

Article

# The Figure of Pontius Pilate in Josephus Compared with Philo and the Gospel of John

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**Abstract:** In this paper, I attempt an approach to the ‘historical Pilate.’ I aim to present the sources referring to him as well as to point out their rhetorical tendencies. However, the approach is selective: whereas all references to Pilate in Philo and Josephus will be addressed, with respect to the New Testament, this study will be based only on the Gospel of John, because its text offers the longest narrative of the Roman trial of Jesus among the Gospels. At the end of each section, the main conclusions are presented. Finally, after discussed all the sources chosen for this work, I will try to depict a picture of the ‘historical Pilate.’

**Keywords:** Pontius Pilate; Flavius Josephus; Philo of Alexandria; Gospel of John

## 1. Introduction

Pontius Pilate’s time in office as the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judea was from 26 to 36 or 37 C.E.<sup>1</sup> Judean Jews were situated in the center of Pilate’s province and the Idumaeans in the south. Jerusalem was regarded by both groups as their religious and cultural center. Furthermore, to the north, were the Samaritans with Mount Gerizim as their religious center. Under the Roman governors, there were two cities of Judea considered as the capital: Jerusalem as the traditional one and the focus of Jewish religious life and Caesarea as the residence of the Roman governor together with his troops and family. Occasionally, especially during festivals, the governor moved to Jerusalem. His responsibilities were primarily military, which is shown also by his title ‘prefect’ (ἐπαρχος).<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under his rule makes Pilate an important figure for the New Testament, Christian creeds,<sup>3</sup> post-canonical literature,<sup>4</sup> and also in popular imagination. Inextricably linked with Pilate are 1) the image of his handwashing in order to avoid responsibility and 2) his question, ‘*Quid est veritas?*’ (John 18:38).<sup>5</sup> Apart from his own person, the New Testament bears only one reference to his wife warning him against a judgement on Jesus (Matt 27:19).<sup>6</sup> Two contemporary nonbiblical sources, which both refer to Pilate, are the Jewish writers Philo and Josephus.

In the present work, I attempt an approach to the ‘historical Pilate.’ I aim to present the sources referring to him as well as to point out their rhetorical tendencies. The approach is selective: whereas all references to Pilate in Philo and Josephus will be addressed, with respect to the New Testament,

<sup>1</sup> See for example (Lémonon 2007, p. 263). For a critical discussion on this, see (Krieger 1992, pp. 27–32) and (Blinzler 1969, pp. 271–3).

<sup>2</sup> Under Claudius (41–54 C.E.), the title was changed to ‘procurator’ (ἐπίτροπος). The title ‘prefect,’ although not testified by Josephus, Philo, or Tacitus, is also confirmed by an inscription found in Caesarea in 1961. See for example (Lémonon 2007, pp. 23–31).

<sup>3</sup> See (Staats 1987).

<sup>4</sup> See (Diebner 2002).

<sup>5</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. xi).

<sup>6</sup> For a study on her, see (Kany 1995).

this study will be based only on the Gospel of John, because its text offers the longest narrative of the Roman trial of Jesus among the Gospels. At the end of each section, the main conclusions are presented. Finally, after having discussed all the sources chosen for this work, I will try to depict a picture of the 'historical Pilate.'

## 2. Pilate in Philo

The earliest literary reference to Pilate can be found in Philo's work *Embassy to Gaius (Legatio ad Gaium)* in paragraphs 299 and 304.<sup>7</sup> The part that is of interest to us is the following:

(299) I [sc. Agrippa I] can also tell you of something on which he prided himself, although I experienced countless sufferings during his lifetime. But you love and respect the truth. Pilate was an official who had been appointed procurator of Judaea. With the intention of annoying the Jews rather than of honouring Tiberius, he set up gilded shields in Herod's palace in the Holy City. They bore no figure and nothing else that was forbidden, but only the briefest possible inscription, which stated two things—the name of the dedicator and that of the person in whose honour the dedication was made. (300) But when the Jews at large learnt of his action, which was indeed already widely known, they chose as their spokesmen the king's four sons, who enjoyed prestige and rank equal to that of kings, his other descendants, and their own officials, and besought Pilate to undo his innovation in the shape of the shields, and not to violate their native customs, which had hitherto been invariably preserved inviolate by kings and emperors alike. (301) When Pilate, who was a man of inflexible, stubborn and cruel disposition, obstinately refused, they shouted, 'Do not cause a revolt! Do not cause a war! Do not break the peace! Disrespect done to our ancient Laws brings no honour to the Emperor. Do not make Tiberius an excuse for insulting our nation. He does not want any of our traditions done away with. If you say that he does, show us some decree or letter or something of the sort, so that we may cease troubling you and appeal to our master by means of an embassy.' (302) This last remark exasperated Pilate most of all, for he was afraid that if they really sent an embassy, they would bring accusations against the rest of his administration as well, specifying in detail his venality, his violence, his thefts, his assaults, his abusive behaviour, his frequent executions of untried prisoners, and his endless savage ferocity. (303) So, as he was a spiteful and angry person, he was in a serious dilemma; for he had neither the courage to remove what he had once set up, nor the desire to do anything which would please his subjects, but at the same time he was well aware of Tiberius' firmness on these matters. When the Jewish officials saw this, and realized that Pilate was regretting what he had done, although he did not wish to show it, they wrote a letter to Tiberius, pleading their case as forcibly as they could. (304) What words, what threats Tiberius uttered against Pilate when he read it! It would be superfluous to describe his anger, although he was not easily moved to anger, since his reaction speaks for itself. (305) For immediately, without even waiting until the next day, he wrote to Pilate, reproaching and rebuking him a thousand times for his new-fangled audacity and telling him to remove the shields at once and have them taken from the capital to the coastal city of Caesarea (the city named Sebaste after your great-grandfather), to be dedicated in the temple of Augustus. This was duly done. In this way both the honour of the Emperor and the traditional policy regarding Jerusalem were alike preserved.<sup>8</sup>

The incident described in the *Embassy* is found within a letter from Agrippa I to Emperor Gaius Caligula, trying to persuade him to respect the Jewish Law by referring to those preceding him and, therefore, to dissuade him from setting up his statue in the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>9</sup> For fruitful work on the question of Pilate's character, we have to be aware of this literary composition. Thus, I will discuss, briefly, its circumstances and particularities in the following paragraphs.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See (Borgen et al. 1997).

<sup>8</sup> (Philo 1970, par. 299–305 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 128–31]).

<sup>9</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 189). The whole letter can be found in (Philo 1970, par. 276–329 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 122–37]).

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed view on this see also (Smallwood 1976, pp. 220–55).

### 2.1. Historical Background of the Embassy

The *Embassy* is an invective against Emperor Gaius, with episodes showing, according to Philo, his hostility toward the Jews. Philo refers to two attacks made on them during the governorship of Gaius: the anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria in the summer of 38 C.E. and Gaius' attempt to dedicate the Temple in Jerusalem to the imperial cult.<sup>11</sup>

Although the city of Alexandria was dominated by Greek citizens, its Jewish Diaspora community was a large one and needed some definite organization beyond its division into synagogues. In fact, the Jews in Alexandria “were constituted as a quasi-autonomous civic unit, generally known as a *πολίτευμα* by modern, if not always by ancient, writers.”<sup>12</sup> From the time of Ptolemy I, the Jews had the right of residence in Alexandria, but, concerning their status of citizenship, they occupied only an intermediate position between the Greek citizens and the Egyptians who were totally without privileges. Having coexisted peacefully during the time of Ptolemaic dominance, hostility began with the annexation of Egypt in 30 B.C.E. by the Romans, but it did not take an active form for over sixty years. It seems that this hostility had its roots primarily in the complications introduced into the Alexandrian situation by the Roman annexation and, originally, was not based on hatred against Jews in general.<sup>13</sup> By the 30s C.E., after a party of Greek nationalists had arisen in Alexandria, the passive hostility changed into a brutal anti-Semitism and finally culminated in the riots against the Jews, which followed the visit of Agrippa I to Alexandria in August 38 C.E. First, a mob gathered in the gymnasium brought out a succession of gibes against the king.<sup>14</sup> Because this went unpunished by the prefect Flaccus, the Greeks mocked him by dressing up a certain lunatic named Carabas as a king.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, being aware of the prefect's impotence, the Greek mob deprived the Jews of the use of their synagogues.<sup>16</sup> It was not until Flaccus' sudden arrest by soldiers arriving from Rome in the autumn of 38 C.E. that conditions returned to normal for the Alexandrian Jews.<sup>17</sup>

As a consequence of these troubles, “three delegates were chosen by each of the factions and appeared before Gaius.”<sup>18</sup> While waiting to be received by the emperor in order to defend the interests of the Alexandrian Jews in light of their maltreatment by the Greeks, the Jewish embassy learned that Gaius had ordered that a statue be set up and named after Zeus in the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>19</sup> Finally, after being heard by him twice, Gaius left them within, saying: “I think that these men are not so much criminals as lunatics in not believing that I have been given a divine nature.”<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the embassy to Gaius was not successful. Philo himself says so clearly.<sup>21</sup> Thus, I may ask the question: for what purpose did Philo publish his *Embassy to Gaius*?

<sup>11</sup> See Smallwood, Introduction to (Philo 1970, p. 3).

<sup>12</sup> (Smallwood 1976, p. 225). A further discussion on this *terminus technicus* will not be done here. For this, see also (Smallwood 1976, pp. 225–35).

<sup>13</sup> See (Smallwood 1976, p. 233). According to her, the trouble probably arose over the question of the civic position of the Jews. See (Smallwood 1976, p. 234).

<sup>14</sup> (Philo 1960, par. 32–4 [trans. Colson, pp. 318–21]).

<sup>15</sup> (Philo 1960, par. 36–9 [trans. Colson, pp. 322–5]).

<sup>16</sup> (Philo 1960, par. 41–53 [trans. Colson, pp. 324–33]).

<sup>17</sup> (Philo 1960, par. 102–24 [trans. Colson, pp. 358–71]). According to Philo, Emperor Gaius decided on it after having received a letter from Agrippa I from Alexandria explaining Flaccus' suppression. For a further discussion on this letter, see the following paragraph.

<sup>18</sup> (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 257 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 152–3]). This voyage to Rome probably took place in the winter of 39–40 C.E.

<sup>19</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 187–9 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 100–1]).

<sup>20</sup> (Philo 1970, par. 367 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 144–5]). The two audiences given to them are told in (Philo 1970, par. 349–67 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 140–5]). Josephus mentions only the second hearing in (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 257–60 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 152–5]). For a more detailed study on this part, see (Smallwood 1976, pp. 242–5).

<sup>21</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 368–73 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 144–7]).

## 2.2. The Letter of Agrippa—Considerations on Philo’s Political Rhetoric

In order to find a reliable answer to this, we should keep in mind that the *Embassy* was written after Gaius’ death in 41 C.E.,<sup>22</sup> probably in the early part of Claudius’ reign, in order “to persuade the new Emperor [*sc.* Claudius] not to follow the policies of Gaius but those of his predecessors, Augustus and Tiberius,”<sup>23</sup> because this is relevant to his success as emperor. On a higher level, the whole work contains a scheme similar to this. Furthermore, Philo’s so-called historical writings, comprising the *Embassy* and the *Flaccus*, are marked by rhetorical and theological concerns.<sup>24</sup> In particular, this is prominent in his treatment of the characters and actions of Roman Emperors and officials, leading us back to our subject, Pilate.

