

Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.180–82, Jeremiah, and Nebuchadnezzar

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Scholars who discuss the history of the southern Levant in the Neo-Babylonian Period frequently refer to Josephus, *Ant.* 10.180–82 (= 10.9.7) as possible evidence for a Babylonian attack on the Moabites, Ammonites, and Egypt in the year 582 B.C.E.¹ Many of these scholars express some skepticism

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¹ G. W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup, 146; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 808; H. M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah During the "Exilic" Period* (SO, 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), 57–58; P. Bienkowski, "The Iron Age and Persian Periods in Jordan," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 7 (2001), 265–74 (269); J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 352; I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 178; E. Gaß, *Die Moabiter: Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, 38; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 210–11; L. G. Herr, "Wine Production in the Hills of Southern Ammon and the Founding of Tall al-'Umayrī in the Sixth Century BC," *ADAJ* 39 (1995), 124; idem, "The Ammonites in the Late Iron Age and Persian Period," in B. MacDonald and R. W. Younker (eds.), *Ancient Ammon* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 232; idem, "Excavation and Cumulative Results," in L. G. Herr et al. (eds.), *Madaba Plains Project 5: The 1994 Season at Tall al-'Umayri and Subsequent Studies* (Berreïn Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 8–22, here 18; U. Hübner, *Die Ammoniter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion eines transjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, 16; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 202, 205; H. J. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre: From the Beginning of the Second Millennium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C.E.* (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1997), 335–39; A. Lemaire, "Les transformations politiques et culturelles de la Transjordanie au VI^e siècle av. J.-C.," *Transen* 8 (1994), 9–27 (13); J. Lindsay, "The Babylonian Kings and Edom, 605–550 B.C.," *PEQ* 108 (1976), 23–39 (27–29); O.

with regard to the historical worth of this text, especially with regard to the campaign against Egypt (*Ant.* 10.182).² Some have offered suggestions for where Josephus obtained his information.³ No one has offered an extended examination of Josephus' account in order to determine whether it is an independent historical source for such an event. To remedy this, I examine Josephus' sources and the literary techniques that he used to create the account. For sake of convenience, the passage is presented below.

[180] But, when they came there [i.e., the Judeans arrived in Egypt], the Deity revealed to the prophet [i.e., Jeremiah] that the king of Babylonia was about to march against the Egyptians, and He bade the prophet to foretell to the people that Egypt would be taken and that the Babylonian king would kill some of them and would take the rest captive and carry them off to Babylon. [181] And so it happened; for in the fifth year after the sacking of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar marched

Lipschits, "Ammon in Transition from Vassal Kingdom to Babylonian Province," *BAIOR* 335 (2004), 37–52 (40); idem, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 67; J. R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 533; J. M. Miller, "Moab and the Moabites," in A. Dearman (ed.), *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 1–40 (26); J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 486; M. Noth, *The History of Israel* (trans. P. R. Akroyd; New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 293–94; A. Spalinger, "Egypt and Babylonia: A Survey (c. 620 B.C.–550 B.C.)," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 5 (1977), 221–44 (236); A. H. v. Zyl, *The Moabites* (Pretoria Oriental Series, 3; Leiden: Brill, 1960), 41. Several works in which one might expect a reference to this passage leave it out, see, e.g., L. L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Vol. 1: Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (Library of Second Temple Studies, 47; London: T&T Clark, 2004); idem, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T&T Clark, 2007); M. Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2005).

² The main objection on this point is that Josephus states that Nebuchadnezzar killed the Pharaoh and replaced him. This act is impossible for 582 since Pharaoh Hophra reigned from 589 to 570 B.C.E. See Bright, *A History of Israel*, 352; Lindsay, "Babylonian Kings and Edom," 28; Miller and Hayes, *History*, 486.

