בס"ד

"For the Freedom of Jerusalem": The Jewish Wars with Rome

Book proposal

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*1. Brief Description*

The book will describe the ongoing struggle of various groups of the Jews of Palestine/Judaea to be liberated from the Roman occupation and to establish an independent Jewish entity. The book will focus on the years 6-200 AD, with special emphasis on the mid-period, the years 136-66. During this period, Judaea moved to direct Roman rule, and in the midst of it the two major revolts took place: the Great Revolt in 66-73, and the Bar Kochba rebellion in 132-136. The failures to be liberated from Rome, and the Roman response caused enormous social and cultural changes in Jewish society and way of life. The book will address three key questions:

1. What motivated Jews to rebel against Rome over and over for almost a century and a half, despite its failures?
2. How did Rome meet the Jewish, military, political and ideological challenges?
3. What were the results of the military-political struggle for Jewish society and Judaism in the long run?

The uniqueness of the book is in both the chronological and the methodological approach, where these two aspects are interrelated. As will be explained below (section 3), the book's uniqueness chronologically lies in its review of one historical phenomenon: the military confrontation of the Jews (as opposed to the Hasmoneans and their supporters, and the opposition to Herod's rule) vis-a-vis the Roman government from the first Jewish uprising in 6 AD through the Great revolt and the Bar Kokhba revolt, until de facto and even de jure reconciliation with Roman rule. That is where the second uniqueness of the book stems, its chronological range lead to integrative approach to history's many faces. Although a national uprising is manifested in a military clash, and as such can be described by the conventional methods of military and political history, a national uprising is primarily a result of social circumstances and is often precluded by an ideological motivation. Understanding the phenomenon of repeated Jewish revolts requires the integration of military, political, social and cultural history. As this is the case, the book is also based on the wide variety of ancient sources of the writings of Josephus and the Roman historians (Tacitus, Suetonius, etc.); Jewish Literature (Qumran, Talmudic Literature, Philo); and the rich archaeological finds.

*2. Outline of the book*

The introductory section will present the chronological boundaries of the period and will deal with the sources available to us for the reconstruction of the period. I will also address the methodological questions of using the literary and archaeological finds. From then on, the book on the chronological axis will move:

*Chapter One: From Sponsorship to Roman Republic (6-26)* - The chapter opens with the considerations that led Augustus to transfer Judaea from a Romanian protectorate governed by Herod's House to a Roman province controlled by a Roman governor. The main part of the chapter will deal with the ideological and religious tension in Judaean society following Rome's political decisions. On the one hand, the radical ideology of freedom sees Roman rule as a religious prohibition and stood behind the rebellion during the census of Quarinius (AD 6). On the other hand, there are expressions for a reshaping of Jewish culture and lifestyle in a way that need neither a political nor a national center.

*Chapter Two: The Governor and the Emperor - Two Turning Points (41-26)* - In the fourth decade of the first century, two turning points can be pointed out in the assessment of the images of Romans and Jews in each other's eyes. The term of Pontius Pilate was accompanied by a number of harassments by the Roman governor against the Jewish religion and its Temple. The result was violent clashes with some Jews and the diffusion of the ideology of liberty for wider strata. Several years after Pilate's removal, Emperor Caligula demanded to place his statue in the Temple. This demand probably caused many Jews in Judaea to lose faith in the benefits of Roman rule and created fertile ground to expand the circle of believers in the religious ideology of liberty.

*Chapter Three: Broken Dream - from Agrippa to Florus (66-41)* - Agrippa's brief monarchy (41-44), has resurrected the hopes of regaining political independence by way of peace. The elimination of this hope with Agrippa's death and the repeated frictions against the Roman governors led to the rise of frustration and a growing hold of the ideology of liberty, followed by sporadic revolts. On the other hand, it is quite clear that the Roman government did not understand the social and cultural processes that underwent Jewish society and continued to view the various manifestations of rebellion, only eruptions. As the Roman governor preferred to lean on the non-Jewish population, this contributed to an escalation of Roman-Jewish relations.

*Chapter Four: To Revolt or Not to Revolt? (Spring 66 - Fall 66)* - At the heart of the chapter will be the dilemma faced by the Jewish population, whether the time has come for a total revolt in Rome. At the focus will be two events:

1. The cessation of the sacrifice for the Emperor's peace in the summer of 66 was probably meant to signal to the Romans the gravity of Jewish rage, but was interpreted as a call for rebellion. However, even at this stage probably most of the Jewish society has not yet supported the revolt.
2. The event that motivated many Jews to join the rebellion, including parts of the upper classes, was probably Castius Galus's failure to take control of Jerusalem and the defeat he suffered during the withdrawal from Jerusalem in November 66.