Agrippa’s letter to Gaius in the *Embassy* includes the only reference to Pilate in Philo’s works. However, is it really a work of Agrippa himself? First of all, from a stylistic point of view, the letter fits with Philo’s text of the whole *Embassy*. Secondly, ancient literature offers examples of discourses that were not delivered by those to whom they were dedicated.<sup>25</sup> Despite these reservations concerning an Agrippian authorship of *this* letter presented in the *Embassy*, the possible existence of a real letter from him in that conflicting situation cannot be totally rejected;<sup>26</sup> however, whether the historical Agrippa wrote one is unknown to us.<sup>27</sup> Certainly, the one in the *Embassy* is a Philonian composition.<sup>28</sup>

In the *Embassy* (and also in the *Flaccus*), Philo makes use of several rhetorical themes, which I will take briefly into consideration with regard to the relevant passage cited above:<sup>29</sup>

- (1) He stresses that the Jews are loyal and peaceful members of the Roman Empire, striving for “respect for the Emperor” as well as “obedience to [their] hallowed laws.”<sup>30</sup> They show respect to their emperor, but they cannot tolerate any disrespect toward their own laws. The incident of the Gilded Shields shows that “there is no fundamental conflict between these two positions,”<sup>31</sup> because by removing them, “both the honour of the Emperor and the traditional policy regarding Jerusalem were alike preserved.”<sup>32</sup> According to Philo, it is obvious that dishonor shown toward Jewish Law is therefore connected with dishonor to the emperor,<sup>33</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The *Embassy* mentions events after Gaius’ time as Roman Emperor. See (Philo 1970, par. 206 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 106–7]).

<sup>23</sup> (Bond 1998, p. 33). For this view, see also (Lémonon 2007, pp. 190–1). That is why (Schwartz 1983, p. 32) speaks correctly of a “context that is doubly apologetic, reflecting Agrippa’s situation in relation to Caligula, and Philo’s in relation to Claudius.”

<sup>24</sup> See also (Bond 1998, p. 25). See also (Thatcher 1995, p. 218): “*Legatio* may be ‘history,’ but it is history in service of a rhetorical agenda.”

<sup>25</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 191), particularly fn. 17. For an ongoing study on this see also the works of (Stowers 1986) and (Malherbe 1986).

<sup>26</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 191): “Ces réserves étant faites, on ne peut pas refuser l’existence d’une lettre du roi Agrippa à Gaius dans les circonstances dramatiques narrées par Philo.”

<sup>27</sup> For an ongoing discussion on this, see (Zeitlin 1965, pp. 22–31).

<sup>28</sup> See (Thatcher 1995, p. 216) and Smallwood, Commentary on (Philo 1970, par. 276, pp. 291–2). This conclusion will be sufficient for our further considerations on Pilate. Furthermore, Lémonon mentions in his work three—convincing—reasons for the supposition that Philo probably appears to be inspired by thoughts that were originally related to Agrippa. For this see (Lémonon 2007, pp. 191–2). However, Josephus does not know of such a letter. He speaks of Agrippa’s appeal to Gaius in the context of a banquet in Rome. See (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 289–97 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 168–73]). See also the summary of (Zeitlin 1965, p. 31): “The letter of Agrippa to Gaius, as recorded by Philo, was composed by Philo in accordance with his theology. The speech of Agrippa to Gaius, as recorded by Josephus, was composed by Josephus in the spirit of the historiography of the Greeks.”

<sup>29</sup> See also (Bond 1998, pp. 33–6).

<sup>30</sup> (Philo 1970, par. 236 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 114–5]).

<sup>31</sup> (Bond 1998, p. 34).

<sup>32</sup> (Philo 1970, par. 305 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 130–1]).

<sup>33</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 301 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 128–9]).

which is recognized immediately by an emperor such as Tiberius.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Pilate's action of setting up the shields can only have been "with the intention of annoying the Jews rather than of honouring Tiberius."<sup>35</sup>

- (2) As already mentioned above, concerning Philo's motivation for publishing the *Embassy*, he tries to persuade Claudius not to follow the policy of Gaius with regard to the Jews, but rather those policies of Augustus<sup>36</sup> and Tiberius<sup>37</sup>, described by Philo as men of high moral standing, showing respect and honour toward Jewish Law and traditions and whose long reigns were peaceful and prosperous. Contrary to those is the depiction of Gaius<sup>38</sup> as an enemy of the Jews.
- (3) The fate of Flaccus, being removed from office, shows in Philo's works what happens to an official acting against Jewish Law.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the *Embassy* includes references to a greater number of Jews in the empire who would certainly rise up in the case of offense to their religion.<sup>40</sup> The warnings of the spokesmen reproduced by Philo<sup>41</sup> fit with this theme and, therefore, give a clear indication that such an action—such as the one involving the shields by Pilate—could be followed by a revolt throughout all the empire.<sup>42</sup>

Having analyzed these rhetorical tendencies in Philo's *Embassy* (and in the *Flaccus*), I will now take into consideration how Pilate is presented to us in the incident of the Gilded Shields. Philo's political rhetoric enhances his theology and vice versa, and both aspects influence his portrayal of Pilate.<sup>43</sup> Keeping this in mind, I will attempt to provide some concluding remarks on the 'historical Pilate' in the last paragraph of this section.

### 2.3. Philo's Presentation of Pilate in the Incident of the Gilded Shields

With regard to *Embassy* 299–305, Philo's depiction of Pilate conforms to the picture of a Roman official disrespecting the Jews and their law.<sup>44</sup> He is described as intending to annoy the Jews (τοῦ λυπήσαι τὸ πλῆθος) rather than honoring Tiberius (οὐκ ἐπὶ τιμῇ Τιβερίου). His disposition is

<sup>34</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 304–5 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 130–1]).

<sup>35</sup> (Philo 1970, par. 299 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 128–9]).

<sup>36</sup> For Augustus, see for example: (i) (Philo 1960, par. 74 [trans. Colson, pp. 342–3]): "savior and benefactor" or (ii) (Philo 1970, par. 143 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 90–1]): "What about the Emperor whose every virtue outshone human nature, who through the greatness of his imperial rule and of his valour alike became the first to bear the name 'Augustus,' who did not receive the title by inheritance from his family as part of a legacy, but was himself the source of the reverence paid to his successors also?" or (iii) (Philo 1970, par. 309 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 130–1]): "Now what about your great-grandfather, the best of all the Emperors who have ever lived, who was the first to be called Augustus because of his goodness and position, and who spread peace everywhere by land and sea to the ends of the earth?"

<sup>37</sup> For Tiberius, see for example: (i) (Philo 1970, par. 141 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 88–9]): "He [*sc.* Tiberius] held sway over land and sea for twenty-three years without allowing any spark of war to smoulder in Greek or barbarian lands, and he gave peace and the blessings of peace to the end of his life with ungrudging bounty of hand and heart." or (ii) (Philo 1970, par. 298 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 128–9]): "Then what about your other grandfather, Tiberius Caesar? Was his policy not clearly the same? At any rate, during the twenty-three years of his principate he safeguarded the Temple ritual which had been handed down from the distant past, and did not abolish or disturb a single item of it."

<sup>38</sup> For Gaius, see for example: (Philo 1970, par. 77; 133; 162; 201 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 72–3; 86–7; 94–5; 104–5]): "blasphemous deification of himself;" "felt an indescribable hatred for the Jews;" "swelled with pride;" "how hostile he was towards the whole Jewish race."

<sup>39</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 116 [trans. Colson, pp. 366–7]): "It [*sc.* Flaccus' arrest] was caused, I [*sc.* Philo] am convinced, by his treatment of the Jews, whom in his craving for aggrandisement he had resolved to exterminate utterly."

<sup>40</sup> See for example the issue of Gaius' plan of erecting a statue in Jerusalem in (Philo 1970, par. 217 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 108–11]): "So he [*sc.* Gaius] was naturally very much afraid that, when these Jews heard of the proposed new dedication, they would suddenly invade and encircle him, some from one side and some from the other, and then join forces and maltreat those whom they had surrounded."

<sup>41</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 301 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 128–9]). This passage has already been cited above.

<sup>42</sup> Regarding Philo's rhetorical aims—and the relative smallness of Pilate's offense—these warnings have probably been exaggerated. See also (Bond 1998, pp. 33–5).

<sup>43</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 26).

<sup>44</sup> For the following analysis, see also (Bond 1998, pp. 31–3).

inflexible (ἀκαμπής), stubborn (αὐθάδης), cruel (ἀμείλικτος), spiteful (ἔγκοτος), and angry (βαρύμηνης), without having the courage to do anything to please his subjects.<sup>45</sup> Concerning his administration, it is characterized by venality (δωροδοκία), violence (ὑβρις), his thefts (ἀρπάγη), his assaults (αἰκία), his abusive behavior (ἐπήρεια), his executions of untried prisoners (ἄκριτος, φόνος), and his savage ferocity (ἀργαλέος, ὁμότης). In order to get nearer to the ‘real Pilate,’ we have to answer the question of whether these adjectives are used in Philo’s historical writings (the *Embassy* and the *Flaccus*) exclusively to describe him or if there are indications for a common use.<sup>46</sup>

First of all, none of these adjectives are used only for Pilate. The charge of annoying the Jews rather than honoring the emperor is also an accusation against the Alexandrian mob.<sup>47</sup> The word ἀκαμπής is also used for captors allowing their captives to go for money, not mercy;<sup>48</sup> αὐθάδης describes the evil speech of the Alexandrians;<sup>49</sup> and ἀμείλικτος is referred to two times in order to describe the character of Gaius.<sup>50</sup> Parallels to the description of Pilate’s administration can also be found as follows: δωροδοκία is used to describe the bribes given to Flaccus’ accusers by Isodorus;<sup>51</sup> ὑβρις, ἐπήρεια, ἄκριτος and φόνος are also used to describe Flaccus;<sup>52</sup> and ὑβρις,<sup>53</sup> ἀρπάγη,<sup>54</sup> αἰκία,<sup>55</sup> ἐπήρεια,<sup>56</sup> ἀργαλέος,<sup>57</sup> ὁμότης,<sup>58</sup> and ἔγκοτος<sup>59</sup> are used to describe the Alexandrian crowd and their leaders. Furthermore, some of these words (ἀρπάγη,<sup>60</sup> ἄκριτος,<sup>61</sup> φόνος,<sup>62</sup> ἀργαλέος,<sup>63</sup> ὁμότης,<sup>64</sup> ἔγκοτος,<sup>65</sup> βαρύμηνης<sup>66</sup>) are used to describe Gaius. Finally, Tiberius rebukes Pilate for his novel action (καينουργέω).<sup>67</sup> It is the same word that is also used by Philo in order to describe the cruelty of the Alexandrian mob,<sup>68</sup> Gaius’ statue,<sup>69</sup> and his acts of megalomania.<sup>70</sup>

To sum up, Philo’s presentation of Pilate is not based on a personalized attack but, rather, on general terms that are used by him regularly to describe those who do not respect the Jews, in particular Gaius and the Alexandrians.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, our conclusion is supported by a passage from the *Flaccus*, giving a general description of a corrupt governor. The text, which refers even in Greek to some of the keywords analyzed above, is as follows:

<sup>45</sup> Greek: μήτε βουλόμενός τι τῶν πρὸς ἡδονὴν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις ἐργάσασθαι.

<sup>46</sup> This question is also posed by Bond and McGing. See (Bond 1998, p. 31) and (McGing 1991, p. 433).

<sup>47</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 51 [trans. Colson, pp. 332–3]).

<sup>48</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 60 [trans. Colson, pp. 336–7]).

<sup>49</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 35 [trans. Colson, pp. 320–1]).

<sup>50</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 182 [trans. Colson, pp. 398–9]) and (Philo 1970, par. 350 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 140–1]).

<sup>51</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 140 [trans. Colson, pp. 378–9]).

<sup>52</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 173; 103; 54; 189 [trans. Colson, pp. 394–5; 358–9; 332–3; 402–3]).

<sup>53</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 40; 59; 95; 136 [trans. Colson, pp. 324–5; 334–5; 354–5; 376–7]).

<sup>54</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 56–7; 62; 69 [trans. Colson, pp. 334–5; 336–7; 340–1]) and (Philo 1970, par. 122; 129 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 84–5; 86–7]).

<sup>55</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 59; 71–2; 96 [trans. Colson, pp. 34–5; 340–1; 354–7]) and (Philo 1970, par. 128 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 84–7]).

