Abstract: **Exegesis of Legal Scripture in the Works of Josephus**

In this book, I build upon my earlier work on Josephus’ exegesis and provide a comprehensive study of his contribution to the crystallization of the Halakha. My analysis focuses on the similarities (and dissimilarities) between his work and both the earlier tannaitic sources and contemporary Second Temple sources. The book begins by providing a clear definition of Halakha and offers an explanation of its methodology and sources. I then examine the structure and contents of the Pentateuch in Josephus' writing, before moving on to more specific coverage of the Decalogue in his work and its relation to other laws in the Pentateuch. Further analysis is applied to the laws in the books of Leviticus-Deuteronomy and to laws that appear outside the Pentateuch. Throughout my analyses, I make close comparisons between biblical laws and Josephus' rewriting of them, in order to consider the reasons behind this rewriting and the origins of the texts to which Josephus may have had access while carrying out his exegetical work. I have drawn clear conclusions about the interpretative traditions to which Josephus had access, and within which he worked, as well as to how he used them.

I have focused primarily on Josephus’ treatment of biblical legal material mainly found in the Judean Antiquities’ books 3 and 4. There are references to his other writings where necessary. I cross-reference Josephus with the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Philo, the NT, and rabbinic literature. I note that he interprets, reorders, and at times also rewrites.

Among the larger topics discussed are the nature of Josephus’ juxtapositions, reasons for the commandments, Moses as a lawgiver or mediator, and the question of the influence of Roman law. In each chapter I define what I plan to do, treating every law, from every source, in a logical series. I interact with both Josephus and the most important scholarship on the matters discussed.

What distinguishes this book from earlier treatments is its isolation of halakhic material from other material and its contextual, and broadly sympathetic, treatment of Josephus as an earnest interpreter of Moses’ laws.

The book frames the discussion by noting how much is left undefined in the biblical text, such that any serious interpreter would need to make a number of decisions. I show how Josephus made each one, often differently from the rabbis. In the process, I consider the LXX version, parallels in Josephus elsewhere, and the question of the possible influence of Roman law. This contributes to a picture of Josephus as an interpreter of the Mosaic law who deserves careful attention.

Translating this book into Russian would be an exciting development for the “Contemporary Jewish Studies” series in Academic Studies Press. Its methodological relevance will ensure that the book finds interested readers among scholars who are active in Jewish studies, Jewish and Christian theology, and philosophy. For academics, this translation will help teach Jewish exegesis, and, specifically, Josephus’ contribution to it. It will be actively marketed among worldwide universities that offer courses in Jewish studies, as well as in the Academies of Science in the Baltic region and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Caucasus, and Israel.

Russian Title: Пятикнижие как правовой источник в комментариях Иосифа Флавия.