³ Most important among recent commentaries on and editions of this passage are C. T. Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy (AJ 9,1–10, 185)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000); C. T. Begg and P. Spilbury, *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities Books 8–10* (Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary, 5; Leiden: Brill, 2005); F. Josephus, *Les Antiquités Juives, Livres X et XI* (trans. E. Nodet; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2010). See also I. Eph'al, "Nebuchadnezzar the Warrior: Remarks on his Military Achievements," *IEJ* 53 (2003), 178–91, here 184.

against Coele-Syria and, after occupying it, made war both on the Moabites and the Ammanites. [182] Then, after making these nations subject to him, he invaded Egypt in order to subdue it, and, having killed the king who was then reigning and appointed another, he again took captive the Jews who were in the country and carried them to Babylon (*Ant.* 10.181–82).⁴

GREEK SOURCES FOR *ANT.* 10.180–82

In his edition of Josephus, *Ant.* 9–11, Marcus states that Josephus probably based his narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt mentioned in *Ant.* 10.180–82 on Berosus.⁵ Lemaire likewise suggests that Josephus based *Ant.* 10.181–82 on Berosus, who may have based his own account on a Babylonian Chronicle.⁶ So, what can be said about the relationship between Josephus' text and those of Greek authors, particularly Berosus?

Josephus quotes Berosus concerning the events of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in *Ant.* 10.220–26 as well as in *Ag. Ap.* 1.135–41. Since Josephus provides a fuller discussion of the account in *Ag. Ap.*, it will be the focus of my comments here. In *Ag. Ap.* 1.132–33, Josephus summarizes Berosus' account of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in his own words before quoting Berosus. By including Berosus' quote and his own summary, this segment of *Ag. Ap.* provides a unique opportunity to see how Josephus is using his source material. What is noticeable in the quotation of Berosus is the succinct quality of the description. Cited here is the relevant part of Josephus' quotation of Berosus:

His father, Nabopalassar, hearing of the defection of the satrap in charge of Egypt, Coele-Syria, and Phoenicia, and being himself unequal to the fatigues of a campaign, committed part of his army to his son Nabuchodonosor, still in the prime of his life, and sent him against the rebel. Nabuchodonosor engaged and defeated the latter in a pitched battle and replaced the district under Babylonian rule. Meanwhile, as it happened, his father Nabopalassar sickened and died in the city of Babylon, after a reign of twenty-one years. Being informed ere long of his father's death, Nabuchodonosor settled the affairs of Egypt and the other countries. The prisoners—Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and those of Egyptian nationality—were consigned to some of his friends, with orders to conduct them to Babylonia, along with the heavy troops and the rest of the spoils; while he

⁴ Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities, Books 9–11* (trans. R. Marcus; LCL; London: Heinemann, 1951).

⁵ See Marcus in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 259 n. a.

⁶ Lemaire, "Les transformations," 13.

himself, with a small escort, pushed across the desert to Babylon (*Ag. Ap.* 1.135–37).⁷

In this section, Berosus provides a condensed account of the military activity of Nebuchadnezzar from his battle against Necho II⁸ at Carchemish in 605 B.C.E., down to his campaigns against Judah (598/7 or 587/6 B.C.E.).⁹ If one did not know of this history from other sources, one might infer from Berosus' account that Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt and promptly subjugated all of Syro-Palestine, when in fact this only began in 605 B.C.E. at the battle of Carchemish. Furthermore, by condensing Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Berosus' account makes it appear as though the death of Nabopolassar occurred around the same time Nebuchadnezzar was deporting Jews and others. Nebuchadnezzar may have taken some prisoners from the battle of Carchemish, but there is no evidence to suggest that Judeans were deported at that time. Thus, while Berosus' account makes reasonable sense of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, the telescoping of historical events makes it difficult to understand the sequence of events without other historical sources.

Josephus' summary of Berosus highlights his adaptive use of sources. Referring to Berosus' account cited above, Josephus writes:

In his narrative of the actions of this monarch [i.e., Nabopolassar] he [i.e., Berosus] relates how he sent his son Nabuchodonosor with a large army to Egypt and to our country, on hearing that these people had revolted, and how he defeated them all, burnt the temple at Jerusalem, dislodged and transported our entire population to Babylon, with the result that the city lay desolate for seventy years until the time of Cyrus, king of Persia. He adds that the Babylonian monarch conquered Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, and Arabia, his exploits surpassing those of all previous kings of Chaldea and Babylon (*Ag. Ap.* 1.132–33).¹⁰

In this summary of Berosus, Josephus makes the temporal telescoping of events more visible than Berosus by adding a reference to the burning of the temple (586 B.C.E.). Thus,

⁷ Josephus, *Against Apion* (trans. H. St. J. Thackeray; LCL; London: Heinemann, 1926).

⁸ Necho II (610–595 B.C.E.) is most likely the “satrap” mentioned here (J. M. G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus: Against Apion* [Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, 10; Leiden: Brill, 2006], 82 n. 447; Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 290–91 n. 948).