<sup>56</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 134 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 86–9]).

<sup>57</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 21; 95 [trans. Colson, pp. 314–5; 354–5]).

<sup>58</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 59; 66 [trans. Colson, pp. 334–7; 338–9]).

<sup>59</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 19 [trans. Colson, pp. 312–3]).

<sup>60</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 105 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 78–81]).

<sup>61</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 344 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 138–9]).

<sup>62</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 66 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 70–1]).

<sup>63</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 182 [trans. Colson, pp. 398–9]).

<sup>64</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 341 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 138–9]).

<sup>65</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 260 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 120–1]).

<sup>66</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 260 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 120–1]).

<sup>67</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 305 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 130–1]).

<sup>68</sup> See (Philo 1960, par. 59 [trans. Colson, pp. 334–5]).

<sup>69</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 217 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 108–9]).

<sup>70</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 348 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 140–1]).

<sup>71</sup> See also (McGing 1991, p. 433) and (Bond 1998, p. 32).

(105) Some, indeed, of those who held governorships in the time of Tiberius and his father Caesar, had perverted their office of guardian and protector into domination and tyranny and had spread hopeless misery through their territories with their venality [δωροδοκία], robbery [ὑπάγη], unjust sentences, expulsion and banishment of quite innocent people, and execution of magnates without trial [ἄκριτος]. But these people on their return to Rome, after the termination of their time of office, had been required by the emperor to render an account and submit to scrutiny of their doings, particularly when the aggrieved cities sent ambassadors.<sup>72</sup>

Apart from these three identical words, the cited passage includes even a reference to an embassy that will inform the emperor about the misdeeds of the (corrupt) governor.<sup>73</sup> Historically, Pilate may have appeared in the eyes of the Jews as an inflexible, stubborn, cruel, and violent governor.<sup>74</sup> Because Pilate acted against Jewish Law—because he wanted to show loyalty to Tiberius—he is described by Philo “in precisely the same terms as other ‘enemies’ of the Jews: Gaius, Flaccus [...] and the Alexandrians,”<sup>75</sup> doubtlessly exaggerated according to his theological rhetoric.<sup>76</sup> However, his action surely caused offense in *some* way and, therefore, is not only simply Philonian rhetoric.<sup>77</sup> Thus, it should be possible to come to a plausible reconstruction of the historical event behind *Embassy* 299–305.

#### 2.4. Notes on the Historical Event

The question to be answered is the following: Is the incident of the Gilded Shields an example of the hypersensitivity of the Jews, or in what way did the shields cause offense against Jewish Law? What was different about these shields (ἄσπίδες) compared, for example, with those set up in the Alexandrian synagogues?<sup>78</sup>

According to Philo, the shields bore no figure<sup>79</sup> and nothing else that was forbidden,<sup>80</sup> except a brief inscription,<sup>81</sup> revealing the name of the dedicator (ἀναθέντα) and that of the person in whose honor the dedication was made (ὑπὲρ οὗ ἡ ἀνάθεσις). Thus, the offense lays in the wording of the inscription.<sup>82</sup> Otherwise, if there was not any offense, the whole incident would lose its significance,<sup>83</sup> and Philo, with regard to his rhetorical aim, would have succeeded only in presenting Jewish

<sup>72</sup> (Philo 1960, par. 105 [trans. Colson, pp. 360–1]).

<sup>73</sup> And that can be regarded as a clear parallel to Pilate’s fear in (Philo 1970, par. 302).

<sup>74</sup> Not all characteristics concerning Pilate and his maladministration given by Philo are repeated here. For this, see the analysis above.

<sup>75</sup> (Bond 1998, p. 33).

<sup>76</sup> See also the statement in (Lémonon 2007, p. 204), concerning the ‘review’ on Pilate’s administration in *Embassy*, par. 302: “Le texte présente une exagération évidente. La Judée n’aurait pas supporté dix ans un tel gouverneur, et les procurateurs dont les actions ont conduit à la révolte juive sont à peine accusés par Josèphe d’autant de méfaits.” It should be noted that the description of Tiberius as benefactor of the Jews, and particularly his reaction toward Pilate’s action, in Philo is simply exaggerated, or at least selective, because it does not mention, for example, the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 19 C.E., which is noted in (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 79–83 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 56–61]). For further considerations on this, see (Lémonon 2007, pp. 200–2).

<sup>77</sup> This is shared by (Thatcher 1995, p. 218). Furthermore, according to (Bond 1998, p. 37), Philo was probably in possession of some accurate facts, because he was a friend of Agrippa I. See also the statement of (Mason 2005, p. 168): “Nevertheless, where there is smoke there may be fire.”

<sup>78</sup> See (Philo 1970, par. 133 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 86–7]). The Greek reference is also ἄσπίδες.

<sup>79</sup> Usually, ἄσπίς bore an image of a god or a great man. It corresponds to the Latin *clipeus*. See (Lémonon 2007, pp. 196–7).

<sup>80</sup> Greek: μήτε μορφήν ἐχοῦσας μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων.

<sup>81</sup> Greek: ἔξω τινός ἐπιγραφῆς ἀναγκαίας. It is noteworthy that ἐπιγραφῆς ἀναγκαίας can also be translated as “necessary inscription.” This translation is also proposed by (Davies 1986, p. 110): “[...] the word ‘necessary’ seems to make fully sufficient sense as a translation.”

<sup>82</sup> Now, the difference to those put up in the Alexandrian synagogues becomes clear. Moreover, those were put up by the Jews themselves!

<sup>83</sup> (Lémonon 2007, p. 197) and (Bond 1998, p. 38) also make this point.

hypersensitivity and not, as already shown above, in showing how offense caused by a Roman official against Jewish Law is reprimanded.

Pilate probably referred to himself in the same way as in the inscription found in Caesarea in 1961, possibly adding his title. Thus, the full reference would have been: ‘Pontius Pilatus. Praefectus Iudaeae.’<sup>84</sup> Because neither of these words seems to offend Jewish Law, scholars agree that the offense must have been in the name of Tiberius, referring to him by a phrase that included his designation as *filius divi Augusti*.<sup>85</sup> Finally, with respect to the context of the Agrippian letter, we should also consider the observation made by Lémonon that, possibly, with regard to *Embassy* 306, “Philon minimise les motifs de l’incident pour mieux mettre en valeur le scandale provoqué par l’érection de la statue de Caligula dans l’adyton, véritable provocation à l’égard des Juifs.”<sup>86</sup> However, although this cannot be proved sufficiently because Philo is our only reference for this incident,<sup>87</sup> there remains the fact of the offending inscription.<sup>88</sup>

Concerning the question on the date of the incident, it seems to be the most probable solution that it occurred at a Jewish feast, because this is the most likely explanation for the simultaneous presence of the King’s four sons and Pilate in Jerusalem. According to major scholarship, the *terminus a quo* for the incident seems to be the end of 31 C.E. after the assassination of L. Aelius Sejanus, the powerful commander of the Praetorian Guard who had a hatred for the Jews. The politically unstable conditions after his death allowed Pilate to demonstrate loyalty to the emperor by putting up the Gilded Shields.<sup>89</sup>

## 2.5. Conclusions—Pilate’s Picture in Philo

Pilate is presented to us by Philo as a governor who wants to annoy the Jews by an unprecedented erection of shields bearing a forbidden inscription in Jerusalem. His description of Pilate’s character<sup>90</sup> and government<sup>91</sup> fits with his description of other figures within the *Embassy* and the *Flaccus* disrespecting the Laws of the Jews, particularly Gaius, the Alexandrian mob, and the so-called ‘corrupt governor’ in *Flaccus* 105. This negative description is based on his rhetorical aim, which is to convince Claudius not to follow the policy of Gaius, and on his theology, which depicts enemies of the Jews as the enemies of God and thus in an extremely negative way.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>84</sup> For the inscription, see also the remarks made in the Introduction.

<sup>85</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 197), (Bond 1998, pp. 38–9), (Schwartz 1983, p. 431), and (Fuks 1982, p. 507). For an ongoing check of dedications for or of Tiberius, see also ILS 113; 114; 152; 153; 155; 156; 159; 160; 164; 5818; 5829; 5829a; 6080.

<sup>86</sup> (Lémonon 2007, p. 197). This is also shared by (Schwartz 1983, p. 33): “If the Jews protected such innocent objects, how much more would they resist the erection of a statue (§ 306)!” See also (Krieger 1995, p. 76): “In diesem Zusammenhang [des Briefes; CGU] dient die Pilatus-Episode dazu, in LegGai 306 eine conclusio a minore ad maius ziehen zu können.”

<sup>87</sup> It should be noted that there is a wide discussion on the question of whether Josephus (1927, II, par. 169–74 and (1965, XVIII, par. 55–9) and Philo refer to the same incident or not. See (Schwartz 1983, pp. 26–45) who also gives chronological lists of works claiming either for a one-incident opinion or not. See also (Lémonon 2007, p. 206), and, for a more detailed discussion, (Maier 1969, pp. 109–21). For a brief comparison of both versions, see also (Krieger 1994, pp. 42–3).

<sup>88</sup> Further considerations could be made here but are omitted. Undoubtedly, there was an offense, and the—very subtle—question to be answered is whether the offense derived from the inscription itself (as concluded in this paper and seen by [Bond 1998, p. 41] and [Fuks 1982, p. 507]) or from the dedication, i.e., from the facts that the inscription revealed (shared by [Lémonon 2007, p. 195] and [Davies 1986, pp. 112–3]). These scholars see strong arguments in favor of a religious interpretation of the Greek ἀνάθεσις.

<sup>89</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 44; Maier 1969, pp. 113–4; Fuks 1982, pp. 504–5; McGing 1991, p. 425). Because (Philo 1970, par. 159–61 [trans. Smallwood, pp. 94–5]) and (Philo 1960, par. 1 [trans. Colson, pp. 302–3]) is the only source for Sejanus’ anti-Semitic sentiments, this theory has been criticized by (Schwartz 1983, pp. 35–7) and (Krieger 1995, p. 78).

<sup>90</sup> As spiteful, angry, etc. See above.

<sup>91</sup> Showing his venality, violence, etc. See above.

<sup>92</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 47).



Nevertheless, the historical Pilate has become visible as a Roman governor who wants to be loyal to his emperor, in particular during troubled times after the death of Sejanus. He fears to remove the shields, because this would show dishonor to the emperor and negate the whole project. *This* seems to have been his main priority rather than an attempt to please his people. Therefore, his erection of the Gilded Shields was not an intentional act of aggression as Philo suggests. Perhaps, he thought that his action was less offensive, because the shields did not bear images as usual and were put up in an appropriate place in the Herodian palace. However, nevertheless, there remains the reproach of insensitivity toward Jewish traditions: after having already been in office for some years, Pilate must have been aware of the offensiveness of Tiberius' full title, in particular, while referring to him on shields, which were probably introduced to Jerusalem at a Jewish feast.

