begins at the boundaries of Arabia, at the village named Jordani, and ends to the north at the village of Borceus. The breadth of Judaea runs from the river Jordan as far as Joppa. For it begins at the springs of the Jordan and at Mount Lebanon and spreads as far as the lake of Tiberias. Its length also begins at the village of Arfa and extends as far as the village of Julias, where Jews and Tyrians live together. In the middle of Judaea the city of Jerusalem is called, as the wise have thought fitting, the navel of the whole region. The region abounds in inland resources and is not deprived of those of the sea, since it stretches as far as Ptolemais and fringes that whole sea with its shores. There are many cities, but Jerusalem stands out among them all, like the head in a body, which does not overshadow its limbs but governs them and serves as their protection and beauty. Thus, though with fitting brevity, we have not omitted what needed to be indicated about Judaea and the neighbouring regions.

Chapter 7

Online text and commentary

[III.7.1] The military reinforcements granted to the Sepphoritans also raided the neighbouring regions, claiming unrestricted authority to plunder under the guise of the war being waged by the Jews against the Roman dominion. Josephus, eager to avenge the wrong done by such harsh treatment, therefore gathered a great number to his side and pressed on to storm the city of Sepphoris. He sought either to recall them to alliance with Judaea or, if they resisted, to overthrow them in utter destruction, if he could. But he failed in both attempts: he could neither dissuade them from their choice of union with Rome nor overthrow the city, which he himself had strengthened with such defences that it could not be taken even by the Romans, who were far superior. Thus the attempted assault, without achieving anything, sounded the trumpet and stirred up war throughout the region. They laid waste to everything day and night, burning buildings, plundering estates, killing all whom they captured who were fit for war and subjecting the weak to slavery. All Galilee was filled with fire, blood and plunder, spared no misery and disfigured in every aspect. Whatever had survived fire or slaughter was reserved for captivity. Compared with the evils of captivity, what had a little before been judged more bitter was preferable.

Chapter 8

Online text and commentary

[III.8.1] These events were a kind of prelude to the war before Titus arrived. As soon as he had crossed from Achaea to Alexandria, he brought the soldiers according to his father's command and came to the city of Ptolemais. There, with the fifth and tenth legions joined and the fifteenth also added—these were the most outstanding troops—and with the army of Romans and allies assembled, they began a savage and memorable war.

[III.8.2] For when, after initial successes under the command of Placidus, good fortune had turned to adversity, Vespasian set out with his son from the territory of Ptolemais in a more hostile spirit and plunged into Galilee. He learnt that they refused peace, although he had given them the chance to condemn their secession if they thought they should look to their own interests. He utterly destroyed Gadara, finding it empty of fighting men, since all the stronger men, distrusting its weak defences, had withdrawn to more fortified places. He therefore spared none of those he found, but ordered them all to be killed, with no regard for age and no pity for weakness. He carried this out less by the right of war than from grief at Cestius's battle and hatred poured out upon the Jews. Indeed, he ordered not only the city but also the villages and towns to be burnt. Nor was his anger unjust, since after such insolence he had given them the opportunity to amend their error, and they had not obeyed.

[III.8.3] Josephus had passed from that city to Tiberias before the Roman army drew near, but his flight had inspired more fear than his presence had inspired confidence. For they were terrified by this very fact, that Josephus judged himself unequal to waging war against the Romans. His only hope was that the Jews might abandon their zeal for war: that was the course he preferred. If they chose war, he preferred to appear faithful to his fellow citizens

by facing danger rather than a traitor by avoiding it. For his greatest concern was not to disgrace the military honour entrusted to him. He therefore wrote to the city of Jerusalem that war was upon them and that they should reply speedily. They must deliberate promptly whether they preferred peace or battle. He conveyed these matters briefly, inclining to neither side, lest he be judged either a fearful soldier or an obstinate rebel.

Chapter 9

Online text and commentary

[III.9.1] He again went from the city of Tiberias to Jotapata, either because it was better fortified than the others and therefore very many of those readier for war had gathered there, or because Vespasian had sent many of his men there to make a road. The route through the mountains was difficult, rocky and rough for infantry, but impassable and insurmountable for cavalry. In four days, therefore, the stretches of road were opened up so that narrow passages would not hinder them, and a route was prepared by which the whole army could pass more easily. On the fifth day Josephus crossed over there and raised the downcast spirits of the Jews. When Vespasian too was informed that Josephus had gone there, he gained an incentive to hasten his march, since he thought it a shortcut to finishing the war if the commander and the people readiest for war were captured.

[III.9.2] He therefore arrived with the army and on the first day allowed time for the soldiers to be refreshed with food, so that the cares of war would not assail them when they were tired from the march. On the following day he enclosed the city with a double battle line and a third line of cavalry. When the Jews saw that they were hemmed in and besieged on every side, with no place of escape, they took courage from their very despair. For nothing makes a soldier readier for war than the necessity of fighting and the precipice of danger.

[III.9.3] Vespasian pressed them with javelins; he pressed them with arrows. Many of the Jews who had advanced beyond the walls were also wounded by skilfully aimed missiles, yet they remained unafraid. Roman valour tried every means, and wherever it perceived weaker defences in the walls, there it pressed with a greater force. Shame armed the Romans; hope armed the Jews, who longed to open with the sword a way to their last chance of safety. The Jews endured grievous onslaughts and returned attacks no less daring. Skill with valour fought on the Roman side, fury with rashness on the Jewish. They were therefore exhausted, the Jews fighting all day for safety and the Romans for triumph, when night broke off the battle.

[III.9.4] On the following day too, and on the third, and likewise on the fourth and fifth, they fought fiercely. But, as is usual in skirmishes, more wounds than deaths were inflicted, although the Jews often attempted sorties and the Romans assaults. Shame kindled the Romans to anger, because the conquerors of Hannibal and Antiochus and all nations were being delayed in battles with Jews. Such was their confidence in Roman valour that failure to win quickly counted as partial defeat. But their struggles were against nature more than against the enemy.

[III.9.5] For the city was hemmed in almost everywhere by precipitous crags. It was encircled not by a rampart and ditch like other cities, but by deep precipices which human eyes could not encompass and which no practical means could explore; the more closely one looked, the more deeply horror enveloped one. Only on the north, where the mountain fell away, did a single approach to the city lie open, though the ascent was steep. Josephus closed this with a wall and guarded it with defenders, so that an assault between the lower wall and the higher city would be dangerous for the besiegers, and whoever looked up could not judge what lay above. For the city itself, set on the brow of the mountain, is surrounded by a ring of neighbouring mountains as though by a natural rampart, hidden by a barrier native to the place, so that no one knows there is a city there before entering the city itself.

Chapter 10

Online text and commentary

[III.10.1] Vespasian, unable to conquer nature, himself summoned it to his aid, so that by a prolonged siege he might force the besieged to surrender through lack of drink and food. But a supply of grain amassed long before kept the danger of famine at bay. The difficulty over water was very great, since there was no spring in the city, and the customary drought, with rain rare in those parts, had diminished their supply for drinking. All the water channels had been blocked to prevent water from reaching the city. Scarcity increased their thirst; nature resisted. Josephus proposed a device: to hang soaked clothes on the wall, so that, as water dripped from them little by little, it would be believed that they had water in abundance for washing clothes and no shortage of it for drinking.

Chapter 11

Online text and commentary

[III.11.1] Discouraged by this, Vespasian was again fired with zeal to take the city. He gathered the whole army and shook the wall with engines; the ram battered it. Its appearance gave it this name: the head of a strong and knotty tree is clad in iron and covered with it like a ram's forehead, which swells and juts out beneath an overlay of plates. From its centre projects something like a horn of more solid iron. The size of the tree is like that of a ship's mast, which neither the storm of winds nor the swelling of sails would bend. Suspended by ropes tied to the upper, stout portions of timbers, it was driven against the wall by the strong hands of many men. Then it was drawn backwards and, held by its ropes like the beam of a balance, directed with greater force, so that the side of the wall, worn out by repeated blows, would give way and be hollowed out at the fractures, leaving an opening through which a path into the city's interior would lie open to the Romans. At the first blow, therefore, the wall was shaken and trembled all over. At once everyone cried out, trembling as though the city had been taken, for fear that another blow would shatter the wall.

[III.11.2] But Josephus ordered sacks filled with straw to be lowered at the place against which the Romans were hurling the ram, so that the slack folds of the sacks would elude the blow and soften the whole impact of the ram. For solid things dashed against solid things do harm; against looser things their force is spent. Indeed, harder things give way more easily to softer

things than softer things to harder. Rocks are dissolved by the washing of water, and a falling rock does no harm to water. When massive blocks are thrown into the sea, water retains its uses, but rock does not know how to retain its own amid the waves. Nor does falling marble break sand, while falling sand crushes marble to pieces. Yet the Romans too devised a way to counter the devices of the Jews, tying sickles to poles with which to cut the lowered sacks, so that, emptied of straw, they could no longer deprive the ram's blow of its strength.

[III.11.3] When the thrust of the engine was thus renewed and the Jews saw themselves hard pressed, one of them, Eleazar, lifted a stone of immense size and dashed it from the wall onto the ram with such force that it shattered the head of the engine. Leaping also into the midst of the enemy, he seized the head of the engine and was carrying it to the wall, fearless in the sight of his adversaries and exposed to wounds. He was pierced by five javelins, but, paying no attention to his wounds, he bent his thoughts on how he himself might overwhelm the enemy with the falling stone. He therefore climbed the wall and stood conspicuous in his great daring, a victor over pain. He hurled himself and the stone onto the ram and fell with it, defeated indeed by death but victor over the engine. For in his own person he alone was lost to his country, but in shattering the engine he had saved the whole city from destruction. Netiras and Philip also threw themselves into the midst of the column, to turn back those whom they had attacked. [8]

[III.11.4] Josephus, however, hurled fire to burn all the engines and soon burnt up a great many; but those burnt up were replaced.

Chapter 12

Online text and commentary

[III.12.1] Vespasian pressed on and urged the attack so hard that an arrow struck him in the ankle. The Romans were alarmed when they saw their commander's blood flowing. His son ran in agitation to his father, but Vespasian, whose strength of spirit rose above the force of the wound, forbade his son to be afraid and fired the soldiers all the more for battle, to avenge their commander's injury. He himself acted as standard-bearer, rallying the army and driving it towards the walls; he himself urged the others into battle. Some pressed the enemy with arrows, others with missiles, others with ballistae.

[III.12.2] Such was the force of this engine, which hurled stones at the enemy, that one of Josephus's companions standing nearby was struck and fell with his head shattered, and the back of his head was flung more than three stades away. A pregnant woman too, struck in the womb, had her infant hurled more than half a stade from the innermost recess of her generative organs.

[III.12.3] At last, when the Roman soldiers were already advancing victorious beneath the walls and strong forces on both sides were fighting at the very entrance, Josephus ordered scalding oil to be poured over the Romans, packed together as they were. It flowed easily from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. The heat of the glowing oil, no less than a burning flame, devoured every limb. Others nevertheless took their places, and in many cases streaming sweat even cooled the force of the oil. Although oil is of such a nature that it

heats quickly and is slower to lose the heat it has absorbed, their zeal for victory made them conceal their hurt. They burned in spirit so that they felt no burning of the body. They reckoned the pain of that searing torment less than the loss of glory if those who had led the way in danger withdrew from battle as though they had no share in triumphs. They therefore strove to quench the burning oil even with their own blood.

Chapter 13

Online text and commentary

[III.13.1] During this delay in the siege, the people of the neighbouring city of Japha had also grown insolent because the contest had lasted so long. Vespasian, provoked by this, sent Trajan, who held command of the fifteenth legion, with a thousand cavalry and two thousand infantry. He set out without hesitation, an energetic man skilled in the arts of war, and found an outcome suited to his zeal. For although the city was protected by the nature of the place and enclosed by a double wall, its people were not content to shelter within its fortifications but thought they should go out to meet the Romans. They dared to resist for only a short time, however, and in seeking to retreat inside the outer wall they also admitted the enemy, for the Romans entered along with them as they hurried in. When they fled to the inner wall, the gates were closed lest the Romans again burst in with them. Thus the Jews fought with God's aid withdrawn from them, the aid by which they had formerly been accustomed to conquer. But they had offended by wicked crimes, and so the penalty they owed was exacted from them, that their sufferings might be bestowed upon the nations as a gift. Indeed, almost more of them were crushed in their wars with one another than by their enemies. The people of Japha are an example: they opened their gates to the Romans and closed them against themselves. For they themselves opened the first wall for the Romans to break in; the Jews closed the second wall to prevent the Jews from passing through. The enemy was therefore admitted, the ally excluded: the one admitted so that there would be no lack of a slayer, the other excluded so that the doomed man would not escape. Between the two walls the Jews were cut down at close quarters and struck from the wall at a distance. For many men of the Roman army, confined in the narrow space, climbed the wall and hurled missiles at those below. Thus the Galileans, in greater danger from their own people than from their enemies, begged to be admitted through the entrance of the inner wall, but their own people resisted them. Fighting took place on the threshold of the gate, with Jews struggling against one another. Those on one side met an advancing formation with their swords, those on the other a resisting one. They died calling down savage curses on one another and declaring with their last words that they were suffering less than they deserved. Thus twelve thousand men were killed, all of them fighting men. Trajan, a man of the old discipline, thought that no one would now resist him or that the capture of the city would be easy. He reserved the crowning victory for Vespasian and sent to ask him to dispatch his son Titus to put an end to the battle. On his arrival they broke in and many people were slain, but victory did not fall to the Romans without toil and danger. When they entered the inner wall, all who were fit for war opposed them and, stationed in the narrow passages, made the outcome of the battle uncertain for the victors. Men and women fought from above, often hurling stones and every kind of missile they happened to find even at their own people. Indeed, at the very end they fought for six hours as though the battle were just beginning. At last, when those who had stood to resist were slain, the attack turned to the rest without order, without limit, without mercy. Old men were slaughtered with the young; women and little children were kept, not for pardon but for slavery. All the males were killed except those whom boyhood or infancy protected. Two thousand one hundred and thirty slaves

were led away as booty, masters together with their slaves, now sharing the same condition: captivity had made them equals.

Chapter 14

Online text and commentary

[III.14.1] Nor were the Samaritans exempt from misery. They had gathered and, according to their custom, climbed Mount Gerizim, which was sacred to them and where they were accustomed to worship. Hence the Samaritan woman also says in the Gospel, “Our fathers worshipped on this mountain,” and she was answered, “The hour will come when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.” For superstition had to cease and true religion succeed it, the shadow be done away with and the truth come, so that every person might worship God no longer on the mountain like the Samaritans, nor at Jerusalem three times a year like the Jews, but in spirit, in every place, lifting up pure hands and bending the knee in the name of Jesus. When, therefore, as we said above, they remained gathered on the mountain according to their rites, the very appearance of the gathering, or the disposition of those assembled, threatened war. They had not come to their senses even through their neighbours’ misfortunes, but were stirred all the more by envy at the Romans’ increasing success, and matters were close to an uprising. It was judged more prudent to forestall them, lest they break out into a greater calamity. Vespasian summoned the prefect of the fifth legion and sent him with three thousand men of both arms of the service. He judged it dangerous to climb the mountain at the outset, for the multitude of people and the precipitous terrain combined to inspire fear. He surrounded the foot of the mountain with his army and had a watch kept throughout the day to prevent anyone from coming down to draw water. Thirst tormented this great press of people, burning more and more fiercely in the heat, and many preferred to offer themselves to slavery or even death rather than perish from hunger or thirst. Cerealis—for that was the prefect’s name—judged from those who came down that all were exhausted. He encircled the mountain with his troops, promising safety if they laid down their weapons, and ordered those who refused to be struck down. Eleven thousand six hundred men were killed there.

Chapter 15

Online text and commentary

[III.15.1] At Jotapata too, on the forty-eighth day, the Romans broke in at first light, while the inhabitants were still resting, exhausted by the great toil of the previous day. Titus was the first of all to enter, with Sabinus, and opened the way for the others. The higher ground was seized, and people still unaware of the entry were struck down everywhere in the narrow streets. Some paid the penalty in their beds, others newly awakened, others awake but weakened by hunger and drowsiness. Yet the whole city was still unaware of the force of the calamity. But when the army entered and roared with its battle cry, they rose with scarcely any thought but to meet death. Those who had tried to reach the higher ground were driven back and killed; the very crush had deprived those who might have had the strength to avenge themselves of vengeance. Those who prepared to resist were hidden from the battle as others rushed upon them. Others, exhausted by the long struggle, let their hands fall and offered themselves to be wounded, so that death at least might snatch them from such deadly spectacles of their own misfortunes.

[III.15.2] Misled by this unconcern of the dying, the centurion Antonius was asked by a man who had taken refuge in a cave to give him his right hand as a pledge of pardon and a guarantee of safety. He at once held it out, heedless of deceit and—alas, poor man!—too secure in his triumph. But the man struck him unawares with a dart and immediately ran him through, so that the Romans' victory would not be complete.

[III.15.3] That day all who were found were killed. On the following days they were also brought out from underground chambers and other excavated caves, or killed where they were, except for little children and women. The slain counted over all the days numbered forty thousand; twelve hundred were led into captivity. The city and all its strongholds were overthrown and burnt with fire in the thirteenth year of Nero's reign.

[III.15.4] Meanwhile Josephus was hiding in a pit among the city's ashes, well aware that he was being sought with particular diligence as commander of the opposing force. He came out on the second day, but when he saw that every way was closed, he returned to the pit. On the third day a woman was found who knew Josephus's hiding place and showed it to those searching for him. But forty men who had fled there were also hiding in the pit. They learned that Vespasian was inviting Josephus to hope for safety, first through Paulinus and Gallicanus, and afterwards through Nicanor. Nicanor was bound to Josephus by an old friendship, and for that reason had been sent to offer his right hand and was carrying out his appointed task all the more readily. They crowded round Josephus and assailed him with these words.

Chapter 16

Online text and commentary

[III.16.1] "Now a greater ruin threatens the Jewish name, now fouler ashes threaten to bury and hide the discipline of a most illustrious lineage and overthrow all its honour, when Josephus is ordered to be kept captive for a triumph. What do these suddenly so earnest invitations from our enemies mean? What these unsolicited gifts of safety? They did not spare others when they begged for life: Josephus is summoned, Josephus is begged to live. Clearly they fear losing the pomp of a triumph, having no captive for Rome to gaze upon, no one for Vespasian to lead in chains before his chariot. Do you wish, then, to be kept for this mockery? And how will they triumph if the leader of those over whom they triumph is missing? Or what triumph is there if friendship is granted to the conquered? Do not believe them, Josephus. Life is promised to you, but things worse than death are being prepared. Roman arms may have conquered you; do not let deceit capture you. Their gifts are more terrible than their wounds: the former threaten captivity, the latter preserve freedom. Are you yielding, Josephus, broken by some softness of spirit, and do you wish to outlive your country? Where is the teaching of Moses, who asked to be blotted out of the heavenly book so that he would not outlive the Lord's people? Where is Aaron, who stood between the living and the dead so that death would not devour the living people with its savage contagion? Where is the spirit of King Saul and Jonathan, devoted to their country, and that death for their fellow citizens, bravely undertaken, gloriously sought? The son called his father by his example; the father did not forsake his son in his resolve to die. Though he could have lived, he preferred to be killed rather than led in triumph by the enemy. He urged his armour-bearer, saying, 'Strike me, lest these uncircumcised men come and strike me and mock me.' Because his armour-bearer was afraid, he ran himself through with his own sword. He was worthy to be avenged by David in the prophetic spirit, because a man of Amalekite descent had falsely boasted of his death and thought to diminish the glory of the man who had snatched himself from the enemy by lying that he had killed him. He was worthy also to be praised by so great a prophet, who said, 'Saul and Jonathan, lovely and most dear, inseparable in their life, and in death they were not separated, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.' David himself too, when he saw the people struck by the angel, wished to turn the heavenly vengeance upon himself, so that he would not be spared while the people perished. Finally, where is the divine law, whose interpreter you have always been, which has promised the righteous everlasting immortality in exchange for this brief life? Where is the God of the Hebrews, who teaches the righteous to despise death, that they ought even to shun their earthly dwelling and fly back to the heights, to that region of paradise where God has consecrated devout souls? Do you now at last desire to live, Josephus, when you ought not—indeed, when it is not lawful, indeed, what is more, not fitting? Do you long to enjoy this light—I would dare to call it the light of slavery—which is in another's power? So that the Roman may snatch it away when he wishes, or veil it in the darkness of prison when he wishes? So that you may long to flee from here and not be allowed to die? And with what sense of shame will you go to those whom you persuaded to die for their country? What excuse will you have for lingering so long? They are waiting to see what you do; surely they are already saying, 'Why does Josephus delay, when he ought to have gone before us? Why

does he follow so late? Why does he refuse to imitate his pupils, whom he urged to die for freedom?' Are we indeed to endure your choosing slavery, champion of freedom, your binding yourself to the Romans as a slave, your preferring captivity to freedom? But suppose you wish to live: how will you obtain this from those against whom you have fought so often? How will they look at you, with what eyes, with what feelings? How will you wish to live under angry masters, even if you are allowed? Or who will not believe you to have been a traitor to your country when he sees you paid the reward of treachery? Choose which you prefer. One of these two things must be: your life will be either the reward of treachery or the punishment of slavery." With these words they levelled their swords, adding, "If you consent to die, we offer our service as friends; if you refuse, we exact vengeance as men betrayed." [9]

Chapter 17

Online text and commentary

[III.17.1] To this Josephus replied: "And who would wish to survive so much death? Who would choose to become an heir to sorrow? Who would not wish his soul to be released from this body of death, if it were permitted? But none may loose the bond except the one who bound it. The soul is joined to the body by the bond of nature. Who is the author of nature but almighty God? Who would dare to interrupt and dissolve this union of our soul and body, which is pleasing to God? If someone removes from his hands bonds imposed at his master's command, without his master's permission, will he not be condemned for having grievously wronged his master? We are God's possession; we owe God service. As slaves let us await his commands, as prisoners let us preserve our bonds, as the faithful let us guard the good deposit. Let us not reject the gift of this life which he has given us; let us not shun the heavenly gift. If you reject a human gift, you are insulting: how much more ought we to preserve what we have received from our God? From him, then, we have received our being; it ought also to be for him to decide how long we exist. For both are marks of ingratitude: to depart sooner than he wishes and to live longer than the one who gave us life has willed. Did Abraham hasten before his time? Did Moses climb Abarim before he was told, 'Climb Mount Abarim'? But he was told to climb, and he climbed and died. Like a good servant he awaited his master's command. Job himself, who said, 'Let that day perish on which I was born,' nevertheless, beset by wounds and pains, did not break the bonds of this life, but asked to be released, saying, 'Why is light given in bitterness, and life in the pains of the soul?' He certainly praised death when he said, 'Death is rest for a man,' yet he did not seize it before his time but asked for it, as it is written: 'I am shaken in every limb, and since I am impious, why have I not died? Why did I not fall from my mother's womb into the grave? Or is not the time of my life short? Leave me to rest a little.' Another holy man also says, 'Bring my soul out of custody.' He asks to escape, asks to be released from this body as from a prison. Yet none of the saints takes it upon himself, none seizes it before his time. If dying is gain, it is theft to seize it before the expected time; if living is good, it is sacrilege to reject it before it is demanded back. But you think it glorious to die in war. Nor do I deny that it is good to die in war for one's country, good to die for one's fellow citizens. But by the law of war I offer my throat if the enemy seeks it, if the Romans plunge in the sword—the Romans to whom God has granted victory over us, to whom he has consigned us because of our sins. Nor do I flatter myself because they promise to spare me. Would that they deceive me! I shall at least carry away this gain, that they feared me so much as to deceive me; I shall at least take this vengeance, that they break faith. I would rather perish by their brigandage than by my own. It is my brigandage if I lay hands on myself; if the enemy does so, it is a benefit. Thus, though they could grant this benefit by killing me, they thought to grant it in this way: they turned into brigandage what lay within their power: to kill a captive. But you promise me the service of your hands. Truly, we lacked a slayer, so that we should perish by our own crime! I do not wish to perish by my crime, nor by yours, which is more than mine, nor by our mutual crime. For this is what it means for each of us to lay hands on himself: to pay the price of reciprocal killing, so that each incurs guilt not only for his own blood but also for another's. But the example of King Saul is brought forward: surely the man who was demanded as king against

the divine will and earned God's displeasure, whence he received a successor even while he was alive. A splendid example of a man who lacked God's favour! Yet he wished to die because he could no longer live. He too, however, wished his companion to kill him; but the man thought it a crime and refused the service. So he turned his sword against himself not by following counsel but because he was denied that service. If he acted from fear of being mocked, why do you praise what belongs to fear? If he was not afraid, why did he first choose something else? I fear the Romans neither when they mock nor when they lie. Saul alone killed himself, not Jonathan, nor anyone else in our Scriptures. What wonder that he could kill himself, when he could even kill his son? Aaron stood between the living and the dead, and that belongs to valour, not rashness. For he did not inflict death on himself but did not fear death, repelling it with his body and standing in its way as it crept upon everyone. I am not Aaron, but neither am I unworthy of him: see, I offer my hands; let them strike as they will. If I can fear their hands, I deserve to perish by my own. If they spare an adversary, why should I not spare myself? If you ask why they wish to spare me, they admire valour even in an enemy. For such is the favour valour wins that it often pleases even an enemy. You yourselves also know how much destruction I have inflicted on the Romans, how by the long siege of the obscure city of Jotapata I diverted the conquerors of all nations from destroying the city of Jerusalem. At a small cost I played out the hazard of the whole war. Others have learned through my danger to desire peace. Perhaps we are spared for this purpose, that the others may not be deterred but encouraged. But you maintain that it is sweet to die for freedom. Who denies that either? Yet it is sweet to live with freedom. For the man who offers friendship promises freedom. But if he imposes slavery, then there will surely be a more fitting time to wish to die, if death is necessary. Now, however, they offer life; they do not wish to kill us. Both the man who refuses to die when he ought and the man who wishes to die when he ought not are timid. For who does not know that to wish to die in order not to die belongs to womanish licence and womanly fear? Indeed, frightened women, when they learn that some danger threatens them, are accustomed to throw themselves over a precipice. For in their narrow spirits they cannot sustain the weight of terror and the fear of death. But the steadfast man, who does not fear the present and thinks of the future, knows no trembling where there is no cause for fear. Indeed, it is written that 'the souls of the effeminate will hunger': they hunger because they do not have the food of valour, and so they hasten to death before their time. For one filled with the food of spiritual grace does not lay hands on himself, since it is written that 'the mouth of the foolish calls upon death'. Again Scripture says, 'And he who takes no care of himself in his works is the brother of him who destroys himself.' Thus the man who strikes himself is condemned. For what is so contrary to the law of nature? What so contrary even to the nature of all living creatures? Love of themselves is implanted in all, even wild and untamed beasts. For the law of nature is strong: to wish to live and not to bring death upon oneself. Indeed, all kinds of living creatures cannot arm themselves with iron against themselves even if they wish. Humans may have invented the hideous noose of death; beasts know nothing of it. But the bites of beasts are their weapons, their teeth their swords. Yet when has anyone heard of a beast biting off one of its own limbs? Against others they use their jaws as weapons, upon themselves for kisses. For us too, what is so sweet as life, what so hostile as death? The man who protects life is a patron; the man who tries to seek our death is a plotter. Do we then

wish to inflict on ourselves what we abhor in others if they attack us? And do we impose upon ourselves as a favour what we exact from others as a punishment? We prosecute a helmsman if he dashes the ship entrusted to him against a rock; do we ourselves destroy with iron the helm of our body entrusted to us and consign it to voluntary shipwreck? But you confront me with an early death once I have been brought into the enemy's power. What shall I gain, then, if I inflict upon myself what I fear from the enemy, when it may happen that the enemy will not do what you urge me to do? It is just as if a helmsman, seeing a storm to come, sank his ship in the waves to avoid the storm. Or do you think we must forestall the adversary because he will exact more grievous torments? Or because you think it brave to use iron against ourselves? But seeking to gain by avoiding torments is a refuge of weakness, not a trophy of valour. Do we therefore cling to something that bears neither the marks of courage nor any practical gain? Why should I add that the sanctity of a deposit is violated? Almighty God gave us a most excellent treasure, enclosed it in this earthen vessel and entrusted it, sealed, to our keeping until he should please to demand it back. Is it not a crime in either case, to cast away the deposit when the giver has not demanded it back, or to deny it when he does? If violating a human deposit is disgraceful, how much more so is violating God's deposit? The soul in this body is God's deposit, a soul that cannot be subject to this death. For it is not constrained or bound by any bond of death, but seems to bring about death when it is released from the body and separated from the union entrusted to it. Why then do we inflict death before the deposit is demanded back, dismiss the soul as though it were of no use to us, exclude it from our house, and dissolve into earth the body deprived of its own beauty and grace? Why do we not await the command to depart from here? A soldier awaits the watchword, a slave the command. If either leaves without an order, the one is a deserter, the other a fugitive. The man who flees a human master is liable to punishment, even if the master he fled was wicked. Can we flee the best of all masters without being bound by the disgrace of impiety? Does it also escape our notice that God has stationed an angel around those who fear him? There is therefore someone to forbid departure unless a command has been received. If there is no command, there are no provisions for the journey. And how do we arrive without provisions for the journey? Who will receive us in that pure and secluded place? Who will admit us to those fellowships of holy souls? Adam hid because he had transgressed God's command; he was shut out of paradise because he had not kept the order. He is asked, 'Adam, where are you?' as though he had fled, as though he were not present before God. Will I not also be asked, 'Where are you, who have come without a command, whom I have not released from the bonds of nature? Take him into the outer darkness: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' We have learned that these acts are forbidden not only by human custom but also by laws. For some order those who have plunged iron into themselves to be cast out unburied. It is fitting that those who have not awaited their Father's command should be deprived of burial in the earth, as though of a mother's lap. Others cut off the right hand of the dead, so that the hand which fought against its own body in mad fury is separated from that body's limbs. But this is the end suffered by the sacrilegious, or traitors, or killers of their parents. Those who have not acknowledged their true Father do not recognise themselves either. Thus they are either forbidden burial altogether or are not buried whole. Nor does paradise receive their souls, but the darkness of the underworld and savage torments. As I consider these things, although everything has

been taken away, these alone terrify and frighten me: that I might inflict on myself what not even the enemy can inflict, and rob myself of those things of paradise which the Roman has not yet been able to take away—he can certainly hasten them, he cannot remove them—which alone I impatiently desire. For no desire for this life holds me, in which I have found nothing to delight me either among my fellow citizens or among my enemies. The former denied me peace, the latter robbed me of my country. Amid so many evils, what sweetness can remain in this life? Only you, almighty Father, author and arbiter of nature, grant me an honourable end. Break this bond of nature, restore my soul to its secluded places. Though the people be destroyed, their right taken away, their freedom broken, I shall not transgress your law by dying unbidden. I await your command; I await the release I desire from you. You have many to carry out your will: from you I await the command, from its executor the service. It is good to die, but if I die as a Hebrew, not as a brigand, not as an executioner, not as an enemy. Though I be defeated in war, I shall remain what I was born, so that I do not abandon the inheritance of Abraham our father. I shall not cross over into the number of the enemy to become my own slayer. I can offer myself to the enemy to be struck without loss of devotion; I cannot turn my hands against myself as an enemy without crime. Or is the fear that we may not be allowed to live according to the law? Truly, great is the freedom we now enjoy, when we are not allowed to die according to the law."

Chapter 18

Online text and commentary

[III.18.1] Josephus put forward these arguments to undermine the defence of voluntary death. But those who had once devoted themselves to death, unable to resist his words, surrounded him with swords as though ready to strike him at once unless he thought fit to consent. Surrounded, he called one man back with a commander's authority and addressed another with a stern gaze and the consciousness of his own valour. He restrained one man's right hand, bent another's anger, soothed them with wholesome counsel. In different ways he wrested unreasoning fury from each man. For although the final turn of fortune had stripped the defeated man of his dignity, it had not wholly abolished their reverence for him. Little by little, therefore, hands were lowered and swords put away, but their resolve persisted.

[III.18.2] When he saw that he alone was held besieged by many, whether by some chance or by design he devised a way to reduce the number of those opposing him. "Let us entrust the order of dying to the lot," he said, "so that no one may withdraw, since the lot embraces all. Let the condition of this lot be that whoever is drawn is killed by the man who follows." Thus it would be the lot, not each man's own will, that condemned him to death. "Let each therefore stand with the lot as judge, free from crime and free from captivity, so that he neither hastens the death to come at another's will nor evades it at his own. No one will be able to refuse an outcome which either chance has brought about or God's will has marked out." The offer inspired confidence, and all agreed to the lot. Each man designated by lot offered himself to the next, ready to be killed. So it happened that when the rest had been killed, Josephus and one other survived the slaughter. It necessarily remained that either he would be condemned by lot, or, if he survived the destruction, he would be stained with his companion's blood.

[III.18.3] He persuaded his companion that they should renounce the lot. Thus he escaped the battle within and was conducted by Nicanor to Vespasian. A crowd gathered to see him arrive, with almost all the Romans flocking together. Some wished to see cast down the man whom a little earlier they had seen in the highest honour, in command of the whole enterprise; others strove to mock the captive; others marvelled at the changes in human affairs, so varied and shifting. Many, with greater wisdom, groaned, reflecting in another's fall that the same could happen to themselves. Titus was moved more than the rest by his innate gentleness of spirit: this man, lately a proud warrior, suddenly subjected to the enemy's power, awaited his fate at another's nod, shipwrecked in life, an exile from hope, uncertain of safety. So much could a moment in battle accomplish, that a brief turn of fortune made men unlike themselves, when either the powerful were cast down or the afflicted raised up. Thus the better part of them, namely those who held honour, offered gentler counsels. Yet Titus played the greatest part in securing Josephus's safety with his father. Vespasian ordered him to be kept under guard, lest he slip away.

Chapter 19

Online text

[III.19.1] A few days later Vespasian returned from there to Ptolemais and then hastened to Caesarea, the largest city of Judaea, but inhabited more by gentiles. They therefore welcomed the Roman army with applause and joy, not only because they desired the favour of Roman alliance, but also from an ingrained hatred of the Jewish people. With the loudest cries they shouted that Josephus, its leader, ought to be punished. Vespasian let this anger subside in silence, as the unreasoning anger of the crowd. Since both the season and the city were suitable for winter quarters, he stationed two legions in Caesarea, and also the fifteenth legion in the city of Scythopolis, lest Caesarea be worn down by the burden of the whole army. The aforesaid city was therefore consecrated to Scythian Diana as a foundation of the Scythians, and was called the city of the Scythians, as Massilia was of the Greeks. The situation of the place shows that its founders, in their innate hardiness, chose open plains rather than ground suited to habitation. For open places bring more hardship than pleasure both in the harshness of winter and in the burning season of summer: in winter they lie more exposed to the cold, and summer's heat is fiercer in places which receive the full sun without the delight of any green field. Thus the flat and coastal region of the aforesaid city was heated still further by the heat of the sea.

Chapter 20

Online text and commentary

[III.20.1] Yet Vespasian was not free from the business of war. He learnt that very many people had gathered from different places at the city of Joppa and had restored it as a convenient base for piratical raids, repairing the buildings which Cestius had destroyed. Since the countryside had been devastated, they sought their means of subsistence at sea. He carefully investigated everything. They fitted out vessels suitable for brigands' use and watched the passage of travellers, plundering almost all the trade of Phoenicia and Egypt. Their frequent raids spread such terror that they closed that entire sea, and fear of certain danger interrupted navigation. On learning this, he ordered a force of infantry and many cavalry to set out and enter Joppa by night. This was easily done, since no guard protected the city: it was thought that the Roman commander would give no attention to a city reported to be destroyed. The inhabitants were there, but did not dare resist the arriving Romans or deny them entry. They boarded their vessels, went beyond arrow-shot and spent the night at sea.

[III.20.2] The subject seems to require a brief account of the shore along Joppa, so that it may be clearly shown how the aforesaid city suffered a second disaster without any battle. The city has no natural harbour. Its seashore is rough and straight, but bends slightly into promontories at either end. There are deep-rooted cliffs and immense rocks projecting from the sea; although they rise from the sea's depths, they also jut out into it. Hence the shapes of the places and the very appearance of the landscape seem to reveal that Andromeda was there when she was exposed to the sea monster, lending no small credibility to the ancient tales. When the opposing blasts of Boreas strike the shore, the waves rise to an immense height. Dashed against the rocks, they raise a mighty crash and, falling back into the waters, make that inlet so restless that there is more danger in harbour than in the open sea. While the boats which, as we said above, had put out from Joppa were tossing there, a violent wind, which those sailing in that region call Melamborium, swept down towards morning. At once, with the waves driving them, it threw the boats against one another and engulfed them. Some, their anchor cables broken, it drove against the rock. Others were heaved violently upwards against the oncoming sea as the sailors sought to escape the danger of the rocky shore or slaughter by the Romans, who had spread along it. A wave met them, towering above them in a lofty mass, overwhelmed them and sank them. There was nowhere to flee and no hope of remaining, since the wind drove them from the sea and the Romans shut them out of the city. The sound of the vessels colliding was grievous; the groaning of the men as they were crushed was unbearable. When they saw the sea breaking into their unsteady hulls, some, skilled in swimming, threw themselves overboard. Others, leaping towards boats drawing near, fell into the sea and were crushed by the collision of hulls. Many sank into the depths with their light vessels, having lost confidence in swimming clear. Yet death came with less torment to those who lacked the skill or any hope in trying. Those who attempted to swim were struck repeatedly by broken fragments of the ships, which crashed into their sides and hideously battered their wretched limbs. Or death overtook them as they were driven against the rocks, amid their very prayers to embrace the shore; yet they had what

consolation they could in dying on land. The sight was therefore pitiable: the rocks were spattered with the brains dashed out of the unfortunate men, the shores wet with blood. You could have seen the sea stained with gore, everything filled with corpses. If any had escaped, they were killed as they approached the shore. For the Romans judged that the storm raged there not from the roughness of the place and the customary winds, but that divine indignation had stirred the sea, with the winds conspiring beyond their usual manner to prevent the Jews from escaping. They therefore feared to spare those whom God had not spared. Some killed themselves with the sword, thinking it more bearable to perish by the sword than by shipwreck. Others, trying to push boats away with poles, pierced them. Some drove back with oars or struck with a weapon those who had fallen into the sea, if they begged to be taken aboard by those in the boats. I have not passed over this, so that it may be clear that the Jewish people faced greater danger from themselves than from the enemy: they killed one another, as though all the things hostile to them together—sky, enemy, sea and rocks—were too little for their destruction. Four thousand five hundred dead bodies, which the sea had spat out, were therefore counted; the city was captured without battle and razed to its foundations.

[III.20.3] Thus, within a short time, Roman hands destroyed Joppa for the second time. Vespasian thought this order just, lest pirate dwellings be established there again. Hence, although he was leaving, he left cavalry there with a smaller number of infantry. The infantry were to remain in the place, to prevent a band of brigands accustomed to brigandage from making any attempt; the cavalry were to range through the neighbouring countryside, villages and small towns, so that everything might be utterly destroyed and the inhabitants prevented from combining in any enterprise.

Chapter 21

Online text and commentary

[III.21.1] While these events took place at Joppa, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, distant though they were, were not even so free from sharing the disaster. They heard what the Romans had done in Judaea, and especially that Josephus had been killed. They did not believe it, first because no informant had come to them from those places, and secondly because they thought that so great a commander could not readily have fallen into the enemy's hands. Indeed, no messenger had survived so great a disaster. This very fact, that no informant survived, confirmed the report of utter destruction: everything had perished, nothing remained even to tell what had happened. An impression spread that exceeded any report. As the very silence terrified them in their uncertainty, everything they feared was believed. Far from anything going unreported, even things that had not happened were added. For rumour had also insisted that Josephus had been killed, and this brought the greatest grief to everyone.