⁹ Begg and Spilsbury discuss Josephus' use of Berosus, including the possibility that Josephus has altered Berosus' text when citing him (*Judean Antiquities*, 290–91 n. 948; cf. Barclay, *Against Apion*, 82–83 nn. 450, 455).

¹⁰ Josephus, *Against Apion* (trans. H. St. J. Thackeray).

Josephus' summary of Berossus covers at least the years 605–586 B.C.E. and is equally as compressed as Berossus' account if not more so. Furthermore, Josephus changes the focus of Berossus' account slightly by excluding the information about the death of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent emergency return to Babylon.

Now, unless it is assumed that Berossus' works contained another more detailed account of Nebuchadnezzar's reign that is no longer extant, the text that Josephus quotes is the text he used to create his account of Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year campaign. It is possible that Berossus used a Babylonian Chronicle to create his account, but even if he did, he did not retain the year-by-year notation of events characteristic of the Babylonian Chronicles. Rather, Berossus compressed the information he found in it.¹¹ In any case, Berossus does not specifically mention a campaign in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year. Nor does Berossus mention the Moabites, Ammonites or an invasion of Egypt that resulted in the replacement of the Egyptian king, all of which are mentioned explicitly in *Ant.* 10.181–82. If Josephus used Berossus, he significantly adapted and added to what he found in order to come up with the account in *Ant.* 10.180–82.

It is possible that Josephus had another Greek source. Following his discussion of Berossus, Josephus mentions other ancient authors whose works he consulted (*Ag. Ap.* 1.143–44). However, there is little evidence in Josephus' citations that these authors had precise information about Babylonian history. In *Ag. Ap.* 1.156–58, Josephus' citation of "the Phoenician record" shows that some ancient records, to which Josephus claims access, may have had a reasonably high level of detail for a particular city such as Tyre.¹² Whether such detail ever went beyond the history of a particular city is unknown since we do not have access to these records except through Josephus.

Thus, while Josephus might have had access to a Greek source—Berossus or otherwise—on which he based his account of Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year campaign, the

¹¹ The extant Chronicle for Nebuchadnezzar's reign covers his campaign in 605 B.C.E., when he was crown prince, down to his eleventh regnal year in 594 B.C.E. The events of some of the years are not well preserved, especially the eleventh year. The Chronicle mentions the 605 B.C.E. campaign against Egypt and an inconclusive campaign against Egypt in Nebuchadnezzar's fourth year (601 B.C.E.). For the Chronicle covering Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Chronicle 5), see A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS, 5; Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1975), 99–102.

¹² Although, as Barclay notes, Josephus seems only to know of two Greek authors, Dios and Menander, rather than any truly Phoenician writer (Barclay, *Against Apion*, 67, 89 n. 509).

extant evidence suggests that it would be almost as temporally compressed as his own narrative. If Josephus did construct the narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year campaign from Berosus' writing, then what he got from it was twofold: 1) the undated mention of military action against Egypt and Coele-Syria; and 2) the deportation of prisoners to Babylonia (*Ag. Ap.* 1.135–37).

JEREMIAH AS A SOURCE FOR *ANT.* 10.180–82

In his edition of Josephus, *Ant.* 9–11, Marcus also suggests that Josephus used Jeremiah 44–49 as a source for the conquest of the Moabites and Ammonites mentioned in *Ant.* 10.180–82.¹³ More recently, Begg, in his analysis of Josephus *Ant.* 10.155–85, as well as Begg and Spilsbury in their commentary on Josephus' *Antiquities*, have argued that Josephus used Jer 40–52 in composing his narrative.¹⁴ Begg also analyzes Josephus' compositional strategies. These strategies include expanding, compressing, rearranging, adapting, and modifying the narrative of his sources. Josephus also retouches characterizations and specifies matters that his sources leave to inference.¹⁵ Begg's and Spilsbury's insights are to a significant extent judgments of a literary rather than a historical nature. Nonetheless, their identification of Josephus' literary sources and discussion of his historiographic method are crucial in coming to a conclusion on the historical problem. This discussion takes advantage of their insights and adds additional observations, achieving a higher resolution understanding of Josephus' compositional method for *Ant.* 10.180–82.