### 3. Pilate in Josephus

Josephus refers to Pilate in his two major works: the *Jewish War* (II 169–75) and the *Jewish Antiquities* (XVIII 55–89)<sup>93</sup>. Although both books were written under Flavian patronage and he himself was born after Pilate's time in office in Judaea,<sup>94</sup> his description probably relies on information from his parents and grandparents. Theological and rhetorical aims—similar to those in Philo's work—can also be found in his works, and therefore, we have to be aware of particularities in his literary style.<sup>95</sup> The *War*, written between 75 and 79 C.E., contains two incidents regarding Pilate; and the *Antiquities*, finished around 93 C.E., add two more.<sup>96</sup>

#### 3.1. Pilate in the Jewish War<sup>97</sup>

In the *War*, we are told about two incidents that took place between Pilate and the Jewish people: the conflict over the images of the emperor (II 169–74) and the trouble caused by the erection of an aqueduct (II 175–77). Before dealing with the two reports themselves, I will—briefly—consider their context within the second book and some of the aims of the *War*.<sup>98</sup>

The beginning of *War* II deals with a description of the disturbances after the death of King Herod (II 1–79), which is followed by accounts on the division of the country between his sons, Archelaus' short reign, the transformation of Judaea into a Roman province under Augustus, and the revolt led by Judas the Galilean under Coponius (II 118).<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, descriptions of the three Jewish schools (II 119–66), of the reigns of Philip and Antipas, of Pilate's time as governor of Judaea (II 169–77), of the Gaius Caligula crisis, of Agrippa I and II, and of the procurators of Judaea until the 60s are given. This period is marked by increasing tensions between the Jews and the Romans, but, at the same time, conflicts between Jews and Gentiles are also described. We are told about Jewish rebels, Cestius Gallus' campaign against Jerusalem, and his unexpected defeat (II 499–555). Finally, Josephus tells us about a rebellious Jewish government in Jerusalem and ends with a description of the preparations for the war in Galilee and of corresponding preparations in Jerusalem during the winter of 66–7 C.E. (II 569–654). Although it relates to the uprising of Judas under Coponius, the passage about Pilate belongs to a time of direct Roman rulership showing relative tranquility and satisfaction of the people. His long *excursus* on the three philosophical schools contributes to this

<sup>93</sup> This is the major part that is of interest to us. Among this, there are two brief references to him in XVIII 35 and in XVIII 177.

<sup>94</sup> See for example the overview in (Mason 2005, p. 34).

<sup>95</sup> See also the statement of (Bond 2000, p. 213): "What Josephus wants to say about Pilate, therefore, can be understood only if the stories about the prefect are seen as part of the larger narrative."

<sup>96</sup> For further information, see the work of (Mason 2005, pp. 64–99 [concerning the *War*]) and (Mason 2005, pp. 99–121 [concerning the *Antiquities*]). Historical evaluations of Josephus' accounts will be done here only with regard to the actions of Pilate.

<sup>97</sup> On this topic, see also (Stowasser 2008 [non vidi]).

<sup>98</sup> For the following and for a more detailed view on this, see (Bilde 1988, pp. 65–79).

<sup>99</sup> It should be noted that there is a contrast to (Josephus 1927, II, par. 433), which connects the rebellion of Judas with the Syrian governor Quirinius.

relatively harmonious impression of Judea between the reigns of Archelaus and Caligula and Agrippa I.<sup>100</sup>

With regard to the purpose<sup>101</sup> of the *War*, we have to keep in mind the outcome of the war for the Jews, which was disastrous. Josephus' first aim in the *War* is therefore to deal with this catastrophe for the Jewish people and to prevent a repetition of it by trying to convince them that some of them<sup>102</sup> chose the wrong solution.<sup>103</sup> By analyzing the causes of the war, he places the blame with the Jews themselves, because those who were in favor of the war did not observe the law.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, he wants to reject all militant nationalism and Messianism, because Rome is too powerful. This is demonstrated in many ways in the *War*, especially in the speeches of Agrippa II.<sup>105</sup> The point to notice is that Rome received her power from God, and<sup>106</sup> thus, a revolt against Rome is also a revolt against God.<sup>107</sup> However, only for a limited time should the Jews accept Roman governorship, waiting patiently until the situation changes.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, the story of the Jewish uprising against the Romans serves as illustration of what happens when a nation attacks the Romans and is a warning to others of the disastrous consequences.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.1.1. The Incident of the Effigies of Caesar

The relevant passage for our research on Pilate includes the following:

(169) When he [sc. Pilate] had been sent to Judea as procurator by Tiberius, Pilatus introduced into Hierosolyma—by night, concealed—the images of Caesar, which are called ‘standards.’ (170) After daybreak this stirred up a huge disturbance among the Judeans. For those who were close to the sight were shocked at their laws’ having been trampled—for they think it fitting to place no representation in the city—and [in addition] to the indignation of those in the city, the citizenry from the countryside streamed together en masse. (171) They rushed to Pilatus in Caesarea and kept begging him to take the standards out of Hierosolyma and to preserve their ancestral [customs]. But when Pilatus refused, they fell down around his residence, prone, and held out motionless for five days and nights alike. (172) On the next [day] Pilatus sat on a tribunal-platform in the great stadium and, after summoning the rabble as though truly intending to answer them, gave the soldiers a signal, according to a scheme, to encircle the Judeans with weapons. (173) As the infantry column was positioned around three-deep, the Judeans were speechless at the unexpectedness of the sight. After saying that he would cut them to pieces if they would not accept Caesar’s images, Pilatus nodded to the soldiers to bare their swords. (174) The Judeans, just as if by an agreed signal, fell down en masse, bent their necks to the side, and shouted that they were ready to do away with themselves rather than transgress the law. Pilatus, who was overwhelmed by the purity of their superstition, directed [his men] immediately to carry the standards out of Hierosolyma.<sup>110</sup>

Pilate is introduced very abruptly to us without any further references to his biography. Because Josephus refers to him by the Greek ἐπίτροπος (procurator),<sup>111</sup> scholars have assumed that the

<sup>100</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 54).

<sup>101</sup> Its audience, a Roman one, will not be discussed further here. For a discussion on this, see (Mason 2005, pp. 96–9). Obviously, Josephus had several motives in writing his account. I mention only the most important one. See Bond (Bond 2000, p. 214).

<sup>102</sup> He stresses that the Jewish people as a whole are not responsible for the war. The blame rather falls on small groups of rebels, which are often called tyrants (τύραννοι, see for example [Josephus 1927, II, par. 10 {trans. Thackeray, pp. 6–7}]) or bandits (ληῆσται, see for example [Josephus 2008, par. 541 {trans. Mason, p. 372}]).

<sup>103</sup> See for example (Josephus 1927, III, par. 108 [trans. Thackeray, pp. 608–9]).

<sup>104</sup> See for example (Josephus 2008, par. 454–6 [trans. Mason, pp. 333–6]).

<sup>105</sup> See (Josephus 2008, par. 345–401 [trans. Mason, pp. 269–310]). See also *ibid.* fn. 2796 on pp. 334–5.

<sup>106</sup> See (Josephus 2008, par. 390) (trans. Mason, p. 305).

<sup>107</sup> See (Josephus 1928, V, par. 378 [trans. Thackeray, pp. 318–9]).

<sup>108</sup> See (Bilde 1988, pp. 76–7).

<sup>109</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 52). There is also a thesis on this task: See (Lindner 1972).

<sup>110</sup> (Josephus 2008, par. 169–74 [trans. Mason, pp. 138–45]).

<sup>111</sup> His title should be ἑπαρχος (prefect). See also fn. 720 in Mason’s commentary on (Josephus 2008, pp. 79–80).

emphasis in this account is not on Pilate's governorship itself, but on the two following incidents, especially on the behavior of the Jews.<sup>112</sup> The reaction of the Jews is based on an initial action of Pilate, which is not regarded further by Josephus.<sup>113</sup> He does not seem to be interested in why Pilate brought the standards (σημαῖαι) into Jerusalem. Although shocked by this,<sup>114</sup> the Jews remain peaceful and go to Pilate, asking for their removal in order to preserve their laws.<sup>115</sup> Pilate's refusal gives Josephus a reason to put greater emphasis on the reaction of the Jews than on Pilate's behavior: accepting death rather than a transgression of their laws, they held out<sup>116</sup> for five days and five nights at his residence. Finally, astonished by their religious devotion, Pilate has his men remove the standards. Therefore, in accordance with Josephus' aims of the *War*, this account shows that, by respecting the Roman government, a passive demonstration can be successful.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the lack of further information on Pilate's motivation for introducing the standards, it is possible to get a picture of Pilate's character. The fact that they are introduced by night and under cover (νόκτωρ κεκαλυμμένας) leads to the question of whether his decision was a deliberate act of causing offense or not.<sup>118</sup> The dominant impression, however, is that of insensitivity toward the Jews under his governorship. By refusing to remove the standards, Pilate shows stubbornness as well as patience, because he let the people remain motionless outside of his residence.<sup>119</sup> Although remaining completely convinced that the Jews have to accept the images of Caesar,<sup>120</sup> the situation changes suddenly. Being overwhelmed<sup>121</sup> by their religious zeal,<sup>122</sup> he directed<sup>123</sup> his men to remove the standards in order to respect Jewish Law. Thus, Pilate's behavior here seems to be reasonable rather than being a sign of weakness,<sup>124</sup> because he did not want to cause a massacre on a passive and unarmed crowd.

### 3.1.2. The Incident of the Aqueduct

The passage concerning the aqueduct follows immediately on the preceding. The text is as follows:

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- <sup>112</sup> See (Bond 2000, p. 215) and (Krieger 1995, pp. 66–8). (Schwartz 1983, p. 32) points it out clearly that often Pilate did not have an accurate picture of the order of events or that he did not intend to narrate them in chronological order. He further observes that "Josephus begins his account of almost every governor with the same terminology ('After NN was sent...' or 'Caesar sent NN...[']'), so the reference in *War* to Pilate's 'having been sent' need not be taken as a chronological indication." For further examples, see also fn. 25 on p. 43.
- <sup>113</sup> Throughout the whole account, the scheme of action and reaction can be found. See (Bond 2000, p. 215).
- <sup>114</sup> Greek: πατέω τῶν νόμων.
- <sup>115</sup> The Greek τὰ πάτρια is used as a synonym here for laws (οἱ νόμοι). See fn. 1070 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 143).
- <sup>116</sup> Greek: διακαρτερῶ. Endurance (καρτερία) is for Josephus a Jewish virtue. See fn. 1074 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 143).
- <sup>117</sup> See (Bond 1998, pp. 55–6).
- <sup>118</sup> Scholars do not agree with respect to this point: (Krieger 1995, p. 67) thinks that this is part of the exposition of Josephus' account and that he therefore does not want to blame him. For (Bond 1998, p. 56), however, this clearly indicates the perpetration of a crime and that Pilate was aware of creating trouble. (McGing 1991, p. 429) and (Lémonon 2007, p. 145) share her opinion. Mason, fn. 1056 in his commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 140), leaves the question open to answer.
- <sup>119</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 58). The five days and five nights of motionlessness are obviously reflecting literary and rhetorical aims.
- <sup>120</sup> Three times he tried to dispel them: first ignoring them, then intimidating them, and finally threatening them.
- <sup>121</sup> The Greek ὑπερθαυμάζω expresses an extreme wonder and can be found only here in the *War*. See also fn. 1095 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 145).
- <sup>122</sup> Shared by (Lémonon 2007, p. 139): "À chaque étape du récit, les Juifs agissent avec franchise et leur comportement est expliqué par l'absolu de leur zèle religieux [...]."
- <sup>123</sup> The active verb κελεῖει gives the impression that Pilate remains the commander of the situation. See (Bond 1998, p. 59).
- <sup>124</sup> Against (McGing 1991, p. 429).