[III.21.2] But when they learnt that he was living among the Romans, they pursued him with such hatred that they detested the life of the very man whose death they had first lamented, as a sign of either cowardice or treachery. Hence their agitation against the Romans grew greater, to avenge themselves on Josephus; and the more their fortunes declined, the more

they were inflamed for war. Where there ought to have been an end, they took up a new beginning of evils. For the wise find in adverse outcomes a lesson in greater caution, so that the same things which have already gone badly may not happen again; but for the foolish they are an incentive to misery. Their allies' danger ought therefore to have brought the people of Jerusalem to their senses, but because they refused to understand so that they might act well, it turned to their destruction.

Chapter 22

Online text and commentary

[III.22.1] Vespasian, however, yielded to Agrippa's request to spend about twenty days in Caesarea Philippi, a city of his kingdom, so that the very delay might allow the Jews to take better counsel for themselves and the army to rest a little from its toil. At the same time the troubled parts of Agrippa's territory might recover their senses from the frenzy of agitation and discord. Their inhabitants ought to understand that, if they changed their course, they could be received through the king's intervention, when such diligent exchanges of services bound the king and the Romans together. Indeed, Tiberias, near Caesarea, did not reject the remedy and found health. For it too seethed with a grievous disease: its people were divided against one another. Vespasian therefore decided to summon three stronger legions and send them to Scythopolis, dispatching his son on the business. This was the greatest of the ten cities, near Tiberias. From there he ordered Valerian to approach the walls with fifty cavalry, to urge peace and call those shut within to faithful alliance. The terror of the assembled army was to strike the unwilling, while the messenger of peace invited the willing. Valerian dismounted near the walls, and those who had approached more closely with him did the same. Jesus, the leader of a band of brigands, and his companions, who dared to advance with him, thought them contemptible for their small number. In a sudden sortie they drove them from their position and seized the horses which Valerian had brought, as his men withdrew together. Fools, they did not see that Valerian showed better judgement in yielding to their insolence than they did in taking spoils from those who offered peace.

[III.22.2] The elders, offended by the enormity of the deed, therefore left the city and came to beg Vespasian not to attribute the insolence of a few to the whole people. Vespasian immediately sent Trajan to the city to discover whether the people rejected the attackers' rashness. By reporting that the people's wishes agreed with the elders' entreaties, he added credibility to the embassy. Thus pardon was granted to those who asked for it, especially since Vespasian saw the king's concern for the condition of the whole city. On the king's pledge that they would dare nothing of the kind thereafter, he willingly granted pardon for the offence.

Chapter 23

Online text

[III.23.1] From there he made for Taricheae with an alert and well-equipped army, since a very great multitude had gathered at that city because of the strength of its position. Josephus had enclosed it with a wall, except where, inaccessible on foot, it was washed by the waves of Lake Gennesar. They therefore gathered vessels and clamoured for war on two fronts: if the battle on land turned against them, they would flee to their ships; if they gave way in a naval contest, they would return to the city and defend themselves with its surrounding walls. The defences of Tiberias and Taricheae were similar, but the characters at Taricheae were more desperate. The wall of Tiberias was stronger, but the fury of the Taricheans readier, so that, if necessary, they would throw everything together, naval contests with those on land, those on land with naval. At last, surrounded by the opposing army, they dared more than their strength allowed. Their rashness made no headway against the order of the Roman deployment and the valour of the veteran army. Before they suffered any destruction, they turned in flight and rushed to their vessels. They packed these together and fought as though in a close battle line, as if the contest were being fought hand to hand on land. An innumerable multitude was also awaiting the enemy on the plain. On learning this, Vespasian sent his son with chosen cavalry.

[III.23.2] When he saw himself surrounded by immense forces, he reported to his father that the enemy's multitude was greater than had been supposed. But he called together those whom he had led out with him and fired them for battle with this address.

Chapter 24

Online text and commentary

[III.24.1] "Men of Rome," he said, "as you go into battle, you ought to remember your name and race. No one in the Roman world has escaped your hands. For how did you give this name to all lands except by conquering? You must also remember the place where you now are and those against whom you Romans wage war. For we stand at the furthest part of the world. In crossing so great an expanse of lands, you have therefore seen nothing belonging to others. For what belongs to others when the whole world is in your possession? Whatever exists anywhere is yours by right; whatever all peoples inhabit is your possession. You were running well. Who has halted your triumphs as they ran throughout the world? Those triumphs which Hasdrubal the Carthaginian could not halt, nor Pyrrhus the Aeacid, nor Brennus pressing upon the approaches to the Capitol, nor the Persian hordes, nor the Egyptian phalanxes—rebellious Judaea has halted them, displaying an unskilled rashness in warfare, fitter for a brawl than a battle. Yet this is not what I fear. I consider it full of shame that you grow weary of conquering while those who are conquered so often have taken courage; that you are wearied by prosperity while they grow harder in adversity. Raise your spirits, then, men of Rome, and rise against the enemy hordes in confidence in your native valour. Do not let the numbers of the Jewish people disturb you, when they are not deterred by so many proofs of our valour, which are far stronger than numbers. For the Hebrews have neither knowledge of military affairs nor experience in fighting nor a gift for command, no practice of discipline, no patience to endure. They bring to battle only contempt for death; but no one has ever conquered an enemy by dying, only by killing. They know weapons only in war; we train with weapons in peace, so that in war we do not feel war's uncertain chances. For the inexperienced, the outcome is doubtful; for veterans, triumph is customary. What else do we do every day but ensure that battles are never new to us? Each man trains at home as though in battle, so that in battle there is a kind of rehearsal of the contest. Indeed, no one would be mistaken in saying that our rehearsals are wars without blood, our wars rehearsals. We advance into war protected on every side: the head is covered by a helmet, the chest by a breastplate, and the whole body by a shield. The enemy can find nowhere to strike the Roman soldier, whom he sees enclosed in iron. Such arms are a burden to others, a covering for us, since practice makes them light. Thus our battle is against men unarmed and naked. Or do we fear being surrounded by their numbers? First, cavalry have freedom of movement in battle, making a game of war by retreating and pursuing; they ride round battle lines however great, and withdraw over whatever distances they please. Then, even in infantry combat, it is not so much the numbers of the many that decide the battle as the valour of the few. A multitude unused to discipline is its own hindrance: in prosperity, to victory; in adversity, to flight. But steadfast valour grows stronger in prosperity and does not collapse altogether in adversity. There is also this: our habit of victory is an incentive to fight. Even if they fight for their country and children, they ought not therefore to be readier than we are. For it is no less—indeed, I do not know whether it is not even more—to fight for ourselves than for our own people. We fight for ourselves when we fight for glory, so that we may not become less than we are. Who, then, could doubt that it is greater to fight for glory than for safety? But for us this war concerns the danger to our reputation, lest the right we

have won be lost. We also risk appearing equal to the Jews, though we are conquerors of nations and rulers of the world: we set them up as opponents equal to ourselves if we engage them only with equal numbers. Our ancestors often routed great enemy forces with a small band. And what benefit do our daily exercises bring us, what our daily toil, if we come to battle with equal numbers? We have indeed reported their numbers to my father, because we were not permitted to do otherwise; but let him see that we have not feared the danger, but preserved our reverence for the arbiter of the war. We may taste the battle first, hold the enemy, seize victory while reinforcements are coming, lest those who arrive boast less that our common strength overcame the adversaries than that their valour protected us. With what face, then, shall we come before my father if we have feared to begin the battle? With what shame shall I, a degenerate son, meet the eyes of so great a man, who does not know what it is to see his soldier as anything but a victor? How shall I prove myself his son, when he is always triumphant but I am defeated even in my own judgement—which is worse—having yielded to a Jewish enemy? What will become of you when your commander is condemned, the man whom my father confidently entrusted to you? But I would rather you had to plead your case over your commander's valour than over his cowardice. Let us therefore rush upon our adversaries, hasten, forestall the enemy. I shall run first into danger; follow, so that you may guard my father's deposit and preserve what my father has entrusted to you. I ask for companions not in danger but in victory. Yet take care not to seem to have reserved for others the palm of triumph offered to you, and snatched it from yourselves. Certainly, if things turn out otherwise, I would rather my father recognised his son in my wounds, if he has not recognised him in his soldiers. But let us suppose that my father is offended by our beginning the battle. Which, then, is more bearable: to have seized victory too soon, or to have abandoned it? In seizing it too soon there is the haste of courage; in abandoning it, the fault of cowardice. Let my father condemn us as victors: I do not shrink from guilt of this kind. I would rather be guilty with the commonwealth triumphant than innocent with it injured. If only I might imitate the son of Manlius Torquatus, even in the danger alone, whom his father ordered to be struck with the axe because he had led the army against the enemy contrary to his father's command! The young man stood with the enemy slain, clothed in triumphal glory, untroubled by death beneath the executioner, since he thought it the greatest happiness to die in victory. For what is more illustrious than to close one's life with a triumph and not be kept for the uncertainty of events after a certain victory? O charge of victory, which the wise should seek! If only we too were accused of having conquered! Certainly, on that example, I alone shall be in danger; you will triumph. Yet my father has not forbidden us to fight, but commanded it by sending us into battle. Hence I think he will be angrier that we yielded to the Jews when we could conquer them than that we fought."

Chapter 25

Online text

[III.25.1] With these words he was the first to drive his horse against the enemy, and the others followed with a great shout, spreading across the whole plain, which made them seem more numerous. Trajan too arrived with three hundred cavalry, sent by Vespasian when Titus was already advancing. The Jews could not resist much longer, thrown into confusion by the men's lances and the horses' snorting. They therefore turned in different directions, many making for the city. Titus sprang forward, overwhelmed some as they fled with their backs turned and cut down others as they strayed. By forestalling their route he drove them all away from the walls and, meeting those who ran back, cut off their flight. Nevertheless, while some were struck down, others escaped and found refuge in the city.

[III.25.2] But there too the battle was fiercer. Those who had come from the neighbouring places at the beginning preferred peace, but the people who arrived later had forced them into support for the war against their will. Hence there was dissension and a grievous tumult within the city. Roused by the noise, Titus turned to his soldiers. "This, most faithful fellow soldiers," he said, "is the moment I was seeking. The enemy stir up disturbances among themselves within the city: outside they are cut down, inside they fight with swords. Let us hasten while they are still divided, lest fear of danger bring them to reconciliation."

[III.25.3] He therefore mounted the horse from which he had dismounted near the walls and, turning towards the lake, made for the city through the waves. He was the first to burst into the city, and the others followed him. At once all those within scattered in flight. Some were struck down, others boarded vessels and sank into the lake; many people were killed inside. Those from the countryside, however, offered themselves to the Romans, declaring that they had no part in the guilt. Titus, with merciful restraint, thought they should be spared, pressing only those responsible for the rebellion.

[III.25.4] He also sent a horseman to his father to announce the victory. Vespasian rejoiced at it, especially at his son's triumph, for he had completed the greatest part of the whole war being waged against Judaea. He hastened there and ordered the city to be guarded more carefully so that no one could slip away, because all were liable to punishment. On another day, however, he ordered rafts to be made because of those who had taken to the boats. They were made without delay, since the neighbouring woods and the many workmen made it possible to hasten the task.

Chapter 26

Online text and commentary

[III.26.1] For the lake itself, with a very broad expanse like a sea's circuit, stretches a hundred and forty stades in length and spreads forty in breadth. Its rippling waters raise a breeze for it from itself, whence it is called Gennesar, a Greek word signifying, as it were, that it generates a breeze for itself. Its water is fresh and fit for drinking, receiving none of the thickness or turbidity of marshy moisture, since it is surrounded on every side by a sandy shore. It is more temperate than the chill of a river or spring, yet colder than the surface of a still marsh, precisely because the water does not lie flat like a pond but is stirred more often by blowing breezes across the lake's wider spaces. Hence a draught of it is purer and softer for drinking. If anyone wishes to add care to its natural excellence and prepare it for drinking by hanging it out in the air on summer nights, as the inhabitants do, he would think it scarcely different from snow. Its kinds of fish too are superior in taste and appearance to those of another lake. The subject seems to require that we explain the source of the Jordan, as we promised elsewhere. For when men of an earlier age were uncertain whether the Jordan arose from the lake named Gennesar, Philip, tetrarch of the region of Trachonitis, refuted the false opinion and dispelled the error by throwing straw into Phiala, which the river threw up at Panium. It is therefore clear that Panium is not the Jordan's source but a place where it flows. Its spring is not there, as though it began there in the manner of other rivers: it is brought there from Phiala by underground passages. There it wells up again like a spring and is revealed as it emerges. Phiala is in the land of Trachonitis, a hundred and twenty stades from the city of Caesarea. Its appearance gave Phiala its name, as though expressing the shape of a wheel, for it is so constantly full of water that the water neither overflows nor is perceived to be drawn away by any decrease. The water therefore flows below in a certain measure and wells up again at Panium, as the reappearance of the straw made plain. Thus the Jordan was shown to have risen again where men of an earlier time had thought it was born. Yet Panium did not have the same splendour from the beginning, only its natural beauty. Through Agrippa's royal munificence a richer and more splendid adornment was added to the place; by it, we are told, the cave through which the Jordan rises was built up and beautified with admirable decoration. From there it begins to spread, no longer by a hidden course concealed in the earth's hollows, but in a visible and open stream over the land. It cuts through Lake Semechonitis and its marshes. Then, directing its course, it proceeds a hundred and twenty stades without any mingling as far as the city named Julias. Afterwards it passes through the middle of the lake called Gennesar. From there, after wandering through many deserts, it is received by Lake Asphaltites and buried in it. Thus, after emerging victorious from two lakes, it remains caught in the third.

[III.26.2] The region of Gennesar stretches along the lake of the same name, from which it too took its name, with a marvellous natural grace and appearance of beauty. The fertility of the soil supplies spontaneous fruits; rich in groves, it raises itself of its own accord into every kind of fruit-bearing tree. The ingenuity of cultivation, imitating nature, has turned the gift of abundant fertility to whatever uses it wished, so that there is nothing there which nature has denied, nothing which cultivation has passed over. The air is suited to all fruits and never

unfavourable to any, so temperate that it accommodates the diversity of everything that grows. There both what is nourished by cold and what is fostered by heat spread in abundance. There you may see summer growth mixed with winter growth, northern nuts together with dates which know no birth except in hotter places. Why speak of figs or olives, nourished by a milder stretch of sky? Yet they do not equal those mentioned before. For the former are the principal fruits of Palestine and, in a sense, native to it, and therefore more abundant; the latter are their near equals and, though separated by a long distance, nevertheless come next. You might call it a pleasing contest between nature and the seasons: nature, like a fruitful mother, creates everything; the temperateness of the seasons, like a good nurse, rears everything with gentle nurture. Thus not only are diverse fruits produced abundantly, but they are also preserved, so that some kinds do not fail for the greater part of the year, while all the rest last through the entire year to its end. For grapes and figs, which among cultivated fruits possess a certain royal grace, abound for ten months without any failure. The other fruits of the branches, whether the willing fields have produced them spontaneously or human industry has brought them into being, do not know how to abandon their service until new ones succeed them, following as it were the practice of attendants. To this fertility of nature and temperateness of the air is added the benefit of a spring, which irrigates the aforesaid region with a life-giving flow. Its name is Capharnaum. Some have thought, not without reason, that it is a vein of the river Nile, not only because its richness makes the fields fertile, but also because it produces a fish of such a kind that you would take it for the coracinus found in the lake at Alexandria through the Nile's inflow. The district too, named after the lake, stretches thirty stades in length and twenty in breadth. Since we have spoken of the nature of the place, let us return to the conclusion of the battle.

[III.26.3] When the rafts had been prepared according to his command, Vespasian put a force of soldiers aboard to pursue those who had escaped destruction by fleeing in vessels. They could find no course to take. There was no place of safety on land, with the enemy surrounding everything; no possibility of flight on the water, since the lake was enclosed and surrounded on every side by Romans; no confidence even in resisting in their small light vessels. For what could a few do against so many as the rafts drew near? The rafts' approach was indeed slower and the vessels' sorties more effective, but the Romans suffered no wound: only the rattle of shields was heard as the missiles bounced off them. The Jews did not dare approach, and no one brought a boat nearer with impunity, since at close quarters it was easy to be struck by missiles or sunk by the rafts. If anyone tried to swim clear or rise to the surface, he was pierced by an arrow and gave up his wretched life in the waves. They could not resist much longer, as their numbers were reduced in different ways. Little by little, as more rafts converged, the Romans drove the greatest number of vessels towards the shores. Hemmed in there, they either leapt ashore and were killed there by the Romans, or were cut down by those pressing them from the rafts, or were crushed by the collision of rafts, or threw themselves into the lake when the enemy leapt into their boats. You could have seen the waters mingled with blood, the lake full of corpses. No one encountered was spared. The smell was grievous, the stench of the place utterly foul. Six thousand seven hundred Jews were killed in that battle, including, however, those killed earlier.

[III.26.4] Vespasian returned victorious to Taricheae. There he prepared to separate the people of the region from the townspeople, so that those who had not been responsible for the sedition might be spared. But many advised that allowing so great a multitude to survive, capable of renewing the fighting, was contrary to peace and harmful to the district. Where would they settle, driven from their homeland? On what food would they sustain themselves, deprived of everything, unless they lived by plunder? He changed his decision and, having inspired hope of being spared death, ordered them to leave by the gate facing Tiberias and make for that city. They readily believed what they desired. They began to leave, but the whole route had been occupied beforehand: the passing columns of Jews were hemmed in and led into the city's stadium. Vespasian too entered and inspected the age and strength of all those whom he had ordered to be set before him. He selected six thousand of the stronger young men and sent them to Nero at the Isthmus. He ordered twelve hundred old and infirm men to be killed, and sold thirty thousand four hundred of the rest. All who were found to come from the territories of Agrippa's kingdom he gave to the king, who likewise accepted payment and transferred them into the service of slavery. In addition, other people of the regions of Trachonitis and Gaulanitis, and the Hippeni and Gadarenes, paid just and deserved penalties for their crimes as instigators of war and disturbers of concord: they had abandoned their own lands and invaded those of others, taking up arms and violating the peace.

BOOK IV

Chapter 1

Online text and commentary

[IV.1.1] With Taricheae destroyed, the Romans held most of the cities and territories of Galilee, except that Gamala, a city in the region of Gaulanitis, sustained the spirit of a stubborn people, relying on its rugged position. For it stands on a mountain. Cut off on the right and left by sheer cliffs, it narrows towards the top; at the front it is severed by a deep chasm, while at the rear it spreads out somewhat. On that side too the approach is narrow and difficult, so that you would judge the road taken by those making for the city to resemble a tail. From its highest point it stretches out a neck to an immense distance, so that it presents its citadel like a head and raises it to a lofty height. Narrow at the beginning, with the ground, as it were, curving through winding slopes and sinking into the depths, it then raises a sort of tendon in the middle of its neck; the rest is steep and impassable. Hence many think that earlier generations called it Camela because it presents the form of a camel, but that the name Gamala became attached to the city through a corruption in the inhabitants' usage. If you look at its closely joined buildings, you would judge it a city suspended in the air, and think especially that its northern parts hang down, while the southern parts bend back a little.

[IV.1.2] Josephus had added fortifications to this city too. Relying on these and on the numbers of people flocking there, they had made a mockery of King Agrippa's siege for seven months. For it, Sotanis and Seleucia were all parts of his kingdom. Seleucia lay beside that most pleasant grove of Daphne, renowned throughout Syria, interwoven with cypress trees and abounding in springs. Through these it pours nourishment, as from milky breasts, into the local river flowing past, which they call the Lesser Jordan. This city and Sotanis, however, form the upper part of Gaulanitis, Gamalis the lower. Hence, with their inclinations differing, those cities had chosen alliance with Rome,

[IV.1.3] while this one was rebelling so stubbornly that, when the king wished to approach the walls and address them, he was wounded by a missile from a sling. Inflamed by the injury done to him, the Romans pressed the siege more fiercely, and battle was joined with the greatest eagerness on both sides. For the Jews too fought with all their strength: having injured their own king while he was offering useful advice, they reckoned that they would receive no pardon if defeated.

[IV.1.4] Agrippa, then, struck by a stone on his right elbow, withdrew from the fighting, and the Romans burst into the city. For the enemy yielded to missiles, the wall to rams. Those who had been obstructing the engines could no longer resist, and the wall, shaken by three rams, gave the besiegers an open route to the besieged. But impatience in their haste brought no slight disaster upon the victors. For when they poured into the houses, searching them or striving to seize the plunder first, the cramped dwellings gave way under the weight. Their foundations swayed and brought on a collapse, and each neighbouring

building, crashing against the next, caused destruction. Many Romans, caught in these falls, met destruction in victory. Many, throwing themselves forward, were overwhelmed by fallen buildings; others were dragged out, their bodies mangled, scarcely half alive; dust killed many. Crowded into narrow spaces, they were cut down, while from above women, feeble old men and the younger men who had fled hurled stones upon those beneath them, or whatever kinds of missiles came to hand. Darkness had poured over everything, taken away sight and confounded the mind. In their ignorance they could find no way out.

[IV.1.5] Thus, barely extricating themselves from danger, they left the city. Meanwhile Vespasian, pressing the enemy, had advanced into the interior of the city and kept the battle raging amid the hostile ranks surrounding him. For it did not befit so great a man to turn his back to the enemy, nor did he consider it safe. He had sent his son Titus to Syria. He roused his confidence in his well-known valour and gathered himself under arms. With shields locked together, he stood undaunted with the few men he had at hand, as though considering whom he should hurl himself upon. Dreading his onslaught, the Jews began to press him less vigorously, and each, fearing for himself, loosened the battle line. Thus Vespasian, facing the enemy, gradually drew back, more like a man fighting than one retreating. There fell Butius, a decurion, a man proven in many earlier wars and of known experience against the Jews and robust courage. A centurion too, with ten other Syrians, performed an outstanding and memorable deed. In the midst of the tumult, seeing the Romans hard pressed, he withdrew into the hidden parts of a house. There, while the Jews were talking over supper about what they had contrived against the Romans, he killed them all in the dead of night and presented himself again to the Roman army with his soldiers.

Chapter 2

Online text and commentary

[IV.2.1] When Vespasian saw that the army was dejected at the loss of so many men, and above all ashamed of having abandoned its commander, because they had left him alone inside the enemy's city, he consoled them with the greatest goodwill, saying: "If the danger that fell to my lot causes you shame, I too had advanced to war to face dangers, not to avoid them. If, rather, it is because many of our men have been killed, there is nothing to wonder at: when is any victory won without bloodshed? Battles have their own outcomes. Although proven valour usually excels in war, something is commonly left to chance. But it belongs to the prudent man to correct a fall in adversity and to maintain moderation in prosperity. It belongs, on the contrary, to a rough and untrained mind always to presume upon success, as though the contest were not against men; it belongs to a weak man to lose confidence in the whole undertaking because of some fall, when all that happens in war may suddenly turn on the slightest impulses. Thus the best man is he who, sober amid adversity, wrestles with chance, trips up the stronger opponent and seeks to recover himself and correct his own falls. The less careful man, however, often falls through his own movements: rushing in heedlessly, he is thrown down by his own onslaught and lies prostrate. If this often happens where valour stands alone, how much more in war, where forces of different kinds meet in combat, with no single plan or shared judgement, where the ground is unfavourable and rugged, and the conditions of fighting in a confined space are unequal for many against few, since the very multitude is a burden to itself, while the few are less likely to miss among so many. But these things often steal upon us for a moment; they do not arise from valour, but happen by chance. There is therefore nothing that should distress you, fellow soldiers. It was not any weakness of your force, nor the courage of the Jews, that turned the course of events: the difficulty of the ground hindered our victory and gave them time to delay it. Nor is there anything to blame except an ill-considered and disorderly onslaught. For in following them to the higher parts of the city and rushing into their houses, you entangled yourselves in danger. You entered their dwellings; you took on their dangers. You held the city: who compelled you to go further inside? The enemy ought to have come down to you; you ought not to have striven recklessly for victory, forgetful of life and safety. Recover your spirits, then, and expect from your valour not merely consolation but, what is more, vengeance. You will certainly have me leading the way into battle. Be ready in spirit; may these dangers have made you stronger, not more timid. It is easy to redress an injury if valour recognises itself."

Chapter 3

Online text

[IV.3.1] With these words he kindled the soldiers' courage. While they were repairing the rampart, many of the besieged slipped away from the siege by the steep places. For shortage of food was already assailing them, and they thought that the damaged stretches of wall would give way to the engines. Moreover, there was only one spring within the city, and that too was close to the walls. This put them in the greatest fear, so that very many slipped away. Those who thought they should remain, however, fought stubbornly.

[IV.3.2] Meanwhile the Romans undermined a very high tower and brought it down with tremendous force. Its fall shook the city; all were thrown into confusion, fearing the collapse of the whole city. Chares too, ill in body, was overcome by terror at so great a crash and met his death.

[IV.3.3] Yet the Romans refrained from entering the city when it lay open, until Titus returned and, stirred by distress at his father's danger, burst into the city with a few men and inflicted very great slaughter upon the Jews. Those on the heights, however, rolled down stones and prevented the Romans from approaching; they hurled javelins and shot arrows. Stones pushed by the Jews rolled easily downhill, missiles reached their mark and arrows descended, not without danger to those they struck. For the Romans, hurling missiles towards the higher parts of the mountain was ineffectual, their effort fruitless and dangerous to themselves. Suddenly a storm of wind arose, turning back the Jews' arrows and driving back their javelins, while carrying against the enemy whatever the Roman army hurled. Thus, overwhelmed by the barriers raised by the very elements and by whirling winds, all who were found there perished in the final destruction of the captured city. We have learnt, however, that four thousand were killed by the Romans and five thousand perished by falling from the heights; no age was spared.

Chapter 4

Online text and commentary

[IV.4.1] Gischala alone among the districts of Galilee had not yet drawn the enemy against itself, since the quieter dispositions of its inhabitants, a rural people content with their own produce, had no taste for war. But through the gathering of many men who made brigandage their way of life, even the inclinations of the milder people were corrupted by wicked habits. There was also a man named John, son of Levi, a native-born plague upon his people, second to none of the cunning in deceit, knowing no equal in wickedness. His desire to do harm had never failed him, though for a time poverty had prevented him from practising iniquity—yet I do not clearly know how to decide whether poverty had concealed him or restrained him. He was cunning in deceit, an artist in deception, skilled at winning belief through lies and securing credulity through fabrications. He regarded deceit as a virtue and thought it a mark of refinement to cheat those dearest to him. He was ready to conspire, vehement in daring, keen in carrying things out; a troublemaker in times of quiet, a deserter in danger; accustomed to brigandage, inexperienced in war. Though he could not conduct wars, he nevertheless sowed them to prepare the way for his own rule. His mind, then, was restless, his audacity ready and nourished by successes, and he had wealth with which to gather a band of reprobates.

[IV.4.2] When Vespasian learnt that the people of the aforesaid city were being roused to war by John's faction, he sent his son Titus with a thousand horsemen, so as not to weary the entire army. Accompanied by them, Titus approached the city. But when he saw the walls crowded with people, he said that he was amazed that they followed in rebellion the example of those whose destruction ought to have brought them to their senses. "Granted, however, that their first attempts offered some ground for confidence, what hope could the

destruction of them all hold out? Their hopes of freedom may certainly have been pardonable at the beginning, but perseverance when all is lost and beyond hope is unforgivable. For against those who are moved neither by an example of humanity nor by earnest verbal admonition, words are not needed, but arms. You trust in walls, as though they had protected anyone against Roman valour. What else can men shut in display, men besieged put forward, except their boldness in captivity?"

[IV.4.3] No one had the freedom to speak; the band of brigands had occupied the entire circuit of the walls. John was taking care that no one should invite the Romans in through friendly conversation. He therefore forestalled any reply, saying that he willingly accepted discussion of their common affairs and did not refuse to try it: he himself might perhaps offer useful advice, or have to assent to what was proposed. But he was forbidden by ancestral law to discuss conditions of peace, since the day of the sacred week had not yet passed. Just as taking up arms was forbidden, so it was also unlawful to deliberate on peace on holy days. For to decide on business even in words was sacrilege for those compelled to do so, and would not go unpunished for those who compelled them. He asked the indulgence of a single day; so small a delay would be no hindrance. For, with the enemy surrounding them, those shut in had no free means of escape. Was he being offered a choice of peace? With so fair a choice, there was no fear. Meanwhile he ought not to be pressed into deliberations on peace, when he and his people held it a religious scruple to transgress their ancestral law. Moreover, it was fitting, with so generous an offer of peace, that the man who freely offered peace beyond expectation, so that no one should face danger, should also preserve their own laws for those who would escape it. Titus thought these arguments had been put forward without deceit, sounded the retreat and recalled from the walls those he had brought with him.

[IV.4.4] Thus John obtained the opportunity to flee and departed in the dead of night with many others. Women too followed him as he went. But the further the men advanced, the more women and little children were left behind. Abandoned by their own people, the frightened women watched the road. When their husbands were already passing out of sight, they thought the enemy was at hand and trembled at every sound. If anyone ran, the wretched women turned round, afraid that they were being attacked and chains were being put upon them, as though those they feared were already present.

[IV.4.5] In accordance with the agreement, Titus made for the city with his army once the sun had shed its light. The gates were opened; the people came out in exultation and welcomed the Romans with joy and eagerness, glad that the pestilent man had gone. He had fled during the night, they said, and they had been given the freedom to decide for themselves. They begged pardon, asking that the flight of a man whom they could not have held without their own destruction should not count against them. Consoling himself for the postponement of vengeance with the speed at which the business had been completed, Titus immediately sent many men to seize John, in case they might catch up with him. He himself entered the city and, content to have dealt with the disturbers of peace by threats rather than punishment, pardoned everyone. He did so lest anyone, stirred by hatred or private disputes, should bring odium upon innocent men and assail them with a charge of the gravest crime, since it is far

more tolerable to leave an uncertain matter to the fear of a complicit conscience than to condemn an innocent man. For fear often corrects a guilty man, but there is no remedy for the punishment of an innocent man. Those whom Titus had sent did not find John, but they did find the little children and women who were following him. About two thousand were killed; three thousand of vulnerable age and sex were assigned to captivity once the appetite for killing had been sated. He gave the city a military garrison. Thus all Galilee was brought under Roman power.

[IV.4.6] For Mount Tabyrius too, whose height is thirty stades and whose level summit extends for thirty-three stades, had been abandoned by some for want of water and handed over to the Romans by others who asked for pardon. Yet through the valour and skill of Placidus, to whom Vespasian had entrusted the task, the whole crowd of newcomers, while following him as he yielded and pressing upon him as he artfully drew back, had been surrounded in the middle of the plain and had lost its refuge and found destruction.

Chapter 5

Online text and commentary

[IV.5.1] Thus far we may be allowed our digression, as we have kept our pen occupied with other cities, shrinking from the defilements of the holy temple founded by our ancestors and of the sacred law. But now it is time to undertake the account of what happened at Jerusalem, not trusting in our ability, but lest we seem to have denied our ancestral law and ancient worship the service of our grief. Though there may have been in them shadow, not truth, yet shadow marks the traces of truth. For a shadow has the outlines of a picture, but lacks its brilliance; it has not received the finishing touch, yet to those who look closely it portrays what is to come. Thus the figure gives less delight; grace attracts more. Hence it pleased the arbiter of all things to abolish the old and establish the new, so that those who, through the narrowness of faithlessness, did not follow the images might follow the truth.

Chapter 6

Online text and commentary

[IV.6.1] Fleeing from the regions of Galilee, as we said above, John made his way to the city of Jerusalem and, like a kind of plague, infected the minds of many who, foremost in outrage, had flowed there from various regions as into a cesspool. For this was a cause of greater destruction for that city: the service the reprobates rendered to their crimes—many gathering there where they believed they would either be safer or more unrestrained in heaping up their outrages—was thought to be service rendered to faith. They were therefore received everywhere as though they had come to defend the temple out of devoted love for it. This was the first blight of these evils.

[IV.6.2] Hence the gentleness of the few was overwhelmed by the insolence of the many. Hence they proceeded to killings, since an outsider was less inclined to spare anyone. Hence they conspired to neglect the observances of the law and transfer priesthoods from good men to wicked ones, because men who were strangers not only to devoted worship but to the very knowledge of the law did not know what was holy. First, men of royal stock who resisted

were bound, so that the rest would yield through fear; then they were killed. To conceal the outrage, they falsely claimed that the men whom they had killed without trial by sending assassins into the prison had been put to death on a fabricated charge of treason. Fear therefore struck them all. Since powerful and innocent men—Antipas, Levias and Foras—had been so easily overwhelmed, they no longer dared to resist.

[IV.6.3] From this they went so far as to install obscure and unworthy men as chief priests. Men whom no claim of merit commended for the honour obtained priesthoods contrary to their deserts and were made subject, in every wicked deed, to the will of those who bestowed them.

[IV.6.4] But when the men of the priesthood opposed them, and above all Ananus, senior to the others, the rebels called for the chief priest to be chosen by lot, so that the prerogative of the highest title should not be bestowed through favour. In this way the outcome of the lot would be regarded as entrusted not to favour but to divine judgement. They did indeed invoke an ancient custom, by which those to be appointed to the chief priesthood were ordinarily summoned to the lot; in fact, however, they were plainly working to dissolve the law.

[IV.6.5] For the law selected for the lot men of priestly succession, but they, for appearances, brought forward a single one of the priestly tribes, named Eniachim, and ordered the choice to be made by lot. Then a certain Phanis, son of Samuel, a villager, was chosen by the lot. He not only lacked any succession traced through the chief priests, but had no knowledge at all of priestly office, since he occupied himself in the country and therefore did not know what a chief priest was. In short, he was dragged unwillingly from the fields and made to assume another's role, as though on a stage. He was also clothed in the vestments consecrated by ancient custom and taught on the spot what he ought to do. Thus the outcome of the lot exposed the wickedness of the seditious men, when the exercise of so great a priesthood was handed down to an ignorant rustic. But the evasion of the ancient observance was a jest to them and a grief to the priests, who wept and groaned that the law was being mocked by reprobates.

[IV.6.6] Yet, relying on the authority of devotion itself and on the indignation of good men, they gathered together and rushed upon the disturbers.

[IV.6.7] But the others, distrusting both their cause and their numbers, fled to the temple as to a citadel and established it as a kind of camp from which to repel the crowd of people rushing upon them. At first they stood before the temple doors and in its very vestibule, fighting against the people. Anyone who had been wounded made for the interior of the temple, pouring his blood upon the inner threshold and wiping his bloodied face upon the pavements. Wounds and the flesh of open wounds were packed with garments they were not permitted to touch. There was war within the city, war among citizens, war before the temple. The brigands showed no reverence even for this: when the people pressed them more fiercely, they withdrew inside the temple itself and immediately closed the doors. This barrier checked Ananus, lest he seem to be bringing war upon the temple and breaking through the temple doors consecrated by ancestral religious observance. He turned back the

people's onslaught and stationed six thousand men in the porticoes, armed to stand guard and keep a vigilant watch. Gradually, however, he softened his resolve and sought peace, chiefly from his concern that the blood of citizens should not defile the temple. He urged that an embassy be sent to mediate peace, so that civil war might be laid aside.

[IV.6.8] John was enlisted to carry out the embassy, a man of doubtful faithfulness and inflamed with the desire to secure power. An oath was demanded; he did not refuse, lest by refusing he should lose the benefit of perjury. He pretended to favour the people in order to deceive them.

[IV.6.9] What more? He went, prefaced his words with a little about peace, and wove much more into them to kindle war. He said that war was wrapped in the name of peace, that there were hidden snares, and that Ananus had prepared to hand the city over to the Romans, so that ancient observance would be dissolved and the precepts of the law abolished. He fashioned everything into its opposite and turned against the chief priest the odium of the things he himself was planning. He also cunningly stirred up those whom he knew to be the leaders of the men shut inside and the chiefs of their faction, by fear of the death prepared for them. He asserted that Ananus had devised destruction especially for them; that he himself had come to reveal the deceit; and that they must seek help speedily, before punishment was exacted from them.

[IV.6.10] What more? The mediator of peace kindled war. Men were chosen to ask the Idumaeans to fight—a fickle, restless, insolent people, ready for discord, rejoicing in upheavals, heedless of danger, headlong in battle.

[IV.6.11] Thus they were won over and came without delay. Twenty thousand men assembled, intent on no cultivation of the land but ready for brigandage.

[IV.6.12] The arrival of the Idumaeans could not escape Ananus's notice. He ordered the gates to be closed, so that they should not enter in tumult but, if possible, learn the truth and renounce war.

Chapter 7

Online text and commentary

[IV.7.1] The chief priests therefore climbed the wall and addressed the Idumaeans from a tower. They were utterly amazed, they said, that, so swiftly ensnared by lies, the Idumaeans were pursuing by arms causes they had not yet understood. They ought to have been judges of disputes before becoming fighters in wars, and above all to have learnt the merits of the case before taking up arms—arms against men of their own stock, their own worship, their own observance. No greater injury had been inflicted upon anyone than upon the Idumaeans, who were being stirred to share in such grave outrages. For what else was being asked of them but the murder of their own kin—their fellow citizens—and sacrilege against the temple? Different aims and different characters did not ordinarily agree with one another. Similarity of character creates fellowship in purpose and binds kindred aims together. The most wicked men, who maintained their livelihood by brigandage, had presumed to summon the Idumaeans as allies, although the Idumaeans' purpose differed so greatly from that of those who had called them: "Those men have brought war upon their own country, yet have entreated you to come as though to defend a city not your own. You, who are innocent, have nothing in common with plunderers; you, who are sober, have nothing in common with men who make themselves drunk. If only that drunkenness were of wine and not of fury! Once they have gorged themselves on outrages, squandering their own inheritances, they plunder the property of others; and what they have wickedly gained they squander still more wickedly and pour away still worse. There is no end to their plundering, because there is no limit to their gluttonous consumption. When they have drenched themselves in wine and filled themselves with drunkenness, they belch out a surfeit of public affairs, so that they may become drunk again on our blood and mock holy religion, which has always been an object of veneration and reverence to you. Flee, then, these gatherings for the murder of kin, abandon their sacrilegious ventures, forsake the assemblies of brigands. You have been called to a share in crime: let your coming bring a remedy to your country. We see a most distinguished people, who ought to have come at the request of a public council, to give aid against the enemy to the most eminent city of the Jews, held to be the mother-city of the whole nation. But even if we failed to ask, while hoping for peace and unwilling to weary you hastily—we were offering peace to the stirrers of war—nevertheless, as though you had come by divine judgement, deliberate for the common good and present yourselves as arbiters between both sides. Ask where the disturbance began; who sounded the war trumpet in a peaceful city; who shed the blood of its most eminent citizens; at whose instigation punishment was exacted from men not condemned; who brought destruction upon us before the Romans did. We were preparing war against the Romans, yet were already suffering these men as enemies. Whose favour with the Romans, then, is suspect: that of the men who avenge the Romans, or that of the men who repel them? These things are certainly more grievous to us than battles with the Romans. At their hands we would die for freedom; by these men we are butchered as though for a crime. Charges of treason are invented against the innocent, and the accusation is fabricated after death, although investigation ordinarily precedes punishment, not punishment investigation. For what does it profit a dead man to be acquitted, when he is no longer answerable to judgement? Yet we

accept even a fate of this kind, that our innocence should be investigated after our killing; and we willingly plead before you too the case for our own integrity and that of the dead, although you stand armed on behalf of our adversaries. So utterly do our accusers lack arguments that their case is the worse even before you, who believed them so quickly. For a good judge grieves at having been deceived by lies and is therefore more hostile to the deceiver than to the man attacked, because he thinks he must take vengeance for having been rashly induced to believe falsehoods. Preserve, then, an impartial examination for us, and gather the truth from the course of events, not from the weaving of words. First of all, why should we betray our country to the Romans, whom we could have refrained from provoking? Perhaps that was what we ought to have done, so as not to rouse the conquerors of all nations. But deliberation on this is no longer part of our present task. It belonged to an earlier time to choose what course we should follow; now we must fall for freedom. For it is better to die for one's country. It might have been more advantageous before the war to prefer peace to death; but since war is at our necks, many of our brothers have already been captured, others killed, and there is grief for the dead and groaning for those in chains, a free death must be chosen rather than a life of captivity. Yet it remains open to those about to die to wipe away the disgrace of the false charge of treason. Before you, Idumaeans, we plead our case: let those privy to it, the intermediaries who conveyed the messages, be exposed and brought forward. If they have informers, let them produce them; if they have none, why do they accuse us and charge us on empty suspicions they have themselves devised? They ought not to allege what they cannot prove. But because they do not dare to accuse us openly, they wish to spread it among the crowd, and therefore rush into war to avoid being called to judgement. For in war there is a chorus of fury; in peace, an examination of truth. See, we are here first; we offer ourselves willingly for punishment, if only an accuser comes forward. Or if odium is being turned upon the people, inquire more carefully what the purpose of the public assembly was. Was it not to prepare forces equipped for war, so that each man should help his country in the cause of freedom? Against the brigands themselves, what had been resolved except that peace should be agreed? The grief of individuals, the blood of the innocent, the groaning of women and the violation of ancestral statutes had sharpened public indignation. The groaning of all rang out, because each feared the same things for himself. Priesthoods were being bestowed upon the most unworthy men. They began to be attacked with cries; they struck down the people with stones and killed them with weapons. Public grief blazed up; they established refuges for brigands in the temple. Thus the place of peace, revered even by the nations, and the dwelling of holiness became an assembly-place of plunderers. Where people used to flock from every part of the earth to worship at the festal celebration, there are now dens of wild beasts wet with human blood. You may investigate these things even while armed, but without the law of war. Judgement has often taken place amid arms, and justice has laid aside the instruments of war; the verdict of equity has silenced the trumpets. You can turn to the defence of the city these arms which you took up for its overthrow. You may also enter unarmed, hear everything and inquire into it. If you find any slackness towards the enemy, deem it treason. But if you wish to act neither as our defenders nor as arbiters, why are you surprised that the gates are not opened to armed men? They are closed against arms, not against kinsmen. Lay aside war, and the gates will open."