In the narrative leading up to our passage, Josephus describes events after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. (*Ant.* 10.155–79). The relation between this narrative and that found in Jeremiah is important for understanding *Ant.* 10.180–82 and so I will summarize it briefly. In *Ant.* 10.155–75, Josephus provides a straightforward summary of the narrative he found in Jeremiah 39:11–41:18 with a few modifications, expansions, and the like.¹⁶ Key to this narrative is the assassination of the Babylonian-appointed governor Gedaliah—including the Chaldean troops with him—by Ishmael who had the support of the Ammonites. Afraid of Babylonian reprisals for the bloodshed, the Judean soldiers fighting against Ishmael decide to make their way to Egypt.

¹³ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (trans. R. Marcus), 259 n. a.

¹⁴ Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*; Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 256–65.

¹⁵ Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 619–22.

¹⁶ For analysis of this section of material consult Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 599–613; Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 256–62.

Next, Josephus compresses into a few short paragraphs (*Ant.* 10.176–79) the biblical narrative found in Jer 42:1–43:7.¹⁷ The biblical narrative describes the request of the Judean commanders that Jeremiah consult God and ascertain whether the Judeans should flee to Egypt (Jer 42:1–6). Jeremiah’s negative answer follows (Jer 42:7–22), but the Judean soldiers decide to go to Egypt anyway, taking along an unwilling Jeremiah (Jer 43:1–7).

Josephus continues the story in *Ant.* 10.180–82, the main object of this investigation. This brief section of Josephus’ narrative has a more complex relationship with Jeremiah than *Ant.* 10.155–79. Table 1 lays out *Ant.* 10.180–82 alongside the possible source texts from Jeremiah. While the translation of the biblical text provided here follows the MT, some caution is necessary because it is not certain that the text that Josephus had available to him was the same as the MT. Furthermore, Josephus was aware of and occasionally followed something approximating the LXX.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Begg’s extensive study concludes that Josephus’ main source for this section of material was something approximating the MT over against the shorter LXX tradition.¹⁹ I use the MT in what follows as a practical matter without asserting that Josephus used a manuscript tradition that was identical with the MT. A discussion of the main points follows.²⁰

¹⁷ Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 262–63.

¹⁸ E.g., Begg, *Josephus’ Story of the Later Monarchy*, 602 n. 12.

¹⁹ Begg, *Josephus’ Story of the Later Monarchy*, 569 n. 172, 626.

²⁰ Translations of the biblical texts are the author’s. The text of Josephus is quoted from, Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities, Books 9–11* (trans. R. Marcus).

Text of Josephus	Possible Source Text in Jeremiah
<p><i>Antiquities</i> 10.180—<i>Prediction</i></p> <p>“But, when they came there [i.e., the Judeans arrived in Egypt], the Deity revealed to the prophet [i.e., Jeremiah] that the king of Babylonia was about to march against the Egyptians, and He bade the prophet to foretell to the people that Egypt would be taken and that the Babylonian king would kill some of them and would take the rest captive and carry them off to Babylon.”</p>	<p>Jer 43:8–13 (see also Jer 44; 46:13–26)</p> <p>Undated oracle predicting that Nebuchadnezzar would come to Egypt, kill some people and take others captive</p> <p>“. . . and coming he will strike the land of Egypt, those for death, to death, those for captivity, to captivity, those for the sword, to the sword” (Jer 43:11).</p>
<p><i>Antiquities</i> 10.181—<i>Fulfillment Part 1</i></p> <p>“And so it happened; for in the fifth year after the sacking of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar,</p>	<p>Jer 52:29–30a</p> <p>“In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, he deported 832 people from Jerusalem; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, deported 745 Judeans.”</p>
<p>Nebuchadnezzar marched against Coele-Syria²¹ and, after occupying it, made war both on the Moabites and the Ammanites.”</p>	<p>Jer 46:1–49:33—Oracles about foreign nations, including Moab (48), and the Ammonites (49:1–6).</p>

²¹ The referent of Coele-Syria changes over time and from author to author. Generally, however, it included the inland areas of Damascus, Samaria, and areas east of the Jordan River (R. W. Smith, “Coele-Syria,” *ABD* 1:1075–76). This conclusion comports with Josephus’ usage of the term. One important example appears in *Ag. Ap.* 1.133, where Josephus summarizes part of an account from Berossus by referring to Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, and Arabia. Josephus then quotes the text he just summarized and there one finds Berossus speaking of Egypt, Coele-Syria, and Phoenicia (*Ag. Ap.* 1.135). This suggests the basic identity of Coele-Syria with Syria and Arabia, or in other words, non-coastal areas. In *Ant.* 1.206, Josephus retells the story of Gen 19, in which Lot’s daughters give birth to the eponymous ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites, and then includes them both as people of Coele-Syria.