(175) After these [events] he set in motion a different kind of disturbance by exhausting the sacred treasury—it is called the *corbonas*—on a water conduit; it conducted [water] from 400 *stadia* away. At this there was indignation among the rabble, and when Pilatus was present at Hierosolyma they stood around his tribunal-platform and kept yelling at [him]. (176) But because he had foreseen their disturbance, he had mixed in amongst the rabble soldiers in arms, but concealed in civilian clothes. Having prohibited them from using the sword, but having directed them instead to beat with sticks those who had begun screaming, he gave the agreed signal from the tribunal-platform. (177) Many Judeans were lost from being hit by blows, but many others from having been trampled under by their very own [people] in the escape. Given the calamity of those who had been taken, the beaten down rabble became silent.<sup>125</sup>

This account bears the same structure as the preceding one.<sup>126</sup> Although several terms of the first are mentioned also in the second,<sup>127</sup> it is not simply a variation on it.<sup>128</sup> It is built around the scheme of cause and effect and also does not give further regard to the motives for Pilate's using of money from the Temple treasury, called *κορβωνᾶς*,<sup>129</sup> or how he got access to it.<sup>130</sup> Thus, Pilate's initial offense serves primarily as an occasion to demonstrate Jewish reactions, reactions that also become clear from the first sentence of the account,<sup>131</sup> which is typical Josephan language.<sup>132</sup> However, the reaction of the Jews shown in this incident is completely different and, therefore, serves as a counterpart of the preceding story: active and angry protest<sup>133</sup> against the Romans cannot be successful and will end in a disaster.<sup>134</sup>

The construction of the aqueduct (*καταγωγὴν ὑδάτων*) itself does not seem to have caused the trouble<sup>135</sup>, but, rather, the fact that he exhausted (*ἐξαναλίσκω*) the Temple treasury to do so is problematic.<sup>136</sup> The indignation (*ἄγανάκτησις*) caused among the Jews is referred to only in general by the Greek *πρὸς τοῦτο*.<sup>137</sup> However, now it becomes clear that Pilate was aware of some of the offense of his action (*προήδει γὰρ αὐτῶν τὴν παραχῆν*). It would otherwise be difficult to understand why he had mixed soldiers in civilian clothes among the crowd that encircled him at his tribunal platform. Contrary to the incident with the standards, Pilate here seems to avoid an

<sup>125</sup> (Josephus 2008, par. 175–7 [trans. Mason, pp. 146–50]).

<sup>126</sup> See (Bond 2000, p. 215) and (Krieger 1994, p. 35).

<sup>127</sup> For example: indignation, rabble, tribunal-platform, concealed, sword, agreed signal, trampled.

<sup>128</sup> See (Krieger 1995, p. 68).

<sup>129</sup> Form taken from the manuscripts P, L<sup>2</sup>, and corrections of A. The majority of the manuscripts, M, L, V, R, and C, read *κορβανᾶς*.

<sup>130</sup> See also the statement of (Lémonon 2007, p. 155): “L’impêtement sur la part du trésor réservée aux sacrifices conduit Josèphe à insister sur le caractère sacré du trésor. [...] Pilate n’a donc pas accompli une œuvre illégitime, mais il s’est octroyé un droit qui n’était pas le sien: décider de l’utilisation du trésor [...]” For further considerations on the Temple treasure, see also (Lémonon 2007, pp. 153–5).

<sup>131</sup> Greek: *μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα παραχῆν ἐτέραν ἐκίνει*. The first incident of the Effigies of Caesar was called a *μεγίστη παραχῆ*.

<sup>132</sup> See fn. 1098 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 146).

<sup>133</sup> The Greek *καταβοᾶω* in the *War* is used exclusively for popular outrage at the behavior of Roman officials. See fn. 1108 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 148).

<sup>134</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 56). In the following incident on Gaius' statue (II 184–203) the Jews seem to have learned from the incidents with Pilate, appealing peacefully to Petronius. It should also be noticed here that in this scene only the Jews who are killed are called *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*, whereas to the others showing angry protest is referred by *τὸ πλῆθος*.

<sup>135</sup> Notice that Jerusalem was not favorably situated for a water supply and, therefore, Pilate's construction of an aqueduct had also a utilitarian value. For further—also technical—discussions on the aqueduct see fn. 1102 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, pp. 146–7).

<sup>136</sup> It is also possible that the offense was simply caused by confronting the Jews with a *fait accompli*. See (Lémonon 2007, p. 157).

<sup>137</sup> See also the statement of (McGing 1991, p. 429): “It is not clear why [the offense was caused].” Furthermore, it is not at all clear if Pilate acted against a Jewish Law, because there is no reference to the Greek *νόμος* (or to its synonyms) as in the preceding incident or in Philo. See also (Krieger 1995, p. 68).

unnecessary massacre from the very beginning, because instead of directing the use of the sword, he only allows his soldiers to beat those who begin shouting (κραζώ) with sticks after having given the signal.<sup>138</sup> Because his orders seem to be appropriate to the circumstances, the disastrous outcome of the incident is primarily based on the harsh behavior of his troops and the escape of the Jews. While describing the final silence, this incident shows its tragedy not only because of Pilate's behavior but also because of the protest of the Jews.<sup>139</sup>

### 3.1.3. Conclusions—Pilate's Picture in the *War*

Despite the lack of further explanations concerning Pilate, both narratives show his insensitivity toward the Jewish religion in the context of conflicts with Roman interests. Beside stubbornness and patience, he can also be impressed by Jewish religiosity and allow this to influence his judgement. As a Roman official he takes seriously the duty of maintaining peace and does not want to cause unnecessary violence. Therefore, he backs down rather than to execute an unarmed crowd, and, furthermore, encounters a disturbance with a minimum of violence.<sup>140</sup>

### 3.2. *Pilate in the Jewish Antiquities*

Pilate is referred to within four incidents in the *Antiquities*: the first two, which are also found in the *War* (standards and aqueduct; XVIII 55–9 and XVIII 60–2), the execution of Jesus (XVIII 63–4; known famously as the *Testimonium Flavianum*) and the uprising of a Samaritan revolt (XVIII 85–9). Before going into details concerning the four texts themselves, I will briefly consider their contexts within the *Antiquities* and some general aims of this Josephan work.<sup>141</sup>

Written about twenty years after the *War* also for a non-Jewish audience, the *Antiquities* can be divided into two main parts, I–X and XI–XX. Whereas the first is mainly a “paraphrase of the Bible,”<sup>142</sup> the second concentrates on the Hasmonaeans (XI–XIII), Herod the Great (XIV–XVII) and his descendants Agrippa I and Agrippa II (XVIII–XX). Being under Roman domination by the governorship of the Herodians, the situation in Israel is characterized by internal strife and conflicts.<sup>143</sup> Despite his beneficent character the kingdom of Herod the Great mainly reveals his ferocity.<sup>144</sup> Although transformed into a proper province of the Roman Empire,<sup>145</sup> confrontations between the Jews and governors, now Roman officials, continue. Therefore, the accounts of Pilate serve as examples for the situation of conflict.<sup>146</sup> In general, it seems that Josephus is following the parallel version in *War* II 117–203, which, however, has been expanded in the description of the same events as well as the addition of new material,<sup>147</sup> e.g., the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum* (*Antiquities* XVIII 63–4) and the passages on John the Baptist (*Antiquities* XVIII 116–19).

With regard to the aim of the *Antiquities*, the most common view is that it is an apologetic work written for a Greek-speaking audience. Josephus writes against pagan hostility toward Judaism and

<sup>138</sup> Because I noticed that this incident can be seen as a counterpart to the preceding, this Josephan information about secret instructions to the troops is probably due to literary composition. See also fn. 1113 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 149).

<sup>139</sup> The Greek συμφορά underlines the tragic mood of the incident. See also fn. 1122 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 150).

<sup>140</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 60).

<sup>141</sup> For the following and for a more detailed view on this, see (Bilde 1988, pp. 80–104).

<sup>142</sup> (Mason 2005, p. 99).

<sup>143</sup> See (Bilde 1988, p. 91).

<sup>144</sup> Therefore, see for example the detailed description in (Josephus 1963, XVI, par. 150–9 [trans. Marcus, pp. 267–71]).

<sup>145</sup> See the passage on the Jewish delegation in Rome blaming the kingdom of Herod the Great and claiming for an end of the Herodian governorship in Judea in (Josephus 1963, XVII, par. 299–314 [trans. Marcus, pp. 510–7]).

<sup>146</sup> The Greek refers always to θορυβέω or θόρυβος. See (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 58; 62; 65; 85 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 44–7; 50–1; 60–1]).

<sup>147</sup> See (Bilde 1988, p. 88).

tries to defend his nation against slanders concerning its origins and early history.<sup>148</sup> This overall aim fits with Josephus' own words in the introduction to the *Antiquities*:

(5) And now I have undertaken this present work in the belief that the whole Greek-speaking world will find it worthy of attention; for it will embrace our entire ancient history and political constitution, translated from the Hebrew records.<sup>149</sup>

His idea is that the holy scriptures of the Jews are trustworthy not only because of their antiquity but also because of the fact that they are confirmed also by non-Jewish sources. He therefore tries to convince members of the Roman Empire to revert to the former respect toward Judaism by stressing, for example, the value of Jewish Law<sup>150</sup> and by citing edicts from Roman governors<sup>151</sup> demonstrating tolerance toward the Jewish religion. Although these themes have also been mentioned in some way in the *War*—as we have seen in our analysis of the two incidents above—they are of special importance in the *Antiquities*.<sup>152</sup>

### 3.2.1. The Two Parallel Events to the *War*<sup>153</sup>

The *Antiquities* give us more information about Pilate than the *War*. He is introduced to us the first time as the successor of Gratus as governor of Judea.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, Josephus also informs us about his departure from the province to Rome because of an order by Vitellius, the Roman governor of Syria.<sup>155</sup> In general, in the *Antiquities*, Josephus shows a greater interest in Pilate and his actions than in the *War*.<sup>156</sup> The two parallel incidents that are of interest for our work on Pilate are narrated in the following passage:

(55) Now Pilate, the procurator of Judaea, when he brought his army from Caesarea and removed it to winter quarters in Jerusalem, took a bold step in subversion of the Jewish practices, by introducing into the city the busts of the emperor that were attached to the military standards, for our law forbids the making of images. (56) It was for this reason that the previous procurators, when they entered the city, used standards that had no such ornaments. Pilate was the first to bring the images into Jerusalem and set them up, doing it without the knowledge of the people, for he entered at night. (57) But when the people discovered it, they went in a throng to Caesarea and for many days entreated him to take away the images. He refused to yield, since to do so would be an outrage to the emperor; however, since they did not cease entreating him, on the sixth day he secretly armed and placed his troops in position, while he himself came to the speaker's stand. This had been constructed in the stadium, which provided concealment for the army that lay in wait. (58) When the Jews again engaged in supplication, at a prearranged signal he surrounded them with his soldiers and threatened to punish them at once with death if they did not put an end to their tumult and return to their own places. (59) But they, casting themselves prostrate and baring their throats, declared that they had gladly welcomed death rather than make bold to transgress the wise provisions of the laws. Pilate, astonished at the strength of their devotion to the laws, straightway removed the images from Jerusalem and brought them back to Caesarea. (60) He spent money from the sacred treasury in the construction of an aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem, intercepting the source of the stream at a distance of 200 furlongs. The Jews did not acquiesce in the operations that this involved; and tens of thousands of men assembled and cried out against him, bidding him relinquish his promotion of such

<sup>148</sup> See (Bilde 1988, p. 99) and (Mason 2005, p. 100).

<sup>149</sup> (Josephus 1930, I, par. 5 [trans. Thackeray, pp. 4–5]). For a more detailed analysis of his prologue, see (Mason 2005, pp. 103–21).

<sup>150</sup> See for example (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 266–8 [trans. Feldman, pp. 156–9]).

<sup>151</sup> See for example (Josephus 1963, XVI, par. 174 [trans. Marcus, pp. 278–9]).

<sup>152</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 63).

<sup>153</sup> I will discuss the two incidents primarily with regard to their differences to the versions in the *War*. For a synoptic overview on both accounts, see (Lémonon 2007, pp. 136–8, and 150–1).

<sup>154</sup> See (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 35 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 30–1]).

<sup>155</sup> See (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 89 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 62–3]).