Chapter 8

Online text and commentary

[IV.8.1] When the priests had spoken in this way, especially Jesus, who was senior to the others but came after Ananus and held second place, the Idumaeans were indignant that they had not immediately been received into the city. Simon, one of the Idumaean commanders, said: “It is no wonder that they rage against their fellow citizens and keep them shut in, when they have closed the gates against an allied nation and do not allow their fellows and partners to enter. They speak to us from the wall and repel us with walls as though we were adversaries, when they had us as friends. Who can doubt that they are preparing to receive the Romans and perhaps to crown the gates when they enter? What greater injury could there be? This city is accustomed to lie open to all men for religious observance; to us alone it is barred, as though we were enemies. We alone are disowned, we alone are repelled. They pretend to seek our judgement, though they did not think us worthy even of the city’s threshold. Let what they have done against those men remain hidden: we are witnesses and judges of our own injury. We see what those shut in suffer, when we ourselves are ordered to lay down our arms. Can it be believed that they await the judgement of men whose faithfulness they suspect? Let us hasten, then, to rescue those shut in, for whom the temple has become a prison, lest they be kept until the arrival of the Roman army and handed over as captives to Vespasian. Let us lift the siege from the temple and remove the foulest of guards, who allow no one to go out even to empty his bowels. If anyone wishes to bring food to those shut in, he is prevented; if anyone wishes to go out, he is dragged to death. Religious worship has been made a crime.”

Chapter 9

Online text and commentary

[IV.9.1] On hearing this, Jesus withdrew, considering it vain to struggle against God’s adverse will, since hostile uproar resounded both within and without, and the city was being assailed from both sides. The Idumaeans raged at being excluded; those stationed in the temple contrived how to join them. Fear troubled the latter, lest the Idumaeans should leave before accomplishing their purpose, while shame deprived the others of the will to return. Distrust had already almost crept over them when suddenly, in the night, an unbearable gale arose, a black storm. The winds roared, the sky grew terrible, torrents of rain poured down; there were dreadful flashes of lightning, monstrous peals of thunder and a bellowing of the earth, so that the world seemed to be dissolving. Who would believe that this did more harm to those inside the city than to those outside, when the former were certainly sheltered by roofs and the latter exposed to the rain? But fear of harm terrified them more than the harm itself. Those who had no shelter of roofs covered themselves with shields, remaining at their duty and not dispersing. Those inside scattered, each about his own house, and gave those within the temple the opportunity to open the gates.

[IV.9.2] The people’s judgement, however, was uncertain and divided. Some thought that the supreme God, indignant at the Idumaeans because they had come armed against their fellows, had stirred up the storms. Ananus and the more penetrating minds among the elders

conjectured that the harm suffered by the Idumaeans was rousing them still more to destroy their allies. Ananus, more watchful on other nights, that night was undone, not by bodily weariness but rather by despair of spirit. He yielded to events flowing against him and to the storms of the world fighting for his destruction. He did not think to inspect the guards again, as though he were authorising them to disperse wherever each pleased. Seizing this opportunity, those who had fled into the temple rose and cut through the bars of the gates. The crash of the sky helped them, so that the sound of the saws and the tumult of those going out were not heard.

[IV.9.3] Then they came to the wall and opened the gate near the assembled Idumaeans. That would have been the last day of the whole people, had the Idumaeans not thought they should make for the temple before entering the heart of the city. Those kept shut inside the temple feared for themselves: once the Idumaeans' entry became known, the people surrounding them might rush upon them to exact vengeance before dying. They therefore asked to be saved from slaughter first; then, once they had been freed and their forces joined, they could pour out against the people. The Idumaeans turned aside to those who had sent envoys to beg for help in saving them, also so that the authors of their unexpected entry might be repaid with this benefit above all.

[IV.9.4] When this had succeeded as intended, they all poured out together from the temple as though from a camp, their battle line extended, and slaughtered throughout the streets whomever they found, some asleep, others terrified. Prayers availed nothing, tears nothing, marks of honour nothing; no services won favour. All were indiscriminately butchered. Seeing the bestial savagery of their pursuers, and that no one was spared, they hanged themselves: an end more pitiable, as it seems to me, than being killed by the enemy, because voluntary death is ascribed to savagery, and the hideous knot of the noose is reckoned a disgrace as well. But what room was there for counsel, where the fear of punishment was so great, when each man feared not death but the torments before death, for which death would be a remedy? Blood overflowed everywhere, and especially around the temple, because those guarding the men shut in had gathered there. That day eight thousand five hundred slain men were found.

[IV.9.5] Then they turned towards the city and killed whomever they met as though slaughtering a herd of cattle. It was a pitiable spectacle: war waged within a city formerly revered by all, destruction inflicted equally upon the poor and the weak. The young and stronger men, however, were thrust into prison, since they were thought suitable for the faction. But many, with great courage, preferred to undergo every punishment rather than join the reprobates. There was no limit and no shame, so fiercely did the frenzy of savagery rage. Afterwards, when they seemed to have spent their fury, as time passed they began to invent grounds for killing people by bringing the accused to trial, so that cruelty might be stirred up, not justice sought.

Chapter 10

Online text

[IV.10.1] There was in the city a man named Zacharias, who hated the wicked and did not mingle with evildoers. He was rich in wealth, whose abundance they thought could either be effective in breaking up their faction or offer them rich plunder. They decided to summon him on a charge of treason. But he, with a conscience clear of any such thing, began to speak freely in his own defence, not only refuting the charges but also establishing that they themselves were guilty of the gravest outrages. The case was heard before seventy men. All acquitted him, because nothing connected with a crime was brought forward. But the others rushed upon him and hurled him into the depths. They drove out the judges, not only insulting them but also putting them in danger, so that their example would warn the rest against presuming in future to show firmness in judgement contrary to their will.

[IV.10.2] Again, however, so that no one should be acquitted, they themselves became the executors of their anger and killed whomever they pleased without trial. Gorgon, a pleasing and lovable man, was slain. So too was Niger the Peraean, who had been chosen among Judaea's defenders to safeguard its highest interests. A warrior, who even bore the marks of his valour in the scars of his wounds, he was dragged to death. When he saw that he was being led outside the city, he began to beg, no longer for life, but for burial. Yet not even to this pitiable petition did he receive an answer consistent with mercy. False charges were fabricated: if anyone bought himself free, he was innocent; the man who offered no money was struck down as guilty.

Chapter 11

Online text and commentary

[IV.11.1] While these things were happening at Jerusalem, Vespasian meanwhile was subduing other parts of the Jewish nation. News reached him of the strife at Jerusalem, the deaths they had inflicted upon themselves in domestic battles, and the punishments citizens had exacted from citizens. Many urged him to proceed there, lest anything be taken away from Rome's triumph and his own glory. But he was a moderate and far-sighted man, who judged advantageous not what accorded with common practice, but what, on deeper consideration, he thought would benefit the whole undertaking. He began to reply to those giving this advice that the state was not always helped by battles, but often glory was won and the debt to the fatherland paid even by laying down arms. "What difference does it make how the enemy is defeated, by our sword or his own, except that by his own he is overthrown without odium attaching to Rome? For they cannot complain of us when they have wounded one another. At the same time they show how justly they have made war upon us, since they do not spare even themselves. This would seem vengeance from heaven, that those who have provoked the Romans should rage in madness. But if anyone asserts that something is being taken from our glory, let him recognise that a remedy achieved in silence always outweighs a battle fought with danger. Indeed, our Maximus broke Hannibal more by delaying than by fighting. Although the Scipios subdued Africa, victory in war is shared with many; to Maximus alone was it granted to restore the Roman state by delaying. It is therefore a greater thing to have preserved the Roman dominion than to have extended it. Yet let us reckon the merits of these valiant deeds equal. Surely, in war itself, the devices of wisdom are no less than the distinctions of courage. Let them therefore perish by their own arms: nothing is taken from our praise, and a very great deal is added to our victory. Those whom we spare do not know how to preserve their own people. What if, when we begin to threaten them, they perhaps come to their senses and are reconciled with one another? I do not fear this, but put it forward against your view. Or, if the strife persists, should it appear that they have defeated themselves, that the Roman army has done nothing, that our hands have been idle, and that victory has been won not by our valour but by the enemies' mutual slaughter? The wiser course, then, is for them to rage to their own destruction in our absence, lest anyone think that they have been harassed more by our intrigues than by their own. We shall do better to approach when a victor remains to be added to our triumph. Certainly, let those who flee their own people come to us; let those whom the scourge of their own people has driven out find safety with us."

Chapter 12

Online text and commentary

[IV.12.1] Vespasian's expectation did not deceive him. For those who could buy their release fled to the Romans. Every paved road and every path was filled with fugitives. The rich were let go; the poor, who lacked money for their ransom, were killed. Many also greatly feared ambushes and brigandage outside the city, especially the poor, who had no escort. Thus they faced equal danger outside and at home, deadly in either case; yet to many, in the hope of burial in their native land, death among their own people seemed more tolerable.

Chapter 13

Online text

[IV.13.1] When fear, spread among all by the immense slaughter of the people, had made everyone subject to the faction, John, not content to exercise power in common with the leaders of the faction, began to aspire to tyranny and resented an equal. He therefore overturned the decrees of others, recognised nothing as valid except what pleased him, and gradually attached bodyguards to himself. Skilled in deceit, he ensnared by fraud those he wished, bound them to himself with money, and terrified them with power; by these arts he had joined very many to himself. Yet there were also men who rejected servitude, even at peril to themselves, especially since, accustomed to rule, they could not endure slavery. Thus three kinds of deadly calamity contended in one city: tyranny, war and strife, each of which could destroy not one city but many. Yet of the three, war was the lighter evil, and an enemy in regular warfare seemed more tolerable than a tyrant or a faction.

[IV.13.2] To these was added a fourth kind, that of the Sicarii. Seeing the city occupied by the upheavals of tyranny or the tumults of strife, they ravaged all the neighbouring places and carried everything away. They put to death women and children who, through the weakness of their sex or age, could not endure the hardship of the journey. Seven hundred in number were thus killed. Grain was conveyed into the strongholds. They rushed upon fields, cities and temples, carried off plunder, and let no opportunity for killing pass. In the guise of an army they practised brigandage, in greater numbers than the practice of brigandage required. They made war more bitter with the savagery of brigandage, allowing no pardon for surrender or mercy in receiving those who submitted.

Chapter 14

Online text

[IV.14.1] Thus Vespasian, from whom destruction had been feared, was asked to come as a remedy. He hastened to Gadara, where there were very many wealthy men who, on account of their estates, were increasingly afraid of the brigands' ambushes and raids. They had therefore secretly sent to Vespasian to ask him to approach them, so that the city might be rescued from the brigands. The Roman army arrived. On seeing it, the Gadarenes wished to flee to it, but could find no way to do so without destruction to themselves, lest the faction rise against them as they departed and destroy them all. Yet it did not escape the faction that Vespasian had been invited by an embassy of the Gadarenes and that Dolesus, a leading man of the city, was privy to that embassy. The faction seized and killed him; having avenged the affront, they left the city and withdrew to hidden and more strongly fortified places. Gadara was handed over to the Romans, and Vespasian was received with great applause. He at once sent Placidus to pursue those who had fled, and himself returned to Caesarea.

Chapter 15

Online text and commentary

[IV.15.1] Placidus sent five hundred horsemen ahead and pursued the fugitives, forcing them into the nearest village. Finding there a picked body of young men, they took courage to rise against the Romans. This brought them very great disaster. For the cavalry surrounded them and cut them off from the village, and they were killed without any hindrance; while others withdrew in a mass, they were slaughtered before the thresholds of the gates. A mound heaped up from the bodies of the slain had reached the height of the walls.

[IV.15.2] The Romans pierced some with arrows and wounded others with various missiles; at last they stormed the stronghold, and all within were killed except those who had the opportunity to escape. Others, as they fled, magnified by their words the great fame of Roman valour: the bodies they had seen were larger than human bodies, and no one had any confidence of resisting the unconquered. Hence all were terrified and fled at once. Not only neighbouring and adjoining places were abandoned, but even the city of Jericho, which, because of the throngs of its inhabitants, had sustained the hopes of the rest. With events going as he wished, Placidus pursued these too with his horsemen, striking down some in masses and others as they strayed, as far as the river Jordan. At the riverbank too he found a very great number whose passage was blocked, because the aforesaid river happened then to have swollen with rain or melting snow. When they saw the Romans at hand, they made ready and crowded along the edge of the river. With the refuge of flight cut off, necessity put the remedy into their hands, and the many charged and hurled themselves upon the fewer horsemen. These, with familiar skill and in the old manner of soldiering, began to ride between them, break up the enemy's wedge, disperse their masses, press the weary and pursue those who yielded. Thus some were killed by the enemy's weapons, others by their own, upon which they fell as they were crowded together and dashed against one another. Others rushed into the river, where their very fall and their entanglement with one another submerged them. Many also entrusted themselves to the river, thinking they could cross it;

when they had advanced a little, the force of the eddies swallowed them or the rush of the river swept them away. Even those who, practised in swimming, had made progress over the water and kept themselves afloat above the current flowing beneath, lost their lives in the river, caught in the branches of trees carried down by it or crushed by the trunks themselves. Often too a man unskilled in swimming, on grasping a swimmer, held fast so that he too might escape, and wore him out, locked in his arms, until both sank, each bringing destruction upon the other. And if someone, carried down by a favourable current, seemed likely to escape, he was sewn through with arrows and suddenly perished face upwards, the oars of his arms ceasing to move. There were also men who, unable to swim and seeking a painless death, flung themselves willingly from a raised bank into the river; others entered from a sandy shore, their feet sank, and they were drawn down. Many too slipped on rounded stones or stumbled in the shallows, swayed with unsteady footing and were overwhelmed by the currents following them. Thirteen thousand were killed by the sword, while an innumerable multitude was consumed by the river. Immense plunder was gained from flocks of sheep and herds of camels, asses and cattle.

[IV.15.3] Although this slaughter of men was very great, it was nevertheless reckoned greater than it really was. For not only was the whole region filled with human bodies, since the scattered and straying were killed wherever they were caught, but the Jordan itself was so obstructed by the bodies of the dead that it could not maintain its own course. Lake Asphaltites too, into which everything the Jordan had drawn along was carried, changed its natural appearance through the blood and entrails of the dead. Indeed, it was reckoned that ninety-two thousand two hundred Jews had perished that day at the hands of only five hundred horsemen and three thousand foot soldiers. Advancing further, Placidus also restored Abila, Julias, Bethesmon and all the villages of that district as far as Lake Asphaltites to the Roman dominion. He also put soldiers into boats to kill all who had fled into the aforesaid lake.

Chapter 16

Online text and commentary

[IV.16.1] Thus these places too, and everything as far as Machaerus, were recovered. Vespasian, however, was awaiting the time for battle, when he would attack the chief city of all Judaea with the Roman army. Meanwhile, as he was occupied with the affairs entrusted to him, news reached him of fresh disturbances in the regions of Gaul: certain powerful men of the Roman army had deserted Nero. On learning this, he wished to bring the turmoil of wars in the East to an end and bring relief from the civil wars and the danger to the whole state and the entire Roman dominion, so as either to suppress or forestall all disturbances in Italy with news of successes. As soon as the rigours of winter had been tempered by the beginning of spring, he set out from Caesarea with the greater part of the army. The city called Antipatris received him. Advancing from there, he burned villages and killed those he found hostile; above all, he ravaged whatever places he encountered near the Idumaeans, because they were a restless race of men, friendly to wars rather than leisure or quiet. He also seized two villages of Idumaea, Legaris and Caphartor, and shattered their inhabitants by immense slaughter. More than ten thousand men were killed; he carried off a thousand captives and drove out the rest of the populace, to station a force of his own men there, since the mountainous places of that region were infested with brigandage. He himself returned with the army to Amathus, which took its name from hot waters, since the vapour of water is said to be called amathus in the language of Syria. It is therefore called Thermae in Greek, because it has a hot spring within its walls. Then, through Samaria near Neapolis, he hastened to Jericho. There Trajan met him, leading a large force drawn from those peoples of the region of Peraea beyond the Jordan who, defeated, had returned to Roman rule.

[IV.16.2] At the news of the Roman army's approach, many had left the city of Jericho for the mountains of the region of Jerusalem, since they saw that it was unsafe. The whole multitude of those who remained was destroyed. For it was not difficult to capture the city quickly: it was supported by no natural defence and had been deserted and abandoned by its own people as they slipped away. The city is built on a plain, above which rises a broad mountain bare of vegetation. For it extends northwards as far as the territory of the city of Scythopolis, while to the south it stretches as far as the region of Sodom and the boundaries of Asphaltites. The soil is poor and barren, and therefore deserted by inhabitants, since its natural sterility makes it of no use to cultivators. Opposite it is a mountain beyond the Jordan, which begins to rise from Julias and the northern quarter. It extends southwards as far as Sobaros in Arabia, bordering on Petra, where there is also a mountain called Iron by ancient usage. Between these two mountains lies a plain which the inhabitants, by ancient usage, have called Great because of its size, since it extends over a vast space. Its length is two hundred and thirty stades, its breadth a hundred and twenty; it begins at the village of Genuabari and ends at Lake Asphaltites. The Jordan cuts through the middle of this plain, not merely leaving its beauty unimpaired but adding to it: the banks grow green through the river's flooding, and the lakes Asphaltites and Tiberias follow in succession, sharing one source but differing in character. For the water of the one tastes salt and is barren in its use, while that of Tiberias is sweet and life-giving. In the days of summer, however, excessive

heat burns over the expanse of the plain. Hence, as the blight of excessive drought combines with the dryness of the ground, the air grows more corrupt and causes pitiable illnesses among the inhabitants. For everything is dry except the edge of the river. Indeed, in the more distant places even the fruit of trees grows sickly, since the yield of palms growing on the banks of the river Jordan is both more abundant and richer, while elsewhere it is far poorer.

Chapter 17

Online text and commentary

[IV.17.1] There is also beside the city of Jericho an abundant spring, rich in water for drinking and nourishing for irrigation, which Joshua son of Nun, a Hebrew by nation and mighty in hand, first wrested from the nation of the Canaanites. At first it was considered corrupt, barren in generation and of little wholesome use to those who drank it. Hence the prophet Elisha, Elijah's disciple and a successor by no means unworthy of so great a master, was asked by the inhabitants of the places he had visited to leave them a reward for their hospitality and relieve the corruption of the waters. He gave a remedy, as the ancient Scripture of Kings teaches, ordering an earthen vessel with salt to be brought to him. Taking it, he threw the salt into the spring and said: "I have healed these waters, and no one will die in them or be made barren by them." "And the waters were healed," it says, "according to the word of the prophet Elisha." From that time, then, the waters were tempered by the infusion of blessed salt, the mouth of the spring was opened, and the courses of its waters were sanctified, so that the gushing of its veins poured forth sweeter draughts and all that bitterness of the waters grew sweet. The earth gave richer fruits, and a fruitful succession of children born supplied an abundance of posterity. Nor did the life-giving water fail, upon which divine grace had breathed through the blessings of so great a prophet, in response to the faithful zeal of the righteous. Thus, at the prophet's prayers, the answering voice of the heavenly oracle changed the nature of the waters and at once drove out sterility and poured in fertility. Generations of men and the fruits of the earth began to multiply there. The water, formerly barren and bitter, accustomed to kill the crops and twist the mouths of drinkers with its harshness, began to pour fertility into the soil and sweetness into those who drank, so that, if it touched cultivated ground there only briefly, it did more good than where it had watered for longer. For this is a new grace: the increase is more abundant where the use is less, and where anyone has used more, the yield is less. It therefore irrigates more than other springs, because even a little of it is more than enough for fertility. Indeed, a plain surrounds it, extending seventy stades in length and twenty in breadth. In it you may see the wonderful grace of gardens, various kinds of palms, and dates of such sweetness that you may watch honey flowing from them, by no means inferior to other honey. There are also excellent broods of bees there; nor is this surprising, where gardens breathe upon such varied flowers and pour forth sweet scents. Opobalsam is produced there. We use the name with this addition because farmers cut through the bark of the twigs in which balsam is produced, so that the liquid dripping gradually through those openings may collect. An opening is called opē in Greek. They report that henna grows there, and myrobalan, and other things of this kind that are nowhere found in other places. The water is like other spring water. Yet here it is superior: cold in summer, warm in winter; the air is milder, so that in the depth of winter the inhabitants wear linen clothing.

Chapter 18

Online text and commentary

[IV.18.1] Let us now consider the character of Lake Asphaltites. For it is better to occupy the pen with descriptions of ancient places or the marvel of the other elements than with the strife of the Jews, since the latter exasperates the mind by its wickedness, while the former soothe the spirit as they are recounted and recall it to knowledge of ancient history. But we, whose talent is uncultivated, are eager to retrace the footsteps of the fathers as they went out of Egypt as far as the land of resurrection, so that, if our writings should happen to come into anyone's hands, he may read not our words but reread those of the fathers. For it is sweeter to dwell among the habitations of our ancestors, recall to memory the words and deeds of the ancients, and cling to their grace. But now let us describe the nature or character of the waters, lest our pen too be cast out of that lake, from which, it is believed, all living things you might think could be submerged nevertheless rebound and, however violently dashed into it, are at once cast out. The water itself is bitter and barren, admitting no kind of living creature. Indeed, it tolerates neither fish nor birds accustomed to water and delighting in diving. They say that a lighted lamp floats upon it and, without being overturned, sinks when its light is extinguished, and that whatever is alive, submerged by any contrivance, can scarcely remain in the depths. Indeed, they say that Vespasian ordered men who could not swim to be thrown into the depths with their hands bound, and that all at once floated, as though lifted by a breath of wind, and sprang back, driven upwards with great force. Many have thought much of what is told of this lake fabulous; as we have not tested these things, we have had no intention of declaring the truth of the matter. Nor have we chosen to set down as true that the water changes colour three times a day and gleams variously in the sun's rays, since the water of the lake itself is darker than other waters and has the appearance of being scorched. Certainly, if it too shines in a ray of sunlight, there is nothing new or to be put forward as a marvel, since this is common to all waters. It is certain that lumps of bitumen, a black liquid, drift over the water; those whose task this is approach in boats and collect them. Bitumen is said to cling together so firmly that it cannot be cut by iron or any other sharply pointed metal implement. Yet it yields to women's blood, by the discharge of which during menstruation they are said to gain relief. It is reported to be broken apart by contact with this blood or with urine, as those who have had experience of testing it assert. It is said to be useful for joining ships' timbers and wholesome for human bodies when mixed with medicines. The lake's length extends five hundred and eighty stades as far as Zoaros in Arabia, its breadth a hundred and fifty stades as far as the neighbourhood of the people of Sodom, who once inhabited a very fertile region, abounding in fruits and distinguished by splendid cities. Now, however, those places are deserted and burnt out by fire. For although God had bestowed everything upon them as his gift—fields bearing abundant crops and countryside planted with vines and other fruit-bearing trees—they were ungrateful and did not keep before their eyes the power of God most high, as though he did not discern all things and behold every outrage, and as though anything could be hidden from him or escape his notice. Thus they began to confound and pollute everything with the shameful acts of their intemperance, by which they drew upon themselves divine displeasure. As the price of their crimes, fire descended from heaven to burn that region.

Five cities were thus consumed, a certain shadow and semblance of which is visible in the ashes. The lands burned; the waters burn, and in them the remnants of heavenly fire are recognised. There still remain fruit green to the eye and a formed cluster of grapes, such as to arouse in onlookers the desire to eat. If you pluck them, they crumble and dissolve into ash and give off smoke as though still burning. These things learnt about the territory of Sodom ought not to have been veiled in silence, because of the punishments of the impious. For after surveying them, there can be no doubt that there will be a reward for the pious.

Chapter 19

Online text and commentary

[IV.19.1] Vespasian therefore filled all the strongholds or city fortifications nearest Jerusalem with detachments of the Roman army or allied forces, so that they might recognise as hostile to them all the places which they had previously thought would join them in making war against the Romans. He also sent Lucius Annius to Gerasa and captured the city by stratagem. He killed a thousand young men too, who, taken by surprise, had been deprived of escape. Very many captives were carried off, and everyone's property was seized by the soldiers at their commander's order. The estates they found were burned, and they exercised their licence to plunder. They ravaged everything in the mountains and on the plains, and the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by these places, blazed with war on every side. Nor were the people of Jerusalem free from awareness of their dangers: all exits had been blocked against them, so that no one might escape danger by flight. Within was the domestic evil; outside, everything was closed. There was neither the wish to remain nor the means to flee. Even anyone who had hoped for pardon from the Romans by deserting was prevented by his own people from leaving.

Chapter 20

Online text and commentary

[IV.20.1] Vespasian had returned to the city of Caesarea, so that, having gathered all his forces there, he might undertake the siege of Jerusalem. News arrived that Nero had been killed after completing the thirteenth year of his reign, when he was already passing the eighth day of the following year. He deserved that punishment, for he had violated not only faith by sacrilege, family devotion by the murder of kin, and chastity by incest, but also the very power of the Roman dominion, whose offices and affairs he had entrusted to the most wicked of freedmen. For since he himself kept faith with no one, he suspected everyone, and therefore thought he should entrust himself above all to the utterly wicked Nymphidius and Gemellinus, whose lowly condition had made them dependent. But even they eventually shuddered at the example of his cruelty; and because he had killed all those dearest to him, they thought they must take precautions for themselves and wished to forestall what they feared. Thus, conspiring with the others, they deserted the murderer of his kin. For whom was he thought likely to spare, when he had not spared his mother? Abandoned therefore by all his people, he fled the city with four of his freedmen. Seeing himself hard pressed by the conspirators drawing near and by a hostile force, he secretly withdrew to an estate outside the city, torn and lacerated by thorns while he feared being seen by anyone, lest he be betrayed. Then, realising that he was surrounded, he prepared a contrivance of wood and put it together with his own hands to kill himself, so that severe punishments might not be exacted from him. Turning to his freedmen, he said: “What an artist is dying!” Thus the most cruel murderer of his kin met an end to his life worthy of his deserts: he who had killed his mother and his own people did not spare even himself. Truly he was a fine artist of his own death, who devised a way of perishing such that not even his death was free from crime.

Chapter 21

Online text and commentary

[IV.21.1] Thus the report that Nero had been killed had arrived first, in keeping with the human disposition, which is content, on hearing what it desires, to inquire no further, but at once to spread abroad and send out among the people, still incomplete, what has pleased it. Not long afterwards, however, it became known that Galba was at the head of the Roman dominion. Vespasian therefore decided to ascertain the new emperor's judgement on the Jewish war, and sent his son Titus and King Agrippa. Titus returned from Achaea on learning that Galba too, on the seventh day of the seventh month after taking power, had been stripped of his insignia and suffered punishment in the very heart of the city, that is, the Roman Forum, and that Otho enjoyed success and the imperial succession. Agrippa hastened to Rome to establish his favour with the new emperor. To Titus, the reverence owed to his father in family devotion seemed of greater worth than that owed to imperial power, since he thought that, if he went on without consulting his father, he would not please even the emperor himself. Certainly the outcome showed that he had returned to his father at an opportune time, amid new events whose direction was uncertain. Indeed, Vespasian too, anxious about the condition of the whole Roman dominion and his fatherland, suspended the war and restrained his own onslaught, setting what was happening in Judaea below his care for the whole state and his devoted concern for his fatherland.

Chapter 22

Online text and commentary

[IV.22.1] But Judaea was not at rest: it was waging a more grievous war among its own people than against outsiders. For while John's faction was intolerable, Simon also rose up. He was inferior in wickedness of character, but relied more on his bodily frame to dare every impious deed, and was accustomed through brigandage to practising and attempting outrages. He was a citizen of Gerasa, vigorous in youth, whom Ananus, the chief priest, had brought low for his wicked schemes and driven from the place where he lived, compelling him to withdraw to other regions. But he, who had no place among the quiet and moderate, joined the company of brigands. At first they too suspected him, lest he ensnare them by intrigue; afterwards he easily insinuated himself among them through their common character. With them he ravaged the places adjoining their strongholds, because they did not dare to seek more distant places. Hiding as though in burrows, they lay in wait for passers-by without making any expedition, content, as it were, with brigandage at home. Simon, unrestrained in spirit, could not endure this for long, and soon gathered a large force for himself, promising freedom to slaves, rewards to the free, and recompense to the reprobate.

[IV.22.2] As very many flocked to him for licence to plunder, he dared to storm strongholds and seize the peoples of cities, and was a terror to all. He prepared walls as a refuge for himself in the village called Aiacis.

[IV.22.3] He was already advancing surrounded by twenty thousand armed men when the people of Jerusalem suddenly grew afraid of his daily progress. Thinking that, if it continued

to grow for longer, it would turn against them, they decided it must be cut short, and in a sudden armed sortie attacked Simon. He did not lie open to their ambush heedless and unprepared, but met them as they approached, routed many, and compelled others, driven from the battle, to withdraw into the city.

Chapter 23

Online text and commentary

[IV.23.1] He also fought the Idumaeans and withdrew on equal terms, yet was distressed as though defeated because he had not won. When they were to fight again, he thought it more advantageous to try deceit and found a willing servant of fraud. For when it was understood what he sought, Jacob, one of the leaders of the Idumaeans, cunning and crafty in such affairs, came secretly to Simon and offered to betray his fatherland, giving assurance that he would ensnare all the Idumaeans. Having demanded, as the reward of their future association, that he should be the most powerful and trusted man with him, he promised to betray them all. Their friendship was sealed by a banquet, and Simon's immense promises confirmed the agreement between them. On returning to his own people, Jacob began by telling a few that he had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy's strength and had seen a powerful force, men experienced in war, a very great multitude invincible in battle. Gradually he introduced such talk among the leaders, and finally spread it among them all: Simon himself was exceedingly energetic; he had organised his army in the manner of a king, maintained its ranks, distributed its units and appointed capable commanders. The Idumaeans ought to look to their own interests, so as to experience such a man as a friend rather than an enemy. Certainly, if they saw him superior in an encounter, they should yield without danger and avoid battle. When Jacob learnt that the inclinations of very many had bent to his view, he instructed Simon to take the field. Confident that the Idumaeans would scatter, Simon did not delay. Jacob, as though leading the advance with his own men and readier for battle, turned his horse and took to flight once the light-armed troops had tested the fighting, before they came to close quarters. His men did the same. Thus he turned and scattered all the battle lines and handed victory to Simon without a contest of war.

[IV.23.2] Having gained a triumph over so great a nation, he became more insolent towards the rest. He captured sooner than expected Hebron, an ancient city, thronged with people and rich in wealth, found much plunder in it and carried off its abundant produce. For it is said to be the most ancient city, not only among the cities of Palestine but also among all those founded by the ancients in Egypt, so that many think even Memphis, which is considered the most ancient, later than it. There were also those who said that father Abraham had lived in it after setting out from Mesopotamia and making for Egypt, and that his sons had a tomb there, most beautifully built of marble and of exquisite workmanship. Seven stades from the city, a great terebinth tree is asserted to have stood there since the foundation of the world; whether it still remains now, however, is unknown to us. Advancing from there, he ravaged territories, stormed cities and gathered peoples. Surrounded by forty thousand armed men, he emptied everything wherever he went, even as though a friend and ally. For what place could supply food for so many? By the mere tread of the foot soldiers, every place in which he stationed such numbers of fighting men was trampled like

pavement. Not only was every crop carried away, as though eaten by locusts, but the ground, beaten into pavement, refused to bear fruit even in the future.

[IV.23.3] The growth of Simon's power terrified John, and all the associates of his faction were shaken. They wanted Simon destroyed but did not dare to provoke him to war. Again they prepared an ambush and, lying in wait along the roads, seized his wife with her entire female retinue and a few men escorting her. They boasted as though they had achieved a complete victory and, as though holding Simon himself captive, thought that he would supplicate them. But he was harsh and merciless, could be reached by affection for no one, and held nothing dear or sacred. He was inflamed as though by an affront received rather than a love taken away, and tortured those he found with far greater savagery and grievous torments. He cut off the hands of very many and sent them, their bodies mutilated, to the enemy, to announce his cruelty and make known his threat to overthrow the walls and destroy the city unless his own wife was restored to him at once. He would likewise mutilate the hands and entrails of all who dwelt within the city unless they took thought in time. Thus, terrified, they sent his wife to him. His fury was thereby softened, and he gave those shut in some opportunity for rest, ceasing to press the siege.

Chapter 24

Online text and commentary

[IV.24.1] Not only had Galba been killed, but Otho too had perished in conflict with the commanders of Vitellius, whom the army in Gaul had made emperor. In the first encounter Otho appeared the stronger. When battle was renewed a day later, Otho learnt that victory had fallen to Valens and Caecina, the companions of Vitellius, and that very many of his own men had been killed. At Brixia he rescued himself from humiliation by a voluntary death, after holding power for only three months and two days. Victorious, then, Vitellius hastened to Rome with the army that had survived on both sides.

Chapter 25

Online text and commentary

[IV.25.1] At that time Vespasian set out from the city of Caesarea. He ravaged Judaea and subdued all the neighbouring mountains and strongholds. He killed those who resisted, granted those who begged for mercy a pardon that spared their lives, drove his adversaries to flight and stationed his own men in their places. Cerealis too, a commander of the Roman army, ranged everywhere with the cavalry, destroying some, subduing others and driving along columns of captives. Everything around Jerusalem was burned, so that the Jews might have no refuge. Thus every way out had been blocked against the Jews before the siege.

[IV.25.2] But they not only failed to look to their own interests; they also fought out a domestic contest among themselves. John was the tyrant within, Simon the enemy outside the walls. After receiving his wife back, Simon went on a brief expedition, ravaged Idumaea, and returned stronger, making his arms resound around the walls of Jerusalem. John, stationed within, trained his men for war through vice, giving them licence for crimes. Zeal for plunder, desires for shameful acts, outpourings of luxury and the scents of ointments

seethed. They curled their hair with curling irons, painted their eyes with antimony and put on women's clothing. They sought not only women's adornment but also feminine softness and the passions of unlawful lusts. Men practised women's ways, made their voices effeminate and undid their sex by the languor of their bodies; they grew their hair, whitened their faces, smoothed their cheeks with pumice, plucked their beards, and in this dissolution practised an intolerable savagery of cruelty. Indeed, they walked with a mincing gait, yet in a moment became warriors: suddenly drawing the swords they kept concealed beneath their purple cloaks, they slashed apart whoever they found. Whoever had escaped Simon was killed by John if he withdrew within the city; whoever had fled John was captured by Simon and sacrificed before the walls.

[IV.25.3] The dissension was grievous. The Idumaeans sought to extinguish John's tyranny: they envied his power and hated his cruelty. They fought against the attendants of the tyranny, drove them back and pursued them as far as the royal palace, which a close female relative of the king of Adiabene had founded. They rushed in, drove out its defenders, occupied the temple and plundered the spoils of the tyranny, since John had established a storehouse for his wealth there. A grave fear arose that the Idumaeans would enter the city from the temple by night, kill the populace with the sword and destroy the city by fire. Terrified by this fear, after deliberation they brought in another tyrant, since they could not endure the one. John had crept into tyranny by fraud; this man, invited as though he would provide a remedy for their safety, brought domination upon the citizens and a tyrant upon the city. Matthias, the chief priest, was sent to beg him to enter. With great arrogance he consented to rule, and, as though it were a burden, yielded to their entreaties and poured into the city with his whole force. They opened the gates with their own hands to admit a more destructive man, while cursing the one within. Thus Simon, having entered as he wished, showed himself equally an enemy to all. With a common hatred of everyone he persecuted both those who had called him in and those against whom his help had been sought. John was hard pressed by his own deceits; the city tossed upon the waves. The contest between John and Simon was who could do more harm to his own people.

Chapter 26

Online text and commentary

[IV.26.1] Reports of civil wars gained strength in the Roman army. The deaths of Galba and Otho became known, and the rule of Vitellius, who, more wicked than his predecessors, had settled like dregs. Veteran soldiers began to confer among themselves and resent the presumption of the praetorian legions at Rome: although they had long ceased to experience the dangers of war and did not know the names of the nations that made war, they nevertheless appointed an emperor for wars and claimed that the choice of the arbiter of Roman affairs lay in their hands. Then, following this example, the soldiers stationed in Gaul had aspired to give Vitellius imperial power without consulting the senate and Roman people. They themselves meanwhile were treated as mercenaries, following the decisions of others, first in danger and last in honour. For so long they had waged war, with their triumphs increasing daily, yet received masters from their inferiors—not even useful ones, but men utterly idle or devoted to their bellies and to disgrace. They must confront and remove this injury. They had an energetic man in Vespasian, whom everyone ought to have chosen as emperor, mature in years for counsel and stronger than younger men in battle. They must hasten, lest others choose him first, to the discredit of those with whom he had grown old in military service and triumphs. When was there a more opportune time to repay his labours with a worthy reward? Vitellius's voracity was a disgrace to private citizens, to say nothing of emperors. Neither the senate nor the Roman people would endure for long that this disgrace of drunkards should remain at the summit of imperial power, a man for whose expenditure the Roman state could not suffice. "For who could endure a tyrant's rule when he has in the army a worthy governor of the Roman dominion? What nations would subject themselves to luxury and surrender to vice, when an emperor's idleness is an incentive to war, whereas the firmness of peace rests on valour in an enemy and sobriety in the ruler of the state? Who would not admire in Vespasian, still a private citizen, the splendour of kingship and the authority of the Roman dominion, when so many military units and the stronger force of the whole Roman army are at his disposal? Why do we wait, so that, supported by our valour, he may owe to others his position as emperor, and we may yield to others what lies within our rightful power? Certainly, if we do not wish to honour him, let us not disparage him or inflict this injury: that by our judgement he should be rejected as unworthy of the imperial power of which Vitellius is held worthy. Finally, since his brother and his son Domitian are in Italy, there is surely reason to fear that a man who should long ago have been a distinction to his family may become a danger to them. Or, if they begin, as we suppose, to press the tyrant, their rebellion as his brother and son may count against him, and we may begin to see as an accused man the one whom we are unwilling to see as emperor."

[IV.26.2] Voicing these things among themselves, the soldiers approached Vespasian and asked him to take up the helm of the Roman dominion. He refused, saying that he was unworthy, that an emperor had already been appointed, and that civil war must be avoided. They pressed more readily; he resisted more persistently. At last they surrounded him under arms as he struggled against them, threatening death with their swords. They recognised

that guilt and grave danger would remain with them if he refused. Thus he yielded to their pressure rather than willingly accepting what others commonly solicit. The soldiers pressed him, the commanders urged him; he took on the burden before the honour.