<p><i>Antiquities</i> 10.182—<i>Fulfillment</i> Part 2</p> <p>“Then, after making these nations subject to him, he invaded Egypt in order to subdue it, and,</p> <p>having killed the king who was then reigning and appointed another,</p> <p>he again took captive the Jews who were in the country and carried them to Babylon.”</p>	<p>Jer 46:13–26 (cf. 43:8–13)</p> <p>Undated oracle predicting the destruction of Egypt at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar</p> <p>“Yahweh of hosts, the god of Israel says, ‘I am about to punish Amon of Thebes, Pharaoh, Egypt, her gods, her kings, Pharaoh and all who trust in him. I will give them into the hand of those seeking their life, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and into the hands of his servants.’” (Jer 46:25–26; cf. Jer 44:30).</p> <p>“Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, deported 745 Judeans” (Jer 52:30a; cf. the prediction in Jer 43:11 mentioned above).</p>
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Table 1—Josephus, *Ant.* 10.180–82, and Possible Source Texts in Jeremiah

As indicated in Table 1, Josephus structured his text using a prediction and fulfillment pattern. Josephus builds the prediction (10.180) primarily on Jer 43:8–13, which is an oracle predicting a campaign of Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt. In particular, Josephus appears to have focused on Jer 43:11, which mentions both destruction and deportation.²² This verse also seems to have been crucial in structuring the fulfillment in *Ant.* 10.182 with its notice that Jews were deported to Babylon. Dependence on Jer 43:11 becomes all the more clear when one considers that the following chapter (Jer 44) contains oracles predicting the destruction, but not deportation, of the Judeans who have fled to Egypt. Josephus’ technique here is to compress the oracle in Jer 43:8–13 down to its essence: an invasion by the king of Babylon that would result in Judean deportations.

²² Begg, *Josephus’ Story of the Later Monarchy*, 617.

Josephus' source for the prediction in *Ant.* 10.180 is reasonably clear, but understanding the sources behind the fulfillment section of the passage (*Ant.* 10.181–82) is more problematic. The key issue is that the text of Jeremiah moves into a series of poetic oracles that do not narrate a fulfillment to Jeremiah's prediction of destruction and deportation. This part of Jeremiah consists of an oracle to Jeremiah's scribe Baruch (Jer 45), a series of "oracles against the nations" (Jer 46–51; hereafter OAN), and a historical appendix about Zedekiah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the release of Jehoiachin (Jer 52; cf. 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30 and Jer 19:1–10). If Josephus did not find a narrative fulfillment of the prediction in these chapters of Jeremiah, are there any clues as to how he came up with his narrative? Here also, a few items in Josephus' and Jeremiah's texts suggest a plausible solution.

First, Josephus states that the Babylonian campaign took place "in the fifth year after the sacking of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (*Ant.* 10.181). As indicated in Table 1, the most obvious source for this date is Jer 52:30,²³ which is part of the list of Babylonian deportations carried out in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh (598/7), eighteenth (587/6), and twenty-third (582/1) years.²⁴ This conclusion is strengthened by Josephus' statement that the campaign took place in the fifth year after Jerusalem's destruction (*Ant.* 10.181). The dates given in Jer 52:29–30 specify Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth and twenty-third years as two of the instances in which Judeans were deported.²⁵ The difference, of course, is five years. This is crucial because only a few verses earlier in Jer 52:12–16—and in its parallel in 2 Kgs 25:8–12—the Temple is said to have been destroyed and Judeans deported in Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year, only four years separated from Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year. Josephus' explicit reference to the five year difference between the destruction of Jerusalem and the campaign makes his use of Jer 52:30 as the source of his

²³ Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 617; Eph'al, "Nebuchadnezzar the Warrior," 184 n. 10; Josephus, *Antiquités Juives, Livres X et XI* (trans. E. Nodet), 54 n. 4; Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 336 n. 218.

²⁴ On the discrepancy between the eighteenth year mentioned here and the nineteenth year mentioned in 2 Kgs 25:8, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 37–52, 533. The LXX does not contain this summary of deportations.