<sup>156</sup> And, vice versa, the descriptions of the reactions of the Jews have been minimized. See (Bond 2000, p. 219).

designs. Some too even hurled insults and abuse of the sort that a throng will commonly engage in. (61) He thereupon ordered a large number of soldiers to be dressed in Jewish garments, under which they carried clubs, and he sent them off this way and that, thus surrounding the Jews, whom he ordered to withdraw. When the Jews were in full torrent of abuse he gave his soldiers the prearranged signal. (62) They, however, inflicted much harder blows than Pilate had ordered, punishing alike both those who were rioting and those who were not. But the Jews showed no faintheartedness; and so, caught unarmed, as they were, by men delivering a prepared attack, many of them actually were slain on the spot, while some withdrew disabled by blows. Thus ended the uprising.<sup>157</sup>

Contrary to in the *War*, Josephus first gives a superficial reason for introducing the standards<sup>158</sup> into Jerusalem: the removal of his troops to the winter quarters in Jerusalem. However, Josephus refers even to Pilate's real motive for introducing them: ἐπὶ καταλύσει τῶν νομίμων<sup>159</sup> τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν. Besides this, by stressing the prohibition of images according to the law<sup>160</sup> and by contrasting his behavior with that of the preceding governors,<sup>161</sup> it becomes clear that Pilate deliberately wants to provoke the (uninformed)<sup>162</sup> Jews.<sup>163</sup> The Jewish reaction, compared with that in the *War*, has been shortened here in their entreating<sup>164</sup> for the removal of the images for many days<sup>165</sup>. Furthermore, Pilate's refusal to do this is explained here, although his motive was lacking in the *War*: διὰ τὸ εἰς ὕβριν Καίσαρι φέρειν. Because the Jews do not cease entreating him both times, Pilate feels himself obligated to react: first by secretly<sup>166</sup> hiding his armed troops in the stadium<sup>167</sup> and secondly by directing them to surround the Jews in order to threaten to put them to death<sup>168</sup> if they do not stop their disturbance. Thus, the *Antiquities* focus the situation of the Jews in front of Pilate more on the aspect of entreating the governor than on a motionless resistance as in the *War*.<sup>169</sup> Finally, the outcome of the incident is very similar to that in the *War*: the Jews, gladly accepting death rather than the transgression of the wise provisions of their laws,<sup>170</sup> bare their necks, and Pilate at that moment<sup>171</sup> removes<sup>172</sup> the images, because he is impressed<sup>173</sup> by the strength of their devotion<sup>174</sup>.

This incident, therefore, shows Josephus' interest in Pilate's personal history as a Roman governor, particularly his attitude toward Jewish Law. His determination to honor Caesar shows his ruthlessness toward Jewish sensitivities and leads into a conflict with the Jews for not accepting a transgression of their laws, for which it is worth suffering. Finally, the strength of their devotion to

<sup>157</sup> (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 55–62 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 42–7]).

<sup>158</sup> The Greek reference is also σημαῖαι. However, Josephus' language is more precise here (than in the *War*) when he refers to them by προτομὰς Καίσαρος, αἱ ταῖς σημαῖαις προσήσαν (busts of Caesar connected to the standards).

<sup>159</sup> The manuscripts M, W, and E show the form νόμων, which is also evidenced by the parallel in the *War*.

<sup>160</sup> Greek: εἰκόνων ποίησιν ἀπαγορευόντος ἡμῖν τοῦ νόμου. In contrast to in the *War*, Josephus here refers explicitly to himself as a member of the Jews.

<sup>161</sup> Greek: οἱ πρότερον ἡγεμόνες ... ἐποιοῦντο εἰσοδὸν τῇ πόλει in contrast to πρῶτος δὲ Πιλάτος.

<sup>162</sup> Greek: ἀγνοίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>163</sup> See (Krieger 1995, p. 70) and fn. 1058 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 140). The motive of the introduction by night can also be found here.

<sup>164</sup> Greek: λιπαρέω.

<sup>165</sup> Greek: ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας. The date of the incident in the stadium becomes therefore only clear by the later notice κατὰ ἕκτην ἡμέραν.

<sup>166</sup> Greek: ἀφανῶς. This detail is not given in the *War*.

<sup>167</sup> For this see fn. 1077 in Mason's commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 143).

<sup>168</sup> The swords are not mentioned.

<sup>169</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 140).

<sup>170</sup> Contrary to in the *War*, Jewish Law here is characterized further by its wisdom (σοφία) and the reaction of the Jews by their pleasure (ἡδονή).

<sup>171</sup> Greek: παραχρήμα.

<sup>172</sup> The active verb ἐπανεκόμισεν almost gives the impression that Pilate *himself* does so. The parallel account in the *War* refers to an order.

<sup>173</sup> Greek: θαυμάσας.

<sup>174</sup> Greek: τὸ ἐχυρὸν αὐτῶν ἐπὶ φυλακῇ τῶν νόμων. The importance of Jewish Law is stressed here again.

their laws is the point, which results in Pilate removing the standards.<sup>175</sup> Thus, compared with the *War*, the version in the *Antiquities* reflects a completely different style, i.e., the importance of devotion to Jewish Law, while narrating the same event.<sup>176</sup>

Concerning the construction of the aqueduct,<sup>177</sup> however, Pilate's motives remain as unclear as in the *War*, but the construction of the account seems to be more neutral at the beginning: Pilate's action is not qualified as causing another kind of disturbance as did that in the *War*, and, furthermore, Josephus does not mention the exhaustion of the sacred treasury.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, the reaction of the Jews seems to be toned down to some extent in the present version: they do not acquiesce in the operations (οἱ δ' οὐκ ἠγάπων τοῖς ... δρωμένοις)<sup>179</sup> and come together with thousands of men (πολλαί τε μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων συνελθόντες) in order to bid him to give up his plan (κατεβόων αὐτοῦ παύσασθαι τοῦ ἐπὶ τοιούτοις προθυμουμένου).<sup>180</sup> The fact that some of them hurled insults and abuse (λοιδορία χρώμενοι ὕβριζον) is explained by him as a common quality of such a throng (οἷα δὴ φιλεῖ πράσσειν ὄμιλος). Contrary to in the *War*, Pilate *now* orders the soldiers,<sup>181</sup> dressed in Jewish clothes and carrying clubs under them,<sup>182</sup> to surround the Jews. Because the Jews refuse to withdraw and continue insulting Pilate, he gives the pre-arranged signal to the soldiers. The differences Josephus is insisting on in his version of the *Antiquities* become clear in the following scene: the behavior of the soldiers<sup>183</sup> (by arrangement)<sup>184</sup> and of the Jews. Ignoring apparently a directive of Pilate, which is not mentioned explicitly, they strike the Jews much harder (οἱ δὲ καὶ πολὺ μείζονως ἤπερ ἐπέταξεν Πιλάτος), the ones rioting as well as the ones who do not (ἐχρώντο πληγαῖς τοὺς τε θορυβοῦντας ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ μὴ κολάζοντες). Thus, Pilate is not paid much attention to, because responsibility for this ferocious act lies on the soldiers. Furthermore, the incident lacks the dramatic ending it has in the *War*: all the dead and injured are victims of the attack of the troops, and nobody is trampled under by compatriots in the escape.<sup>185</sup> Josephus, however, states that the Jews, caught unarmed (ὥστε ἄοπλοι ληφθέντες), showed no faint-heartedness (οἱ δ' εἰσεφέροντο μαλακὸν οὐδέν). Finally, it is the Jews who have to give up their uprising (καὶ οὕτω παύεται ἡ στάσις).

Therefore, this incident has its central focus not so much on Pilate's offense or on the protest of the Jews but, rather, on their attitude in the case of a violent attack from pagan soldiers.<sup>186</sup> While in the first incident, the Jews were able to impress Pilate by their religious zeal, now they are really dying for it.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>175</sup> See (Bond 2000, p. 220).

<sup>176</sup> Shared by (Lémonon 2007, p. 140): "Josèphe, tout au long du récit des *Antiquités*, insiste moins que dans la *Guerre des Juifs* sur l'attachement aux lois."

<sup>177</sup> Varied here with ὑδάτων ἐπαγωγὴν.

<sup>178</sup> See (Lémonon 2007, p. 152). It is said that he spent (ἔπραξεν) money for the aqueduct.

<sup>179</sup> Josephus' reference to the Jews here as οἱ δ' shows that this account is also connected with the preceding one. In the *War*, however, Josephus referred to those protesting against Pilate as τὸ πλῆθος.

<sup>180</sup> Josephus here puts emphasis on the number of Jews coming together. He already supposes the presence of Pilate in Jerusalem.

<sup>181</sup> More exactly: a large number of soldiers (πολὺ πλῆθος στρατιωτῶν).

<sup>182</sup> Greek: οἱ ἐφέροντο σκυτάλας ὑπὸ ταῖς στολαῖς.

<sup>183</sup> This is described in much more detail than in the *War*.

<sup>184</sup> Greek: ἐκ παρασκευῆς.

<sup>185</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 70).

<sup>186</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 70).

<sup>187</sup> That there is a connection between these two narrates on the literary level has already been mentioned above. See also the statement of (Krieger 1994, p. 40): "18, 60–62 ist auch in einem ‚positiven‘ Sinn Steigerung gegenüber 18, 55–59. Die in 18, 59 bekundete Todesbereitschaft wird in 18, 62 eingelöst."



### 3.2.2. The So-Called *Testimonium Flavianum*<sup>188</sup>

The passage on Jesus in the *Antiquities* is as follows:

(63) About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. (64) When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvellous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.<sup>189</sup>

Pilate is referred to only very briefly here, whereas the center of attention is Jesus and his followers. Although the present author shares the opinion that the *Testimonium Flavianum* was originally written in *some* way by Josephus, regarding the context probably by remembering another disturbance, the majority of scholarship thinks that the present version was altered by a Christian interpolator. The original wording is now lost, and therefore, the Josephan motive for introducing the text here is not recognizable anymore. The present text adds very little regarding the portrait of Pilate in the *Antiquities*.<sup>190</sup> Pilate seems to be competently putting down a tumult by executing the leader.

### 3.2.3. The Samaritan Uprising

The fourth and last incident taking place during Pilate's governorship is narrated in the following passage of the *Antiquities*:

(85) The Samaritan nation too was not exempt from disturbance. For a man who made light of mendacity and in all his designs catered to the mob, rallied them, bidding them go in a body with him to Mount Gerizim, which in their belief is the most sacred of mountains. He assured them that on their arrival he would show them the sacred vessels which were buried there, where Moses had deposited them. (86) His hearers, viewing this tale as plausible, appeared in arms. They posted themselves in a certain village named Tirathana, and, as they planned to climb the mountain in a great multitude, they welcomed to their ranks the new arrivals who kept coming. (87) But before they could ascend, Pilate blocked their projected route up the mountain with a detachment of cavalry and heavy-armed infantry, who in an encounter with the firstcomers in the village slew some in a pitched battle and put the others to flight. Many prisoners were taken, of whom Pilate put to death the principal leaders and those who were most influential among the fugitives. (88) When the uprising had been quelled, the council of the Samaritans went to Vitellius, a man of consular rank who was governor of Syria, and charged Pilate with the slaughter of the victims. For, they said, it was not as rebels against the Romans but as refugees from the persecution of Pilate that they had met in Tirathana. (89) Vitellius thereupon dispatched Marcellus, one of his friends, to take charge of the administration of Judaea, and ordered Pilate to return to Rome to give the emperor his account of the matters with which he was charged by the Samaritans. And so Pilate, after having spent ten years in Judaea, hurried to Rome in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, since he could not refuse. But before he reached Rome Tiberius had already passed away.<sup>191</sup>

This incident is not based on an action by Pilate but describes his reaction toward a Samaritan disturbance. As in the *Testimonium Flavianum*, the focus is not on Pilate himself but, rather, on the activities of the Samaritans and their leader who is described as a man of false qualities:

<sup>188</sup> For more detailed studies on this, see (Whealey 2007) and (Horn 2007). For a very different view on Whealey, see for example (Olson 1999). His opinion is that there is no convincing evidence that Josephus wrote any part of it. For a recent study on this, see also: (Niemand 2008).

<sup>189</sup> (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 63–4 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 48–51]).

<sup>190</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 71).

<sup>191</sup> (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 85–9 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 60–5]).