[IV.26.3] He hastened to Egypt, for he knew that the greatest resources of the Roman state were there. Where its sustenance was supplied, he must seek support for himself if he won, or a means of obstructing Vitellius if he thought the war should be prolonged. There were also two military formations there, which he hastened to join to himself, so that a very great city, surrounded by numerous natural defences and highly useful for either outcome of the war, might remain under his own authority rather than another's. We have therefore thought that something should be said, even briefly, about the situation of the places, and above all about the chief city itself.

Chapter 27

Online text and commentary

[IV.27.1] The city of Alexandria was founded by Alexander, to whom the name of a great commander was given for his valour. It lies like a barrier between Egypt and the sea, a city with poor harbourage, like most of Egypt, and difficult of access from outside, situated in the more remote parts of Asia. To the west Egypt itself borders on the arid regions of Libya; its southern and upper regions separate Syene and the unnavigable cataracts of the river Nile from the Ethiopians. On the east the Red Sea spreads back as far as Coptos, a place at the furthest edge of the land which opens a passage to the Indians for those about to sail. Enclosed therefore on one side by the burning heat of the sun, on that side by the Indian sea and on this by the Egyptian sea, it adjoins land only along a single northern wall leading into Syria. The rest is shut off on every side and fortified by the aid of nature. Yet the protection of its northern side is divided and opens through a kind of double threshold, through which either foreign supplies are conveyed to it over the Egyptian sea or freer access extends overland. The land stretches to an immeasurable extent. For between Syene and Pelusium lies an immense length of two thousand stades, if the statements are to be believed, and from Plinthine to Pelusium likewise three thousand six hundred stades. The region is unaccustomed to rains, yet has no need of them, since the Nile's irrigation supplies showers of its own accord. The Nile is both things to it: the abundance of heaven and the fertility of earth. It tempers the fields and enriches the soil, equally useful to sailors and farmers. The former sail, the latter sow; these are carried about their own fields in boats, those cultivate them: sowing without a plough, travelling without a carriage. You may see the land divided by streams and raised, as it were, by ramparts of ships. Dwellings wander across all the lands encircled by the Nile. For it is navigable as far as the city they call the City of Elephants. Beyond it the cataracts we have mentioned do not allow a ship to proceed, not through lack of depth but through the whole river's steep descent and a kind of collapse of the waters. The city's harbour, like most approaches along the coast, is difficult to enter, and far more difficult than the others. It resembles the form of a human body: more capacious in the head itself and the anchorage, narrower in the throat, where it receives the passage of the sea and ships, which supply the harbour with a kind of aid to breathing. When one has passed the narrows and mouth of the harbour, the expanse of the sea stretches far and wide like the rest of the body. On the right of the harbour is a small island, and on it a very great tower, which Greeks and Latins alike have called Pharos from its very function: it is seen from afar by sailors, so that, before they approach the harbour, especially at night, the indication of its flames lets them know that land is near. Thus they will not be deceived by darkness and strike the rocks or fail to find the bounds of the entrance. There are attendants there who kindle the fire by placing torches and other piles of wood beneath it. Like a herald of the land and a guide to the harbour's throat, it shows the narrow approach, the recesses of the waves and the windings of the entrance, lest a frail keel graze the crags and strike rocks hidden beneath the waves at the very entrance. The straight course must therefore be turned aside a little, lest the ship strike unseen rocks and incur danger where escape from dangers is hoped for. For the approach to the harbour is narrower, constricted on the right by the island's flank and on the left by rocks which obstruct the harbour's left side. Around the island too,

built masses of enormous size are lowered into place, lest the island's foundations yield to the constant onslaught of the rising sea and be loosened by long-standing damage. Hence, as the waves strike the side of the island and recoil in the opposite direction among the jagged rocks and constructed masses, the channel between is always restless, and the roughened passage makes entry dangerous for ships. The extent of the harbour is thirty stades, its anchorage safe and its calm very great in any storm. For by the narrows of the aforesaid mouth and the barrier of the island it repels the waves of the sea. The harbour within is made utterly safe as a kind of compensation for the dangerous entrance: by those same narrows of the harbour mouth, the whole basin is defended, kept free from storms and calmed from the crashing waves that make the entrance rough. Nor is it without reason that the protection and size of the harbour are such, since things serving the needs of the whole world must be conveyed into it. For the innumerable peoples of those places seek the trade of the whole world for their own use; and the region, fruitful in crops and abounding in the other gifts of the earth and in commerce, feeds the whole world with grain and supplies it with necessary goods.

Chapter 28

Online text and commentary

[IV.28.1] Having therefore settled affairs in Alexandria in his favour, with the support of all who conducted military affairs united around his rule, he felt secure in his absence and hastened his return to Syria. He had, however, approached Tiberius Alexander, who then governed Egypt, with instructions to attach to him the goodwill of the army in the upper regions, and himself to help bear, with whatever forces he could, the burden of Roman rule that had been laid upon Vespasian. Tiberius made the letter known to the provincials and soldiers. It was received by all with joy; allegiance was promised and favour poured forth. Caesarea received Vespasian, then Berytus, with embassies from the cities flocking to him in the greatest joy.

[IV.28.2] There Josephus too was ordered to be released from his bonds. Titus approached the emperor to ask that the chains be broken rather than loosened, because, if they were broken, it would be as though he had not been bound. This pleased his father. He ordered an axe to be brought and the chains to be broken, so that the Jews might realise that pardon would not be denied to them either, if they changed their course and asked for peace. At the same time, he did so because he was no longer keeping Josephus for another's judgement, since authority to decide all matters had now been conferred upon himself.

Chapter 29

Online text

[IV.29.1] They came to Antioch. There, after deliberation on where they ought to cross to Italy, speed was the consideration, since he had seen that everything in Egypt and Alexandria was secure. He therefore sent Mucianus ahead with a large part of the cavalry and infantry, to precede the emperor's arrival in Italy. Deterred by fear of a long voyage, Mucianus directed his route through Cappadocia and Phrygia.

[IV.29.2] He also ordered Antonius, commander of the third military formation stationed in Moesia, to pour into Italy while it was unprepared, before the Vitellians stirred. For Vitellius, as though surfeited and sunk in sleep, thought he was managing a banquet rather than an empire, and slumbered amid affairs of such importance. Indeed, scarcely roused at last by news of Antonius's approach, he sent Caecina with part of the army and entrusted the whole issue of his danger to another's judgement, relying on Caecina's strength because he had routed Otho's force. Caecina met Antonius as he approached near the city of Cremona, reconnoitred everything and learnt that a very powerful force was coming against him, energetic in war and practised in triumphs. His own men, by contrast, were equal neither in strength nor in number and could not fight against the stronger force. He summoned the centurions and urged them to desist from war, since they were inferior in number and the other emperor's glory carried greater weight. The fame of the commander conducting the whole undertaking counted for much in war. Vespasian had shone in the regions of Gaul and in victories in Britain; Vespasian, girded with triumphs in the East, rested on a strong presumption in favour of his name. Vitellius, nothing but a man dissolved in wine and always belching yesterday's feasts amid his banquets, expected nothing except to perish drunk, without feeling pain, when the enemy arrived. The glory of so great an emperor raised the spirits of the soldiers on the one side; on the other, his disgrace and shameful acts cast them down. They must take care not to lose the fame of the former war. They had defeated Otho, Vitellius's equal; now they had to deal with a man who had encircled the whole world with his triumphs. They must forestall necessity by goodwill, choosing Vespasian as a fellow citizen rather than experiencing him as an enemy. It was wretched even to win in a civil war. "How much more wretched to be defeated, so that you appear an enemy of your own people! The victor retains his fatherland; the defeated man loses it, or, if it remains, it will remain to the odium of his crime, so that we appear to have made war upon our fellow citizens for a tyrant. For the defeated man is no longer a citizen but a tyrant. Why do we join guilty hands in battle? Let it be enough for our guilt to have won once, so that we were ashamed of the man for whom we won. We thought he would become sober at least through imperial power, or, awakened by the weight of affairs, renounce his perpetual sleep. Why do we wait any longer? Our dangers win no gratitude from any of our fellow soldiers; our judgements are reproved and condemned by all peoples because of the outrages of the man we chose. Consider what kind of man he is, rejected even as a victor. We must certainly deliberate first on the outcome of the war, and then fight. If dangers come first, you will deliberate in vain; once a plan has been approved, you may rightly begin." He added that, as befitted a vigilant commander, he had reconnoitred everything, and it had become clear that Vespasian's army was stronger. His allegiance to Vitellius had long since been proved. When he had been confident of the outcome of war, victory had followed; when he lacked confidence, what would happen was plain. He did not fear his own death, but the danger to the Roman army and, what pains men more, the loss of glory already won, so that those accustomed to victory should appear defeated. He must certainly take care lest it be judged that his victory in the former war had been due not to courage but to chance, and his later defeat to cowardice.

Chapter 30

Online text

[IV.30.1] By these and similar words he brought the soldiers over to his view, so that they would go with him to Antonius and surrender themselves to him voluntarily. But such is the changeability of the crowd, especially a military one: during the night, in their beds, many were stung by remorse for having deserted Vitellius, lest, if he proved the stronger, no room for pardon should remain for those who had abandoned their own emperor. They rose and began to confer, first with whoever they encountered and then with everyone, on how to amend their error. Drawing their swords, they sprang upon Caecina, wishing to avenge the injury of their own lapse. But when the centurions and chiliarchs intervened, they thought they should indeed refrain from killing him, yet prepared to send him bound to Vitellius. Learning this, Antonius moved the men he had brought with him and rushed under arms upon the deserters. On seeing the column of the opposing side, they prepared for battle. But after daring to resist for a little while, they turned to flee to Cremona. Antonius met them with his horsemen and forestalled every approach, so that the fugitives would not be received, and killed them, shut out before the city.

[IV.30.2] A very great multitude was killed there; he pursued the rest into the city itself and destroyed them. Everything was plundered. Very many merchants who had come from other places, and very many inhabitants, were killed for the sake of plunder while defending their possessions. Thirty thousand two hundred men of Vitellius's army who were present were destroyed. Primus too—for that was Antonius's surname—lost four thousand five hundred of the Moesian soldiers. For when the Vitellians saw themselves surrounded, despairing of safety and wishing to avenge themselves, they too yielded no bloodless victory to Antonius's men. Caecina was released from his bonds and sent by Antonius to Vespasian. There, not only assurance of safety but also the payment of rewards consoled him for the stain of betrayal.

Chapter 31

Online text and commentary

[IV.31.1] Elated by the news of this victory, Sabinus wished to win favour for himself too with the emperor by forestalling Antonius's arrival through the destruction or expulsion of Vitellius; or, if Vitellius resisted, Antonius, who was reported to be on the very point of arriving, would come to his aid. He therefore gathered soldiers for himself, a force drawn from the units stationed at Rome to perform watch duties.

[IV.31.2] At night he also occupied the Capitol. During the day very many nobles flocked to him, among them Domitian, born to Vespasian's brother, who feared that the vengeance of Vitellius might be turned upon him as Vespasian's nephew. Placed between two opponents, Vitellius attacked the nearer, less concerned about the more distant—for dangers close at hand inspire greater fear. In his indignation he sent the Germans against the Capitol. Exceedingly fierce in the savagery of their nation, and also stronger in number, they surrounded Sabinus's fighting band.

[IV.31.3] Almost all were killed. Domitian, however, with many of the nobles, found an opportunity to flee while the Germans strove to reach the upper parts of the Capitol and were repelled by Sabinus and his companions with the aid of their position. Or perhaps he himself too was being preserved for the public evil, as a future tyrant. Vitellius tortured Sabinus and killed him; all the gifts offered to the Capitol were plundered and the temple was burned.

Chapter 32

Online text and commentary

[IV.32.1] A day later Antonius arrived and met them from the opposite side. After three encounters around the city's walls, all the Vitellians were routed and killed. Meanwhile Vitellius was feasting, lest, about to die, he miss his meal; as men commonly do in their last moments, he stuffed himself with the more abundant dishes of his final table. He overwhelmed himself with more frequent cups of wine, so as to lose awareness of the disgrace or danger to come. He was snatched from the banquet and dragged through the crowd; insults were hurled at the dying man, and injuries inflicted which, drunk, he did not feel. He was killed in the middle of the city, pouring out wine and blood together and belching his drunken excess. Had he lived longer, he would have licked away the wealth of the Roman dominion in expenditure on luxury and the cost of his tables. Indeed, he ruled for eight months and five days, and already Rome had failed to satisfy his appetite. More than fifty thousand others were counted among the slain.

Chapter 33

Online text and commentary

[IV.33.1] On the following day Mucianus and Antonius entered together with the army and scarcely put an end to the killing by the raging soldiers. For they pursued the Vitellians as men who had presumed to determine who should rule, and searched the houses of private citizens, stirred by such indignation that, when they discovered some of the people hiding in fear, they struck them as Vitellians before an inquiry could reveal the truth. Thus the victors' fury often forestalled questioning. Since Vespasian was absent, Mucianus put Domitian in charge of public affairs, as though to fill an interregnum, lest prosperity lack any blemish. Yet the lust for outrages had not wholly poured itself into Domitian. He was still unpractised in vices and a novice in crimes as in positions of power.

[IV.33.2] Vespasian, detained by winter, with the sea closed by winds, returned to Alexandria with his son. There, on receiving news of victory and learning of the Roman populace's favour towards him, he decided to hasten his departure, lest anything new be attempted in his absence. Yet he did not leave the Jewish war unattended. He thought it should be entrusted to his son as a partner in his works and his successor, so that neither the Romans should lack him in person nor the Jews lack Vespasian, whom his son would represent.

[IV.33.3] Chosen therefore to carry out his father's triumph, Titus was sent with a picked force. He set out on foot and made for Nicopolis. That city is twenty-four stades from Alexandria. From there, putting his soldiers aboard a fleet of larger ships, he sailed down the

Nile as far as the city of Thmuis. Advancing from there, he stayed in the city called Tanis. The travellers' second stopping-place was the city of Heraclea, the third Pelusium. After spending two days at Pelusium as a halt, he travelled through the desert and reached the temple of Jupiter Casius. Ostracine was his next stopping-place. It lacked local water, yet by their diligence the inhabitants had provided themselves with a supply by constructing water conduits. The Rhinocori too received the advancing army with welcome refreshment. They came to the city of Raphiul, which marks the beginning of Syria for those travelling from Egypt. They reached Gaza—this was the fifth city for those arriving—then Ascalon, then Jamnia, from which they passed to Joppa and reached Caesarea. There it was necessary to remain for a little while and gather the force of soldiers still in winter quarters. Already the rigour of winter was abating.

BOOK V

Chapter 1

Online text and commentary

[V.1.1] In the first year after imperial rule had been conferred on Vespasian, Judaea was being torn apart by bitter wars and domestic seditions. It had enjoyed no respite from its woes even through the winter, when the savagery of wars usually rests.

[V.1.2] Indeed, a third tyrant, Eleazar, had joined the others, as though to correct the vices of his predecessors. Judas, Simon son of Ezeron, and Hezekiah, a young man of no low birth, conspired with him, and very many others accompanied them. They occupied the inner parts of the temple and stationed armed men all around above the doors, at the front of the vestibule itself. John, however, had the advantage in the number of his fellow conspirators and the multitude of his faction, but his position was lower. Although he took no rest and fought back against those above him, he was nevertheless hard pressed by having enemies above his head.

[V.1.3] Simon, whom the people had brought in as their tyrant, held the upper parts of the city; its lower parts too were filled with his people. The city suffered within itself from a threefold battle. There was no interruption, no rest, no truce; fighting went on at every moment. Many fell, countless men were slaughtered; blood flowed, fouled everything and filled the very thresholds of the temple. Corpses fell everywhere; some were struck by arrows, others by missiles. Of the three, John was in the middle, below Eleazar and above Simon. The advantage Eleazar had over him was the same advantage he himself had over Simon: his position between them meant that the more heavily he was pressed by one, the more he himself harmed the other. Better equipped than the others, however, with the support of engines and various kinds of weapons, he kept the war evenly balanced. Yet, besides those who waged war, many of the priests too were killed and sacrificed among the very victims they had slaughtered. For although a dense crop of missiles fell upon them all and battles raged everywhere, the priests still performed their solemn ministry of sacrifice and did not cease from the duty entrusted to them. The further inside the temple they were, the more severely they were struck down, because missiles driven by an engine delivered more violent blows. Many too who had come from the ends of the earth to pray, hoping for saving remedies, were caught in greater dangers the more closely they clung to the temple. You could see foreigners lying beside citizens, priests beside the profane, men of dignity beside the shameful, the self-indulgent beside the abstinent. The blood of all was mingled indiscriminately and ran like a torrent, pooling in the very innermost recesses of the temple; all around, the blood swelled, so that many champions of the factions, as they attacked one another, slipped on it and plunged into the blood, as though to sate their fury. Yet even then the tyrants' followers were not frightened by the dangers into abandoning the battle. The greater the danger, the more fiercely the storm of fury raged. If destruction bore down more heavily on one side, the others pressed on more violently, as though towards victory, to destroy their disordered opponents.

[V.1.4] Eleazar or Simon could withdraw, so that they were separated by what amounted to truces, even if only for a few hours. John, however, was always under arms, at every moment in combat. If those above rested, those below on Simon's side pressed him; if he drove these back, Eleazar assailed him. Nor did he himself allow them to remain at rest. When he had repelled one group, he sprang upon the other, ever watchful in combat and tireless in his very cruelty. When they spared their missiles, they hurled fire, which caught the rooftops and devoured the houses. These were filled with grain and other stores of food for enduring a prolonged war; they too were burnt, providing greater fuel for the conflagration. Charred timbers fell; the tops of lofty buildings came crashing down.

[V.1.5] Thus bloodshed, fire, ruin and famine severed the sinews of the whole city. No place was free of danger, no time could be found for counsel; there was no hope of a change, no opportunity for escape. Everything was mournful, full of horror, full of savagery: everywhere grief and terror, everywhere the cries of women, the wailing of old men, the groans of the dying, the despair of the living. You would have called those who remained pitiable, those who had died blessed.

Chapter 2

Online text and commentary

[V.2.1] How you have been deceived, city, by your peoples, through whom you once seemed blessed! How you have been stormed by your own arms, and your own hands turned against you—you who used to conquer without arms and strike the enemy without any battle, when angels fought for you and the waves of the sea, the chasms of the earth and the crashes of heaven served in your army! Arise now, Moses, and see your nation and the inheritance of the people entrusted to you perishing by their own hands. Look upon that people of God, for whom the sea opened a path as they walked, for whom heaven supplied food when they were hungry: they are shut in without a sea, besieged without a Pharaoh, starving without any barrenness of the land. Arise, Aaron, who once, when death was devouring very many of the people because they had offended almighty God, stood between the living and the dead: death stood still, and the plague was checked by the barrier of your body and could not pass on to infect the living. Awaken, you too, Joshua son of Nun, who levelled the impregnable walls of Jericho as the priests sounded their trumpets, and see the people to whom you subjected foreigners now themselves subjected and oppressed. Awaken, David, who used to drive out the tormenting spirit by the sweetness of the lyre, and see how fury rules and has erased all the sweetness of your psalms from the minds of the lost. Each of their leaders offers the whole people to death to wrest away their freedom—the people for whom you offered yourself to death. Awaken, Elisha, who brought the enemy into Samaria and made him a friend. Through you the crash of four-horse chariots rang out in the camp of Syria, the sound of horsemen and the sound of an army; the enemy fled, the Jew escaped the siege. Where now are those merits, where now those works of the saints? Nor is it surprising that they have lost the works of the prophets, since they denied the master of the prophets. Therefore your own arms are turned against you, Judaea; your prayers avail you nothing, because your faith accomplishes nothing. Therefore your people have turned against you, because your faithlessness has turned back upon you. What remedy can be sought where the author of the remedy is not reconciled? What did you think would happen when with your own hands you crucified your salvation, when with your own hands you extinguished your life, when with your own voices you drove out your advocate, when by your own assaults you killed your helper, except that you would lay your own hands upon yourself as well? You have what you asked for. You deprived yourself of the guardian of peace; you asked that the master of life be killed and that Barabbas be granted to you, who had been sent to prison for sedition committed in the city and for murder. Therefore salvation has departed from you, peace has gone, rest has ceased; sedition has been given to you, destruction has been given. Acknowledge that for you today Barabbas lives, Jesus is dead. Therefore sedition reigns within you, peace lies buried, so that you perish more cruelly at the hands of your own than if you perished at the hands of foreigners. What evil did the Roman bring upon you with his arms, wretched city, that equalled what your own people brought? It was your own people who made you fight the Romans. The Romans wanted peace; you declared war. What reason was there to provoke those stronger than you? It was certainly grievous that a gentile entered the temple contrary to the sacred law; but it was no longer God’s temple. You were not God’s city, nor could you be, because you were the tomb of the dead, and above all of

your own people whom you yourself had killed, not those you had lost to the enemy. For how could you be the dwelling of life when you were the habitation of death, a lodging for crimes, a cave of brigands? Ananus and Jesus, chief priests, lay unburied within you. Those who had so recently been clothed in priestly robes and had been held in reverence even by foreigners lay as disfigured corpses, food for birds and a meal for dogs, their limbs torn and scattered throughout the city. The very image of ancient holiness seemed to lament so great an insult to the sacred name and the disfigurement of an office once glorious. But you yourself began this indignity, you who killed the prophets in your very bosom, who stoned the saints of the Lord. Zechariah lay lifeless before the temple; he lay unburied. Thus this blood washes away that blood. And what caused Ananus's death except that he rebuked your people for not rising in defence of the temple, and protested that freedom had been betrayed, valour abandoned, the remnants of the ancient sacred rites trampled upon and the altars defiled? He declared that the people should be abandoned: like unfeeling images and statues of marble, they no longer felt anything. For dumb animals are accustomed at least to retaliate in vengeance, to feel an injury, to be stirred by a goad, to avoid blows. Whoever, then, is neither stirred nor knows how to avoid what harms him is like things without feeling. And indeed, where is that freedom of yours, from zeal for which you once thought you must yield neither to the Egyptians, nor to the Palestinians, nor to the Assyrians, nor later to the Medes? Where is that faith of the Maccabees which once, with a few men, routed the Babylonians, put the Persians to flight and struck down Demetrius, and at last, in little children and women, overcame Antiochus's arms, swords and fires, and preferred to die for ancestral observance rather than obey the king's commands? Where is that devotion of the fathers, the most beautiful of all sufferings, by which they offered themselves to death no more for their children and wives than for God's temple? Once even the priestly rod blossomed, cut from a wild root; now faith itself is dry, devotion is buried, and all emulation of valour has departed. Nor is it surprising that a people who have withdrawn from God and follow the wicked spirit of contradiction are divided against themselves. For how could they preserve their own peace when they rejected the peace of God? The peace of God is Christ, who made both one. Rightly, then, from one people they became many hostile to one another, because they would not follow Jesus, who unites what is divided, but followed the spirit of fury, who divides what is united. You were therefore paying the price of your faithlessness, Jerusalem, when with your own hands you destroyed your defences, when with your own blades you pierced your entrails, so that the enemy pitied you, so that he spared you while you raged. For he saw that God was fighting against you and taking the Romans' part, so that you brought voluntary betrayal upon yourself. Therefore the Romans preferred to be spectators rather than killers, lest laying a hand upon your entrails as they raged against one another be judged a matter of contamination rather than courage. To these torments of abominable slaughter was added the enormity of impious cruelty: they denied burial to all who had been killed either in the temple or around the city's streets. No one had leisure to bury anyone while they were occupied in war against one another, and the concern to strike rather than to bury possessed them all. Thus in a kind of fury they had killed the duties of devotion, while the services of impiety grew savage. In so many calamities nothing had perished more completely than mercy, which alone is accustomed to lighten misery and console suffering. For those who had lost their own people did not dare to

bury them out of fear, since grievous terror threatened them from the leaders of the opposing faction; and those who had killed others took care that no one snatched them away for burial. Thus everyone had to fear that what he wished to grant another he would receive himself, or, worse still, that he himself would not obtain the use of a tomb which he had prepared for another. In the temple itself, therefore, instead of sweet-smelling ointments, instead of fragrant censers, instead of the scents of various flowers, there was the heavy stench of unburied corpses, dissolved by rain, scorched by flame, heated by the sun. Every limb of the slaughtered citizens reeked with a dreadful smell. On one side the putrefaction of decaying entrails, on the other the fumes of burnt bodies filled all the senses and mouths of the living, so that they themselves were soon consumed by a more grievous disease. They groaned that they had survived to perish by a harsher punishment, and had been preserved to see the laws of nature dissolved together with their fatherland: justice denied to the living, peace to citizens, burial to the dead; human and divine things alike stained and polluted; everything confounded; mercy made criminal, cruelty counted as religion. A camp in the temple, war on the threshold, a funeral upon the altars: they saw with their own eyes what they had not believed would come when the prophets announced it. Had not David spoken of them: “They polluted your holy temple; they made the mortal remains of your servants food for the birds of heaven; they poured out their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them”? For at that time the nations came into God’s inheritance to carry everything away, and at the same time the temple was polluted by the deaths of its own people, and the corpses of the slain lay unburied as food for birds, for the voracity of beasts. Blood was poured out until it pooled in the temple; there was no one to bury them, because fury passed from the living to the dead, and from the dead to those who still lived. Someone wished to bury a dead man and was himself killed; the man who had killed the dead man turned his anger upon the one who would bury him, killing the latter to deny the former burial. Again, the man who killed the would-be burier practised greater cruelty upon the dead man, depriving one who now owed nothing to hatred and felt no torments of nature’s final due. What else could happen to those who did not receive the divine oracles? They mocked the prophets’ announcements, trampled upon all sacred law, and did not believe that the things would happen which they themselves hastened to bring about. For there was an ancient and often-repeated saying that the city of Jerusalem would perish and its sacred things be burnt when sedition invaded the law of war and domestic hands defiled God’s temple. They did not understand even this. How often had God’s house been destroyed, how often had there been sedition, how often a siege, how often war! That city never perished except when they truly crucified God’s temple with domestic hands. And let them hear what temple that was: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I shall raise it up.” For what else was it but sacrilege when they stretched out impious hands against the author of salvation, when they stoned him, when they struck him, when they seized him, when they killed him? Then divine fire truly consumed their sacred things. For those things had been burnt by the Babylonians and afterwards repaired, destroyed by Pompey and restored again; but when Jesus came they were burnt away completely, and, dissolved by the heat of the divine Spirit, vanished.

[V.2.2] It was necessary for us, with a somewhat fuller lament, to lead what was, as it were, the funeral of our ancestral observance, to accompany a kind of funeral procession and pay the last duties to the institutions of our forebears. But let us come to the beginnings of the siege of Jerusalem.

Chapter 3

Online text and commentary

[V.3.1] Titus had returned to Judaea. After an interval of a few days, to fill the ranks of the military units from which a picked force had been sent to Italy, he fanned the war into flame, hastening to accompany his father so as not to send him alone into danger to fight against the forces of Vitellius. He therefore set out with his army in splendid array, the column alert and ready everywhere, suspecting ambushes because he saw that he had the advantage in valour. He came through the territory of Samaria. Gophna received him, having long since gone over to the Romans. They reached Aulona, from which Jerusalem was thirty stades away and no more. From there he took six hundred horsemen and rode before the city, also to reconnoitre the lie of the land, the nature of the fortifications, the height of the walls and the disposition of the common people. They were said to be oppressed by the brigands' arms and hemmed in by the mass of the factions, so that they unwillingly submitted to the siege and were prevented from making known their disposition towards the Romans, as they would if given freedom. He therefore rode in conspicuous splendour with a few horsemen along the public road leading to the city walls, and no one was seen to come out.

[V.3.2] But when he turned his horse aside to go around the circuit of the walls, with the rest of the troop following their commander, very many suddenly burst out from the place called Opposite Helena's Tomb and leapt forward to occupy the road, cutting off the greater part of the horsemen following Titus. He himself had passed by with a few men, as the ambushers had deliberately allowed, so that they could more easily overpower him when he was left unsupported by the rest. For it was not easy to return to his men because of the mass of enemies thrust between them, while a ditch or rampart and the other obstacles of the terrain prevented him from going further forward, bringing danger upon him on both sides.

Chapter 4

Online text and commentary

[V.4.1] Seeing, therefore, that his only remedy for safety lay in valour, and that a path must be opened by the sword and by no other means—for the others had already turned their horses and withdrawn, hoping that the emperor's son too would follow—he turned his horse. Shouting to encourage the rest to follow him, he charged upon the enemy. It would seem impossible to explain how he could have escaped, were it not known that boldness has very great power in war and is a wall in itself, even when alone. Moreover, with others following behind him, the worthless rabble thought they should look to their own safety in danger rather than pursue the enemy; and anyone who stretched out a hand to seize his horse was struck down. In the end, only two of Titus's companions were killed, and the emperor's son returned to his men with the rest. Nor indeed does there seem to be any doubt why, although his head was uncovered and the rest of him unprotected, he received no wound even when the missiles were being aimed chiefly at him. He had gone out on a ride, not prepared for battle, and had put on neither helmet nor breastplate: so great a man was being preserved for the destruction of that city. The king's heart is indeed, is indeed in the hand of God.

[V.4.2] Therefore, lest the success of their deceit and the progress of their trickery increase the Jews' boldness, he returned to the city with his army after the night. From a lookout from which the city and the vast expanse of the temple could be seen, he showed his men what sort of city they had to fight. They must be tireless and more cautious, since they had to overcome an innumerable people prepared for deceit. He arranged which ranks should approach the walls; those he knew were still exhausted by the night's march he stationed at a distance as reserves. They advanced gradually.

[V.4.3] When they reached the Mount of Olives, beneath it a valley called Cedron lay between their route and the city. Seeing from the walls that the army had been stationed there, for it was six stades away, the Jews laid aside their zeal for sedition for a time. With external enemies approaching, a domestic compact suspended their civil struggles. For fear often restrains even bitter hatred. Accordingly, the men of the factions encouraged one another to defend their fatherland with a common resolve, lest their discord give the Romans a bloodless victory. Relying on their numbers, they decided to attack the enemy suddenly, and by an unexpected sortie threw the foremost ranks into confusion. But when the Romans, trained by long experience itself and by battles of many kinds, had steadied their spirits, they stood firm in their formation and began to cut down the attackers, repel them with shields and drive them back with volleys of missiles, though by no means without destruction on both sides. The Jews had almost overwhelmed them and the Roman battle line was wavering, when Titus learnt what was happening and arrived. Meeting the adversaries and strengthening his men, he renewed the battle and raised the soldiers' spirits, rebuking the Roman ranks for yielding victory to a disordered multitude, a thing that could not be done without the reproach of the greatest cowardice. Having repelled the Jews, who were pursuing even those separated from them by the valley, he returned victorious to his men. Confident in the support the higher position afforded against those below, if they tried to engage, he turned to another part of the Roman army.

[V.4.4] As Caesar departed, the Jews poured out from the walls and charged upon the enemy in a great column, so that at the onrush of the innumerable multitude the soldiers fled and withdrew to the higher parts of the hills. With their flank exposed, even the others who would have preferred battle fled. Meanwhile Caesar stood in their midst. Very many begged him not to expose himself to danger and, with the army scattered, bear the whole danger alone, since he was master of the world: he should no longer fight as before in the role of a soldier, but in that of an emperor, whose danger meant destruction for all. He did not yield. Placing military honour before safety, and judging a glorious death to outweigh the disgrace of life, he presented his breast to the enemy. When he had terrified those he had advanced against, he turned upon others. By his appearance alone and the renown of his all too well-known and eager courage he drove back the enemy. Those he approached therefore gave way, but from other quarters the Jews poured in more and more. They had almost surrounded Titus when very many soldiers, seeing Caesar in the midst of the battle, cried out to the rest, signalling that the emperor's son must not be abandoned in danger. Thus shame recalled them all, and fear armed them, lest they be branded with the disgrace of having deserted Caesar. Turning upon the Jews, they drove the disordered multitude into the valley with all their strength and valour; nor was it difficult for those ascending to slip back. Thus Titus twice recalled the fleeing military unit from flight and freed it alike from danger and disgrace. He displayed equal valour on both occasions, and at the last employed shame as well: by shunning cowardice, shame brought valour, first so that Caesar should not be abandoned, and then so that the enemy should be driven back.

Chapter 5

Online text and commentary

[V.5.1] When the battle outside had subsided for a little while, the internal battle took its place. For at the arrival of the Passover festival, John enlisted very many men to approach the temple as though for religious observance, and contrived a trap when they were allowed to enter as allies. They entered in civilian guise but armed beneath their clothing; throwing off their garments, they raised their swords, their breasts armoured and themselves girded with protection for battle. Struck with terror, those inside the temple who were attending the festival unarmed rushed out and left the temple empty. As the intruders followed them, slaughtering those they could catch and pursuing others beyond the temple precinct, John and his companions were given the opportunity to break in.

[V.5.2] Many people were slaughtered there, so that even those who had not resisted were killed on some fabricated charges. The tranquillity of peace did not help them, nor silence those who kept quiet, nor patience those who yielded. Having seized the inner parts of the temple, John rode down upon Simon as well, with Eleazar and the other leaders of the third faction appointed beneath him to a secondary position.

Chapter 6

Online text and commentary

[V.6.1] Titus advanced against the enemy for a third time and led out his army. On his arrival he encountered a dense multitude of Jews before the city, giving the appearance of wishing to surrender to the Romans but seeming afraid. Suspecting a trick, especially because he had recently seen them united and obstinate, he did not think it credible that they had suddenly changed. He warned the soldiers to guard against deceit and not rashly to approach the walls except at his command, in a close column, lest those who had come out of the city surround them from behind. Suddenly a sound rang out from the city, and a kind of disturbance echoed softly, as some pretended to be leaving of their own accord and others even resisted them: the former demanded that the gates be opened to them, the latter ordered them kept shut; some wished for peace, others for war.

[V.6.2] The mass of the soldiers rushed forward to assist those who had called from the walls for help. Very many went beyond their orders without formation or any restraint, as though to meet those approaching and bring assistance: with help nearer at hand, more people might be given confidence to break out, or those resisting might be frightened, or the soldiers themselves might have an opportunity to break through those who resisted. Those standing outside began to surround them from behind and press upon them once encircled. They took refuge, as it were, at the wall, suspecting nothing from those who made a show of peace. From there too stones and missiles were hurled down, and suddenly the pretence of peace turned into battle. Roused by this, they ran back against the enemies who, although they had tried to surround the Roman soldiers who had advanced, themselves feared being surrounded by the whole army. Thus, while guarding against the whole army, the Jews let these men slip almost from their hands, though they had already considered them captured. They had inflicted very many wounds, but most of them had themselves been wounded as well. They nevertheless pursued them as far as Helena’s tomb and, as is customary for men taunting their opponents, clashed their shields, mocking the Romans because they had now trapped them in ambushes for the second time.

Chapter 7

Online text and commentary

[V.7.1] Caesar, considerably angered, forbade the returning men to mingle with the rest and summoned an assembly, saying: “Great though Roman valour is, surpassing the peoples of all nations, it excels above all in orderly disposition and obedience to orders. For this is the safeguard of military discipline. Nor is it surprising that the Jews weave plots and devise deceits, since they judge themselves unequal in courage. But just as it is the part of the weaker to rely on ambushes, so it is the part of the stronger to guard against deceit making a mockery of valour.” He therefore marvelled that they could act in agreement in their desperation, while the Romans could not agree as their circumstances improved, with the result that the success of the enemy’s deceit stood on firm ground, while their own attempts at valour remained uncertain. “But if the enemy’s courage were stronger, rather than their deceit superior, it would be less disgraceful. For to be defeated by equals or stronger men brings no reproach. Yet when there is nothing to find fault with in you except your lack of restraint in fighting and a certain hasty intemperance of your hands, what can be more shameful than to reject military discipline in Caesar’s presence? I think the laws of military service themselves groan greatly at the disgrace of such indiscipline, and that the emperor will groan greatly when he learns of it. He has always preferred to be obeyed by his own soldier rather than feared by the enemy. For a soldier’s obedience hastens success; the enemy’s fear delays victory.” He asked what judgement his father would pass on his son, whose command was held in so little esteem by the army. “For judgement is pronounced upon a commander whose order is disregarded, and there is no doubt that punishment has more often been inflicted upon those who fought the enemy contrary to orders than upon those who advanced according to orders and yielded to valour. For the laws prescribe death for a man who leaves his formation. What, then, will happen where not one man but the army everywhere leaves its formation and neglects its commander’s decision? Know that you are soldiers of the Roman dominion, the people and the senate, among whom even to have won without the authority of an order is a crime.”

[V.7.2] With a speech of this kind he terrified not only the officers of the soldiers but the whole army as well. For, since he attacked the leaders of the ranks themselves more fiercely, he seemed about to punish everyone. All therefore gathered around him and begged that the fault of the few who had first abandoned their duty should be forgiven for the sake of them all. Although Caesar was not quick to pardon the offence, he was not impervious to appeals for indulgence. He granted it with the utmost gravity, saying that he was pardoning them all and that the authority of his rebuke had sufficiently punished them all. For punishment of individuals should proceed to action, but punishment of a multitude only to words: the former as far as a penalty, the latter as far as a rebuke. Setbacks in battle, he said, had often given good armies occasions for future deeds of valour.

Chapter 8

Online text and commentary

[V.8.1] After this Titus turned his anger against the enemy. Considering that a siege among so many precipices and sheer slopes was dangerous, since soldiers taken unawares by sudden sorties would have no place to retreat to, from which to rush upon the enemy, or in which to set up engines, he ordered the precipices before the city to be filled in. While this was being done, the Jews were by no means free of the dangers of the moment. They were being afflicted by domestic battle while the Romans were occupied in filling the precipices.

[V.8.2] Neither side had a small force. Ten thousand men were with Simon, and fifty commanders over them. About five thousand Idumaeans also supported Simon's side, under Jacob and the younger Simon. John, however, having occupied the inner parts of the temple by the deceit we described above, was kindling the war with a following of six thousand armed men. Two thousand, with a further four hundred men, joined him after they had begun to unite with their aims in accord for the defence of the city, under Eleazar and Simon son of Arinus, whom they had had as leaders before. As these men fought one another, the people lay between them as the victors' prey and were transferred this way and that, like the prize of the contest, according to its changing outcome. For a little while they had come to an agreement, in the manner of a truce, and had been roused by the first Roman assault. With their entrails diseased, they fell back into their old sickness of internal fever whenever the onset of external maladies grew less severe. Often there was war outside and sedition within, the latter now all the more grievous because sedition itself was nourished by war and nourished war. Two men contended for power; the people between them were anxious not about slavery, but lest they fall to a worse master.

Chapter 9

Online text and commentary

[V.9.1] A powerful man of the Canaanites founded the city of Jerusalem. In his native language he was called the just king. He first named it Solyma; afterwards he added a temple, whence the city was called Hierosolyma. From the beginning its inhabitants were of the Canaanite nation. David was the first man of the Hebrew nation to drive out the Canaanites and establish his own people there; he built himself a royal house in the city. He also wished to found a temple for God, but, forbidden by an oracle, he left Solomon as his heir to build the temple he himself had wished to build. Solomon therefore founded the temple, and the kings each added very many things to adorn the city.

[V.9.2] Envy arose from its magnificence. Among all its works, however, the temple excelled in its immense construction and gleaming marble. Within it was a precious and very large curtain woven with scarlet, blue, fine linen and purple. Material of such diversity was not without purpose: its appearance signified the mysteries of hidden things, because it was the temple of him who, as creator of the elements, had dominion over heaven and air, earth and sea, and alone ruled and governed all things. For scarlet represented the fiery heaven, blue

the air, fine linen the earth because it grows in it, and purple the sea because it is dyed with sea shellfish. Thus you may infer two from their colour and two from their origin.