²⁵ Although the text of Jeremiah 52:29–30 does not say that the eighteenth year was the year when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, it seems to imply this when it states that the people deported in that year were from Jerusalem (v. 29). Furthermore, in *Ag. Ap.* 1.154, Josephus refers explicitly to the eighteenth year as the year that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple and adds that this information comes from "our books."

date very likely. It also shows that Josephus was at this point dealing with something like the MT tradition because the LXX does not contain this summary of deportations.

Next, the inclusion of the Moabites and the Ammonites in Josephus' account of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign needs explanation. Both Jeremiah and Josephus state that Gedaliah's assassin Ishmael had the support of the king of the Ammonites (Jer 40:14; 41:10; *Ant.* 10.164, 174). Furthermore, both Jer 41:18 and *Ant.* 10.175 paint a picture of Judeans worried about Babylonian reprisals for the assassination of a Babylonian appointee. It would be a simple step in creating a narrative to infer that the Babylonians would attack the Ammonites because of their collusion in the assassination. Not surprisingly, a variety of scholars make this inference exactly.²⁶ This might plausibly account for the mention of the Ammonites.

In addition, one can also account for the attack extending to the Moabites by Josephus' regular pairing of the Moabites and Ammonites. Consider the following examples in addition to the present occurrence:

1. *Ant.* 1.205–6. This passage retells the story of Gen 19, where Lot's daughters give birth to the eponymous ancestors of Moab and Ammon.
2. *Ant.* 6.90. A retelling of how God delivered the Israelites from Egypt and then subdued their enemies, first the Assyrians, then the Ammonites and Moabites, and finally the Philistines.
3. *Ant.* 6.129. In this passage, Saul is said to have subjugated the Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, Idumeans, Amalekites, and Soba.
4. *Ant.* 9.7. The Moabites, Ammonites, and Arabs appear as enemies of the Judean king Jehoshaphat.
5. *Ant.* 11.21–25. The people in Syria, Phoenicia, Ammon, Moab, and Samaria write a letter to Cyrus in order to hinder the Jews from rebuilding Jerusalem.

As these examples illustrate, the Ammonites and Moabites (in this order or the reverse one) appear together alongside various other groups. They also appear separately, but never without each other in lists, as is the case in the present text. Perhaps their genealogical (as implied, at least, by Gen 19) or geographical relationship makes this pairing natural; but whatever the reason, the regular pairing of the two peoples

²⁶ Herr, "Wine Production," 124; idem, "Ammonites in the Late Iron Age," 232; Lindsay, "Babylonian Kings and Edom," 27–28; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, 533; Miller and Hayes, *History*, 486.

may account for the inclusion of the Moabites where one would not otherwise expect them.²⁷

If collusion in the assassination of Gedaliah is the motive for including the Ammonites in Nebuchadnezzar's campaign, the OAN in Jer 46–51 most likely provided the inspiration.²⁸ These oracles proclaim the destruction of Judah's enemies including Moab (48) and the Ammonites (49:1–6), both of which are the objects of undated oracles. The position of these oracles following the prophecies that the Judeans would be punished in Egypt (Jer 42–44) makes it likely that the OAN are the inspiration behind Josephus' narrative fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. That is to say, Josephus understood these oracles to indicate the assured destruction of the nations mentioned therein. As a result, it was a matter of inference to portray them as the objects of a Babylonian attack.

One can make a similar case for Egypt. In addition to Jeremiah's prophecy in 43:8–13, which foretells Nebuchadnezzar attacking Egypt, two OAN against Egypt appear in Jer 46. The first oracle against Egypt in Jer 46:2–12 contains a superscription that dates it to when Necho met Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish in 605 B.C.E. (v. 2). Josephus was clearly aware of this event and its relative date as shown by his description in *Ant.* 10.82–83. It seems unlikely that he would have turned to this for constructing the present narrative. Jeremiah 46:13, however, introduces another oracle against Egypt with, "The word that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the coming of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, to smite the land of Egypt." In the following verse (v. 14) there is a specific injunction for the cities of Migdol,