άνηρ ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὸ ψεῦδος τιθέμενος. Although depicted as a fraudulent character, there is no reference to him by using the key words ψευδοπροφήτης or γόης<sup>192</sup> as done in comparable events.<sup>193</sup> However, the story given here fits with the bad image, which emerges from other narratives in the *Antiquities*.<sup>194</sup> Assuming that he will find the sacred vessels (τὰ ἱερά σκεύη)<sup>195</sup>, which have been deposited on Mount Gerizim by Moses, the Samaritan crowd, viewing his story as plausible, gathers together in arms (ἐν ὄπλοις)<sup>196</sup> in a village called Tirathana in order to climb the mountain in a great multitude after having welcomed others. Pilate, however, blocks the route to the mountain with cavalry and heavy armed infantry (ἰππέων τε πομπῆ καὶ ὀπλιτῶν). His exact motives for this are not mentioned. Finally, Pilate puts down the tumult and takes many prisoners, of whom the principal leaders and the most influential ones are executed by Pilate, who, therefore, clearly carries responsibility for this action. Thus, after the uprising, he is charged for this slaughter (ἐπὶ τῇ σφαγῇ) by the Samaritan council (Σαμαρέων ἡ βουλὴ)<sup>197</sup> before Vitellius, the governor of Syria. Insisting in front of him that their meeting was not in rebellion against the Romans but to flee from the persecution of Pilate (ἐπὶ διαφυγῇ τῆς Πιλάτου ὕβρεως), he orders Pilate to return to Rome in order to give Tiberius an explanation of the matters with which he is charged by the Samaritans<sup>198</sup>. Although hurrying (ἠπείγετο), he reaches Rome only after the death of Tiberius<sup>199</sup>.

Similar to the *Testimonium Flavianum*, Pilate is again confronted with an uprising in his province. Although the motives for the Samaritan gathering are shown not to be rebellious ones later in the account, such a religious movement would certainly lead to repercussions on the political level. With regard also to the preceding account about Jesus, it becomes clear that Pilate could not allow an escalation of such a potentially dangerous movement.<sup>200</sup> Otherwise, “a Roman governor who did not deal with the situation firmly would be failing seriously in his duty.”<sup>201</sup> Blocking the way to Mount Gerizim with his heavily armed troops, his main aim was to stop their action. Nevertheless, there remains an objection to this motive of Pilate: Josephus mentions that the Samaritans met as refugees from the persecutions of Pilate, which indicates that there were tumults with the governor before. Certainly, Pilate was acting within his rights as a Roman governor when executing their leaders and

<sup>192</sup> This is also noted by (Krieger 1994, p. 44).

<sup>193</sup> See for example the story on the γόης Theudas (Josephus 1965, XX, par. 97–9 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 440–3]) or on the Egyptian ψευδοπροφήτης (Josephus 2008, par. 261–3 [trans. Mason, pp. 211–4]). For a further discussion of the term γόης, see fn. b in Feldmann’s translation of (Josephus 1965, pp. 440–1). For the term ψευδοπροφήτης, see fn. 1641 in Mason’s commentary on (Josephus 2008, p. 212).

<sup>194</sup> See for example the description of the events of the founding of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in XI, par. 297–347, especially *ibid.* par. 340–6. See also (Bond 1998, p. 71). The image of the Samaritans in the *Antiquities* cannot be discussed here further.

<sup>195</sup> For more information on this legend, see the summarizing passage in (Lémonon 2007, pp. 217–8). In any case, there is a similarity with a Messianic movement that is not without a political dimension. See (Lémonon 2007, p. 218): “De même que les littératures apocryphe et rabbinique conféraient à la découverte des vases cachés une portée messianique, la tradition samaritaine y reconnaissait la manifestation du prophète eschatologique semblable à Moïse. [...] Une telle perspective ne pouvait que provoquer de l’agitation parmi le peuple et en particulier des oppositions à l’égard des païens. Ce type de mouvement n’était pas sans répercussion au niveau politique.”

<sup>196</sup> In a more neutral way, τὸ ὄπλον can also be translated as tool or implement. However, from the further explanations in XVIII 88 (and from the Josephan usage of this word), it becomes clear that the given translation seems to be more likely.

<sup>197</sup> For this reason, (Bond 1998, p. 72) presumes that the gathering in Tirathana also had a political motivation.

<sup>198</sup> There is an interesting variation on the textual level: Only the codex Ambrosianus (A) reads here οἱ Σαμαρεῖται. The codices Medicaeus (M), Vaticanus (W), and (E) and the Latin translation (Lat), however, read οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Taking into consideration the latter, therefore, Josephus would also refer back to the incidents with the Jews while speaking about Pilate’s dismissal.

<sup>199</sup> Tiberius died in 37 C.E. on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March.

<sup>200</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 91).

<sup>201</sup> (McGing 1991, p. 433).

other influential persons,<sup>202</sup> but, given the Josephan note, there remains the reproach that the gathering gave him a suitable excuse for getting rid of some uprising Samaritans.<sup>203</sup>

Finally, with regard to the context of the account within the *Antiquities*, the Samaritan episode serves as the last example of the disturbances (θόρυβοι) under the governorship of Pilate. Leaving out further considerations on the point that the present account possibly includes another type of tale, called the “Goeten-Erzählung,”<sup>204</sup> Pilate’s dismissal fits with the picture of judgement for those who disrespect Jewish Law.<sup>205</sup> He is directed to Rome in order to account for his crimes by Vitellius, who is depicted positively in the *Antiquities* and, thus, can be regarded as a counterpart to the figure of Pilate.<sup>206</sup> Therefore, the mentioned textual variant in *Antiquities* XVIII 89, although it does not respect the context, could give the correct sense intended by Josephus, “that an unpleasant fate awaits those who attempt to tamper with the Jewish law.”<sup>207</sup>

### 3.2.4. Conclusions—Pilate’s Picture in the *Antiquities*

The *Antiquities*, more than the *War*, stress the behavior of Pilate toward Jewish Law. Therefore, in the first incident, his action in honor of Caesar is qualified as a clear transgression of them, whereas it remains unclear in the second. Moreover, both incidents emphasize the religious devotion of the Jews whose acceptance of death in the aqueduct affair marks their absolute loyalty to Jewish Law. This is contrasted with the ferocious attack of pagan troops. Furthermore, he competently puts down the two (religious) uprisings, showing that he is a dutiful Roman governor. However, from the Samaritan tumult, a question emerges regarding the extent to which his actions are opportunistic. Despite his generally competent action toward uprisings, his final dismissal, according to Josephus’ rhetorical aim, is due to his upsetting of Jewish Law.<sup>208</sup>

## 4. Pilate in the Gospel of John

John’s description of the Roman trial is much longer than those given by the synoptics.<sup>209</sup> Certainly, as with these, theological issues have influenced his depiction of Jesus and of Pilate.<sup>210</sup> Concerning the former, the trial reveals clearly the contrast between his exaltation and his humiliation. Furthermore, throughout the trial, John stresses the meaning of Jesus’ kingship, which, obviously, differs from the meaning of kingship for Pilate (and for the Jews). Thus, one gets the impression that the main characters, Jesus and Pilate (and also the Jews), do not really understand each other.<sup>211</sup> Given this, we are already confronted with the important Johannine dualism of ‘being of the world’ and ‘not being of the world,’ i.e., those who believe in Christ and those who do not. This is reflected in the concept of ἀλήθεια: because God is the truth, Jesus *is* that truth, because he is one

<sup>202</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 91), and also the statement of (Lémonon 2007, p. 219): “En agissant ainsi, Pilate ne faisait rien d’autre que d’user d’un droit qui lui était reconnu.”

<sup>203</sup> Against (Bond 1998, p. 91) and (Lémonon 2007, p. 219).

<sup>204</sup> (Krieger 1994, p. 44).

<sup>205</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 73).

<sup>206</sup> See for example (Josephus 1965, XVIII, par. 90–5; 120–2 [trans. Feldmann, pp. 64–9; 84–5]).

<sup>207</sup> (Bond 2000, p. 221).

<sup>208</sup> (Bond 1998, p. 78).

<sup>209</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 168). Apart from the works that are treated here, there are two other important ones: (Kertelge 1988) and (Strobel 1980).

<sup>210</sup> See the statement of (Blank 1959, p. 60): “Man darf wohl behaupten, dass die Passionsgeschichte bei Joh[annes] im Vergleich mit den Syn[optikern] am bewusstesten und konsequentesten in den Dienst theologischer Leitgedanken gestellt wurde.”

<sup>211</sup> Shared by (Blank 1959, p. 60): “Es überschneiden sich hierbei: 1. das βασιλεύς-Verständnis der Juden; 2. das des Pilatus (im Anhang an dieses); 3. das Jesu selbst.”

with the Father. The κόσμος, however, is in opposition to the truth.<sup>212</sup> Therefore, the Johannine Pilate must make a choice either for or against Jesus.<sup>213</sup>

John 18 and 19 are the relevant chapters for our work on Pilate. However, the following analysis will only pay attention to the Roman trial within those chapters, as well as leaving aside further considerations on the background of John's gospel.

#### 4.1. The Characterization of Pilate in John 18 and 19

Brought from Caiaphas into the Praetorium (πραιτώριον), the Jerusalem residence of the governor during the feasts, Jesus' trial in front of Pilate begins. Based on the movements of Pilate between the Jews and Jesus,<sup>214</sup> I will divide the passage into seven scenes:<sup>215</sup>

- (1) 18:28–32: The Jews remain outside the Praetorium in order to not be defiled (ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν) whilst Jesus has been led inside. Respecting Jewish sensibilities, Pilate, who is introduced abruptly, comes out of the Praetorium in order to speak with them. Because he obviously does not know the *exact* charge, Pilate asks for it (τίνα κατηγορίαν φέρετε κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου), and they reply, obviously insolently, that they would not have handed Jesus over to him, if he were not a criminal.<sup>216</sup> Pilate, however, wants them to judge Jesus by their own law (κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑμῶν), but they answer that it is not lawful for them to put someone to death. The question is how to interpret Pilate here? As prefect of Judea, he must have known that executions are not lawful to the Jews.<sup>217</sup> Therefore, Pilate is mocking Jewish impotence and asserts his position as Roman governor as the only person who is able to judge Jesus.<sup>218</sup>
- (2) 18:33–8a: Going inside the Praetorium, Pilate asks Jesus if he is the King of the Jews.<sup>219</sup> His rhetorical question (μήτι<sup>220</sup> ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός εἰμι; τὸ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς παρέδωκάν σε ἐμοί) indicates that the charge is Jewish and distances Pilate at the same time from them.<sup>221</sup> Pilate obviously has no prior knowledge of Jesus' activity and so he asks: "What have you done?" By giving a description of his kingdom, which obviously is not a political one,<sup>222</sup> Jesus completely ignores this question. For Pilate, the important question to have answered, however, is if Jesus is a king (οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σὺ). His famous question (τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια) as a reaction to Jesus' saying concerning the truth shows in John's narrative that Pilate

<sup>212</sup> See the prologue, John 1:1–18.

<sup>213</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 174).

<sup>214</sup> Which takes place as a function of John's literal style, rather than in order to make Pilate appear indecisive.

<sup>215</sup> The difficulty is, as we shall see further on, how to interpret Pilate's reaction as well as that of the Jews. There are certainly various possibilities for interpretation. Here, I am going to follow mainly the view of Bond, which I find more convincing. It will not be possible to pay attention to every detail of this passage in John.

<sup>216</sup> Greek: εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος κακὸν ποιῶν, οὐκ ἄν σοι παρέδώκαμεν αὐτόν. See (Bond 1998, p. 176). However, it could also show the inability of the Jews to present a water-tight charge. See also (Blank 1959, p. 67).

<sup>217</sup> It should be noted that within the Gospels, this is mentioned only by John. However, there is a whole discussion on this issue in the scholarship. See for example (Egger 1997, pp. 44–50), who confirms this detail mentioned in John. This view is shared by (Blinzler 1969, p. 278): "Hat Pilatus gehnt, dass es auf den Tod Jesu abgesehen war, dann haben natürlich seine Worte einen spöttischen Unterton; er musste ja ebenso wie die Juden wissen, dass diese das Tötungsrecht verloren hatten."