[V.9.3] Accordingly, the chief priest was accustomed to express these four things in his clothing when the greatest celebration of the festival days took place, as though putting on the whole world as he was about to make supplication for the people. He was a figure of him who was to come, Jesus, chief priest, to take away the sin of the world. The chief priest covered his thighs underneath with a linen garment, because faith of mind and chastity of body are sought above all in a priest, and chastity should gird up the intemperance of the flesh. There were two sacred tabernacles, one inner and the other outer. The priests always entered the outer one, but into the inner one, which was called the second, only the chief priest entered, once, and not without blood, to offer it for himself and for the people's offence. By this the Holy Spirit signified that Jesus would come, who alone would truly enter the innermost recesses of the divine mysteries and, because he knew all the secrets of the heavenly substance, alone also reconcile the whole world to the Father through his own blood, so as to have mercy on things both heavenly and earthly. Accordingly, after he came, he made all things peaceful through the blood of his cross, whether they are on earth or in heaven.

[V.9.4] Within was the incense burner, within the table, within the lamp. The incense burner signified that the prayer of the chief priest is directed to God the Father like incense; the table, that on it are Christ's suffering and the mysteries of the sacraments. Hence David also says, "You have prepared a table in my sight": its twelve loaves, as it were, are the twelve apostles, witnesses of his suffering and resurrection. The lamp, which is placed upon the lampstand, was formerly under a bushel, that is, under the measure of the law; now it is in the fullness of grace, pouring forth abundant light from seven wicks, because the Holy Spirit illuminates God's temple with the powers of the seven greatest graces. Knowledge of the Trinity was therefore in the inner parts of the temple, which were called the holy of holies. There Aaron's rod, once laid away, blossomed, for priestly grace in Christ would accomplish more after the death by which he redeemed the world. Before the temple were fourteen steps, by which the shadow had ascended in the time of King Hezekiah, signifying to him that the end of his life was to come. But, warned by an oracle, he prayed and obtained a delay of death, with this sign: the sun moved back over the same steps, signifying that an extension of life of the same number of years had been granted him.

Chapter 10

Online text and commentary

[V.10.1] Since the city was thus fortified on every side by the works of very many kings, and especially of Herod, who had fortified the stronghold called Antonia with construction of the greatest magnificence and adorned it with the most splendid beauty, Caesar went around it, seeking the point at which he could most easily pour his forces into the city. After inspecting the wall's whole circuit, he judged that the siege should be begun near the mound where John, chief priest, lay buried. As he explored more carefully, Nicanor, one of his friends who stayed close to him and applied himself earnestly to the task, was struck by an arrow and fell. He had approached nearer because he thought there would be some prospect of future peace if he were given an opportunity to open a conversation; he was considered powerful and effective in speech at influencing his hearers' minds. Caesar was angered that they had inflicted death by an unexpected wound on a man who was urging what would save them. He drove his columns into battle, and war blazed up with the hurling of weapons of various kinds, especially missiles. Battering rams were brought up to strike the strong parts of the walls.

[V.10.2] Alarmed by this, all who had previously contended with one another in their pursuit of domination came together in concord. Granting impunity for past deeds, they made themselves one body and, united under the compulsion of danger, defended the city. Advancing also to the mounds, they hurled fire upon the engines to destroy the siege banks, burn the siege shelters and set fire to the rams.

[V.10.3] They would have burnt almost every kind of engine had not very many picked soldiers and allies, especially those from the region of Alexandria, fought back vigorously. Although these resisted strongly, Caesar gave them the additional aid of more powerful horsemen. Fighting fiercely himself, he struck down twelve champions of the opposing column. Thus the mass of the remaining multitude withdrew into the city to avoid destruction, and the Roman works were defended from the fire. John, leader of the Idumaeans, fell in that battle. While conversing before the walls with a Roman soldier known to him, he was struck in the back by an arrow and immediately collapsed. An Arab, one of the most skilful marksmen, is said to have caused his death. The Idumaeans, it is said, were deeply grieved because they had lost a man both ready in action and sound in counsel.

Chapter 11

Online text and commentary

[V.11.1] The following night it happened that three towers which Titus had ordered to be raised upon the siege bank, so that he could strike the Jews with darts either from the same level or from above, suddenly collapsed without any force from the enemy. The noise threw the whole Roman army into confusion. They believed that the enemy had destroyed the siege banks and undermined the towers, whose fall had spread immense wreckage far and wide. A pitiable disgrace almost occurred: the victors would have yielded in flight to enemies whose presence was uncertain in the night. But the darkness and the collapse itself, which raised a cloud of dust, had taken away their view, so that they did not know where to flee. Each man asked his neighbour what had happened, but could obtain no reliable account, since everyone was equally ignorant of the cause of such a collapse. At last Caesar learnt the facts and ordered it to be made known that what had happened was a sudden accident, not an incursion by any enemy.

[V.11.2] Thus the alarm subsided, and the capture of the city depended entirely on force. For the walls were very high, much of them was covered with iron or bronze, and their very height protected the enemy from missiles. The Romans brought up the engines of the battering rams, whose repeated blows loosened the strong parts of the wall. They began to rely on lighter darts and arrows to drive off the defenders and overcome the hindrance of those resisting them. Thus the wall gradually yielded to their battering. Hence the Jews called the larger ram itself the destroyer of cities. When part of the walls had been broken down, the Jews abandoned that wall's defences, confident that they had two other walls within, and withdrew to the second wall. As they fled, the Romans entered through the openings in the wall and opened the gates. Thus the whole army was admitted and completely demolished the outer wall, so that it would not obstruct them in battle or, if matters went badly, bar their retreat.

Chapter 12

Online text and commentary

[V.12.1] The fellow conspirators of John and Simon divided the positions around the second wall between them. John fought with his men in the stronghold called Antonia. Near it was the portico of the temple which faced north. For the site itself, lying between two porticoes, where the stronghold was later built to bear Antony's name, was called northern, that is, borius. Simon had taken on the duty of defending the city at John's tomb. These men fought for safety, the Romans for victory. Although the Romans had superior valour for combat, their position was inferior for conducting the siege, since fighting from the wall bore heavily upon them.

[V.12.2] The Jews' rashness was more insolent, the Romans' courage more fierce. The commanders watched over their sides, and rivalry grew all the greater as each man longed to prove to his own leaders the dangers he faced. Simon pressed his men with terror and fear; Titus appealed to the Romans above all through their sense of shame before him. They

thought it worse than death not to display before Caesar the dangers they faced, when he himself had so often not hesitated to expose himself to danger for the army. The habit of winning and ignorance of yielding armed them, and especially Titus's presence as judge of each man's valour. They did not look to him for a reward for courage: beyond all else, to have done something vigorous under his gaze that did not displease him was itself the richest reward. Spurred by this, Longinus, a man of the cavalry, saw the opposing bands of Jews before the walls. As though indignant that they should challenge the Romans to war and dare to come out on equal terms, he leapt from his horse and flung himself into the midst of the enemy. He struck one man who was preparing to meet him in the mouth with a weapon, taking his voice and life together. Tearing the weapon from the fallen body, he drove it into another man and returned victorious to his own side. We speak of the outstanding men; there were many imitators on both sides, but of different kinds. Despair gave the Jews boldness; desire for glory added valour to the Romans. Yet, though their spirits differed, their contempt for death was equal. The Jews thought it a consolation to die with the enemy. Titus hastened to finish the war, but without loss of his own men; he preferred to save even the enemies themselves, if he could save them all, rather than destroy them. He urged the soldier only to wage war with deliberation: the only true valour was that which had foresight as its companion; courage without judgement seemed rashness, and nowhere was greater caution needed than in victory. For to perish with the stronger man was a triumph for the defeated. Care must therefore be taken lest victory seem a matter of chance, and failure to escape sharing the danger a matter of cowardice. He therefore ordered the ram to be brought up to the middle of the northern wall.

Chapter 13

Online text and commentary

[V.13.1] There was Castor, cunning and ready for deceit, who held the position with nine other partners in deceit after the rest had been driven away by the archers' missiles. When he saw that the ram's impact was overturning the tower, that the wall was tottering and would easily fall if the engine struck again, he stretched out his hands and begged Caesar in a pitiable voice to spare the city now on the brink of ruin and not resolve to bring it down in utter destruction. Caesar thought that he was earnestly begging pardon and would surrender. To allow the surrender to proceed, he ordered the engine to stop and the marksmen to refrain from battle. He gave Castor leave to speak. Castor pretended that he would come down and then seemed to persuade his men. Some were willing, others resisted; suddenly, as though indignant at being compelled, they struck themselves above the parapet and fell. There was great amazement, while the deceit remained hidden. Thus they drew out the time.

[V.13.2] Meanwhile, one of the Roman soldiers struck Castor's nostril with an arrow. Castor lamented and complained to Caesar, demanding that he order someone to give him his right hand; on those terms he would come over. Caesar entrusted the task to Josephus, but he, knowing the Jews' ambushes, replied that he perceived nothing sincere in it. Aeneas, however, approached nearer the wall and came forward to receive Castor as he came down. Castor shouted to him to open the fold of his garment and receive gold, then dropped a

stone. Aeneas, keeping a watchful eye, saw the stone beforehand and escaped with a swift sideways leap. Yet the huge falling stone overwhelmed another man standing nearby. At this Caesar pressed more fiercely for the walls' destruction, ordering the engine to be driven forward with greater force. In reply, fire was hurled to burn the engines. But when the wall broke apart, Castor and his men threw themselves as though into the fire, deceitfully displaying greatness of spirit in contempt for death, while by shameful deceit he sought a means of escape to preserve his life.

Chapter 14

Online text and commentary

[V.14.1] Only one wall, the third, now remained, two having been overthrown. Yet Caesar still maintained his patience, realising that whatever perished was now a loss to himself. While sparing them and inviting them to surrender, he rushed upon the second wall with a few men without waiting for his column. The Jews gathered a force and wounded very many men in the narrow passages. Many also died on both sides. Then Caesar shot at those resisting from a distance with arrows. Among the crowded ranks no missile could be evaded; no shot failed to wound. Thus the Jews began to withdraw, and Titus recovered his men. Famine had already begun to press heavily upon the city.

[V.14.2] The Jews, however, boasted as victors because they had recovered the second wall, as though they had driven out the Romans. But they could neither repair what had fallen nor defend what was about to fall. They nevertheless resisted for a little while. The fighting at the second wall lasted three days; on the fourth day, unable to withstand Roman valour, they fled within the third wall.

[V.14.3] Caesar ordered them to refrain from an assault for the moment and commanded only that the second wall be overthrown. Since the greatest part of the war remained, he determined that the soldiers should bring in food for themselves, lest want press upon the victors and scarcity afflict them. For four days the army brought in grain. At the same time, this seemed a suitable interval in which the Jews might take thought for themselves and change their course. The people indeed preferred this, but the leaders of the sedition reckoned up the grievous crimes they had committed against the common people. Hoping for no possibility of pardon, they considered it easier to perish with everyone than to perish alone as the authors of those crimes.

[V.14.4] On the fifth day, therefore, since no peaceful proposal was brought by the Jews, Caesar attacked the walls in two columns and ordered two siege banks to be raised, one against Antonia and the other against the wall around John's tomb. With the latter he sought the destruction of the upper city; with the other, if he captured the stronghold, he would easily gain possession of the temple as well. Unless he brought the temple under his control, he could not hold even the city without danger. Titus had divided the army into two bodies. On the opposing side, John and Simon had likewise divided the duties of defence between them. John defended Antonia; Simon, with his armed men and the Idumaean people, kept watch at John's tomb and from his higher position frustrated all the besiegers' attempts by whatever means he could. Taught by their sufferings, they were also more practised at

countering the siege engines, and had themselves acquired several kinds of engines with which to destroy the Roman works and obstruct their undertakings.

[V.14.5] Observing their headlong obstinacy, Caesar wished to mingle speech with the siege works, lest despair of pardon make them resist more stubbornly, while hope of what was promised might induce them to desist. He therefore began to urge them not to involve themselves in the destruction of the captured city, but to yield it to his power, since it was already held by arms and, encircled by the siege, was being pressed towards utter ruin. He would grant pardon to those who yielded, if only they took thought either for themselves or for their fatherland, so that the whole city should not be demolished. He also instructed Josephus to address the citizens himself in their native language, in the hope that he might at least bend his fellow tribesmen to renounce their own fury. Although Josephus knew the Jews' unrestrained hatred towards him, he nevertheless stood as far from the walls as he could with regard to an arrow's range, yet so that he could be heard, and expounded what would benefit the citizens in the language familiar to him.

Chapter 15

Online text and commentary

[V.15.1] “It may have been human nature, Hebrews, to persist obstinately before matters came to the final crisis, while you thought that your position and the resources of a familiar region would give you the advantage. Admittedly, it was fitting not to provoke with arms the Romans, invincible in war, who had often defeated those who defeated you; yet thoughtless human minds do fall into this error in prosperity. Moreover, the outcome of war is often uncertain, and so everyone entrusts himself to fortune even when inferior in valour. Finally, you placed your hopes in the walls; you did not think that matters would go so far as the overthrow of the temple. Spare the altars, spare the sacrificial altars, spare the dwelling once heavenly. For now God himself too has abandoned you, because you have abandoned the practice of devotion. We have endured war in the midst of the temple. Fires spread around and range over the temple, but the armed men surrounding it are not such as used to be there. Yet, with hands still free of sacrilege, they wish to spare it, neither to defile its sacred doorposts nor to abolish its ancient rites, if you permit them. What further is awaited? Two walls have been overthrown; the third remains, itself weaker than the two that have fallen. Or is divine protection hoped for, and help from the inner sanctuary? But he who defended us has gone over to the enemy, since the Romans revere him whom we worshipped, while we offend him. Who does not know that God is with those who have subjected everything to themselves except what excessive heat or frost makes inaccessible, and which therefore lies outside Roman dominion because it also lies beyond human use? No one denies that God has given power to different peoples in turn, first to the Egyptians, then to the Jews, and that he has also been a helper to the Assyrians and Persians; afterwards he turned to the Romans and remains with them. Indeed, all kingdoms have yielded to them, and the whole earth has been given into their possession. What have you to do with the conquerors of the whole earth, to whom the secrets of the ocean and the furthest reaches of India lie open? Why should I add the Britains, divided from the whole world by the intervening sea, but brought by the Romans into the inhabited world? Scothia, which owes nothing to the mainland, trembles before them; so does Saxonia, inaccessible through its marshes and enclosed by impassable regions. Although it seems to dare the stealthy raids of war, it too has often figured as a captive in Roman triumphs. It is said to be a very strong race of men, surpassing the rest, yet it relies on pirate skiffs, not on strength, prepared for flight rather than war. But you reply that it is better to die than to lose freedom. When has this judgement succeeded for you, Jews, or when among the Hebrews has useful slavery not been preferred to useless freedom? The patriarch Jacob himself led the Hebrews down into Egypt, lest they perish of hunger. The patriarchs, his twelve sons, went down together, those illustrious beginnings of our race. There was that noble Judah, the stock of the Jews, who gave his name to the people. There Joseph, exalted in chariot and horses, preferred to submit to another’s power so that he might feed his own people, rather than return to the freedom of his own origin. There Benjamin, detained by his brother’s loving deception, consented to the trick, because it was no crime to serve those more powerful. There their descendants, though called away by Moses, nevertheless desired to remain. Thus even harsh slavery was not so displeasing to your fathers that they could not prefer it to dangers. You served the Egyptians, then, and

would that it had been only once! Yet you served not only then, when you preferred the food of the harshest slavery to showers of heavenly food, but also afterwards, when you went down into Egypt defeated and captive as you fled the Assyrians. You served the Macedonians too; you served the Assyrians too for many courses of years, and that slavery was sweet. You served Persians, Seleucians and Palestinians; only the Romans do you think burdensome, though those whom you served also serve them. Do you therefore owe hatred or gratitude to those who have made you equal to your masters? I consider this vengeance on your behalf, not an insult, because they have avenged you upon those to whom you were subject. The Assyrian who ruled all Asia is oppressed by servitude. The Egyptian ploughs for the Romans; he sows from his own resources what he is to reap for them. Macedonia, which had conquered Persia and extended its dominion as far as the Indians, acknowledges masters it did not know, and recalls in vain that it gave its kings the name of Aeacids, and that it yielded only to a Roman triumph. Even Pyrrhus himself, displaying both the lineage and the name of Achilles' stock, was defeated by their arms and submitted so completely in his zeal to obtain peace that he begged for pardon. For why should I speak of the Palestinians, whom the authority of a single governor restrains? Ungrateful men, is it not an honour for you to serve alongside the Persians? For this is to serve alongside kingdoms and to have kings as the greatest consolation in subjection. But I ask when you were free, you who now refuse slavery. When, then, were you free? Even when you ruled others, were you not under a king? You had God as king; you rejected the rule of him under whom alone you were free. You wished to serve men. Why do you tear up your fathers' testaments, you inheritance rebellious even against your fathers? You chose a king named Saul. When he was killed, the Palestinian people ruled you. After a time David succeeded to the kingship of the whole people, a gentler master indeed, but a master nevertheless. Before he rested, David too imposed a king upon the nation. From Solomon onwards the kingdom was again split in two, and the inheritance of rule divided through a long succession. To pass over the captivities, Cyrus restored many Jews to their lands and their sacred rites. But your fathers, when worn down by grievous battles with the Persians, though illustrious through the triumphs of the Maccabees, chose alliance with Rome. Divine Scripture preserves the agreements of many embassies. You became friends of the Romans, you who had been slaves of the Persians. But again you preferred to have a king rather than a chief priest whom the people should obey. When the cruelty of your kings became intolerable, with Herod dead and Archelaus expelled, you asked to be under the Roman Caesar. You handed yourselves over to Caesar, to whom all are subject, so as to exchange your servitude for a milder one. For to serve in a condition common to everyone is a kind of freedom, since the dignity of the rulers lends honour to the obedience of slaves. Yet the Romans do not exact slavery, being founders of freedom: they not only killed a cruel king but would not tolerate even a proud one. Thus the name of imperial rule is august among them because it increases the prosperity of its own people, not because it oppresses foreigners. But let it be so: let it be useful for you not to obey Roman rule. Let us see whether it is open to you, whether it is not fatal. The Roman battle lines press upon you, the ruins of your country press upon you, the destruction of the temple will press upon you. Weigh not what is useful but what is possible. For it is not the form of your wishes but the reckoning of what is possible that must be weighed. The same law of nature has surely been implanted in all—in men, birds, wild animals and beasts—that each should yield

to the more powerful: the bull to the lion, the stag to the bear, the roe deer to the leopard, the hawk to the eagle, the dove to the hawk, and, lest there seem to be some difference arising from diversity of kind, weaker young bulls to the bull himself, flocks of sheep to the ram, goats to the he-goat, and you to those stronger than yourselves. Yet the Romans expel no one; you expel people. Indeed, they increase people's prosperity, so that no one, even when defeated, leaves his own lands. They left Antiochus part of his kingdom. And now what else does Caesar strive for but that your land should not be deserted, your region not emptied, your city not overthrown, your temple not burnt? Victory is not given to all. Nature has given it to a few to rule, to the many to obey. Bulls stand above herds, rams above flocks. Pre-eminence belongs to the few, meekness to the many. You too must put on meekness; accept the subjection that even wild animals put on." As Josephus said these things, they hurled insults from the wall and cursed him for advising what was useful. Many even shot arrows to see whether they could inflict death upon him. But since he could not bend their untamed spirits by reason, he thought that they must also be confronted with the testimonies of Scripture, especially because they said that God would not fail to protect his temple.

Chapter 16

Online text and commentary

[V.16.1] “Rash men, do you hope that divine help will come to you only now, when you have thrown everything into confusion with arms, violated the altars with war and torn down the defences of the whole city? Rash men,” he said, “forgetful of your own sources of help, have you prepared shields and swords, and these against the Romans? You were not accustomed to conquer with such arms. For when did the Hebrews’ victory lie in spear and sword? Remember whence you arose and from whom you came, how your fathers conquered their enemies. Rash men, what a helper you have taken from yourselves while demanding help from elsewhere! Father Abraham entered Egypt not with a multitude of people but in the fear of God. When he saw the chastity of his abducted wife held captive, he nevertheless abstained from war, took up the arms of devout prayer and called in a defender to overcome the sleeping king and, with the enemy defeated, restore his wife to him undefiled. Sarah returned without arms, bringing her husband a triumphal victory. Abraham slept and Pharaoh was tormented. Sarah feared and Pharaoh denied the crime; he sent away another man’s wife and, condemning the crime, honoured the chastity he had desired to despoil. He added gold and silver in honour of Sarah’s modesty, to condemn an intention that had not issued in a crime. He begged father Abraham to pray to the Lord for his household, for his house was barren. Sarah came back richer, with her modesty intact; Abraham returned holier, having repaid the reward for his wife’s chastity with a remedy for barrenness. What shall I say of his son Isaac? He too relied on the protection his father had enjoyed and did not bring out armed battle lines against the insolence of a powerful neighbour. Yet he certainly had a strong band of three hundred and eighteen men born in his household, who had defeated five kings in war, stripped them of their spoils and restored the captive Lot to his uncle Abraham. He did not draw his sword from its sheath, but clothed himself only in patience against those who envied him and answered them with guilelessness. Those who had declared that he must be driven out came to entreat him; those who could not bear him as a neighbour sought his friendship. I tremble to recount such great wonders of the fathers. Holy Jacob, when his brother Esau threatened the murder of his own kin, left his country and abandoned his parents, carrying with him prayer alone as provision for the journey. Deservedly, while in foreign places he feared his brother’s ambushes and lacked the company and help of men, he found an assembly of angels. Brought, as he says, to the Camp of God, he wrestled with the Lord and, as Scripture says, prevailed against God, though he thought himself no match for men. What else did Moses raise against the king of the Egyptians, his army and his serpents but his rod alone? O powerful rod, which covered heaven with darkness, flooded the earth with rain and dried the sea of its waves! The Egyptians had surrounded the Hebrews; Moses prayed and did not fight. The sea was divided and the people entered; Pharaoh followed, and Moses, placed amid the waves, prayed. Pharaoh was drowned with his men; Moses sang. Who, considering so many and such great things, would not marvel and understand that our arms are better in prayer than in valour? For prayer calls divine help to itself, valour the help of the body. These arms, which are not carnal but mighty through God, were learnt by Moses’ disciple and successor, Joshua son of Nun. An imitator and near equal of his master, he turned the waters of the Jordan backwards; and

when he saw the impregnable walls of the city of Jericho, he ordered the priests to sound the trumpet and the people to shout. When this was done, the walls suddenly fell, the city was burnt and all were killed except those whom the faith of Rahab, the good prostitute, protected from the destruction of that city. Gideon too chose three hundred men for war, and commanded them to carry before them mysteries, not arms: in the left hand jars full of water, in the right torches. Struck by this sight, the enemy fled at once, and victory came to the Hebrews. Care for sacred religion had been neglected through the negligence of Eli the priest; the divine commands were being abandoned. Foreigners brought war upon them, the Hebrews were defeated, and even the ark of God was captured. Yet it was returned without any arms. By this sign it became clear both that arms do not conquer without religion and that religion conquers without arms. When the Assyrian people poured into the Jewish nation, King Hezekiah learnt fully what insults were hurled at God through the voice of Rabshakeh at King Sennacherib's command, and what utter destruction was threatened against the people. On receiving the report, he did not think that words must be answered with words or arms with arms. Rising, he clothed himself in sackcloth as in a shield, covered his head with ashes instead of a helmet and hurled prayer instead of javelins. Prayer ascended; an angel descended. During the night one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians were slain. We counted the corpses; we did not see the slayer. I had passed over the five kings who began a war without consulting the Lord. As they travelled through the desert, lack of water began to afflict them severely, and thirst tormented both them and their horses. Necessity compelled them to make good the duty they had neglected. For the king of Israel was negligent in the worship of God, but, urged by the others to seek out the Lord's prophet, he learnt that Elisha was not far from the very places where they were staying. They sent to beg the help of his prayer and remedies for their need. Although he was offended with the king of Israel because the faithless man did not believe, he nevertheless promised both an abundance of water and a speedy victory. Water began to flow through the desert, and streams poured of their own accord over the land without any rain. The adversaries rose, having been sunk in a deeper sleep, their anxiety relaxed by their confidence of victory. Suddenly they saw the waters turn red as the sun poured upon them, and thought that a battle had been fought among the kings' peoples, with whose blood the earth was wet. So, hurrying for plunder, they ran everywhere without order or restraint, each trying to get ahead of the other. Having rushed headlong into the midst of the enemy, they were surrounded and killed, and a great slaughter was made of them. Thus the holy prophet drove both thirst and fear from our fathers. The same man also brought help against famine. For when Samaria was besieged and the king of Israel remained shut within it, grievous hunger pressed upon them, so that they did not abstain even from abominable food. Confronted by the hideousness of so great a misery and by the messenger of the king, who thought that the famine had grown through the prophet's neglect, he answered: 'On the following day you will see both an abundance of grain and a low price.' He told the messenger who did not believe that he himself, because he did not believe, would not see it, but that the promises would nevertheless be fulfilled. Suddenly during the night the neighing of horses, the crash of chariots, the roar of four-horse chariots running and the sound of arms were heard in the Syrian camp and struck fear into the victors: many strong nations had come, they thought, to help the Hebrews. They hastened to escape by flight the

danger which they believed was imminent. Night hastened their decision and increased their terror. So, after the Syrians fled, all the supplies they had seized were found in the camp the following day. Abundance created low prices; low prices fulfilled the promise; the death of the unbeliever deprived him of its fruit, but did not prevent the remedy for all. It is clear, then, that many leaders among our fathers attained victory when they did not fight at all, and that others too prevailed in war when, after they sought counsel, an oracle permitted them to fight. Thus Amalek was defeated, but when Moses raised his hands; Joshua son of Nun conquered when he made the sun stand still; Gideon conquered when he had tested at the water those who were to fight; Samson too, while he still kept his hair undefiled; and Samuel conquered, but when he had resolved to set up a helper stone. David triumphed when, in prophetic mysteries, he had joined Bathsheba, that is, the daughter of the Sabbath, to himself in marriage. He conquered in civil war too, which he fled when it was brought upon him, and did not himself bring about. For nothing is fouler than civil war except only the man who could bring it about. Asaph too conquered in battle, but only after he said to his men, who despaired because they were inferior in number, that it made no difference whether they were few or many, since God makes a few who fear him stronger than the many. He was truly good in faith, if only he had persevered to the end. A woman too conquered by arms, having kept faith with God. Saul, however, was defeated because he did not keep God's commands. Josiah was wounded because he advanced against the enemy contrary to command; otherwise holy, he was therefore snatched away so that he might not see the captivity due to our sins. Necho cried out, 'I have not been sent against you', bearing witness to his faith; but participation in a degenerate alliance ensnared him, as it had Amaziah before him. Amaziah had in fact been warned by a man of God to dismiss those whom he had hired as allies in war for a hundred talents of silver, if he wished to conquer. When he hesitated because he would lose so great a payment, the prophet answered that the Lord had more from which to restore even the silver to him. Relying on this, he dismissed the hired auxiliaries and conquered with fewer men. Yet he too failed to pay God the reward for so great a victory, but immediately offered sacrifices to the very images he had captured as victor, as though he had conquered through the favour of those he had reduced to captive booty. Zedekiah himself, with the ruin of his country already upon him, was warned through the prophet Jeremiah, while pressed by the enemy's siege, not to fear leaving the city: he would be victorious if he obeyed the heavenly commands, or a captive if he thought it must be defended. Through faithlessness he deceived himself and his own people. The Jewish people had been carried away by the Assyrians into Babylonia; the rest, who had remained, were deliberating about moving to the Egyptians. The Lord commanded through the prophet Isaiah and the others that they should be content with the rule of one nation, lest a double captivity increase their hardship. But they disregarded God's oracles and became captives of two nations, having impatiently desired to escape the yoke of one. Thus they remained exiles in Egypt. Those who had been led away among the Assyrians, however, after the time of captivity which the Lord had appointed for the people's sins was fulfilled, later obtained permission to go back under Cyrus's rule and returned with favour. God's temple was renewed with the resources of Kings Cyrus and Darius and the gifts of the other Persians. Thus the very men who had overthrown it provided the cost of its repair; they also restored the rights of the priests and assisted the practice of religion. Our own people, however, while

competing with one another for the priesthood and courting the Parthians to have that honour conferred upon them, made merchandise of religion. Why do we complain of the Babylonians? We have found our own people worse. Those men restored to us the right of religious observance, those men restored the appointment of priests, and our own people handed it back to the Persians. Those men left the priestly fillets in our power; our own people made them tributary to the Babylonians. Why should I add that the sanctuary is stained with blood, that the sacred thresholds drip with blood, that the temple's gables still stand half ruined? God's anger towards us is less than our own strife. His anger made us captives; our strife made us sacrilegious. His anger scattered the Jews; our strife destroyed them. Compare, if you please, the difference between our captivity and our sedition: our captivity brought the gentiles a share in our religion, while our sedition deprived even the Jews of the grace of religion. Who brought the Romans into Judaea but the strife of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus? Who brought Sossius but Herod? Who brought Antony but Sossius? Who begged Caesar to be their king but you? Who other than you expelled Antipater from the kingdom, and freedom in Antipater? Yet I do not reproach you, nor do I deny that Florus acted criminally against you. But a complaint should have been brought to the Romans, not war. You despised Nero. But Vespasian had succeeded him, kindly by nature, yet capable of being still kinder from inclination, because he had assumed imperial rule in Judaea. Or, if his compassion did not move you, his valour certainly ought to have driven you to take thought for yourselves. But how would he not spare you, when he spared Josephus? For to whom ought he to have been more hostile than to me? Who built greater defences against the Romans? Who thought more zealously that the contest must be fought for our country, once you had chosen war? I did not approve the beginnings of wars, but once they were undertaken I did not abandon them. The ashes of the city of Jotapata, which sheltered me while I was still fighting, bear witness to this: that I did not desist from war until after that city's ruin; that I lay hidden as long as I could in that tomb of the overthrown city; that I preferred hunger rather than surrender myself to the Romans; that I sought ways of escape to come to you, but was caught and did not come out of my own accord; that I preferred to perish with my own people, but Caesar spared me; that I wished rather to share your danger, not because I approved your counsel, but because I chose to share the danger with you. Yet I thank God that I did not fall into partnership in so great a crime, so that I should not be thought an inciter of seditions or, since I could not join in them, complete through my own death the murder of kin that I could avoid committing with my own hand; certainly, so that I should not see my most holy mother torn apart on my account and the entrails of my own people scattered. These things are indeed pitiable, yet it is more bearable to suffer them than to have done them. What, then, are you still waiting for? The signs of our ancestors? Our merits are not such, nor are our services in the worship of God. The Romans' faithlessness is not that of the Assyrians, who accepted payment for withdrawal and broke faith, deciding not to retreat but to press on more fiercely. Indeed, to infer the movement of the divine judgement from events, it is certain that God opposes the Jews. Thus Siloam, which had dried up before the war, and all the veins of springs outside the city, which had long ceased to flow so that water was unavailable for our use unless bought at a price, now return to their functions and pour themselves out at Titus's arrival. Rich veins gush forth, and everything is so filled with overflowing waters that they abound generously not only for the army to drink,

but also for war-horses, beasts of burden and all the livestock. Nor is there any lack of abundant water to irrigate the gardens, so that you would think fuller streams were being poured out as though the elements were striving for Roman victory. We recognise the former portents, which then too preceded the capture of our city: water ceased for the Jews and poured forth for the enemy, lest thirst hinder the siege. Nor is it surprising if divine grace has withdrawn from the Jews, whom such great crimes have hemmed in. A good man shuns a lodging full of horror and leaves his own house if he learns that some crime has been committed in it; he avoids sharing an unworthy dwelling and curses the wickedness of those living there. Do we then doubt, concerning the supreme and immaculate God, that he abhors the contagion of so many crimes, turns away from the atrocity of deadly wickedness and does not linger in the assemblies of murderers of kin? He commanded Dathan and Abiram to be separated from the innocent because they had challenged Moses and Aaron by usurping the priestly office, lest a stain contaminate the devout through association with the guilty, or punishment engulf them. But why do I linger longer in words, when scenes full of horror and groaning surround us and the destruction of the temple is being hastened? What eyes can watch this, what senses endure it, what spirit bear it? O men harder than rocks, more unyielding than iron, who amid such monstrous human events still compete with one another in crime as though in emulation of valour! And, what is graver, you yourselves destroy your country and increase its ruins. Turn back at last, come to your senses at last, judge and see the beauty of the country you have betrayed. What a city, what a temple, what dwellings of the saints and inner sanctuaries of sacred rites, what works of the prophets are being disembowelled by your hands! Can anyone direct flames against these, scatter fires and feed conflagrations, and be moved by no feeling? The hardness of rocks, if it could feel, would dissolve. Indeed, even things without feeling often imitate the appearance of feeling in the greatest bitterness of events, so that crags tremble and drops flow as blood moistens them. Yet you remain unmoved: what better thing can remain after these, what more worthy thing have you to preserve? Finally, if these things do not move you, though they are of greater worth among the devout, at least pity your own kindred. Set before your eyes your children's deaths by the sword or their more bitter deaths by hunger, and the slavery of your wives and daughters. They will have secure freedom through an agreement to surrender, or captive servitude through the city's overthrow. Take thought while you can, lest you leave behind after your death things more grievous than you have done before death. Nor am I free from danger of this kind. I too know that, together with yours, my mother, most holy to me, and my dear wife are in danger, a lineage by no means ignoble and a house once illustrious. And perhaps you think that I urge these things for the sake of my own people. Kill them, and take my blood besides as payment. Gladly do I pay this price for your safety, if after me you can come to your senses."

Chapter 17

Online text

[V.17.1] Josephus cried out these things with tears and moved many of the people to take refuge with the Romans after selling what they possessed. Titus sent each of them where he wished to go, so that the others too might be encouraged to surrender themselves to the Romans without fear. Thus, when they found an opportunity to leave, they streamed out, assured of safety if they reached the Romans and unconcerned about slavery, since their freedom was preserved. But those who followed John and Simon, the arbiters and inciters of sedition, feared punishment for their crimes more than the adversities of war, and therefore thought that refuge would be unsafe for them. Not only did they themselves not dare to leave, but they also kept watch to prevent anyone of the people from leaving the city, taking greater care to guard against the departure of their own people than the entry of the Romans. Thus people were held against their will, and anyone caught paid a grievous penalty. A slight suspicion was the cause of a most grievous death. Truth was sought not through evidence but through torments. If any were wealthy, they were dragged to death on a fabricated charge of treason; equally, if any were poor, they lay exposed to death because they had nothing with which to redeem themselves.

Chapter 18

Online text and commentary

[V.18.1] Hunger too had begun to rage, and sedition to run still more rampant in fury and madness. Grain could not be found; no bread was available for public consumption. Wherever it was discovered, the house was immediately stormed. The owner of the house or the person who had stored the grain was slaughtered for having hidden it. Again, if no grain was found, tortures were inflicted as though it had been hidden more carefully. Many wished for the short way out through death, since either hunger afflicted them or cruelty tormented them. Indeed, the more savage men disdained to kill, grudging the benefit of death to those whose more violent executioner, hunger, had already eaten away their flesh in pitiable wasting and covered their bare bones with thin skin. Half dead, with only breath still remaining, they breathed and dragged their sickly corpses along. If they saw vegetable scraps that had fallen by chance or been thrown away as dried up, powerless in the rest of their bodies, they licked with their mouths what lay on the ground. Or if they saw grass growing in the walls, they snatched it and consoled their miserable hunger with its wretched juice. The richer bought a measure of wheat for their entire fortune—for why should they preserve what would be of no use?—and the poorer a measure of barley, taking care that no one saw either seller or buyer, for this was punished more severely than any crime. Nor did they wait for the bread to be baked, lest death forestall them or delay summon an informer. Hidden in secret places, those who had any supply of grain, however small, chewed the wheat uncooked. There was no table, no seat, no light, lest someone come upon them and catch them unawares. At any sound the food was hidden. Solitude was suspect, gatherings murderous towards kin; among their own people there was a grim struggle.

[V.18.2] For hunger excludes every affection, and above all shame. For the hungry, modesty costs life and diminishes the chance of survival. If a man with a wife, children or grandchildren had any food, he scarcely admitted it. The same was true of the women. But if someone of a gentler spirit set out food, it was wrenched from their hands. The food was pitiable, the meal tearful. Children snatched from parents, parents from children, and food was brought out of their very throats. For many, the vomit of others became food. There was no horror at taking putrid things, no shame at robbing their own people of the last drops of life. Even this spectacle of so wretched a calamity feared discovery. Thus it was enacted behind closed doors, lest someone come upon them seeking food from another's mouth and, like a dog, lick up another's vomit with his tongue. Not even this went unpunished, for wherever doors were barred, a deceit involving hidden food was suspected. The agents of sedition rushed forward, stormed what was closed and exacted intolerable torments of a new cruelty. Not even the private parts of the body were spared. Punishment passed through these too, because the sensation of pain is more grievous in them. Many, when they saw the killers already bursting in, snatched up the food they had prepared, so that they themselves might not be cheated of their last provisions, or at least might avenge the death to come. And what made the cruelty seem more grievous was that those who snatched food from the hungry were not themselves hungry. For through plunder they had heaped up the resources of others for themselves and fed on others' stores, while those who had gathered them wasted away in hunger and fasting. If a mother, stirred by maternal affection and pitying an infant's cries, wished to pour the juice of food from her own mouth into the child's, she paid the penalty for a work of devotion: she was pierced together with her child, whether it hung from her neck or clung to her breasts. Many too, thinking death a benefit, went out of the city to pluck herbs, feed on roots or strip bark from trees, in case their green growth supplied anything to console hunger; when the Romans found them, they killed them. Or one who had escaped the enemy collapsed on the very threshold of the gate, wasted by hunger and feeble in the mouth, no longer able even to chew. Those who returned were also met by a more savage band, which wrenched from the folds of the wretches' garments what they had sought at the greatest peril, committing the bitterest crime and leaving them no share even as a reward for the danger. Thus they died under greater violence from their own people than from the enemy. For what even the enemy had allowed them a fellow citizen snatched away. Yet it was no use to have snatched food of this kind. For not long afterwards, though their bodies were still vigorous, their bellies swelled and they were shaken by pain deep in their entrails, or, their bowels loosened, they failed with their strength exhausted, so that they regretted wishing for what was a consolation for a time and afterwards a torment. Then, with green lizards and the cooked remains of other creatures of the serpent kind, they added pestilence. For if they happened to find the carcasses of horses, they pulled them between themselves and settled the matter in a fierce fight. Nor was there any respite from the destruction heaped upon them by the enemy. For very many left the city with their children and wives and withdrew to the part which curved into the depths of steep ravines. The Romans kept watch, either to lead off captives as slaves, especially the younger ones, or to strike down the stronger, lest anyone dare to steal upon the combatants. Thus, if anyone went further afield in search of food, digging for the roots of wild plants, he was intercepted.