²⁷ The reasons for not including other nations mentioned in the OAN can be specified in some cases while not in others. The superscription to the oracle against the Philistines (Jer 47) implies that Egypt was the aggressor, despite the reference to the waters "rising out of the north" in 47:2 that points to an aggressor from the north such as Babylon. The exclusion of Edom is not clear given the undated oracle in Jer 49:7–22, other than that Edom was not connected in any way with the assassination of Gedaliah. Damascus (Jer 49:23–27), and Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor (Jer 49:28–33) may have been considered part of Coele-Syria and hence not otherwise noted. It is also the case that Damascus was destroyed in the eighth century by the Assyrians and so did not need to be included in this account. The exclusion of Elam (Jer 49:34–39) is explainable in terms of the orientation of the campaign to the Levant rather than to the east of Babylon. The exclusion of Babylon (Jer 50–51) is self-explanatory.

²⁸ Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 617 n. 63; Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 264 n. 742; Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities, Books 9–11* (trans. R. Marcus), 259 n. a; Josephus, *Antiquités Juives, Livres X et XI* (trans. E. Nodet), 54 n. 4.

Tahpanhes, and Memphis to be ready for battle. These three cities are significant. Tahpanhes is the city to which Jeremiah was forcibly taken (Jer 43:7). Furthermore, Tahpanhes is mentioned alongside Memphis and Migdol as one of the Egyptian cities in which Judeans were living (Jer 44:1). These cities, mentioned at the beginning of the second oracle against Egypt (Jer 46:13–26), make the connection between a post-586 B.C.E. Babylonian invasion of Egypt and the deportation of Judeans from those three cities a simple inference. The line of thought would proceed more or less as follows: 1) Jeremiah predicted a deportation of Jews from Egypt; 2) Jews had settled in Tahpanhes, Memphis, and Migdol; 3) the oracle against Egypt in Jer 46:13–26 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar will attack Tahpanhes, Memphis and Migdol; 4) therefore, Nebuchadnezzar's attack against Egypt would result in the deportation of Judeans who had settled there, fulfilling the prophecy. Additionally, because the second oracle against Egypt in Jer 46:13–26 is undated, Josephus could easily connect the details that follow to nearly any campaign, including one of his own making.

Josephus goes on to state that Nebuchadnezzar killed the Egyptian king and replaced him with another (10.182). There is no precise statement in Jeremiah indicating that Nebuchadnezzar killed and replaced an Egyptian king. However, Jeremiah's response to the Judeans in Egypt states that they will have a sign that his predictions will come true (Jer 44:29). Yahweh says, "I am going to give Pharaoh Hophra (Apries), king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those seeking his life, just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life" (Jer 44:30; cf. 46:25–26). Josephus' mention of Pharaoh's replacement appears to be what Begg and Spilsbury term "an implicit realization of Jer 44:30."²⁹ Moreover, Jer 44:30 states that Hophra's end will parallel what happened to Zedekiah. And what happened to Zedekiah? Nebuchadnezzar deported him and replaced him with a governor of local descent (Gedaliah), something that Josephus obviously knew (*Ant.* 9.155). It is only a matter of slight inference on Josephus' part to state that Hophra's deposition led to his replacement.

The final statement in *Ant.* 10.182 concerning the deportation of Jews to Babylon fulfills the prediction in *Ant.* 10.180. The source for the fulfillment might be the prediction itself, which was probably derived from Jer 43:11. It is also possible, as Begg suggests, to see a relationship between the notice of deportation in *Ant.* 10.182 and the deportation

²⁹ Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities*, 264 n. 744. See also Begg, *Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 617–18 n. 65.

mentioned in Jer 52:30.³⁰ Not only did Jer 52:30 provide the date for Josephus, but it also mentions the deportation of 745 Judeans. Moreover, the brief notice in Jer 52:30 does not specify whence the Judean deportees came. This is distinct from Jer 52:29, which explicitly states that the deportees taken in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year came from Jerusalem. This silence makes it easy to connect the deportation mentioned in Jer 52:30 with the deportation from Egypt predicted in Jer 43:11. Josephus probably understood Jer 43:11 and 52:30 in light of each other, especially given the prediction and fulfillment structure of *Ant.* 10.180–82.³¹

The discussion of the relationship between Josephus and Jeremiah shows that all the elements of the narrative in *Ant.* 10.180–82 are plausibly derived from Jeremiah. The key points are:

1. Use of the undated oracle in Jer 43:8–13 predicting that Nebuchadnezzar would come to Egypt, kill some people and take others captive.
2. Use of the date in Jer 52:30 and inference from the deportation of Judeans from an unnamed location.
3. Ammonite involvement in the assassination of Gedaliah and pairing with Moab.
4. Inference from the undated oracles against Egypt, Moab, and the Ammonites in Jer 46 and 48:1–49:6.