<sup>218</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 177).

<sup>219</sup> Greek: ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. This certainly was *the* charge against Jesus. It is the same charge as in the other gospels. See the statement of (Egger 1997, p. 200): "Es ist das gesamte öffentliche Tun Jesu, das sich vor dem Richterstuhl des Pilatus in mannigfaltigen Anklagen widerspiegelt und in dem facettenreichen ‚βασιλεὺς‘-Titulus beredten Nachhall findet." Further considerations on Jesus' kingdom will not be handled here. For more on this, see for example (Blank 1959, pp. 61–2).

<sup>220</sup> This expects a negative answer. Compare this with (Tuckett 2000, p. 135), who thinks that it would leave open the possibility of a positive answer.

<sup>221</sup> However, according to John's theology, the statement of (Tuckett 2000, p. 135) can be seen as correct: "Yet as the story goes on, it will become clear that Pilate's position, by being opposed to Jesus, is exactly that of 'the Jews.' He is by the end a 'Jew' in that he fails to acknowledge Jesus."

<sup>222</sup> Greek: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

- is part of the unbelieving world, which, like the Jews, rejects Jesus. It is impossible for him to recognize the truth and to hear Jesus with understanding and believe.<sup>223</sup>
- (3) 18:38b–40: Pilate goes outside, declaring that he finds no guilt in Jesus. However, instead of offering to release Jesus, he himself<sup>224</sup> refers to a custom<sup>225</sup> by which he should release one prisoner at Passover. The Jews reply that they want Barabbas to be released, who is only characterized further by being a ληστής, rather than Jesus (μὴ τοῦτον ἀλλὰ τὸν Βαραββᾶν). Finally, it is not mentioned explicitly if Barabbas is really going to be released. The main question that emerges from this scene and that, in the final analysis, cannot be answered,<sup>226</sup> is the following: Does Pilate *really* intend to release Jesus? If so, why does he not simply set him free?<sup>227</sup> Moreover, why does he refer to Jesus as the ‘King of the Jews,’<sup>228</sup> which seems to mock them and their nationalistic hopes, because they want Jesus to be put to death. Generally, this passage is interpreted as showing Pilate’s weakness as a Roman governor toward the Jewish high priests and the Jewish crowd.<sup>229</sup> However, it is more plausible that Pilate does not intend seriously to release Jesus.<sup>230</sup> The prefect knows that they want Jesus to be executed, but takes the opportunity to mock their messianic aspirations and, indirectly, the prisoner himself.<sup>231</sup>
  - (4) 19:1–3: Pilate scourges Jesus. The verb form ἐμαστίγωσεν implies that Pilate *himself* did so, but, probably, this shows his responsibility for this action. His motives for the scourging are unclear. Moreover, this was usually done before crucifixion, which is not even mentioned until the following scene.<sup>232</sup> The soldiers are obviously mocking him when saying: Χαίρε, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.
  - (5) 19:4–8: Pilate goes outside once again, this time bringing Jesus to them in mockingly clothes (crown of thorns and the purple robe) because he cannot find (political) guilt in him.<sup>233</sup> The chief priests cry for crucifixion, and Pilate replies that the Jews themselves should crucify Jesus, because he finds no guilt in him. However, now they bring a religious charge: because Jesus made himself the ‘Son of God’ (ὅτι υἱὸν θεοῦ εαυτὸν ἐποίησεν). Given no further reason, Pilate *now* becomes (more) afraid (μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη). Apparently, Pilate is continuing his mockery of the Jews when he, for the second time, wants them to judge Jesus themselves,<sup>234</sup> because as to him, Jesus does not seem to be a person causing serious disturbance. They, however, change their tactic by bringing a religious charge, which has an effect on the governor’s behavior at *this*<sup>235</sup> moment toward *Jesus*, who now appears to him as a higher being.<sup>236</sup>
  - (6) 19:9–11: Consequently, Pilate enters the Praetorium again asking Jesus for his origin (πόθεν εἶ σὺ). Pilate mentions that he has the power (ἐξουσία)<sup>237</sup> to release Jesus or to crucify him. Jesus, however, refers to the

<sup>223</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 179).

<sup>224</sup> This, for example, distinguishes John from the account of the synoptics.

<sup>225</sup> Its origins are explained differently. For an overview on the sources of Jewish and Roman laws dealing with this, see (Blinzler 1969, pp. 301–20).

<sup>226</sup> See already the phrase of (Bajsić 1967, p. 8): “Die Psyche des Prokurators bleibt weiterhin ein Rätsel.”

<sup>227</sup> Question also put by (Blank 1959, p. 72): “Doch warum läßt Pilatus Jesus nicht frei?”

<sup>228</sup> Greek: βούλεσθε οὖν ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

<sup>229</sup> See for example the rather convincing view of (Bajsić 1967, p. 12): “Pilatus kann also gegen den Willen des Volkes nichts ausrichten, nicht aus bloßer Angst vor dem Tumult [...], sondern weil ihm dazu die juridische Handhabe fehlt.” Pilate’s weakness is therefore due to Jewish traditions concerning the question of an amnesty. See also (Bajsić 1967, pp. 13–4).

<sup>230</sup> Against (Bajsić 1967, p. 9): “Es wird bestimmt niemand bezweifeln, dass Pilatus sich sehr für die Freilassung Jesu einsetzte.” At any rate, until *this* point in John’s account, his statement has to be regarded as not applicable. It may be correct to some extent with regard to the seventh scene. However, Pilate’s motives for releasing Jesus remain unclear.

<sup>231</sup> See (Bond 1998, pp. 181–2).

<sup>232</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 183). Therefore, the statement of (Blank 1959, p. 73) is correct: “Juristisch handelt es sich freilich um eine Kompetenzüberschreitung und eine Willkürmaßnahme [...].”

<sup>233</sup> A further discussion on the title ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος is left out here.

<sup>234</sup> See (Tuckett 2000, p. 137): “Yet for John’s Pilate this too is just a mocking jest. John’s Pilate knows that the Jews are not allowed to execute anyone, as the Jews have already told him this explicitly in the story earlier in 18,31.”

<sup>235</sup> Consequently, as we have seen, there were no indications for a fear of Pilate in the preceding scenes.

<sup>236</sup> See (Bond 1998, p. 187).

<sup>237</sup> The central question here is the following: what is the exact meaning of it? Most scholars agree that it refers to the legal power of a Roman governor in his own province. See for example (Blank 1959, p. 78).

derivation of this power from God.<sup>238</sup> Moreover, he says, the one who handed him over (ὁ παραδούς) has the greater sin. It remains unclear to whom Jesus is referring here exactly, to the Jews who have handed him over to Pilate or to Judas.<sup>239</sup>

- (7) **19:12–6a:** At this, Pilate tries to release (ἀπολύσαι) Jesus.<sup>240</sup> However, what exactly has brought him to this change of attitude is not mentioned. The Jews, obviously realizing that their religious charge has produced the wrong reaction of the governor, revert to the political one: if Pilate releases Jesus, he will not be a friend of Caesar. The term φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος may well have been used in a technical sense. The meaning is clear: if Pilate releases Jesus as a messianic pretender, he will not be protecting the interests of the emperor. This argument has the desired effect on him: he brings Jesus outside.<sup>241</sup> Finally, by claiming that the emperor is their only king, Pilate hands Jesus over (παρέδωκεν) to the Jews.

#### 4.2. Conclusions—Pilate’s Picture in John

Keeping in mind the basic difficulty concerning the interpretation of Pilate’s actions, the analysis has shown that Pilate does not appear as a weak and indecisive governor. His general behavior fits with his own statement that he has the power (ἐξουσία) to release Jesus or to crucify him. Therefore, as a dutiful Roman governor, he takes the case seriously but soon realizes that Jesus is an innocent man with regard to political charges. Nevertheless, he does not release him. The motives for this remain unclear.

The ongoing trial, however, reveals Pilate’s mockery of Jewish messianic aspirations with respect to the prisoner himself and would be hard to understand if Pilate was a weak governor. He only stops mocking after the Jews have brought a religious charge to him and tries to release Jesus because he has become afraid, as a pagan governor, of Jesus who appears to him as some kind of a divine man. Finally, the situation changes because of a further political charge offered by the Jews, which raises the danger for Pilate, as a Roman governor, to be blamed for not having protected the interests of the emperor because, apparently, Jesus seems to claim *some* kind of kingship that could oppose the emperor. Thus, he releases Jesus to the Jews but only after they have accepted the sovereignty of Caesar. According to the Johannine theology, Pilate and the Jews act in the passage dealt with as members of the world, which does not accept Jesus.<sup>242</sup>

### 5. Conclusions—The Pilate of Philo, Josephus, and John

As one of the seven governors of Judea between 6 and 41 C.E., Pontius Pilate was charged with maintaining law and order in the province. The province presented many difficulties:<sup>243</sup> one reason for this can be seen in the fact that it was composed of different ethnic groups.<sup>244</sup>

The present study on him is limited insofar as it deals with a selection of the sources that refer to Pilate. The event of the Gilded Shields recorded by Philo illustrates Pilate’s attempt to show loyalty to his emperor during troubled times rather than to cause unintentional offenses. Pilate’s extreme negative depiction is due to Philo’s harsh vocabulary, which appears to have been used for corrupt governors more generally. However, after having been already in office for some years, Pilate can be blamed for his insensitivity toward Jewish traditions.

With regard to Josephus, the episodes concerning the standards and the aqueduct are each narrated twice by him. The former show Pilate as a stubborn and insensitive ruler, as well as putting

<sup>238</sup> Greek: οὐκ εἶχεξ ἐξουσίαν κατ’ ἐμοῦ οὐδεμίαν εἰ μὴ ἦν δεδομένον σοι ἄνωθεν.

<sup>239</sup> Judas is also referred to in John 18:2 by the verb παραδίδωμι. See (Bond 1998, pp. 188–9).

<sup>240</sup> This is the first time that the governor attempts to free him.

<sup>241</sup> The whole question of whether Pilate (or Jesus?) has taken place on the βῆμα is left out here. For more on this, see (Blinzler 1969, pp. 346–56). Again, Pilate is mocking the Jews when he is referring to Jesus as *their* king (Ἴδε ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν ... Τὸν βασιλέα ὑμῶν σταυρώσω).

<sup>242</sup> See (Bond 1998, pp. 192–3).

<sup>243</sup> Shared by (Krieger 1995, p. 82): “Zu berücksichtigen ist ferner, dass Rom mit einem Präfekten aus dem Ritterstand bewusst einen Militär an die Spitze Judäas stellte. Indem dieses Gebiet unter die Provinzen der dritten Kategorie eingeordnet wird, gilt es per se als Unruheherd, der ständiges hartes Durchgreifen erfordert.”

<sup>244</sup> For another incident, which has not been treated with here, see (Blinzler 1958, pp. 24–49).

emphasis on his flexibility when he is impressed by Jewish devotion. Thus, as a Roman governor, he takes seriously the responsibility of maintaining peace. This is little modified in the latter when Pilate encounters the tumult with a minimum of violence. Concerning the two uprisings, the execution of Jesus seems to be a routine crucifixion of a messianic disturber whose followers, however, do not lose their lives. The Samaritan disturbance put down by him confirms this picture of a dutiful Roman governor, preventing escalations in his province. Nevertheless, a question emerges regarding the extent to which Pilate's actions are opportunistic.

Finally, John presents a governor who is sure of his own authority. Moreover, his mockery of the Jews and of Jesus shows some kind of cynicism. He is only willing to go along with Jewish wishes to execute an innocent man in order to protect the interests of Caesar.

From the accounts of Philo, Josephus, and John, therefore, the portrait of Pilate emerges as a loyal and dutiful Roman governor whose main aim is to protect the interests of the emperor in his own province, by ensuring, for example, peace and loyalty. Therefore, his flexibility toward Jewish interests seems *primarily* to be due to his duties as a *Roman* official.

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