[V.18.3] Yet even with the enemy surrounding them, they could not restrain themselves, for hunger gave them boldness. Parental affection could not bear to see their little children consumed by wasting, their mouths opened in hunger and stretched out in vain. They had taken the children with them to share the danger, lest the authors of sedition kill them in their place, as hostages for their flight. Hunger compelled them to go out, since death by the sword was a benefit compared with starvation. The Romans, on the other hand, because they thought them contemptuous of death, increased the kinds of torture, first beating them and then fastening to the cross's gibbet whomever they encountered, so that at least the sight of their torments might recall the others' rashness from insolent provocation. Thus their suffering and the bitterness of such great calamities seemed pitiable to Titus. Countless people were captured; about five hundred a day were tortured, lining the fields before the city in the order of a pitiable procession, so that they could be seen from the walls. The Romans pitied them, the Jews were unmoved; the enemy shared their suffering, their comrades did not relent; compassion was more readily found among adversaries than among comrades. Yet many of the Romans were inflamed with indignation because the Jews became worse amid such great evils. You could see people fastened in different ways and various kinds of punishment and forms of torment, in such an innumerable multitude that space was now lacking for gibbets, gibbets for bodies. Within, Simon raged and John roared; through their agents they laid traps for individuals. If anyone tried to flee, he was dragged along the ground and torn apart. The relatives of those who had left were also tortured, or the corpses of many, fastened to a cross, were displayed to their own people who had escaped. On the opposite side they too had lined the wall with a kind of crop of gibbets, as though triumphing over adversaries, whenever they caught any of their own people wishing to flee to the Romans, so that fear of desertion might seize the others. No place was free of bitterness: outside captivity, within hunger, fear on both sides. Yet arms were feared less than torments, and it was easier to be killed amid the enemy's tumult than by the murder of kin. Yet Caesar did not cease to invite the faction leaders to the hope offered by surrender. For, with the siege banks built, he announced that the effect of the work would not be long delayed and that destruction threatened the city: they should take thought for themselves, so that they might gain safety and the temple too might be rescued from the flames. To make them believe this more readily, many Jews were sent with their hands cut off, lest they be thought to have crossed over to the Romans by voluntary desertion and so be denied belief as faithless men, or be killed by their own people. But in return for his continual admonition they hurled back grievous insults. Caesar's humanity seemed to them more deadly than his cruelty, because the one took away freedom, the other life. They preferred to die free rather than live as slaves. They had devoted their lives to the temple. Immortality would be theirs if, burnt with the temple, they died upon the altars and hearths of their fathers. Titus had accomplished nothing; he had taken away little and given more. Paradise would take the temple's place for them, and they, who had fought for God's temple, would be transferred there, provided only that they did not see Roman triumphs with their own eyes or submit captive necks to the yoke. Their little children, whose parents had been champions of the heavenly mysteries, were being consecrated, not killed. Titus, all the more stirred to rescue at least those who were being held against their will, ordered the engines to be brought up.

Chapter 19

Online text and commentary

[V.19.1] In the army was a son of Antiochus of Commagene, who had come to join in the war, an energetic young man indeed, ready in action but insufficiently provident in counsel. Thinking the Roman army's restraint too slow, and not considering the difficulty of the task, he told Caesar that he wondered why the Romans hesitated to approach the wall. Titus laughed and said, "The task is for us all." At these words the young man rushed forward with those whom he had armed in the Macedonian fashion and who were readier for battle. For he had come supported by others too, but the cohort called the Macedonian was thought to surpass the rest both in bodily strength and in its very stature. As they approached, the battle grew fiercer. Those on the wall fought back more readily, driven by extreme danger and encouraged by success in the present contest. The men below were pierced more often by those above, while not all their missiles reached the higher position. Yet the king's son, eager in his youth, better protected by arms and more closely surrounded by his companions, evaded some blows and repelled others; his comrades' warnings also instructed him how to avoid them, and so he remained free of wounds. But many of the Macedonian cohort were wounded as they fought more obstinately, because they thought it shameful to yield even to nature or fortifications. Thus, their attempt fruitless, they yielded to those above, having learnt that even Macedonian men, if they wished to conquer, needed both Alexander's eagerness for battle and his good fortune in victory. For when he was besieging a city, while the others delayed and the army lingered over the customary engines, he energetically set up ladders, climbed the wall and, putting to flight those there who resisted from the wall, leapt alone into the city. There was no time for him, without a companion, to open the gates as dangers pressed upon him, but his unbounded spirit, eager for victory, sprang upon the enemy. Their ranks gave way, but how many could he strike down alone? Then the enemy poured round him through the various streets of the city. If Alexander pressed upon one side, he gave the others behind him the opportunity to surround him. So the conqueror kept turning his steps to avoid being surrounded by the people. But they had begun to press upon him in close array, and a great mass of weapons bristled over him. His helmet rang with clanging, his shield with the crash of stones. Had the Macedonians not burst in, fearing for their commander, the conqueror of innumerable nations would have been overwhelmed within a small city. It was therefore eagerness that made him leap upon the wall, cast down the enemy, rush alone into the city with a triumphal leap and put peoples to flight by his charge. Yet it was also good fortune, which a commander needs above all, that amid the onrush of so many peoples, so many shots of arrows and so many falling missiles, no place was found for a mortal wound. Valour had therefore brought danger, and eagerness would also have brought death, had good fortune deserted him as he fought. The Macedonians entered after breaking through the gate. Thus rashness found victory, and good fortune turned danger into glory. Our David too, while fighting against giants, was intent upon the enemy and had a killer behind him, but Abessa, the king's companion, forestalled the man as he poised his blow. Yet good fortune saved Alexander, grace the prophet.

Chapter 20

Online text and commentary

[V.20.1] Thus the son of Antiochus, king of Commagene, withdrew, learning that the Roman army's considered restraint arose from caution, not fear, so that they might attack the wall with siege banks and shelters, battering rams and other engines. The banks were being built with the work divided among the units. Four principal banks had risen; one of them, opposite the stronghold named Antonia, had been carried through the middle of the pool they called Strutia. The fifth legion had made this bank thirty cubits high beside John's tomb. Against these works John, the leader of the seditions, dug a tunnel underneath and left the Romans' works hanging above it. The Romans did not know what the Jews had contrived in the hidden tunnel: they had kept its roof suspended by supports of planks and timber placed underneath, so that the whole deception remained concealed. Thus, when an opportunity presented itself, they applied fire. Fed by the sulphur and pitch with which the timber supporting the tunnel had been smeared, it easily consumed all the wood. The burning of the supports was followed by a collapse. The Romans' works therefore suddenly fell with an enormous crash. Dust and smoke filled everything and spread deep darkness, while the hidden cause inspired greater terror. Then, when the other fuel which at first covered it had been consumed, the fire broke out freely and revealed the trick. The Romans' fear of immediate danger diminished, but grievous weariness at their wasted labour took its place. At the same time no small shame tormented them because the Jews taunted them, and their hope of preparing a successful assault thereafter grew cold.

[V.20.2] In another part, two days later, when the wall was already being battered by a ram, Tepthaeus of Galilee and Magassarus, Adiabenus and Agiras seized torches and sprang upon the engines used against the walls. Nothing bolder than these men, nothing more terrible, advanced from the city against the enemy in that war. For, rushing into the midst of the enemy, they neither trembled nor drew back. Instead, as though lingering among their own friends, they thought they must not return, though javelins, arrows and missiles were hurled at them from every side, until they had set fire underneath and kindled the equipment of the siege engines. There was a great rush of the Roman army to extinguish the fire, and shouting and eager effort from the Jews too, devising obstacles for the Romans to prevent help being given. The Romans hurried to withdraw the rams from the flames; the Jews continued to spread fires. Thus, when everything that could burn had caught fire, the flames would have surrounded the Romans had they not acted promptly. For the Jews pressed fiercely, and their success fed their boldness precisely because their efforts in that part had not been fruitless. Indeed, no longer content with the protection of the walls, they advanced beyond them and attacked the Romans' very guard posts. They had even gone forward to overthrow the fort in which the Romans kept watch. Had the glory of the Roman name and the ancient discipline of military service, which deterred men from abandoning such duties through fear of a graver penalty, not resisted the raging attackers, the very conquerors of cities would have yielded their own fortifications. Thus the appearance of the war and the practice of siege were reversed. The Romans defended themselves with catapults and missiles of the swifter

kind, to repel the Jews by the same means with which they themselves had previously been resisted. [10]

[V.20.3] Meanwhile Titus arrived, roused by the shouting and summoned to remedy the situation. The Romans immediately gained strength in Caesar's presence, and shame nourished boldness. Titus cried out that it was a grievous disgrace to the Roman name if, with their roles reversed, they lost their own walls when they had already run out of enemy walls to overthrow. The Jews, distrusting their fortifications, relied on rashness alone; the Romans had only to stand firm, and victory would not fail them. Thus, by encouraging and fighting alike, Titus steadied his men and turned back the Jews, who were not only prepared in spirit for death but rushed forward with the very weight of their bodies to dislodge the Romans. Caesar's danger was no small one amid the confusion of everything, when friend could not be distinguished from enemy. Titus moved in their midst, bold in his youth and the more eager to fight through his desire for glory, so that victory might be completed more quickly, placing concern for safety second to triumph.

Chapter 21

Online text and commentary

[V.21.1] Yet, after the enemy had been driven back, counsel was divided. Some thought that the siege banks should be rebuilt and the engines for attacking the walls repaired. Others thought it wiser to withdraw from the dangers of the siege—there was no timber to rebuild the banks, and the danger was shared with the defeated—and enclose the city with a wall, so that hunger might destroy those deprived of supplies of food.

[V.21.2] This opinion prevailed: they were to be shut in so that they could not make unrestricted sorties and would be worn down all the more both by despair of escape and by lack of food. Thus, with portions of the work divided among the units, the wall rose swiftly, enclosing the city round its entire circuit. Caesar distributed duties among his men so that they would not omit their turns of guard duty at night either. In the first watch he himself undertook the duty of going round each rank of guards; he assigned the second watch to Alexander, and thereafter turns were entrusted to the tribunes in order, according to each man's known diligence. Forts were set into the wall at intervals, and a band of soldiers kept watch in them; the sentries allotted themselves equal periods of sleep and watchfulness. At every moment they went round the wall, each from fort to fort over the distance prescribed for his duty. The night was kept busy by the successive turns of ranks and units.

[V.21.3] The Jews' hope was cut off on every side, and hunger had poured in upon the enclosed people and descended into their very marrow. Everything resounded with the groans of those lamenting the torments of a pitiable death. Every place was filled with the half dead and, if you waited a little, with corpses. Within a moment those whom you had found alive failed. Those too who still breathed, worn away by wasting, bore the image of death, exhausted by hunger and ghastly with decay. They could scarcely even raise their eyes, because their substance, consumed by fasting, gave no vigour to natural movement. Only the human shape remained; its functions had perished. You would see images, but miss their activities. Dry skin clung to dry bones. If a slight movement disclosed a living person,

the stench contradicted it, as did the wasted limbs and a colour so black that you would think it a shadow. Nor could the wretched be supplied with the offices of burial, since everyone was already exhausted and about to die. Even if more recent food gave someone a little strength, the heap of corpses had removed hope and made burial impossible for him. Many died while preparing the funerals of their own people, and by their own deaths left the duties of that final service incomplete. They fell upon the dead whom they had undertaken to cover, so that the man who had come to lighten the burden added himself to it, needing the ministry he was offering another. In the common calamity of all there was no room for grief, except that the authors of such great misery survived, nor time for complaint. Their voices were now free, if they could speak—for what could the dying still fear for themselves?—yet, with their senses already mute, they looked towards the temple, as though demanding from it vengeance for so dreadful an end. The tears of the last offices had dried up because the force of the evil had shut off every affection. The spirit had grown rigid; all feeling stood still in those enduring more than could be wept for. Ground for graves was now lacking, since every place within the city that could serve for burial had been dug up. Some tried to go out in the silence of night between the two walls, the enemy's new one and the city's old one; stealthy acts, dangerous but dutiful, had commended themselves to them. Thus, in place of one, several lay unburied, deprived of the service they had eagerly sought to offer one man as a good gift. But even where the enemy was absent, hunger did its work. The gravedigger often preceded the person to be buried, and was enclosed in the grave he had prepared for another. Suddenly lifeless and fallen while he dug, he claimed the right to his own work as though by deliberate intent. Where ground was lacking, boards were joined so that the bodies of the dead could be enclosed in coffins. Many prepared these for themselves with their own hands, lest this service fail them, and laid themselves in them of their own accord, fearing that death might forestall them and no gravedigger be available. Everything was silent with fear; starvation had taken away the voice. The city was full of death, and there was no wailing at the funeral of the whole city. Yet although the sense of grief had perished, injury did not cease. Even amid such great evils there were men worse than all the rest, who violated even the buried. What shall I say of their feeling no horror when they mocked the dead and tested the edges of their swords on lifeless bodies, while some even tried, by pressing them into the bodies of those still living, whether their weapons were very sharp? Yet this use too was denied to many who asked for it, so that hunger might devour the wretched for graver torments. Nevertheless, vengeance was by no means lacking for the dying. For what they had not been able to do alive, they did in death: they avenged themselves, creating a stench as their avenger, by which to take vengeance upon the brigands. Seeking a remedy for its grievous raging, even those who practised brigandage assumed a certain appearance of devotion and ordered the bodies to be buried at the expense of the public treasury. But when they could not keep pace, they threw the remains of the dead from the wall into the deep precipices.

[V.21.4] Thus Titus, seeing the steep chasms full of corpses and putrid matter floating among torn entrails, groaned deeply and raised his hands to heaven, declaring that this must by no means be ascribed to him: he had wished to grant pardon if surrender took place. He had waited for them to ask for peace and had been prepared to preserve them unharmed if they

laid down war. He therefore ordered siege banks to be raised again, although the woods were no longer close at hand, because all the wooded groves near the city had been cut down. The soldiers carried timber, consoling their labour with the hope of victory. Yet the spirits of the leaders of sedition were not broken. Simon raged and did not yield, unsated by the deaths of so many; and because enemies had begun to run short, he turned upon his comrades.

Chapter 22

Online text and commentary

[V.22.1] Finally, he did not even kill Matthian without torture, though it was through him that he had been received into the city. Matthian had been convicted before him of no crime, but was accused of treachery and suspected because of advice which, diligently and without any deceit, he had thought he should impart to him as a friend for the people's benefit. Simon kept this deeply imprinted in his mind for some time and no longer entrusted himself to him as a friend, but feigned some other ground for his indignation. Thus, when Matthian was accused before him of sharing the Romans' sympathies and agreeing with them, he ordered him to be seized with his sons. He was summoned and given no opportunity for defence; he was condemned to execution before any examination, and his offspring were not exempted but included in his punishment. He begged not for a lease of life but for a swift death, for nature's order to be kept: that he should be killed first, and not await his sons' deaths or survive the funerals of his children, when he himself was about to become a corpse. He did not obtain what family devotion itself demanded, even had he not asked. He asked that this be repaid him for the service of having opened the city to Simon. Guilty indeed towards his fatherland, he had nevertheless secured Simon's admission. He might have owed this punishment to the citizens, but Simon owed him gratitude. Simon was therefore the more cruel, since he neither spared a friend nor remitted the punishment of the man who had sponsored his reception. The father was led to execution with three children, for the fourth had escaped by flight. He was placed in sight of the Roman army as an insult, so that those to whom he had wished to go out might see his punishment. "Let your friends free you," Simon said, "if they can." His sons too were led out. He was not permitted to give his children a last kiss or receive his sons in a final embrace. Yet he was not deprived of the freedom of a father's voice, and accompanied his sons with a pitiable address. "I, my sons, brought the enemy upon you; I brought in the executioners when I asked Simon to enter the city. That day was the cause of this death for us, the cause of this spectacle of murder of kin. I deserved it, I confess, and I do not excuse my fault: in my eagerness to restrain one man, I summoned a worse. Simon was sought for help, but turned to the murder of his fatherland and made earnest counsel into a crime. We stand guilty before our fatherland, we who sought a defender. And rightly indeed we pay the penalty for imprudence, but not for faithlessness. Simon himself acquits us as he kills us: he declares that the city was not given to him by me, but that, out of regard for the fatherland, he was asked to come as quickly as possible to help against John's savagery and bring in the Idumaeans. We thought that, with the two contending against one another, the people would be free. Who would believe me that I offered this to you not out of devotion to you, but because I judged it the more tolerable of the evils, unless you killed me? But why do I speak as though excusing a crime? In my judgement I could certainly have done nothing more grievous than to place you upon our necks. Yet in this I may have been guilty towards my fatherland, not towards you. I may have owed the citizens death, but you owed me gratitude. I may have owed my fatherland the penalty for betrayal because I brought you in: when did I begin to be a traitor to you? If I had thought I should flee, I would have provided for myself, not violated my bond with my fatherland. For who does not flee an enemy, and an enemy within? We thought you a citizen,

but found you an enemy. Sought for help, what did you give in return? What did you promise before, and to what did you afterwards turn? You had entered to drive out an enemy, not to act as one; to prevent killings, not to add to them yourself; to repel brigandage, not to practise it yourself; to aid an innocent people. Why did you turn your weapons against that very people? Before, we were attacked by brigandage; you brought war upon us. Before, fewer people were dragged to death; you brought about a slaughter of peoples. Who betrayed his fatherland, who helped Roman arms more, than the man who extinguished his fatherland's defenders, than the man who deprived it of the defence of so many citizens, than the man who turned his sword from the enemy upon his allies? The enemy outside the walls offered peace; you fought within the walls. He wished to lift the siege; you hastened the city's storming. He prevented fires in our city; you cast flames upon the very roof of the temple. Out of regard for our sacred rites he granted truces; on the very days of worship you were quenching God's altars with the city's final destruction and even with the blood of priests. He had besieged the walls, you the temple. I heap up my crimes: I laid hands upon my fatherland, I armed your fury, I inflicted all these destructions in a kind of old age's delirium. I acknowledge the imprudence of a deranged age. Let us lighten our shame by confession, since we cannot cast off our sin by denying it. Two of us above the rest hastened our fatherland's destruction: I through an error of counsel, you through your intent to murder kin. I therefore pay you, fatherland, the penalties I owe, and for this very reason I thank Simon, because I shall not survive your ashes. Would that I did not survive my children either! But, to add to the bitterness of your crime, Simon, I stand as a spectator of my sons' murder. I deserved it, I confess: I could not bear to see John even in a picture, and I chose you armed. O headlong old age! We feared an image; we sought a tyrant. I was your guarantor, I your petitioner who undertook the embassy. I asked you to be our master; I brought in a killer. Let us therefore watch what we have done: John's wax image terrified us; Simon's brigandage delighted us. Let the procession to the funerals therefore be hastened. Let the executioner come and slaughter the sons before their father's eyes, and the father over his sons' corpses. Let me, a wretched old man, drink in the sight of the executioner's stroke as he poises the savage axe above the necks of my children. Nothing is more dreadful than this spectacle except the man who commands it. Cruel, wicked man, I do what you command; I do it, but unwillingly. Yet I have a consolation in so great a calamity. I suffer whatever is most pitiable, provided that you have ordered it. I willingly undergo whatever is most monstrous, with you directing it. You have filled up the measure of the most savage crimes. Let me at least address my children and say a final farewell to my dear ones. Let there be some place for last kisses, which we share even with wild beasts. Do not forbid the pitiable embrace of nature, which chance can bestow even upon the dead. What you have commanded as punishment will therefore serve me as family devotion. I shall fall upon my dead and, while they are still unburied, cover them as though with a turf of my own body, so that birds may not tear them apart or beasts devour them. With a father's tongue I shall lick up my children's blood and mingle my own with it, lest beasts lick it. Perhaps devotion and nature's own compassion will add this too: that as I die I shall clasp my children in so tight an embrace that you cannot separate us when you wish. Certainly, even if you separate our bodies, you will not separate our souls. But enough, now enough provision of tears have we taken for the journey. Go before me, my sons, and prepare the way for the father who will

follow. If I can catch up, I shall accompany you; and if old age is an impediment there, so that I cannot keep pace with vigorous young men, go ahead to the resting place, to receive your weary father into an enduring lodging. I wished indeed to go first myself and asked for it, but did not obtain it. Yet because you are innocent, better lodgings will be granted you than if I, who summoned Simon, arrived first. That embassy weighs upon me, though it was commissioned by the citizens and undertaken at the people's request. Go before me, therefore, my sons, treading the path above with purer footsteps. The Maccabees too went before their mother, but they to a reward, we to punishment. Yet the devoted mother watched her sons dying and rolling upon the blood of their own; she saw the brothers embracing one another in the bond of nature, and rejoiced in the triumph she was winning over the tyrant. The merits of those suffering were indeed different, but the savagery of the two men giving the orders was the same. Antiochus devised this with Persian monstrosity—for among them are the inventions of new tortures—and you followed him. Yet he kept the mother till last to secure compliance with the royal will; you ordered the father to be kept for the torment of a father's grief. Take comfort, dearest sons: we suffer what the martyrs suffered; Simon has decreed it. What a barbarian persecutor invented, a tyrant has commanded. Let us therefore depart willingly and flee the gatherings of brigands. Indeed, when we have departed to that eternal home, if any come to us and ask how that former people of God fares, what shall we answer them—especially if Jonathan, in the fullness of his age, meets you as younger men, and Saul meets me as a sinner? What, I say, shall we say except that that people—young and beloved Judah, before whom the sea fled, for whom the sun stood still and the Jordan gave way—that people, I say, for whom the wave was passable, the air fruitful, the earth heavenly, which did not take on the form of corruption as this earth of ours does, but assumed the grace of resurrection, now serves the Idumaeans and is subject to Simon, the chief of brigands, and has neither security in slavery itself nor danger with freedom? What do we think those will answer who chose to perish in war rather than survive their fatherland's freedom? What too will Mattathias, the forefather of the Maccabees, answer, who preferred to die resting on the Sabbath in observance of the law rather than live by fighting, if he hears how Simon not only carried out innumerable killings of citizens on the Sabbath, but also caused the Lord's own priests to be slaughtered at new moons and on all the holy days of festal celebration? How deeply Jeconiah will groan when he hears that Simon, who first overturned the city with seditions and violated the temple's ancient religion by slaughtering citizens, though so often called upon to deliver the city from fire by surrendering himself, prefers that everything perish, the city be destroyed, the temple burnt and the whole people killed, rather than lower the height of the dominion he has seized! How deeply, I say, Jeconiah will grieve, though less fortunate in his rule at a time of pressing evils, yet better than his son. For the father preferred to be less fortunate for himself than for his fatherland, miserably indeed, yet dutifully. So he went out of the city and gave himself with his lineage into servitude to the besieging Babylonians, lest he see his fatherland overthrown and God's people captive. But the son, in equal affliction but with unequal devotion, fearing for himself, brought both himself into exile and the city to destruction. Thus this man was unfortunate for his fatherland and not fortunate for himself, losing both his children and his eyes; the other was more prudent, redeeming the citizens' captivity with his own. The outcome finally showed it. The former died older in kingship, the latter younger in servitude,

although the Babylonian king afterwards set a royal throne for him beside himself and granted him precedence in counsel—consolations for a wretched calamity. Indeed, my lot is now more tolerable if I die after my children's murder than if I live, so that you may know how cruel is the man who slaughters sons before their father's eyes. Even his royal gifts are worse than the wounds of family devotion. For either he should not have inflicted such impieties at first, or should not afterwards have put such honours in their place—as though any dignity could be bought by the loss of sons, or the slaughter of one's offspring compensated by the enjoyment of any honour. No dignity, certainly none, lightens so great a grief. No honour heals this wound except death alone, which takes away feeling and removes remembrance. Make haste, then, killer. Yet wait while I see my children, while I look upon them before they die, lest any, perhaps troubled by the immaturity of his age, fear death when he is escaping a more savage tyrant. It is a benefit, my sons, to die so that we do not see our fatherland's captivity. Wounds of the body are more tolerable than wounds of the mind. Now I even look more tolerably upon your deaths, from which I recoiled, so that I may not look upon the common deaths of all, may not see my fatherland's funeral pyre and the whole city the tomb of its own people. Yet he who has died is happier than he who is kept alive. Most high God, may Simon not be laid low with his children among the ranks of the guilty. Let him see in captivity what he has inflicted. Rather, not at all," he said, "for what he could devise, he can endure. Yet I do not pray for these things. Let him consider how grievous is a crime which its victim cannot turn back upon him even in a prayer: if the vengeance is bitter, how savage is the monstrosity of the crime committed! Let him be what he desires, a captive surviving his fatherland, because life's humiliations are worse than death's punishments. But now let there be an end to words. Hasten, executioner, while you bear the sword bloodied with the sons' blood, to strike the father, so that it may cool his wound. This alone is medicine for one about to die; by this alone the sword's stroke and the wound's pain are not felt. Strike in sight of the Roman army, as you have been ordered, so that those who will avenge may watch. Let the enemy have compassion, because an ally has none; let the Romans judge, because Simon kills without judgement. They themselves are witnesses that I was not a traitor to my fatherland but its defender, for they saw me fighting, not deserting. If I could, I would have turned the enemy away from my children, not called the enemy in: would that I had not summoned Simon either!"

[V.22.2] Nor was any end put to such cruelty. The children still lay unburied with their father, and sacrilege too was added to the spectacle of murder of kin. Ananias the priest, born of an illustrious family, was killed, though no one is more illustrious through the splendour of his lineage than through an office of religion. Through the former nobility is sought; with the latter it is not lacking. Let ancient lineage keep its fasces of various honours: priesthoods too have their fasces, which are raised not by shoulders but by character, and lifted high not by the length of rods but by perseverance in labours, the height of faith and the summit of devotion. Aristeus the scribe, himself also of illustrious origin, was killed too, and with them fifteen others of the people who stood out above the rest, though it is innocence, not nobility, that makes a killing unjust.

[V.22.3] Eleven men were also forestalled. They had conspired together, moved by the atrocity of his crimes and each fearing for himself what they saw inflicted upon others,

because Simon was faithless even to friends and hope had been taken away. Hunger ravaged everyone, the Romans were on the very point of breaking in, and Simon was in confusion when it came to providing defence, but raged at his workshop of cruelty. Betrayal was an easy temptation, because Judas, one of them, had been entrusted with guarding a tower. Thus, while he was calling the Romans and promising to hand over the tower, some scorned the offer because the betrayal came so late, while others hesitated because the Jews had often prepared a trick after promising surrender. Simon forestalled them and exacted punishment from all the partners in the conspiracy. Their bodies too were thrown headlong from the wall.

Chapter 23

Online text and commentary

[V.23.1] Josephus's father was kept shut up, and no one was allowed access to him. Josephus therefore urged the Jews to surrender all the more earnestly and had approached the wall all the more rashly, so that he might free his fatherland along with his father. There he was struck on the head by a stone and fell, and would almost have been overwhelmed by missiles thrown from above, had men not been sent at Caesar's command to protect him with shields and snatch him from death. On learning of her son's wound, his mother, terrified by the voices of the taunting brigands, took on both fear of his death and belief in it. She began pitiably to lament that she had been kept alive for these fruits of motherhood: neither to enjoy the service of her living son nor to bury him dead. Her wish had indeed been that he should instead give his mother burial, that she should breathe out her last breath amid his hands, that he should warm her cold limbs as she failed, gather her last breaths with his mouth, close her dying eyes and compose her face while it still breathed. But since she had lost her wish, it would have been a consolation if at least she herself could have attended her dying son's last moments—a pitiable lot indeed, yet a tolerable one—to hold at least the dead body of the man she had wished to survive her. "Yet let me at least look upon my dead from the wall," she said, "even if I may not touch him. Would that no one barred me! But whom should I fear, bereft of so great a son? What should I dread, when it is a benefit for me to die? Would that all turned their missiles upon me and pierced me with the sword! What I could not do alive, let me at least do dead: cover my son's body with my garment. One person's clothing is ample for the burial of two, and perhaps some enemy will take pity and cover the mother's eyes with her son's cloak, and join eyes to eyes, hands to hands and face to face." Thus she rushed to the walls and filled heaven itself with her pitiable lament. Her own people taunted her; the Romans wept. Among allies there was cruelty, among enemies mercy. "Pierce me," she said, "if there is any compassion: I bore the man whom you think you must persecute. I gave him these ill-fated breasts. Kill me if you seek vengeance upon him."

Chapter 24

Online text and commentary

[V.24.1] While she lamented these things, behold, Josephus came forward at his mother's voice and began to weep because he had escaped. It would have been sweet for him to die before his fatherland and to fall for his fatherland while urging counsels of safety. He was no longer contending for his parents' safety: laid low by age, spending the last end of their life in prison, they would be freed if they died. Rather, he was anxious for the altar, for the temple, for the city's still half-ruined walls. He had offered himself to a wound so that he might not see his fatherland overthrown. Moved by this lament, many thought they should cross over to the Romans and, by whatever path they could, withdrew from the ambushes of the brigands and the watches of those guarding the approaches.

[V.24.2] Titus indeed kept his promised mercy towards them, but another, graver affliction befell them. For when a supply of nourishment was given, food which had formerly been useful began to be a burden, and the organs, unaccustomed to the tasks of eating, ceased to perform their service. There was no force in their teeth to chew food, no strength in their air passages; they could not gnaw bread at all. If they swallowed any softer nourishment, they choked, for the passages of their throats were already closed. Their inner parts had grown rigid, the channels for food were blocked, and the veins of the liver which draw in food had dried up. The ability had perished, greed increased; strength had failed, appetite remained. The wretched people rushed upon food and attempted feeble bites like infants. Many failed at the very joy of seeing nourishment, and died amid the food they had longed for, consoled in their misery because they had fulfilled their wish. But it was a tearful procession: more rose from food towards danger than towards health, so that even sustenance harmed them. Their bodies were swollen by unaccustomed food rather than restored, and, distended as though by a kind of dropsy, paid the penalty. If any still had strength to eat, greed, knowing no measure, piled in beyond measure what they could not bear, and, stuffed with sudden food, they burst apart. What was not grievous for people to whom even emotion alone was grievous, so that seeing what they desired harmed them? Unable to bear emotions through prolonged hunger, they were overwhelmed even by natural feeling, and the very movement of joy weighed upon them. It is therefore no wonder if food is dangerous to the exhausted. Indeed, after a two-day fast, if you take anything greedily, it at once remains undigested. Hence many are accustomed to pour liquid milk into their weakened inward parts and, mixing it with honey, temper the imbalance of the humours aggravated by fasting, and nourish the body's weakness with softer food as though it were a kind of infancy. Thus some of the Jews who fled to the Romans were able to escape death, judging the limits of their food with a certain skill, until the flesh, unaccustomed to eating, returned to its normal functions.

[V.24.3] Yet even this did not benefit the wretched, but became the cause of greater destruction. For when many of them emptied their bowels after receiving food, some passed double gold pieces which they had swallowed while preparing their flight, lest their discovery—for the plotters searched everything—expose them not only to loss but also to danger. For anyone except the brigands to possess gold was deemed a crime. Thus afterwards the Jews, in a pitiable spectacle, picked out this gold amid the filth of their bowels. A certain

Syrian discovered it, and from one man the report spread to all. This race of men, headlong in avarice and ready for cunning, would recoil from nothing so atrocious, blush at nothing so shameful, in pursuit of money. The rumour spread from the Syrians to the Arabs, whose avarice was no less and whose savagery was closer to barbarous monstrosity: that the Jews were stuffed with gold. They seized and plundered whomever they encountered arriving, against sacred law, against the terms of surrender, against Caesar's promise. Men whom they were not allowed to kill, they cut open while still alive and with bloody hands disembowelled the hidden parts of the belly. They searched the bowels and sought gold amid their flowing filth, no less shamefully than those whom hunger drove, and with savage cruelty besides. Many bitter things were committed in that war; nothing was more bitter than this one thing. Indeed, in one night nearly two thousand men were cut apart in such wickedness. When the bodies had been divided, Syria counted its gains and Arabia reckoned the profits of its trade, which they had turned to the use of profit and thought merchandise, without the dangers of crossing the sea, by a new invention of cruelty. Even now you may find among this sort of people, and some Egyptians, that they trade in the care of the dead and sell the offices of humanity for commercial gain. The wretched hunger for gold thinks nothing worth pursuing except what is profitable for the present, nothing honourable that is empty of money. A grievous, long since grievous, desire for acquisition has grown into human affections, and human life has become a trade. Life is lived by selling and buying. Thus the vice has crept into everyone, so that the exchange of merchandise is now more tolerable than the exchange of character and souls. The Syrians' avarice infected even the Roman army. For nothing passes more easily to another than the love of money and the desire to possess, especially riches close at hand with which a neighbour inflames one. Nor is there any passion that more effeminates the soul's valour than the desire for riches. Indeed, cunning is accounted praise, poverty a disgrace.

[V.24.4] This hindered the severity of punishment, because countless men were found implicated in such madness. Thus Titus, who had intended to surround the Syrians and Arabs with the army, revoked his decision in view of their multitude. He pardoned the earlier offence and announced a penalty to prevent its repetition; more severe in the harshness of his words, he rebuked his own men because, girded with gold and glittering with silver and costly weapons, they had no shame even before their own arms, dishonouring themselves with such disgrace. He reproached the Syrians and Arabs because, forgetful of the Roman name, they had devised things horrible even to tell. They had come to share in war, not to practise crimes. In the Roman army valour of mind as well as of body was required; not only courage against the enemy but also the standard of discipline was observed, so that a soldier should not be cruel, impious or insolent, nor intent on booty rather than victory. Such things were regarded as grave offences against military service and punished harshly. Even amid arms the laws held force; wars were better waged with faith, which was to be kept even towards enemies. If therefore it was owed even to armed men, how much more to suppliants! They should accordingly beware of such crimes, lest they lose their share both in victory and in safety. He would no longer allow their wicked deeds to be ascribed to the Romans, to whom they were a burden rather than a help. Thus he restrained the Syrians' avarice somewhat, but did not cut it out: they avoided a witness instead of cherishing the command.

Indeed, after first ascertaining whether a Roman soldier happened to be absent, they drew their accursed profit from the entrails of the wretched. Yet success in obtaining booty did not follow in all cases, but only in a few. Their savagery was therefore the more cruel, because very many were killed not only for wealth but even for the hope of gain, though brigands themselves and pirates, who are more savage than brigands, refrain from robbery where they perceive no booty. For it belongs only to barbarous monstrosity to harm for nothing. Even wild beasts pursue prey when they kill. Thus outside there were bitter punishments; within, John was more monstrous.

Chapter 25

Online text and commentary

[V.25.1] Indeed, while the Syrians were doing such things, even if some were turned back when the report became known, others nevertheless did not cease to desert. Among them was Manneus son of Lazarus, who asserted that through the one gate entrusted to him a hundred and fifteen thousand dead had been carried out, with a further eight hundred and eighty corpses, since he had taken charge of this duty. This total counted only those buried at public expense, apart from those whom their own people had buried—and what burial was there except to throw the corpses from the wall? After him, many men of no mean standing fled to Titus and reported that six hundred thousand dead had been counted as they were carried out through the gates. But the number of corpses which could not be carried out because of the countless multitude of the poor, and were packed into very large houses and spaces in various buildings, was beyond reckoning. And the evils still went on growing, though they had already surpassed the limit of all that had gone before. The siege was still savage, the war grievous, though the Jews' spirit now exceeded their strength. Above all, however, famine was more loathsome still: it lay in wait for beasts of burden as they emptied their bowels and searched through old cattle dung, so that what was horrible to see became food for the hungry.

[V.25.2] There was a pitiable mass of unburied bodies, and the ground itself was covered with corpses over a wide circuit. Everything before the walls was filled: a terrible sight, a grievous horror, a pestilential stench which distinguished neither victors nor vanquished, harmful to both alike and a greater hindrance to the Romans, who had to tread upon the fallen remains with bloodstained feet. The land itself lay waste, all the trees having been cut down to be carried away for the necessary use of the soldiers and their engines. For nearly thirteen miles around the city, far and wide the ground was desolate and the soil stripped of growing things. All that tract outside the walls had once offered a pleasing sight, with green groves, gardens breathing the scent of flowers, varied orchards and suburban estates. If anyone saw it afterwards, the stranger groaned, the inhabitant did not recognise it; returning to the place of his birth, though he was there in person, he sought his homeland.

Chapter 26

Online text and commentary

[V.26.1] With the siege banks, shelters and other siege engines rebuilt, the fury of war was renewed, and the efforts of both sides converged, as it were, upon putting the final touch to the work. For the whole contest was at stake: the Romans would have to lift the siege if the banks or rams were burnt, since the lack of woodland left them no means of rebuilding; and the destruction of their homeland threatened the Jews if they yielded in battle, as the battered walls would give way under the renewed blows of the rams.

[V.26.2] The Jews therefore advanced with torches, so fierce that they meant to scatter fire upon the engines and break the siege, as though the Roman army would yield to them. But strength already exhausted by hunger and shattered fortunes denied them their former successes. Their resources had failed; their boldness remained. The Romans, by contrast, felt all the greater shame at the prospect of having victory snatched from their hands by men drawing their last breath from hunger. Battle was therefore joined, and the leaders of the sedition, unequal to the fighting, were driven back and fled to the protection of the walls. But when John, attentive to his last means of defence, saw that the unstable walls would yield to repeated blows, he built an inner wall in the shape of the letter C. On the next day, therefore, a section of wall was torn apart, and the crash of the falling structure and the Roman army's shout rang out together, as though the collapse of the wall had accomplished the city's destruction. But when the sound of the cry over the city's fall echoed back, the situation was reversed: the unexpected sight of the new wall extinguished the Romans' joy, and the Jews' boldness took its place because the danger was postponed.

[V.26.3] Then Caesar began to exhort the army to regard that new wall as something to attack without any hesitation: its recent construction showed it to be weak and easily demolished. They need only dare to advance with courage; the fragments of the wall would afford a means of ascent, placing the Roman combatants on a level with the Jews fighting from above. And because he saw them hesitate at the difficulty of the task, he gathered the strongest men around him and fired them for battle with this speech.

Chapter 27

Online text and commentary

[V.27.1] “No one is unaware, my bravest fellow soldiers, that the end of every undertaking involves more trouble than its beginning, because completing a task once undertaken demands greater labour. A ship runs freely over the whole sea: even if the winds do not always blow from astern, the helmsman nevertheless sets the curves of the sails at an angle, and the sea is cleft without resistance. But when the harbour is reached, a favourable balance of breezes is necessary, and the ships’ entrance is confined within narrow bounds. Concern over danger is therefore greater where hope is near. For builders too, the beginnings of the foundations lie level, but the work on lofty roofs is arduous. And often, at the very point of finishing the work, the pitiable craftsman is cheated of his reward in wages, either crushed by the fall of the roof or betrayed by an unsteady footing, so that he falls to the ground below. What shall I say of the farmer, for whom preparations for harvest are more laborious than for sowing, and for the vintage than for pruning, and who must always fear greater dangers when the fruits are ripe? It is therefore nothing new if danger still awaits you in the very harbour where your course is to end, because we must climb by narrower paths to Antonia, so that, driving the adversaries from there, occupying the higher ground and stationed above the enemies’ heads, we may in a sense cut off their very breath. But this seems difficult to you, fellow soldiers. As though we had come together for play, not for war, in which men must either conquer or die! You should therefore have made your excuses then, when you were coming to battle to avenge the disaster of the Roman army and wash away the disgrace of a dishonoured soldiery. If in Nero’s time you thought the injury to the Roman name must be avenged, what should you wish to do with Vespasian as emperor? Let us wash away the stain of the previous reign, lest it cling to ours: Nero was expected to remove it through Vespasian, but Vespasian will have transferred it to himself through Titus unless we conquer. My father left us only the completion of victory to accomplish. Where are we retreating, disgraced and unavenged, abandoning victory after so much labour has been poured out in vain, as though deserting military service were not a lesser crime than deserting victory? For the former is an act of fear, the latter of betrayal. But you think it dangerous to descend upon the enemy and make the wall resound with arms, as though nature herself demanded womanly deeds from us, not manly ones—nature who poured the breath of life into us for this very reason, that we might gladly pour it out for glory. To what, then, but the greatest deeds should a warrior be exhorted by his commander? For exhortation to an ordinary task brings shame not only upon those addressed but also upon those addressing them, by demanding what is owed of one’s own accord. That is what a soldier ought to offer of himself. And yet what immoderate demand do I make of you? Is it not better to die through valour than to live for disgrace? A Jew has often charged into the midst of the Roman lines and fearlessly flung himself into the enemy’s formations, not in hope of victory but to give proof of courage and display glory. You, whom no one on land or sea has yet resisted with impunity, for whom it is nothing new to conquer and a crime not to have conquered, with such support from heaven for victory—are you not ashamed that you have not even once rushed forward against the enemy, but waste your leisure under arms and stand ready for battle with idle minds, waiting for hunger to fight for us, so that, laid low

by their own starvation rather than our swords, they may turn our triumphs into a reproach at which we must blush? Are you not ashamed, I say, stout fellow soldiers, conquerors of all nations, to hope for nothing from arms, nothing from strength, but only from the siege, and to wait until the enemy wastes away with disease and dies in his own bed? And what victory can there be without war? Everything is filled with corpses; hideous remains lie there, the bloodless relics of the dead, apart from those whom they themselves slaughtered among themselves with their own hands. Why do we fear those whom hunger, fire, brigandage and sedition have already destroyed? Why do we forsake divine benefits? For by whose will but God's have they been dashed against their own weapons, deprived also of supplies of food, with no end to their domestic fury? I fear that we may now seem rebels against religion too, since we preserve for so long men faithless to both our religion and their own. But let it be so: let the war be savage and fearful. For why should I soothe you with the ease of the war? Let victory be uncertain and danger certain. Am I not speaking to men who know by human understanding that the courage of all living creatures is readier in danger than in less intense struggles? Wild beasts themselves, when they see that armed men have surrounded them, rush at them with greater force to open a way for themselves by violence. And a serpent shaken out of its hiding place pours forth more deadly venom. There are even creatures harmless by nature that are nevertheless strong enough to do harm when they themselves are in danger. Deer have their own weapons if anyone confronts them, and repel death with their horns; little bees, when hurt, have their own bites. But why speak of warriors before Romans, when that Leonidas, born in Sparta, about to fight against the countless army of the Persians, said, 'Let us dine on earth, for we shall sup in the underworld'? These words had such power among the Greeks that no one withdrew, not only from those three hundred Spartan men whom he himself commanded—apart from one, whom no one afterwards welcomed as a survivor—but also from the others who had gone out to fight with them, except those whom Leonidas rejected as unworthy of so great a battle. What shall I say of entire Roman legions? Cato, champion of Roman eloquence and an honest interpreter of truth, asserted that they went joyfully into a battle from which they did not think they would return, and that all gladly fell rather than change their resolve. Blessed were they, none of whom announced the enemy's victory to his own people by fleeing. Of the three hundred Spartans, however, at least one escaped, and they fought in a narrow place to avoid being surrounded. Of the Roman legions, no one chose the inheritance of life, but all that of death. You are their descendants, if by contempt for dangers, as glorious offspring, you do not disown your lineage of valour. For what brave man does not know that he is mortal and that an end to life has been appointed for all? How much better, then, to spend for the fatherland what you owe to nature, and exchange necessity for glory, neither living a life subject to the sighs of panting old age nor dreading the hazards of burning disease, when those brought low by age suffer daily weariness, while the souls of those who waste away in illness, their strength and senses failing together, are—as many hold—consigned to the grave along with the body! But no one doubts that the souls of warriors and the stoutest men, who have devoted themselves to death for their fatherland, their children and their religion, released by the sword from the bonds of this body, are received by that pure ethereal element, shining with the light of the stars, into heavenly dwellings, as guests, as it were, in the rest above. On earth too, some mark of favour or injury remains: oblivion hides those wasted by

illness, while glory follows those who bear their breast against the enemy, if death meets them. To these rewards I invite you, fellow soldiers: let us go against the enemy whom we hold shut in, and climb onto the wall over the ruins of the stronger wall, which provide us with a kind of siege bank and reach the level of the lower wall. Whoever bears before him the banner of valour and climbs onto the wall first, or second, or third, or as a companion to many, will by no means depart without receiving a rich gift from me, although there is no greater reward than the glory of courage, which is also very often safer. For as soon as any man most confident in spirit and strength has climbed up, those who were resisting will flee, or withdraw to lower ground, or hide in their lurking places. Thus what we now seek at the greatest peril, stationed below, will follow without great labour: the enemy will be cast down and the war brought to an end."