It appears that Josephus constructed a narrative fulfillment to Jeremiah's prophecies predicting Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Judeans who fled to Egypt. He did this by creating a Babylonian campaign that comports with undated oracles,

³⁰ Begg sees the relationship between the deportation in *Ant.* 10.182 and Jer 52:30 as "distant" (*Josephus' Story of the Later Monarchy*, 618).

³¹ Eph'al argues that Josephus used a midrashic tradition to create the account of the deportation of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar from Egypt (Eph'al, "Nebuchadnezzar the Warrior," 183–85; cf. Gaß, *Die Moabiter*, 210). The earliest extant example of this tradition, according to Eph'al, appears in 4QApoChryphon of Jeremiah C^a fragment 18 (D. Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4, vol. XXI, Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* [DJD, 30; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001], 163–66). This fragment, however, does not indicate anything about deportations from Egypt, and it would be difficult to infer such a deportation from it as it presently stands. Rather, it builds on the narrative about the immediate aftermath of Jerusalem's fall in Jer 39:5–44; 52:24–27 // 2 Kgs 25:18–21. If more of it were extant, one might find a prediction and fulfillment pattern similar to the one Josephus constructed out of the Jeremiah materials. If so, it might provide evidence that authors writing before Josephus made inferences similar to Josephus, and perhaps that he was influenced or dependent on them. As it stands, those sources are not available and Josephus' narrative is explicable in terms of his work on the book of Jeremiah.

and uses Jer 52:30 as the chronological benchmark for the narrative fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this article I noted that *Ant.* 10.180–82 has long been cited by scholars in their reconstructions of the history of the southern Levant. My analysis identified Josephus' sources in order to assess the historical value of the account of Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year campaign. The discussion of Josephus' Greek sources, especially Berosus, showed that while it is possible he used a Greek source, there is little evidence to suggest these sources contained a dated account of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against the Moabites, Ammonites, and Egypt. So far as is possible to determine, the Greek sources to which Josephus had access contained summary accounts of Nebuchadnezzar's reign that compressed his whole reign into a single paragraph. If Josephus relied on such a source it was only for the idea of a campaign of Nebuchadnezzar and deportations. He had to obtain the rest of the details elsewhere or invent them.

On the other hand, the discussion of the relationship between Josephus' text and the book of Jeremiah showed that Jeremiah contains all of the details necessary to create Nebuchadnezzar's campaign. As an example of Josephus' historiographic method, *Ant.* 10.180–82 highlights the importance of inference. In writing his narrative, Josephus was faced with a large set of material in Jeremiah missing a clear narrative line, but containing significant potential. It has undated oracles, a date unconnected to a real campaign, predictions of deportation and destruction. Arguably, Josephus took this series of potentialities and creatively linked them together through inferences and associations in order to fill the narrative gaps. While Josephus' method introduces some historical and chronological problems, his carefully crafted narrative tells a complete and reasonable story given his sources.

If this article is correct in its conclusion—that Josephus' account in *Ant.* 10.180–82 is largely, if not completely, dependent on Jeremiah for all of its details—then Josephus' account is not an independent witness to these events. As a result, any attempt to date the political demise of the Ammonites and the Moabites must rely on Jeremiah's OAN, their parallels in other prophetic books (Ezek 25:1–11; Amos 1:13–2:3; Zech 2:8–11), and on any relevant archaeological or epigraphic evidence. At present, none of these other sources provides definitive answers.³² One promising piece of evi-

³² For a review of the sources see C. W. Tyson, *Israel's Kin Across the Jordan: A Social History of the Ammonites in the Iron Age II (1000–500 BCE)* (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2011).

dence is Nabonidus's rock-cut inscription at as-Sila' in southern Jordan. This inscription indicates that Nabonidus subjugated Edom in 551 B.C.E. while on his way down to Tayma.³³ Perhaps Nabonidus subjugated the Ammonites at this time too, although this also remains to be demonstrated.

³³ B. L. Crowell, "Nabonidus, as-Sila', and the Beginning of the End of Edom," *BASOR* 348 (2007), 75–88.