Chapter 28

Online text and commentary

[V.28.1] Titus had scarcely finished speaking when Sabinus, a distinguished warrior among the men of Syria, offered himself. Standing before Caesar, he said that he obeyed his commands and was ready for the ascent. He wished for success so that he might please Caesar. If good fortune deserted him, nothing would happen to him contrary to his expectation, since by his own judgement he had chosen to die for Caesar. Having said this, he extended his left arm and raised his shield above his head; brandishing his sword in his right hand, he rose to arms with such tremendous vigour that anyone would have failed to recognise the man whom, a little before, he had thought contemptible for his slight physique, on suddenly seeing him advance against the enemy and stretch himself up, threatening foes and walls alike, as though already towering above them he fought against men beneath him and shook the wall with his hand. Eleven men followed him, eager to imitate him but unequal to keeping up with him. The Jews resisted from the wall with javelins, stones and arrows, and whatever weapon each man's hand found was thrown down upon Sabinus. But he, undaunted, ran swiftly up the bank of rubble and, taking his stand on its summit, drove the enemy back, as each man nearest him feared the danger. But as he raised himself and balanced his weight onto the wall, intent upon the enemy and confident of victory, he slipped and fell upon his face with a great crash. At this the Jews turned back and began to press the fallen man with missiles. Resting on his knee and protecting himself with his shield, he defended himself from wounds as long as he could, and did not leave unhurt anyone whom he found nearby. At last, however, pierced with wounds, he gave up his life before he gave up the fight, and was neither driven from his footing nor thrown from the wall until he was dead. Three others were also killed. The remaining eight, though half-dead, were rescued from destruction by the others.

Chapter 29

Online text and commentary

[V.29.1] Yet Sabinus's death did not terrify the rest, but spurred them on. For twenty Roman men serving on watch wished to make up by the achievement of a deed for having been forestalled by Sabinus's zeal. They formed a great and memorable plan: they would call to them the standard-bearer of the fifth legion, two cavalrymen whom they thought especially ready, and one trumpeter, and at the fifth hour of the night silently climb the banks of ruined wall to the heights, kill the guards and occupy the wall of Antonia. When this was done, the trumpet rang out more terribly than usual, so that the Jews, weary with toil and overcome by sleep, were suddenly thrown into confusion, believing that everything was filled with enemies. They therefore began to flee before the truth of the matter was known. For the hazards of danger and the darkness of the night did not allow their numbers to be ascertained. On hearing the blast of the trumpet, Caesar ordered the army to arm itself; he himself with chosen men was the first to climb onto the wall, to help his own men and hinder the enemy. Day broke, and already Caesar, visible on the wall, was exhorting his men. Some were raised onto the wall by their comrades' hands; others entered the city through the tunnel which John had dug to undermine the Roman siege banks. The faithless men's own faithlessness was turned to their destruction. Cut off on every side, they withdrew into the temple. The Romans wished to burst in there too, but were checked by the narrow space and repelled by arms. A fierce battle took place in the vestibule, and the fighting was now hand to hand with swords, no longer with javelins or arrows: hand dealt wounds, sword fell upon sword, blow upon blow. The assailant was drenched in the blood of the slain, so that he rather seemed to have been struck. The fury of war ruled in the temple itself. The pavements swam with blood. The groans of the dying and the shouts of the victors resounded without order or measure. The hope of finishing the contest had fired the Romans; the final destruction of their homeland had stripped the Jews of fear of death. The former fed their valour on the resources of glory; the latter, despairing of safety, poured out their whole provision of valour and kept nothing in reserve.

Chapter 30

Online text and commentary

[V.30.1] Julian too attempted a most glorious deed. He was a centurion, a man mighty in arms, who had come from the province of Bithynia but was accustomed to Roman discipline, practised in war and renowned for his honourable military service. As he stood beside Caesar, he saw the Romans turned back, since the Jews were superior in numbers and the Romans present were still fewer. Suddenly he rushed out of Antonia and turned back the pursuers. They did not dare to resist the very appearance of this outstanding man and the proud authority of a valour beyond human form, so that Caesar himself marvelled. O the varied and uncertain game of war, as it were, which, like a throw of dice, so often plays with unforeseen outcomes by chance rather than valour, supplying new endings! For here too there are throws, not indeed of dice but of arrows and many other weapons, and of stones, by which the victor is often laid low by another's blow; and while he seizes another's spoils, he is himself despoiled. So it was with this Julian, who pressed upon the enemies' backs, killing some and penning them within an enclosure. Made less cautious by his very eagerness, he wore shoes studded with nails, as soldiers do, and did not consider that the ground was paved with polished stone and required caution. Instead, as though fighting in an open field, he slipped heedlessly and made a tremendous crash as he fell; nor could he rise, stretched upon the slippery ground. Yet, supporting himself on his knee, he repelled the returning enemy, killing those who approached and avoiding as far as he could those who threw missiles. But wearied and overwhelmed by their very numbers, alone though he was, since no one dared to enter so great a danger, he nevertheless fell fighting stoutly, neither contemptible nor unavenged. Certainly, in my judgement, he did not deserve such an end, that a man's valour so great should be betrayed in this way. But prudence has very great power in war: ever keen and discerning, it foresees the hazards of uncertainty. Alone he rushed out of Antonia, alone he charged into the enemy's ranks, alone he plunged into the fighting, alone he compelled the Jews to return into the temple. I fear that this was what harmed him most, because those faithless to God should have been driven out of the temple. Thus, once fallen, he found no remedy. Titus watched him winning with joy, in danger with immense grief; he wished to help him, but was far away. His men held him back, because in a soldier one man's fate is at stake, in a commander everyone's. The example showed the danger and taught Caesar what to avoid rather than imitate. Indeed, his comrades were so dismayed and his adversaries so elated that even Julian's body came into the enemies' possession, as though they still feared him even dead if he were returned to the Romans. Once Julian was killed, the rest yielded easily. For the troops had not yet come up, and the occasion of his death had increased the Jews' valour. Most ready in that battle to repel the Romans were Alexas and Gyptheus, John's fellow conspirators, who were champions of his faction, and from Simon's side Melchius and Jacob, the commander of the Idumaeans, distinguished warriors. Simon and Judas, sons of Ari, men of the third faction, likewise exerted themselves. With their forces joined, they drove the Romans back and shut them within Antonia.

Chapter 31

Online text and commentary

[V.31.1] Titus, on the other hand, considered the narrow confines of Antonia a hindrance rather than a defence, and ordered its fortification to be demolished to the foundations, so that a path to the enemy might be opened for those about to engage. Learning that the celebration of the Jews' festival days was approaching, he ordered Josephus to interpret in Hebrew what he himself would say. He asked what cursed reasoning could persuade John to provoke the Romans to destroy the temple. If he was confident in his valour, he should choose another place to fight and advance there, provided he spared the city, did not defile the temple and did not prevent the sacrifices of the festival days. He should leave behind those whom he judged fit for the sacrificial ministries and give proof of his courage wherever he wished outside the city and temple: Caesar's soldiers would not fail to meet him. Against his will, Caesar was being forced to overthrow the whole city, whose remains he wished to preserve, if John would allow it. Torches threatened the temple, not because the Romans were hurrying to burn it, but to draw the instigators of war out of it. If they believed themselves defeated, they should surrender; or, if they hoped to be victorious, they should not withdraw within the enclosures but defend themselves in the open field, so that the temple might be rescued from the flames already licking it and be free for rites of purification.

[V.31.2] As Josephus interpreted this to the Jews, the silent crowd approved what they heard in silence, but feared to disclose their opinion. John replied that there was no more excellent sacrifice to God than for men consecrated to God to lay down their lives for their altars, their hearths and their temple. Therefore, if need be, he would gladly fall for freedom; nevertheless, he hoped that the city of God could not suffer destruction. At this Titus said: "Rightly, then, do you keep the city pure for God and the sanctuary undefiled by killing citizens, slaying the innocent and destroying priests! The divine is not appeased by such outrages, but offended. You have deprived your God of the worship of his sacrifices. If someone denied you food, John, you would seek him out; your God's victims are not sacrificed to him, his gifts are not rendered, men are slaughtered, and do you still think that God assists you? Indeed, so the deeds teach, so the mass of the slain and the heaps of your calamities bear witness. Who could see these things without groaning? Nor would I blame you for fighting for your homeland if I did not wish to spare it, if I did not wish to preserve your homeland or your temple. For Carthage was not worthy of restoration—there is no Hebrew Hannibal to fear, such as the one who had subdued half the Roman world—and yet even Carthage was restored, though it had sustained its citizens' rebellious spirits until its own destruction. On my faith I pledge to you that all these things will be safe; I promise you pardon and survival, not as a reward for crime but as a ransom for the city, that I may buy from you the preservation of buildings about to perish. Cease, I warn you, to disturb the purpose of Roman devotion by your brigandage. Jerusalem will not be feared so greatly as to be destroyed, when Antioch, stronger in resources, was preserved. Certainly your Jeconiah trusted even the Persians and left the city, entrusting himself and his closest kin to barbarian fury lest the city be overthrown on his account. You celebrate his memory, as your own

people affirm; Josephus is here to speak for him and to witness the celebration with which you honour the man who offered himself to captivity for his homeland. Even the barbarian Persian preserved him; I, however, pledge you impunity. Certainly Josephus too took up arms against the Romans: trust the promise of which we have already given an example. We give you Josephus as surety for our pledge—or rather, we have already given him, since we preserved him. Let him speak in your ancestral tongue and bind himself by the rite you customarily use. I am not ashamed to seek a surety and give a guarantor, lest I show myself a destroyer when I wish to spare." At this Josephus wept, entreated John, lamented the condition of his homeland, implored him in tearful speech and appealed to him as a fellow citizen, though more obstinate than the rest. He testified that by the grace of almighty God John would be safe with his people, if only he ceased to rouse the Roman soldiery to overthrow the city. When he could not bend him, he said: "It is no wonder, John, that you persist until your homeland's destruction, since divine protection has already abandoned it. But it is a wonder that you do not believe it will perish, when you have read the prophetic books in which the destruction of our homeland was announced to us and its rebuilt edifices foretold to be destroyed again by the Roman army. For what else does Daniel cry out? He prophesied not what had already happened, but what was to come. What is the abomination of desolation which he proclaimed would come with the arrival of the Romans, if not this which now threatens us? What is that oracle, often recalled by our people and pronounced by the highest God, that the city would perish to its foundations when a fellow tribesman was killed by the hands of citizens, if not what we now see fulfilled? And perhaps, because it is no longer pleasing that the temple should be defended, stained as it is with forbidden blood, it is pleasing that it should be cleansed by fire." [11]

Chapter 32

Online text and commentary

[V.32.1] Josephus finished speaking, but John was moved by no tears and bent by no promises. God had long been pressing upon their faithless minds, ever since they had stained themselves with the impious murder of kin by crucifying Christ Jesus. This is he whose death is the Jews' destruction, born of Mary, who came to his own and his own did not receive him. For when did the Jews not kill their own people? Did they not kill the son of their own Saul? Naboth the prophet was certainly stoned by his own people. Jezebel was Jewish, she who gave the command to the Jewish elders who carried it out; Ahab was Jewish, he who became the cause of Naboth's death. How many other citizens were killed by citizens! And yet the city long remained intact, though destroyed by the Babylonians after countless years, but restored afterwards. This is the final destruction, after which the temple cannot be restored, because by their crimes they have turned away the guardian of the temple, the arbiter of its restoration.

Chapter 33

Online text

[V.33.1] Such feeling on Caesar's part and his repeated address changed the minds of some, who were able to slip away and join the Romans. The rest were held back by fear of the danger threatened by the brigands; perhaps there was also a certain inclination of their minds that prevented more from being rescued from the coming destruction. Caesar welcomed those who fled to him with goodwill, since among them were priestly men with their sons and others of more distinguished families. Promising them safety for their lives and the right to their possessions, he sent them to the city called Gophna, lest any offence arise from differing rites and diversity of worship. Those who remained in the city resisting turned this into evidence of murder, alleging that they had been killed, either because such a suspicion had arisen or because someone had fabricated it deceitfully to prevent more from slipping away.

[V.33.2] On learning this, Titus recalled them and ordered them to go round near the walls with Josephus, so that they might be recognised by their own people. With tears and great groaning they lamented not their own misfortunes but the destruction of their homeland and temple, and begged their fellow citizens to trust Caesar's faith and rescue the temple from the fire prepared for it. Nothing contrary to the law had been commanded of them, nothing had been taken from their freedom. The others should yield and themselves experience the clemency of the Romans, whose unconquerable valour they had experienced.

Chapter 34

Online text and commentary

[V.34.1] While they were making these pitiable lamentations, they were driven away by their own people, and war blazed up. The Jews rushed forward and rashly burst into the very inner sanctuaries; they occupied every recess, every place inaccessible to men who had no share in the sacred rites. The Romans too prepared for battle. The prohibitions of the fathers were violated through the necessity of war, yet with greater reverence on the Romans' part than on that of their own people. The Gentiles looked upon the temple with fear; the Jews approached it with fury and recklessness, and, with their hands wet with human blood, touched the very altars.

[V.34.2] Titus, however, still holding to his purpose, addressed John and declared that he was being drawn against his will to the destruction of the city and temple. He said to him: "What do those letters engraved before the temple doors mean, John? Do they not signify that no one unless consecrated should approach the temple? Why those barriers before the temple? Are they not there to prevent everyone from looking freely within, so that knowledge of the secrets is open only to the initiated, and the view is free to those whose entry is lawful? You exclude foreigners from the sight, yet force their approach. You write that no stranger is to enter, no foreigner to come within, yet you shed foreign blood inside the temple and stain your altars with the blood of strangers and citizens alike. I testify that your violation of what is yours comes from your own transgression, not our attack. I, a stranger, do not demand it;

rather, I solemnly declare that if you are willing to leave, the temple will be safe, no Roman will lay hostile hands upon it, and none of your sacrifices will be violated. I shall preserve the temple for you, even if you are unwilling. For the observance of sacred rites differs, but buildings serve a common use. What belonged to worship has departed from you; what belongs to the building has remained for the victors."

Chapter 35

Online text and commentary

[V.35.1] When Caesar saw that not even these words, conveyed through Josephus, could recall the faction leaders—for they now thought that so frequent an appeal to desist showed lack of confidence rather than devotion—he returned unwillingly to the necessity of battle. He ordered the Romans to be ready, but because the narrow space impeded so great a multitude, he assigned a thousand warriors each to thirty chosen men. For the dense obstructions of the buildings would not admit the whole army. He too wished to descend with them, but his men held him back, lest he expose himself to danger in the confined space, often at night as well, when it was necessary to counter the guile of those lying in ambush. He would achieve more by being present as a spectator of the battle, since each man would think he must fight more readily when he was to fight under Caesar's eyes. For everything being done around the temple could be seen from above, from Antonia's position, as in a theatre. Won over to this view, Caesar entrusted the task to Cerealis: he was to fall upon the Jews posted around the temple at the ninth hour of the night. He exhorted the rest to press eagerly into the contest; he too would not fail to recognise the combatants' deserts, as from above he judged the battle, a witness to each man's cowardice or an arbiter of his valour.

[V.35.2] Cerealis arrived promptly at the appointed time, but found the guards awake. Battle was joined, for those stationed inside the temple were not sleeping either, and when the men on watch engaged, the rest readily prepared for war. The Romans pressed forward in a dense formation. The Jews, relying upon enclosures and narrow passages to avoid being surrounded, ran in different directions, so that they were more often endangered by their own men, since they were not recognised in the darkness and were frequently run through by their comrades, who thought them enemies. For who could distinguish at night whether he met a comrade or an enemy, when questioning took too long, caution was useful and striking first prudent? And an error that wounded another was a more tolerable consequence of a mistake than neglecting one's own danger where an enemy was feared. Thus throughout the night the Jews laboured under a twofold peril, either what the enemy inflicted or what a comrade did in error; nor were they afflicted with less destruction by day. At night there was more danger from their own men; by day the Romans attacked more fiercely, urged on, even in silence, by Titus, who watched the whole contest. They fought fiercely until the fifth hour, the Jews too battling stoutly, so that neither side yielded its ground.

Chapter 36

Online text

[V.36.1] While they fought these battles with one another, everything with which Herod had fortified the stronghold called Antonia was brought down to the very foundations in the space of seven days. The road leading to the temple was made wider, so that it would not only allow soldiers to run along it, but also provide as much space as was needed for setting up defences and heaping up siege banks, from which even the highest roofs of the temple could be struck. While the Romans were busily occupied with this, the Jews, pressed by unbearable hunger, began to lie in wait for the Romans' beasts of burden. If anyone had let a warhorse loose to graze, or a mule needed to ease the burden of transport, they seized it and drove it away. Their food was obtained not only at the Romans' expense but also to the disgrace of their military service. Caesar at once put an end to the reproach of such negligence by prescribing death as its penalty. Yet he did not check the guile of their obstinacy.

[V.36.2] For, cut off from the food which this kind of plunder supplied to the starving, they sought help from vegetation and devised a plan to destroy the wall which Titus had drawn around the city boundary. This would give them greater freedom to range about and seek tree roots and fodder, for the circuit of the wall had shut them in like a prison, and they now had nothing with which to relieve their hunger. They therefore crept out in a sudden sortie and fell upon the men posted before the Mount of Olives. These did not fail in their assigned duty, but summoned others from the remaining fortified camps or towers with a trumpet blast to join the battle. A fierce struggle began at the outset, as shame drove the one side and hunger the other with a cruel and compelling command. But as the Romans converged, the Jews were repelled and driven back towards their city walls. Then one of the cavalry troop—his name was Pedanius—spurred his horse, stretched out his right hand and, leaning down a little, lifted up one of the fleeing Jews. He carried him captive to Caesar and, victorious with his glorious plunder, cast him down alive at Caesar's feet, as an eagle does a little hare or a hawk a coot. Titus was greatly delighted by this and dismissed him with praise and honour.

Chapter 37

Online text and commentary

[V.37.1] The porticoes surrounding the temple were already burning. Everywhere there was grief, everywhere death; outside there was war, within there was fire as well as war. Yet the Jews were not broken in spirit. They thought that whatever they did without guile or insolence was lost to vengeance. Since they could no longer do otherwise, they provoked the Romans to hasten their destruction.

[V.37.2] A certain Jonathan, small in body and more deserving of contempt, challenged the Romans beside John's tomb, inviting anyone who wished to decide the matter with him in single combat. Some despised the man's small stature; others scorned to fight someone whom they would shortly have as a captive. Others reflected that fighting men who, at the

last extremity of survival, sought vengeance through mere rashness rather than any courage was a dangerous contest: there would be no glory in defeating a man already close to destruction, and very great disgrace if some mishap marred the common victory. This most insolent man vaunted himself and charged the victors with fear, pouring out abuse: the Romans relied on others' help, not on their own strength, and the Jews had been afflicted by domestic seditions, not by an enemy's warfare. Among the Roman soldiers was a man named Pudens. Stung by these empty insults, he rashly attended to his shame and neglected his safety. Made incautious by his very indignation, he exposed himself to a wound and, struck down to the ground, brought shame upon his comrades and left Jonathan cause both for exultation and for death. For Jonathan, delighted by the success of the contest and making a show of triumph, danced and exulted, brandishing his shield and sword in sport. He thus roused the centurion Priscus to wound him. Priscus could not endure his proud and swollen boasts and pierced him with an arrow as victory made him heedless. Laid low by this, Jonathan taught that no one should exult senselessly in battle, where the condition of victor and vanquished is uncertain until the war is ended.

Chapter 38

Online text and commentary

[V.38.1] But within the city, when they saw the enemy inside the walls, towering on the highest siege banks and threatening all the fortifications, they feared that the danger would advance inwards like a wound into the body. They cut through the northern portico at the point where it joined Antonia, lest the enemy ascend by it to the upper parts of the temple or, from above, press upon those stationed below. They cut down everything nearby, lest fires ravaging the buildings beside the temple consume the temple itself, and burned the parts they had cut off. Thus they were the first to begin what they feared from the enemy.

[V.38.2] They also prepared Solomon's portico for a deception, filling the interior of its roof with pitch and bitumen hidden within the vault of the upper roof. Pretending that they wished to defend it and repeatedly assailing the enemy, they drew the Romans on and stirred them up against themselves. The Romans brought up ladders and made for the top of the portico. The Jews gradually gave ground so that more Romans would climb up. The Romans competed in clambering up; the more prudent, however, suspected a trick and took care, while the multitude, intent on victory, pressed ahead. When the moment seemed ripe for the deception, with very many men caught as though in nets, fire was put to the inner vaults. Fed by pitch, bitumen and the other fuel, it spread through the whole portico. Flames surrounded the victorious Romans, leaving them neither the means to stand their ground nor a way to flee. They could not discover what to do. Titus watched his men in peril, angry indeed that they had climbed up without orders, but pitying them because they were perishing as victors. Many flung themselves down; yet, after escaping the fire, they died with broken legs and shattered bodies. It was more wretched still if they survived crippled. Caesar wished to help but could not. Nevertheless he urged those nearby and cried out that they should come to their comrades' aid. They took these cries and this grief of Caesar as their final consolation. This was provision for their journey as they died; consoled by it as by a lofty tomb, they hastened to death, because they would be laid to rest in Caesar's inward

parts. The lives of those whose glory lived on would not perish: they were dying for Caesar and leaving triumph as their inheritance. Thus some were surrounded by the fires, others overtaken by them; nor was the enemy far away, ready to strike anyone fleeing the flames.

Chapter 39

Online text and commentary

[V.39.1] Longus, however, a man of outstanding valour, was urged by the Jews to entrust himself to them, with a promise of safety. He preferred to run himself through with his sword rather than stain the courage of his Roman character with disgrace. Artorius, for his part, very cunningly called loudly to Lucius, saying: "You will be my heir if you catch me as I fall." The pitiable man ran beneath him as he fell and transferred to himself the death of the man who was about to die. Truly a testament of war, written not in ink but in blood, not on paper but on a sword's point, which sent the heir ahead! A great ingenuity indeed, to find a willing substitute in death. The portico was therefore burned as far as the tower which John, when he was waging war against Simon, had built above the gates of the royal house that King Hezekiah had constructed for his own dwelling. The Jews themselves demolished the remaining part of it. On the following day the Romans also burned the whole northern portico as far as the eastern portico. For, by laying hands upon their own buildings, they taught the Romans not to spare those of others.

[V.39.2] The face of the temple was now bare, and the people's hunger was savage. They lay in wait for one another, each seeking to snatch food from another. Wherever food was suspected, war was fought among members of the same household for it. Those most dearly loved were killed; the dead were searched, lest food be hidden within their clothing. Some were thought to be pretending to be dead, so that they would not be suspected, as living people, of possessing any food. But even the living could neither discharge the functions of life nor feign death. Instead, with mouths open like rabid dogs, catching breaths of air, they wandered here and there with want as their guide. Often, too, they returned like drunken people to the same dwellings, to search again the places they had left empty. When they found no other relief for their hunger, they stripped the leather from shields, so that what did not protect them might feed them. They chewed footwear, unashamed to take into their mouths and lick with their tongues what had been removed from their feet. Old straw, too, which had long ago been thrown away, was sought with no slight eagerness; anyone who found some exchanged it for a great price.

Chapter 40

Online text and commentary

[V.40.1] How shall I begin to tell of Mary's deed, at which the mind of any barbarous and impious person would shudder? She was one of the wealthy women of the region of Peraea, which lies beyond the Jordan. When the terror of war arose, she had withdrawn with the others into the city of Jerusalem to be safer. She had also brought her wealth there, and the faction leaders competed in seizing it. Even any food she had bought was torn from her hands. The villains harried her; she uttered dreadful curses and wished to die, but could find no one to strike her down. They preferred to torment her longer and afflict her more grievously rather than destroy her quickly. They thought that as long as she lived there would be plunder. Everything had now failed, and, accustomed to delicacies, she could not soften coarse straw or hard hides. Savage hunger poured into her innermost marrow, embittered her humours and agitated her mind. The woman had a little infant whom she had borne. Roused by his crying, seeing herself and her little one wasting away together, overcome by such horrors and unequal to so dreadful a calamity, she lost her affection. Forgetting the practice of a mother's natural devotion, she swallowed her grief and took on fury. Turning towards the little one, now forgetful of being a mother and raging in mind, she spoke thus: "What shall I do for you, little one, what shall I do for you? Everything around you is savage: war, hunger, fires, brigands, ruins. To whom shall I entrust you as I die, or to whom shall I leave you, so tiny? I had hoped that, if you grew up, you would feed me, your mother, or bury me when I died; or at least that, if you died before me, I would enclose you in a precious tomb with my own hands. What shall I do in my misery? I see no means of life for you or me. Everything has been torn from us; for whom shall I preserve you? Or in what tomb shall I lay you, so that you are not prey for dogs, birds or wild beasts? Everything, I say, has been torn from us. Yet even so, my sweet one, you can feed your mother; your hands are fit for food. O your entrails, sweet to me, your delightful limbs, before hunger consumes you altogether, give back to your mother what you received; return to that natural hiding place. In the dwelling where you took on breath, a tomb is being prepared for you when dead. I myself shall embrace the one I bore, I myself shall cover him with kisses. Let the force of necessity have what the impatience of love has, so that I myself may devour my own limbs with bites that are not feigned but pressed home. Be food, then, for me, madness for the brigands and a tale for the living, the one thing still lacking to our calamities. What would you do, my son, if you too had a son? We have done what belonged to devotion; let us do what hunger urges. Yet your case is better, with some appearance of devotion, since it is more bearable that you should give your mother food from your entrails than that your mother can either kill or devour you." Saying this, she turned her face away and plunged in the sword. Cutting her son into pieces, she set him on the fire, ate part and covered part, lest anyone come upon her.

[V.40.2] But the smell of the roasting reached the leaders of the sedition. At once, following the smell, they entered the woman's lodging and threatened her with death because she had dared to eat while they were fasting and to exclude them from the food she had found. But she said: "I have kept your portion for you; I have not been greedy or inhuman. Do not be

angry: you too have something to eat. I have prepared food for you from my own entrails. Sit down quickly; I shall set the table. You will have cause to marvel at my service and to judge that you have never found such affection in any woman, who would not deprive you even of the pleasure of her sweet son." As she spoke, she uncovered the scorched limbs and offered them to be eaten, with this exhortation: "This is my meal, this your portion. Look carefully, lest I have cheated you. Here is one hand of the boy, here his foot, here half the rest of his body. Lest you think him someone else's, he is my son; lest you suppose it another's work, I did it, I carefully divided it: what I should eat for myself, what I should keep for you. Never have you been sweeter to me, my son. I owe it to you that I still live. Your sweetness has kept my soul within me and postponed the day of death for your wretched mother. You have helped me in hunger, you are the gift of my last old age, you the restrainer of murderers. They came to kill; they have become guests. They too will have something to owe you when they have taken my feast. But why do you step back, why do you shudder in spirit? Why do you not feast on what I, his mother, have prepared? What has sated his mother can please you too. I am no longer hungry now that my son has fed me; I am abundantly satisfied, I know no hunger. Taste and see that my son is sweet. Do not become softer than a mother, weaker than a woman. Or if you are merciful amid the wounding and do not accept my victim but turn away from my whole burnt offering, I shall complete my sacrifice and eat what remains. Take care lest it be a reproach to you that a woman has been found stronger than you, to consume the feast of men. I indeed prepared such a feast, but you made a mother feast in this way. Affection held me too, but necessity prevailed."

Chapter 41

Online text and commentary

[V.41.1] The enormity of so great a crime at once filled the whole city. Each person shuddered as though the serving of this feast of the murder of kin were set before his eyes. After this, even the instigators of the sedition began to inspect the food they stole, lest they find such fare and take it unawares. Everyone began to fear living long and to wish to die. The horror of this deed also reached the Romans, for very many, terrified by it, fled to the enemy.

[V.41.2] On learning this, Caesar cursed the pollution of the unhappy land and, raising his hands to heaven, made this declaration: "We have indeed come to war, but we are not fighting human beings. We contend against all the rage of beasts and wild animals—why do I speak of creatures with feeling? Against all the savagery of rocks. Wild beasts love their offspring, which they nourish even in their own hunger; those that feed upon the bodies of others abstain from the carcasses of beasts like themselves. This exceeds every cruelty: that a mother has devoured the limbs she bore. I am clean of this pollution and declare myself free of it before you, whatever power you are in heaven. You know, you surely know that with heartfelt affection I often offered peace and, what I am not ashamed as victor to say, entreated them. I wished to spare even the authors of such monstrosities, to spare the people, to preserve the city. But what was I to do with those who resisted, what was I to do with those who raged against their own people? Often, after laying down arms, I returned to war because they would not desist from slaughtering their own, so that I might free the besieged, not destroy them. They themselves often urged us from the walls to fight, lest they

perish more grievously at their own people's hands. What sort of citizens are these, for whom an enemy is a remedy? I had indeed heard that this people's ferocity was unbearable, that they roused themselves to every insolence through incredible beliefs: that they drew their lineage from heaven, first assumed bodily form there, had been inhabitants of heaven, had descended to cultivate the earth and returned from earth to heaven; that they had crossed seas dry-shod, that the waves of the sea had fled before them, that the Jordan's streams had turned and run back to their source; that the sun had stood still so that they might defeat their enemies without the hindrance of night; that their people had been snatched up to heaven in fiery chariots, that the powers of heaven had fought for them, and that, while they were absent, all the enemy's forces had been routed, and victory won while they slept. I had learned these things, but I thought that they boasted of divine benefits bestowed upon them, not that they would carry their audacity so far as to suppose that they could not be defeated even by the Romans. I therefore recognise that our battle is with those who believe themselves invincible, who boast that they are survivors of the flood, heirs of rivers, guests of the earth, travellers over the sea, climbers into the heavens, for whom water is a wall, air a road and heaven a dwelling, to whom flames yield and whom bonds do not hold. When they thirst, rock dissolves and pours itself out as drink; when they hunger, heaven opens, food is sent, the camp is filled with birds' flesh, and man eats the bread of angels. Liquids are made solid, bitter things grow sweet, the sun is halted, darkness is illuminated. Finally, what can surpass this? When can audacity fail those who, as they say, live when dead and are raised again when buried? It is also widely believed that these people have conspired against divine powers, and their punishment is evidence. Lands burn even today because of their inhabitants' impiety, and a chasm in the ground has swallowed very many of these people too. How long, then, do we linger in these places, where even the earth collapses? We have seen a dead sea; we have also seen the dead produce of the land, parched soil, empty semblances of green fruits, beauty outside and ashes within. Who can doubt that we are among the dead below, where even the elements themselves die? Indeed, among them even natural devotion, which usually lives on after death, has died, and so has the reverence that outlives the dead. For who does not love his parents even when dead? Who does not love even his lost sons and hold them still as his children? Affection remains even if the child has died; the name endures, the bond of nature does not fall away. Yet among these people a mother does not recognise even her living son, does not hear him calling or pity him crying, and lays murderous hands upon her child for the accursed food of a single hour. But why do I denounce this as something new, when they reckon the beginnings of their race from the murder of a brother? They praise the faith of Abraham himself, whom they call their father, the author of their teaching and the founder of their worship, chiefly because he thought that not even his son should be spared, brought him to the altar like a victim and did not hesitate to offer him as a whole burnt offering. I do not condemn devotion, but I ask for family devotion. They say that another of their people, victorious, also vowed to sacrifice to his god whatever first met him on his return home; that when he returned his daughter met him, and he laid hands upon her. They tell many other examples of this kind. What sort of nation is this, which assigns the killing of a human being to religion and thinks the murder of kin a sacrifice? What god could demand this, or what sort of priest could offer it? Indeed, they say that the earlier man, as the more prudent, did not do it but wished to, while the

latter, as the less wise, persisted. Let them have their rites: yet they are hard people, among whom killing sons is a discipline; unhappy the city in which there is such a workshop, such a service. Let its own ruins cover and conceal it, so that the sun may not see this pollution of the world itself, nor the host of stars behold it; lest the breaths of air be defiled, let that purifying fire arise as well. We thought the feast of Thyestes a fable; we see the crime, we behold a truth more atrocious than tragedy. There it was the stronger sex and another's offspring; here it is a woman whose own offspring became her food. There it was another's deceit, here her own will. He grieved, she exulted. Food worthy of such men, who by their obstinacy in war have brought their women to such a feast! I indeed think that, afflicted by such bitter evils, they are now mad and have lost their minds, since they do not perceive these things. Let us therefore finish the war more quickly. Since they cannot be reformed, let us press upon them more urgently, so that we may flee the dying waters and collapsing lands of these regions."

Chapter 42

Online text and commentary

[V.42.1] Having said this, he ordered battering rams to be brought against the temple, but their powerful blows achieved nothing. Nevertheless, very many, terrified, fled to Caesar from among the leaders of the seditions themselves. Titus hesitated to receive them, since they were driven by necessity rather than following his promise, but faith tempered his anger. Yet he did not hold them in the same regard as the earlier deserters, and began to press his men more urgently, so that all the enemy might depart, struck with fear. But when they saw that the walls stood unharmed by the blows of the rams through their sheer mass, their audacity grew. Caesar, however, forestalled them by his ingenuity and ordered the doors covered with silver to be set on fire.

[V.42.2] When fire was applied, the silver began to run down; then gradually the wood too began to burn, and thus an entrance opened into the inner portico. But Caesar, moved by pity lest the adjoining porticoes of the inner vestibule catch fire and the temple burn down, called the commanders of the army to council. He said that he was not contending with things without feeling or waging war upon buildings, which would benefit the victors if they were preserved unburned.

[V.42.3] The commanders, however, maintained that the strength of the walls and the fortification of the temple would continue to encourage the Jews, who delighted in insolence. The roots of rebellion must be torn out altogether, lest their rashness break out afresh.

[V.42.4] Caesar nevertheless deferred discussion of the plan until the following day. The Jews, however, thought they should pour forth, but the Romans, though fewer, locked their shields together and sustained the first attack. Yet their line wavered under the onrush of the countless multitude. Caesar therefore came close with the cavalry, easily trampling those he met, and turned back the hostile column. Encouraged by this, since part of the vestibules was now open,

[V.42.5] he planned on the following day to break in upon the enemy with a larger force of his men and enter the temple. This would have saved the city from burning, had not the people's perverse mind provoked the enemy's flames against themselves. For Caesar ordered the masses of fire to be extinguished, lest they obstruct those about to break in. Seeing this, the Jews lay in wait for those wishing to extinguish the temple fires and, by killing some, inflamed the enemy. One of the Romans therefore found a half-burned piece of timber which had fallen from the roof and, with its fire blazing, applied it to the gate called Golden because its doors were covered with gold. The solid gold, at once melted by the flames, laid bare the wood, which was exposed to the fire as though its flank were uncovered. When the doors had burned through, the fire made its way into the temple's inner sanctuary. The vestibules of its gate were already glowing. All who defended themselves within the temple's fortifications were thrown into confusion and at once began to tremble. Their minds were already inclining to the belief that this was the day of destruction, because on that same day the temple had once been burned when the Babylonians attacked. It was the tenth day of the month of Lous, which they had long counted among the ill-fated days. The fire, raised aloft by the breath of the air, poured joy into the victors and grief worthy of so great a calamity into the vanquished.

[V.42.6] A cry also arose from everyone, and not long afterwards a messenger informed Titus of the enemy's destruction. He rushed out and, as loudly as he could, ordered the fires to be extinguished. But in the tumult there was neither a chance to hear nor a wish to spare, since the Roman soldiers burned with zeal for vengeance, and Caesar's known mercy took away his men's fear of disobedience. It would bring no punishment upon his own men when even enemies were pardoned. Yet Titus called back those he could with nod and hand, and commanded some to restrain the soldiers' assaults. But with anger as their leader, they fed the fire and pressed upon the enemy, who, despairing of safety, now squandered themselves and spent themselves wholly upon dangers. Above all the lowly multitude were struck wherever anyone encountered them, since they were protected by no weapons and could neither ward off a wound nor return it.

Chapter 43

Online text and commentary

[V.43.1] Caesar therefore withdrew, exhausted by shouting, while the flame was still devouring the temple's chambers. When these had burned through, it rushed furiously into the temple itself. At this sight very many were struck with terror; others plunged into the very fires, for their eyes could not endure their being preserved alive after the temple. Titus ran back again, wishing to look about and see what sort of building it was. Moved by its beauty, he acknowledged that it had surpassed the workmanship of their own temples. He marvelled at the size of the stones, the gleam of the metal, the elegance of the work and the charm of its beauty. He declared that the place's renown was not undeservedly so great that people gathered there from everywhere, for so great a dwelling was believed to belong to none but the highest God. The honour with which even barbarian nations revered that temple and brought gifts added credibility to its religion. Yet its own people, plunderers of religion, were then seizing and squandering these gifts. The brigands fell upon everything that had been deposited by widows or orphans, as though vengeance were taken upon the victors if the Romans' booty were diminished at all. Seeing the temple burn, they themselves set the other buildings on fire, lest any building survive the temple's destruction, thinking it an act of religion if everything perished with the temple.

[V.43.2] Yet the Jews still did not lay aside their faithlessness, which caused greater destruction. For, when the minds of many were inclining towards forming a column and surrendering to the Romans, a certain false prophet began to proclaim in his ecstasy that God's divine protection would not fail his temple. As though by an oracle, he declared that God was calling the people to himself, that he still remained in his temple and would immediately drive back the enemy's ranks and the blazing flames. Thus the wretched people, faithfully believing false deceptions, were slaughtered like cattle, without honour or use. Had they been willing to believe, they had clear signs of their impending destruction, by which they were warned, as though by distinct voices, that their end was at hand.

Chapter 44

Online text and commentary

[V.44.1] For nearly a year a comet blazed above the temple itself, displaying a certain likeness to fire and a sword and foretelling that the nation, kingdom and city itself would be laid waste by sword and fire. For what could the likeness of a sword foretell but war, and what could fire foretell but burning? It was seen before the people separated themselves from the Romans. During the days of Passover, on the eighth day of the month of Xanthicus, and on each night at about the ninth hour, the temple and its altar shone with such light that it was as though day had come. This lasted for about half an hour each day. The multitude interpreted it as a visible sign of the nation's increase, and were thereby emboldened, as though the time to recover their freedom were at hand. The more prudent held the contrary opinion, because this kind of star usually foretells war. Let no one suppose that we have spoken things alien to our worship and teaching: first, because we are not establishing what seems true to us, but what happened, what opinions existed at that time, what the prudent thought and what the imprudent thought. Nor, when anything is said about the Jewish sect, should it seem that we have written as though we were setting them within the truth of their worship, rather than as those sent ahead in shadow and figure so that more perfect things might follow. For concerning signs in the stars we are also taught in the Gospel that there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars. They also asserted that a heifer, standing at the altar to be sacrificed, gave birth to a lamb in the middle of the temple during the very sacred celebrations we mentioned above. They said too that the eastern inner gate, heavy with solid bronze, which twenty men used to close with great labour in the evening and which was secured with iron bars, opened of itself on several nights and was afterwards closed by the guards only with difficulty. Very many also thought this a sign of good things to come, for whose entrance the gate was opened. The more discerning, however, said that the temple's protection seemed to have been removed, so that everything within would be plundered by enemies: worship would go out, devastation come in, the throng of worshippers be emptied away and sacrifice destroyed. The reading teaches that this was also clearly signified earlier, when they crucified Christ Jesus. After many days, too, a figure of immeasurable size appeared, which very many people saw, as the Jews' books have made known. Before sunset, chariots and armed battle lines were suddenly seen in the clouds, attacking the cities of all Judaea and its region. During the very solemnity of Pentecost, the priests entered the temple's inner parts at night to celebrate the customary sacrifices. They reported that first they had felt a certain movement and heard a sound, and afterwards also heard a sudden voice cry: "We are departing from here."

[V.44.2] Jesus too, the son of Ananias, a countryman, went up to the temple four years before the Jewish people undertook the war, when the city was in complete peace and abundance and the feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated with solemn sacrifices. He began to cry: "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and against the temple, a voice against bridegrooms and against brides, a voice against all the people." He cried this out by night and by day. Disturbed by this, the leading men of the place seized him, shuddering at the terrible portent of his voice, and subjected

him to many torments, so that at least under the affliction of pain he might cease to announce things so terrible and full of foreboding. But he was frightened by no fear, blows or graver threats into changing his practice or his cry. With the same persistence in warning and the same sequence of words, without inserting any plea, he continued unchanged, heedless of injury and unmoved in feeling. They thought this was no casual utterance, but was being expressed in an ecstasy of mind, as indeed it was, and brought him before the local judge, who at that time conducted public affairs there on behalf of the Romans. To probe the truth, the judge tore him with the most grievous punishments. The more Jesus persisted, the more violently the judge ordered him to be scourged, so that he might reveal any hidden signs of future disturbance he had learned. Yet he neither wept nor begged, but at each blow mournfully lamented not his own destruction but his fatherland's, saying: "Woe to Jerusalem." Asked who he was, where he came from or why he said the same things, he gave no answer, but continued only that lamentation for his fatherland in a pitiable cry. Albinus—for that was the man's name—therefore grew weary and dismissed him as one who, through madness of mind, did not understand what he was saying. But he neither conversed with anyone nor was heard to say anything else for the rest of the time. Singing this like a mournful funeral song, he continually made it resound by day and night: "Woe to Jerusalem." He neither abused anyone who struck him nor thanked anyone who gave him food. To everyone he gave one and the same response, full of funeral wailing, especially at the celebrations of sacrifices. For seven years and five months, then, the same sequence of words and the same sound of his voice remained. Thus, unwearied for so long, when the siege began he ceased to cry out these things, as though warning ought to cease when what had been foretold was present. But when flame began to envelop city and temple together, he went around the wall and began to cry again: "Woe to the city and the people and the temple." At last he added: "Woe also to me"; and, struck by a sling, he breathed his last with that same cry.

[V.44.3] It had also been written in ancient writings that the city itself, together with the temple, would perish when the temple had been made square. Thus, whether forgetful or stupefied by the pressure of the evils assailing them, when Antonia was occupied they made the temple's circuit square. Among these signs the most outstanding was what remained inscribed in equally ancient writings, which they called sacred: that about that time there would be a man from their region who would assume dominion over the whole world. This drove them into such frenzy that they promised themselves not only freedom but also kingship. Some thought this should be referred to Vespasian; the more prudent to the Lord Jesus, who, born in their lands according to the flesh from Mary, spread his kingdom through all the expanses of the earth. Thus, with so many things warning them, they could not avert what was being decreed by God.

Chapter 45

Online text and commentary

[V.45.1] Thus, as the instigators of the seditions fled while the temple burned, the Romans set up their standards within the temple's circuit and sacrificed opposite the eastern gate, acclaiming Titus as imperator at the top of their voices. Meanwhile, a boy in the place where the priests too were suffering from thirst, wasted by lack of water and the heat of the neighbouring fire, asked one of the Roman guards to give him his right hand and offer him a drink. The guard at once held it out, pitying both his age and his need. The little boy drank; then, because his innocent age had been fully trusted, he snatched the water vessel and hurried away at a run, so that he might also provide the priests with a means of drinking. The soldier wished to follow but could not catch him. At his own peril, the boy relieved the priests' thirst. A good deceit, which harmed no one and relieved necessity. Indeed, the soldier himself admired the boy's devotion more than he detested his trick: at that age, amid the destruction of the whole city and the common peril, he had not left unexpressed, through whatever service he could render, the reverence owed to the priests. Not long afterwards, exhausted by hunger and thirst, the priests begged for their lives. Titus ordered them to be killed, replying that it showed a degenerate spirit to wish to survive their temple and their office.

Chapter 46

Online text and commentary

[V.46.1] John, Simon and the other leaders of the seditions asked him to order the missiles and the din to cease for a little while, to give them an opportunity to speak and not to turn away from clemency. When silence had been made, he gave this reply: “The time for mercy is late, most wicked men, when nothing remains to be preserved. It was offered to you and you despised it, thinking it want of confidence, not clemency. But I groaned that innocent buildings should perish through your crime; I grieved that the lowly multitude were driven to death. I wished to spare: you did not allow it. I suspended battles: you rushed in. I offered peace: you did not receive it. I addressed you often, approached you repeatedly—I am not ashamed to say that I made you more insolent by entreaty. What did you think? That the Roman battle lines would yield to you, and that by your numbers you would surround an army victorious over all lands? What a small part fought against you, since neither could your region contain the whole nor did necessity permit it! For our greater concern is to protect the world rather than extend our dominion. There is no new place to which we may advance; nothing is foreign to those whose possession is the whole earth. For a long time we thought we should overlook this brigandage like a blemish upon the body. At length, provoked, we judged that it must be removed, lest your disobedience obscure the splendour of Roman dominion like a cloud. You have felt Roman valour by dying, not by fighting. For we did not see your columns in the field but on the wall, though even your barriers did not avail to protect your safety. For what wall could withstand those whom the ocean did not withstand? What city, enclosed by the protection of walls, could be impregnable to our siege, when Roman arms have penetrated even the Britains, surrounded by the wall of the roaring element? That precipitous mountain of water was laid beneath us. Let the waters of the Red Sea, as Jewish tales relate, have surrounded your fathers as they crossed, like a wall: Roman courage broke through the ocean’s wall. I do not begrudge you benefits bestowed by another. Let the sea have seen you and fled, so that, hemmed in by the enemy, you might flee because you could neither break through nor withstand him. The ocean’s flight would have harmed us if it had fled. We first waged war with the waves; we conquered the raging sea before we reached the enemy. Britain received us already victors over the elements. We subdued what they trusted in, so that the ocean itself might be added to the fullness of our triumph. But perhaps you presumed upon bodily strength. Are you stronger than the Germans, whom Roman courage reduced to slavery though they were enclosed by the wall of the Alps? Those things are not like the hills of sloping Mount Taurus or the Canopean forces of the Egyptians, with whom you are accustomed to wage war. We climbed above the clouds and conquered peoples descending from the cloud; we opened a road through the air to all. We do not begrudge you one through the sea, provided that ours belonged to men in triumph and yours to men in flight. Thus mountains sank before Roman valour; rivers dried up, losing the course which nature had directed and bending it where the victors ordered. Let your Jordan, as you say, have turned and returned to its source to open a path for you: Cloelia, the Roman maiden, had no need of this. Breaking her bonds, she escaped the enemy and, making her way down the river, entered the Roman camp. Nor do we marvel at your fires, from which you are accustomed to sing at great length that the Hebrew youths escaped. Our Mucius,

with no one compelling him, put his hand into the fire and did not withdraw it until, victorious over the burning, he filled the enemy with wonder at his courage, which had not felt the flames. Indeed, those who had hoped for triumph asked for peace. Or did that heavenly nourishment and food of rain exalt you against Roman valour? You ought to have considered that Africa herself, the nurse of the whole world, is subject to Roman courage. She who feeds everyone serves us; everyone's hunger and everyone's sustenance are in our power. What nature gave to all, Roman valour made its own right. It struck down Hannibal himself and drove him into exile: the world could not contain him, Africa was too narrow for him, the Spains seemed unsuitable for his stay, Gaul was cramped for his passage, and Italy unworthy of a treaty of friendship and shared alliance. You may boast that thunderbolts served you and heavenly powers fought for you: we conquered Hannibal riding upon thunderbolts and thundering amid the tempests of the world itself. The world was shaken, and he struck our walls with his arms. Nor was it necessary that our enemies, like your Assyrians, should be destroyed while asleep: they were destroyed while fighting. For victory is sought not in sleep but in battle; where there is a chance favour, there is no reward of valour. Our enemies did not fall heedlessly into our hands, deceived by the red gleam of waters reflecting the rising sun, thinking from the appearance of shed blood that we had been destroyed. Knowing what they did and prepared for war, they covered the plains of the earth with their bodies and filled them with their own blood. What courage has brought you to such insolence? Did you not see that those who ruled you serve us—Egypt, which used to afflict you, pays us an annual tribute and provides a road as far as the regions of India—and that we go beyond the world to seek another world, the sea's hidden places and the furthest bounds of sun and ocean, and add the inhabitants of another world to our dominion? What of the kingdom of Antiochus, who afflicted you with grievous punishments and deprived you even of the right to practise your religion? Did we not restore it to Antiochus himself, judging it more glorious to command kings than to take away a kingdom? Did not Antioch herself, the seat of your masters, eagerly reject her own rulers and choose us as masters? Did you not yourselves flee to us to escape those masters? Did we not ourselves receive you and defend you against them? We preserved your right to live by your own laws; we gave you the power to devote yourselves to your own worship. We wished to know your sacred rites, but honoured them. Afterwards you thought you must rebel. Pompey captured the temple but did not destroy it; he occupied the city but preserved it; he kept all the offerings intact. In return for these things, grateful allies, you repaid us by waging war a third time. Nero may have deserved contempt, but Roman valour was not spent in one man. It had Vespasian as a soldier, who had already brought the Gauls back to peace, so brave in battle that through him even Nero conquered, through him Nero was formidable to the enemy; so faithful to his master that he alone did not seek the dominion which he alone deserved. But Cestius had done you harm. A complaint should have been brought, not arms employed. My father Vespasian was sent; he could have fallen unexpectedly upon you unprepared. He went about Galilee and burned distant places so that you might lay aside your insolence and ask pardon. He showed his valour and, when he held you all shut in, went to Egypt to give you a respite in which to regain your senses. Our absence made you more insolent, because you thought we were occupied elsewhere. But we are never so occupied that we are absent from the world. For even when absent we are present, and when far away we stand near. For, as the soul in

the body gives life to all its members, so Roman providence is present in every part of its dominion and governs the whole Roman world as though present. For if that divine power gave individual souls the strength to govern a body, how much more has it supplied Roman vigour, by which the whole of our dominion is animated as one body, with a certain vital substance for its protection? You therefore renewed the suspended war. As my father was about to depart to recover the city of Rome from the tyrants, he separated me from his company so that you might not lack an executor of his mercy. I came to war with the appearance of one threatening, with the feeling of one entreating. How often did I call the army back from your walls? How often afterwards did I draw it back from the temple's sanctuary? How often did I extinguish fires? How often did I warn you? But you never listened. Do you finally ask now, as though anything remained like what has already been consumed? Nevertheless, I have drawn the soldiers away from slaughter, burning and plunder. What do you desire? Why do you still stand armed, as though to give terms, not receive them—if you seek surrender, lay down your arms, no longer fearful to the victors but proud and full of insolence in the vanquished—so that you petition under arms as though either doubting our faith or still challenging our valour by threatening war? The people are destroyed, the temple burns, we hold the city. What hope remains to you except that your lives may be granted? Therefore lay down your arms as vanquished men. I shall grant you life, though you do not deserve it, because you were unwilling to preserve what was yours along with yourselves."

[V.46.2] Then they began to ask that, since they were bound by an oath never to surrender to the Romans, he should allow them to go out through the wall and proceed into the wilderness with their families, yielding the city to the Romans. Still more angered by this, Titus said: "Do you even impose conditions upon us? Rather defend your fatherland, stand by the temple, rise with all your valour and keep your oath of death, since you have rejected that of life." At the same time he ordered the Romans to rise up and kill the enemy. Very many began to fall under the victors' heightened indignation. Nevertheless, the sons and brothers of King Jaza surrendered, and very many of the common people with them. Out of regard for royal rank, Titus did not abandon his purpose, though roused to anger, but received those who fled to him. Yet he gained only the profit of mercy, which is the greatest gain. For the instigators of the sedition plundered all the royal household's booty, so that none of it reached the Romans.

Chapter 47

Online text and commentary

[V.47.1] As soon as they rushed into the palace, they seized two Roman soldiers and killed the infantryman. The cavalryman, however, asked to be brought to Simon, claiming that he had something to disclose to that leader of the seditions. But when he was brought before him and spun out some empty tale, he was ordered to be killed. While the executioner delayed, though his eyes were already covered with a band, he dashed away to the Romans. They were fighting at close quarters and received the fugitive. When he was brought before Titus, Titus ordered him to be stripped of his arms and dismissed as a man unworthy of death, since he had allowed himself to be captured alive by the enemy. He preserved for him what the enemy's cowardice had not taken away, but deprived him of the military oath which he had betrayed as a captive and dishonoured as a fugitive. This was a greater punishment for him, for among men the disgraces of military service are more grievous than the wounds of death.

[V.47.2] The Jews, however, were at once driven back and withdrew to the upper parts of the city, abandoning the defence of temple and city. Great slaughter was inflicted upon those who remained; the streets were filled with the half-dead or with corpses.

[V.47.3] Caesar ordered the engines to be brought against the upper parts as well. Seeing this, the Idumaeans chose men to send to Titus to ask for surrender. When Simon learned of it, he forestalled them and intercepted the men chosen to seek surrender. Yet not long afterwards, although deprived of their leaders' support, the Idumaeans could no longer withstand the violence and surrendered to the Roman army. Thus hunger first, and finally despair of resistance, brought about their surrender. Nor did the Romans, now weary of much slaughter, refuse to spare their lives; their eagerness to sell captive slaves made them readier to preserve them. Very many were offered for sale, but buyers were few: the Romans disdained to keep Jews in slavery, and no Jews remained to ransom their own people, since each congratulated himself on having escaped, even destitute. Thus they surrendered everywhere with their fear removed, for the brigands were absent and the Romans granted pardon.

Chapter 48

Online text and commentary

[V.48.1] Indeed, Jesus too, one of the priests, the son of Thebutus, surrendered. Having received a pledge of safety, he willingly handed over the vessels of priestly service: two lamps, tables, mixing bowls and cups, and all the golden vessels, as well as hangings and the garments of the chief priests with their stones. Phinehas, the keeper of the treasury, was also captured and revealed the priests' abundant purple cloth and scarlet and many other things reserved for use. Along with these he too handed over cinnamon, cassia, many spices and incense, many vessels for the sacred rites and a consecrated garment, but he was compelled by fear. Hence his disgrace was pardonable among his own people. Yet even if willingness was absent, courage ought not to have been lacking. Although we often judge more severely than we could take precautions if we ourselves were in such necessity, we ought nevertheless to refuse participation in the deed and treacherous disclosure.

Chapter 49

Online text and commentary

[V.49.1] The siege banks had now risen, and the rams had begun to strike the upper wall. On the seventh day of the month which they call Gorpiaeus, the final crisis was reached. Confused and terrified, even the faction leaders, who had exulted amid the greatest dangers, flung themselves at the knees of individuals, begging for help. One could see how pitiable was that change from their terrible and proud eminence to this humble and common abasement, to tears, weeping and fear. The wall of the upper city had not yet given way, but already they were running from one person to another, lamenting that no protection remained. They thought the enemy had entered; very many seemed to see the Romans already fighting from above. Their eyes pictured beforehand what their minds feared, and the mind's terror became an image before their sight. Indeed, believing it certain that the enemy were already pressing upon their necks, though three towers stronger than the rest still remained to them—Mariamne, Phasaelus and the Equestrian—they abandoned the upper parts and fled to underground chambers or secluded caves.

[V.49.2] Not long afterwards, however, John, wasted by hunger and exhausted by fasting, surrendered to Caesar. He was reserved for the triumph but bound in perpetual chains, drawing the breath of life until death rather than experiencing any pleasure in living; he escaped the axe.

[V.49.3] Simon, however, remained hidden amid the ruins of the burned city, concealing himself underground with a few of his more faithful men. Caesar had already departed after the city was burned, believing that Simon too had been consumed by fire, crushed by a collapse or killed by some soldier. But as long as food lasted, Simon kept digging further inwards in the excavated caves. When the food failed and no way of escape opened, he suddenly crept up above ground, dressed in a white robe with a purple garment over it, to strike a certain terror into those who saw him. While the Roman soldiers were at first astonished, he instructed them to bring their commander. Rufus Terentius was there, whom

Titus had left in command of the troops at the place. When he arrived and asked who he was, Simon at first gave other answers, then admitted that he was Simon. He was therefore sent to Caesar and himself reserved for the triumph. But because he had committed cruelties against the citizens and had not surrendered to Caesar, he was sentenced to death after the triumphal procession.

[V.49.4] On the eighth day of the month of Gorpiaeus the city was burned. Countless thousands were slain throughout the siege—very many assert a hundred and ten myriads—all Jews, though not all from the same region and place, since they had gathered there from everywhere at the time of the Passover festival. About ninety-seven thousand were led away captive. Nearly all the brigands were immediately killed; the stronger men were led in the triumph and afterwards thrown to beasts and subjected to other punishments in almost every city through which Titus passed, so that by punishing rebellions he might spread fear among all.

Chapter 50

Online text and commentary

[V.50.1] At the same time the Alans, a savage nation long unknown to our people, inhabited the Scythian Tanais and its neighbourhood and the Maeotian marshes. They were confined in the interior with other savage and untamed nations by the difficulty of the inland places and the barrier of an iron gate which Alexander the Great had set upon the ridge of a precipitous mountain. By that king's ingenuity they were shut in as though in a prison, to cultivate their own lands rather than raid those of others. But, whether because of the barrenness of the places, since the hoped-for fertility of cultivation did not answer the greedy farmer's wishes, or from a desire for plunder, they urged the king of the Hyrcanians, who ruled the places, to open the gate and allow them to break out. Whether this was obtained by a payment or through dissension among the nations is uncertain. Having obtained this, they poured in upon the nation of the Medes, which was unprepared, and in a short time traversed almost the whole region on swift horses, with others likewise tethered on their right, onto which they could leap in turn whenever they wished. First they threw everything into confusion and gave the appearance of a greater multitude, before which no place of flight lay open; then, after surrounding everyone and inflicting as much slaughter as they wished, they carried off their plunder. For the region was populous and abounded in livestock, and lay easily open to pillage with no one resisting. Indeed, Pacorus himself, king of the Medes, withdrew into remote places, attending to his safety rather than his kingdom, so that his wife and children and concubines were captured by the Alans and afterwards ransomed for a hundred talents. Nor was Tiridates, king of Armenia, free from danger. Made more cautious by another's misfortune, he foresaw the scourge and wished to meet it manfully, to turn the enemy from his borders. Yet while he fought, he was caught in a little noose and would have passed alive into the enemy's power had he not quickly cut the misshapen knot with a very sharp sword. For, with a certain insolent pride in their own courage and arrogant contempt for others, and also to use this device as cover for their familiar practice of fighting at a distance and their opportunity of retreat, the Alans make throwing nooses and entangling the enemy their art and manner of warfare.

Chapter 51

Online text and commentary

[V.51.1] Tiridates therefore fled, content to have escaped, but left his kingdom to be ravaged. For, as though injured by his having dared to engage them, they devastated Armenia more fiercely than the kingdom of Media. Enriched with the spoils of both kingdoms, they returned to their own lands.

[V.51.2] On learning of their incursion, Titus made for Antioch, but gradually, as befitted a triumphant commander. Concealing his reason, he celebrated the pageantry of victory in each city. Wherever he went, Jews were killed in the arena and, torn apart by beasts, paid the deserved penalty of rebellion.

[V.51.3] At Antioch too the Gentile population pursued them with ancient hatred, because the kings of the Persians had bestowed upon the synagogues of Antioch the gifts which they had claimed from Jerusalem by right of victory, adding other gifts from their own possessions. The accumulated wealth therefore easily stirred envy. For, to omit for the moment what rivals for the priesthood had done against the Maccabees, and how great a calamity ambition had brought upon the citizens, as we mentioned above, Antiochus, a man of no obscure birth but depraved character, later fabricated a charge that the Jews had conspired to burn the city of Antioch. By the violence of the Gentile multitude he brought to death his own father, who was one of the leading Jews, and very many others whom he accused. Nor did he rest satisfied with that murder of kin and the slaughter of many. Afterwards too he found an opportunity when an accidental fire burned the porticoes, the square and a very great part of the buildings of the same city. Through the false charge of the conspiracy already mentioned, he again began to press and attack the Jews. He would almost have brought about the slaughter of them all had the investigation not been reserved for Titus's arrival, from fear that Caesar might be angered if they took it upon themselves to punish so many. This saved the Jews.

Chapter 52

Online text and commentary

[V.52.1] At Masada too very many Jews gathered, trusting in the strength of the place. Titus considered the task of capturing it unworthy of detaining an imperator and entrusted it to Silva, to whom he had committed supreme command of the Roman troops in those places and responsibility for ensuring that no rebellion arose again. He himself made for Alexandria and sailed from there to Rome.

[V.52.2] Silva vigorously pursued his assigned task and broke down Masada's wall with a ram. They built an inner wall of wood, because wall material of this kind did not easily yield to such blows from engines. But the Romans changed their method of warfare and cast fire upon it, which readily caught the wood and blazed up without delay. As the fire grew, a great roar of flame arose. At first the breath of the north wind drove it away from the fortification and burned the Roman siege shelters instead; then, when the south wind arose, it turned back upon the stronghold, so that the whole wooden barrier of the wall burned up as its

material was consumed. Since night had intervened, the Romans withdrew to their camp, confident of victory, intending on the following day to subdue men now exposed and stripped of every defence. But lest anyone slip away, they surrounded the stronghold with an interlocking cordon of guards.

Chapter 53

Online text and commentary

[V.53.1] Thus, with affairs desperate, Eleazar, the instigator of the disturbances, saw that no defence remained and began this speech. We have not omitted it, as a lamentable epilogue to close the work in the rhetorical manner: “What are we doing, men descended from Abraham, a royal race, invincible through the power of priestly grace? For valour is judged not by the outcome of victory, which is often uncertain, but by steadfastness of purpose. From this one may infer that subduing the enemy belongs to fortune, but not changing one’s mind belongs to valour. I may therefore rightly call you invincible if no fear of death has yet conquered you. But your father Abraham did not train you thus: in his only son he taught that, if he were sacrificed for religion, there would be not death but immortality for him. Why should I praise Josiah, than whom no one was a better interpreter of religion, despiser of death or champion of freedom? Placed on that royal eminence, he could have deferred death. Yet, because he saw that the captivity of the people of Israel would follow their grievous sins, he involved himself in another’s war and fled from life. Necho cried: ‘I have not been sent against you, but against the king of Israel.’ Yet Josiah did not withdraw before receiving a mortal arrow wound. Laid low by it, he shows us whether merit or chance carries greater weight in war. Josiah, the restorer of pious rites, was defeated; Necho, the most wicked of all men, won. But the defeated man is now with the angels, the victor in torment. For who does not know that the reward for human beings is stored up not in this life, but after this contest is completed? Here we run so that there we may reach the palm; here is the contest, there the reward. There is therefore no favour here in length of years. Indeed, Abel died early, Cain survived. Thus death fell to innocence and misery to life. Since then we have inherited the same lot: living has become most wretched, dying blessed. For what is life but a prison of the soul, which is shut within this slave-house and clings to companionship with the flesh? It is shaken by the body’s infirmities, afflicted by toil, crushed by anger, kindled by desires and harassed by fury. It cannot easily rise, bound to the ground, clotted with dust, fastened by a chain and entangled in sinews. Yet its power is no slight thing: it gives life to the body and pours the vigour of sense into insensible matter. Each person’s soul invisibly bestows this upon him, governs the whole man and carries him beyond mortal frailty, so that he may grasp the knowledge of heavenly secrets and direct his mind to the future. Thus, in the image and likeness of its ruler, it is not seen, though situated in the body. It is not perceived by bodily eyes, nor is its entry or departure caught by any gaze. Representing a certain likeness of the divine gift, it pours in life when it enters and brings about death when it leaves the body. Where the soul is, there is life; where it is absent, there is death. Whatever it visits it awakens; whatever it leaves is at once dissolved and immediately withers. By the soul’s infusion the dead man rises; by its departure the living man dies. Who then can doubt that immortality is seen to be at work in the soul, whose power is to avert death? Yet it is a burden to itself, though it abounds in service to another, and what it gives the body it takes away from itself. For it is weighed down and, as it were, bent towards the earth with this mortal body. Thus the body’s life is the soul’s death, and conversely the body’s death seems the soul’s freedom. For while we are in the body, our soul serves in slavery, a wretched slavery indeed, exiled from paradise and a stranger to its ruler. But when it is released from

the bonds of this flesh, it flies back to that pure and shining place above, is present with the Lord its God, and enjoys the dwellings of the saints and the company of the blessed. It rejoices that it no longer has any fellowship with the dead and has left behind companionship with a corpse, that heavenly grace breathes upon it and no agitation of human cares troubles it. Sleep shows us how great a grace the soul resumes after the body's death. For when the body sleeps and its desires and all its movements are as though dead, we often converse with the saints and receive those we have lost: the absent are present with us, the dead live, all grief is stilled, we approach God and converse with him, we know the future, the afflicted find rest and slaves freedom. What we dream in sleep we therefore attain in death; what is an image in sleep is in death the possession of truth and the grace of freedom. Hence some nations customarily greet people's births with tears and their deaths with joy: they grieve that the former are born to misery and congratulate the latter on returning to blessedness; they lament that the souls of the former have come into slavery and rejoice that those of the latter have returned to freedom. The sages of the Indians too are said, when they have taken on the desire to die, to declare that they wish to depart, with no one raising a protest. Then, when the preparations for death have been made, they leap joyfully onto the burning pyre and bid farewell to those standing by. Women grieve as though about to be deprived of support, and little children because they are being left behind; others bless them and do not begrudge their hastening to better inhabitants, more splendid places and purer companions. What else, then, can I think of you, when even barbarian nations have the custom of pursuing freedom? I have long known you well and known you ready to answer to your ancestral institutions, holding that you should serve neither the Romans nor any nation, but God alone, who alone is the just and true Lord of all. The day has come which demands that you prove your will by deeds and not dishonour the splendour of your ancient character by subjecting yourselves, born in freedom, to human domination. You could previously have served without danger; now it is necessary to undergo harsh torments along with slavery if we offer ourselves to serve under Roman dominion, we who were the first of all to challenge them in war and the last still to hold them under arms. We did not surrender to the imperator when he offered peace; shall we surrender to Silva when he threatens cruelty? Wretched men, for what hope in this life shall we preserve ourselves? Granted, the enemy may pardon us. What will that avail when God's offence is clear? The fires were turned from the enemy against us, the winds' blasts changed, the flames bent back to burn our defences. Who can live with God opposed to him? There is no place for pardon, but a manifest command of voluntary death. Why did night intervene, except to keep the enemy from forestalling us and breaking in as soon as the wall's protection was burned, to preserve time for us to kill one another and allow us to die with our children and kinsfolk, so that we should not see panting old men dragged away by the Romans or our dearest wives seized for the victor's lust? Let us die with our fatherland and not survive the reproach of such disgrace. Where, then, shall we flee from the face of God, or where shall we go with the Lord of heaven hostile to us? If mountains fall upon us and hide us in hollow caves, how shall we nevertheless be able to evade the indignation of such power? Where shall we go where God is not, since he himself is everywhere? Are the examples slight which teach us that he has long been hostile, for our sins, to the nation he once protected? Who can doubt it when he sees that our hands have turned against ourselves and domestic sedition has killed more than

war? I shall not grant the Romans that they have conquered; nor do they claim this for themselves, knowing that almost all of us have perished by our own arms rather than another's. For what Roman arms did the Jews dwelling in Caesarea see? On the Sabbath holiday, amid the solemn observances of our sacred rites, the multitude of Caesarean Gentiles, inflamed by a sudden impulse and a fury sent from above, destroyed twenty thousand of them and drove all away, emptying the whole city. Did not a certain madness fill all Syria, so that Jews and Gentiles, living in the same cities and formerly bound together by the goodwill of shared residence, afterwards clashed with one another in arms, establishing for the Romans a ford to their future victory? For what shall I say of Scythopolis? The Jews had first hastened there to forestall the Gentile population, lest, following the example of the other cities, it devise anything against our people. Thus men who ought to have joined their forces and fought against foreigners instead fought against one another: some of the Jews battled alongside the Gentiles against their own kin and neighbours, and then were themselves killed by the Gentiles as the price of their labour and shed blood—the very thing they had prevented from happening to the Gentiles. The Damascenes struck down eight thousand Jews without any cause; the Ascalonites, two thousand five hundred. In the city called Ptolemais too, two thousand were killed. At Alexandria there was ancient hatred between the Jews and the Gentile peoples, ever since Alexander the Great had used the Jews' zeal to subdue the Egyptians. Hence, when the city was founded, equal privileges were assigned to Jews and Egyptians, but separate dwellings, lest the worship of those who wished to preserve their purifications without any contamination be mingled. From this arose frequent clashes between them. Quarrels broke out and judgement was sought; yet it is clear that none of so great a king's benefits was violated. But later, when a tumult arose from the Gentiles and some Jews were killed while others were detained for punishment, the Jewish people, provoked by the injury, rose against its authors. When they sought too obstinately to avenge themselves upon their fellow citizens, the Roman army was brought in and struck down sixty thousand Jews within the city. But why do I linger over lesser things, when we must lament the destruction of the whole world in the ruin of one city? Where is the great city Jerusalem, where beautiful Zion, where the wondrous temple, where that second tabernacle, the sanctuary of holiness, into which only the high priest was accustomed to enter once a year, not without blood which he offered for himself and for the people's sin? It has been profaned by the Gentiles; those who destroyed the city dwell in its remains. Where, I say, are you, city crowded with people, revered by kings, acceptable to God, seat of grace? Your pavements were of marble, your walls gleaming with marble, your roofs shone with precious marble; your gates glittered with gold, others gleamed with silver. All have been killed, both those who continually dwelt in you and those who gathered to you from every part of the world, so that there can be no doubt that the whole world has perished in you. Bare, bare is everything, burned from the rooftops, demolished from the foundations; your dwelling has become deserted, and no one inhabits the tents. Does anyone still take pleasure in living, and not regret having lived? Hard are the eyes that can see these things, pitiless the souls that can wish anything to survive such griefs, not because the calamities have ceased, but because there is now no rest. Where shall we turn our eyes, or what can it delight us to see? The whole city is a tomb of the dead; ashes alone meet the gaze, streets empty of the living are filled with corpses. Wretched elders, with ash-covered grey hair and torn clothing,

sit over the remains of the dead, covering bare bones to protect them from birds and beasts. A few women stand at the threshold, whom the impious soldier has preserved for dishonour, not for life. Who, seeing these things and thinking of postponing death, dares lift his eyes to heaven? Who is so forgetful of his fatherland, an enemy of his own people, estranged from family devotion, devoid of affection? Whose spirit is so effeminate and soft, who so fearful, that he is not ashamed to have been preserved for these things? If only we had died long ago, or, if life remained, lost the light of our eyes before we beheld the holy city demolished by enemy hands, this temple consecrated to God by our ancestors so impiously burned in flames, or priests lying slain in the temple. Let us therefore make amends for having survived these evils, so that we may seem to have deferred death not from a desire for life but from an intent upon valour. The enemy has surrounded the whole fortification; nothing remains but ourselves and our wives. They already set up our children for auction and contend among themselves over who shall take away whose wife, whether the women are to be distributed according to the claims of rank and station or forced to undergo a wretched drawing of lots. Monstrous punishments and the most elaborate torments are also being prepared for us: not only blazing flames or various deaths by the stroke of the avenging axe, a harsh punishment indeed after chains, prison and the yoke, but more tolerable to men because free from mockery; also limbs torn from the living and, above all, hands cut off. Not undeservedly, since they failed in their duty when they could have helped themselves. We must also undergo the bites of beasts as a spectacle for the victors. This has already been performed in the arenas of various cities, and ought to be shameful to us as an example or wretched as an experience: that we preserve ourselves to fight either beasts or brothers. Why then do we delay? We are no longer free to escape what we fear. If we are unwilling to kill our children out of mercy or ourselves through valour, we shall be compelled to kill our brothers or kinsmen in disgrace. The former affection urges; the latter the victors demand. If we are unwilling to perform the service of family devotion, we shall be forced to undergo the mockery of a pageant of the murder of kin. Let us therefore undertake what will benefit our children or wives. If they are weaker, let us remove them from the torments to come; if we are stronger, let us overcome parental compassion and the affections of kinship, and in this too conquer the enemy, whose booty we take away. Valour demands this, shame urges it. Not to fear death belongs to valour. For we are all born for death and beget children for death: their death is assigned to nature, their captivity counted as disgrace. Those whom we could not snatch from danger, therefore, let us snatch from mockery. Fathers, have mercy upon your children; husbands, upon your wives; all, upon the little ones. Let us have mercy, above all, upon ourselves while we have the power to show mercy, so that it may come from us, lest we seem both born and preserved for dishonour. For who could endure fathers killed before their sons' faces and sons before their parents' eyes, old men weary with grey age dragged away either to death or, worse, to slavery, women led away with dishevelled hair in their husbands' sight and dragged by force to shame? Who could endure hearing the voice of a little child crying and calling his father to help him in his plea, when you now hear in vain, your hands bound and your captive neck beneath the yoke? Therefore, while our hands are still free, while we grasp the sword, let us undertake a work which the victorious enemy may admire. Let our wives receive the last gift of conjugal love as a dowry inheritance. We return these keys to them by a new testament of blood, so that they may be heirs of our freedom.

They themselves urge this; certainly those who wish it deserve it, and those who shrink from it must be compelled. Nor will the little ones fear the sword which, because of their age, they do not understand and which they ought to receive from devoted parents, so that they may truly become free. What could be more excellent for us too than to burn the stronghold first, yet preserve the grain, lest they think that we undertook the service of mutual slaughter compelled by hunger rather than invited by a desire for valour? We give them food filled with blood; and if the flames consume it, the very smell of the burning grain will show that what the besieged had in abundance was lost to the besiegers. After this let each offer himself to the wound and, dying, cover his fatherland and clasp it in a final embrace. Let the fatherland which was the dwelling of our dignity become for us the tomb of freedom. This mound befits our dead, so that we may be covered by the enclosure of valour."

[V.53.2] Fired by such a speech, the others held drawn swords, kissed their wives and embraced their children, weeping and hurrying at the same time to forestall the enemy. "These tokens of love," he said, "we give you as consolation in the utmost necessity." Manfully suppressing affection, they shut out feeling and carried out the slaughter. Fearless, the women offered themselves to the wound to preserve their chastity. They too had put on the minds of their husbands. After killing their kinsfolk and children, they chose vigorous men to complete the remaining slaughter. Thus all were laid low, nine hundred and sixty with the little ones and women. Only one woman survived; she hid five sons in an aqueduct while the others attended to their final necessities. Roused by the voices of the Romans arriving at daybreak, she told them what had happened. A fire which they themselves had previously set consumed their wealth.

Translation notes

1. [I.10.3] Translation comparison: The antecedent of cuius is not explicitly named: Pollard understands Demetrius, while Alexander's recovered ascendancy is another possible referent. Millet recasts the sentence and does not unambiguously resolve the antecedent.

2. [I.12.3] Translation comparison: Millet presents the Pharisees as flattering the queen by attributing to her a perfect understanding of Scripture. The Latin supplies no possessive with scientiam, permitting different attachments; Pollard retains the Pharisees' own knowledge of divine law.

3. [I.24.2] Translation comparison: Millet presents Mithridates's testimony as supporting Antipater against accusations before Caesar, giving the episode a forensic interpretation. Absolutio permits consideration of acquittal or defence, but does not establish a separate hearing here; Pollard retains the immediate rescue narrative.

4. [I.37.3] Translation comparison: Lauro's paraphrase does not clearly distinguish a married woman from a woman attached to Antony. The Latin sociatam uiro permits the former interpretation, but the English retains the latter: Cleopatra's claim to surpass all women in beauty favours the contrast between male and female rivals.

5. [I.37.5] Translation comparison: Millet substantially agrees with Pollard in presenting Mariamne as hating her husband. The genitive uiri could instead be subjective, referring to Herod's hatred of Mariamne; the existing interpretation is retained in view of the narrative context.

6. [II.12.2] Translation comparison: Lauro's worldly paraphrase supports the retained reading that true salvation does not lie in prosperity. In secundis could instead mean "in second place", but this interpretation is not adopted here; salutis is construed with ueritatem.

7. [II.18.1] Translation comparison: Pollard takes perfidia tribueretur as attributing faithlessness to the Scythopolitans. Millet instead makes Simon say that he would have been more justified in treating them treacherously: tribuere can concern attribution or the bestowal of treatment.

8. [III.11.3] Translation comparison: Pollard refers illud to caput machinamenti, the head of the battering ram. Millet has Eleazar seize both the machine and his stone; the later reappearance of the stone makes the sequence difficult, but his version supplies an additional object not explicit in the Latin pronoun.

9. [III.16.1] Translation comparison: Pollard takes perferemus as enduring Josephus's decision. Millet understands carrying news of it to the dead, whose imagined speech immediately precedes this passage; that interpretation supplies a message and recipients not expressly stated in the Latin.

10. [V.20.2] Translation comparison: Lauro also presents a four-person list. The English provisionally retains that enumeration, rather than taking Adiabenus as "of Adiabene",

qualifying Magassarus. The latter interpretation would reduce the participants to three; the difficulty concerning Adiabenus remains unresolved.

11. [V.31.2] Translation comparison: Eum may refer either to the person denying food, as in Pollard, or to cibum, the food denied. Millet omits the entire analogy and therefore supplies no independent interpretation of the pronoun.