We will look at how military events were interpreted by the Jews from a religious perspective and generated different reactions: on the one hand, many in the Jewish society saw the retreat of Galus as a divine endorsement of the revolt; On the other hand, communities, such as Sepphoris, chose to cooperate with Rome and even gave it political and cultural expressions.

*Chapter Five: The Galilee - The birth cradle of the Historian and the General* - (Spring 67 - Winter 67) - The chapter will follow Flavius Josephus preparations for the clash with the Roman army. Based on the literary and archaeological findings we will examine the military steps taken by the Roman in the Galilee and its social and ideological implications. We will focus on the characters of Flavius Josephus and John of Giscala. The first was convinced that the failure of the revolt in the Galilee require to adopt a religious approach of accepting the Roman rule; the other one adopted, through those events, a radical concept of liberty and became the prominent leader of the rebellion.

*Chapter Six: Civil War - Between Rome and Jerusalem (Winter 68 - Summer 69)* - The chapter will review the links between the civil war in the Roman Empire (The Year of the Four Emperors, 69 AD) and events in Judea. In this chapter, I will particularly emphasize the social polarization that has characterized Jewish society for decades, contributing to the fact that, during a crisis rather than a united front, Jewish society has deteriorated into a civil war involving social and religious aspects.

*Chapter Seven: For the Freedom of Jerusalem - Siege and Destruction (July 69 - Summer 73)* - We will continue to monitor the political decisions and military moves that led to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. We will analyze military and political decision-making processes from two different perspectives. One is the intensification of the radical freedom ideology among the rebels. The other is the viewpoint of Titus and the Roman army that tried to decipher the temple's importance to Jewish society.

*Chapter Eight: Judaea Capta or From Jerusalem to Yavneh? (96-73)* - The destruction of the Temple led to a new appreciation of Judaism among both the remaining Jewish leadership and Roman government. As for the Jewish angle, we will examine the degree of difference and continuity in Jewish society from the demographic, social and religious perspectives. In particular, we will examine whether the failure of the rebellion led to the decline of the radical freedom ideology and the rise of alternative ideologies. With regard to Roman side, we will examine the place of the triumph over the Jews Flavian propaganda, and the implications of the punishment measures that were taken by the Romans, most notably the Jewish Tax, had on the Jewish image in the eyes of the Romans and the Jews themselves.

*Chapter Nine: From the Jewish Tax to the Jewish Diaspora Revolt (96-117)* - We will look at how Roman policies formulated against Judaism and Jews following the Great Revolt, as well as the arrival of former rebels from Judaea to Jewish communities in the Mediterranean basin, created social and ideological changes that led some Jewish communities to organized insurgency against Rome. In particular, we will examine whether links can be established between the radical ideology of freedom that developed in Judaea and the ideology that motivated the rebels, as far as possible based on the meager sources.

*Chapter Ten: To Revolt or not to Revolt (II) - The Causes and Circumstances of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (117-132)* - The reasons for the Bar Kokhba revolt are in ongoing dispute. In this chapter, I will discuss the existence of two interrelated factors. On the one hand, Roman policy towards Jerusalem, which probably included a decision to establish a foreign city named Aelia Capitolina, and against the religious-redemptive meaning attributed by the Jews to the Roman measures. We will also examine whether connections can be made between the ideology of liberty that underpinned the Great Revolt and the religious-redemptive ideology that prompted the Bar Kokhba revolt. We will also explore the question of the involvement of sages in the leadership of the rebellion and in particular Rabbi Akiva sayings.

*Chapter Eleven: From the Redemption of Israel to the Destruction of the House of Israel - The Bar Kochba Rebellion (132-136)* - The chapter will offer as detailed a picture as possible of the course of the war between the Jews of Palestine and the Roman army. The chapter will be based on a careful analysis of the archaeological discoveries, most notably the hiding complexes and the refuge caves, the numismatic finds and the Bar Kokhba letters. Through these we also examine whether oppositional approchesto the revolt can be indicated among the Jews. Two questions that need special discussion are: whether Jerusalem was conquered by the rebels; the extent of the Galilee's participation in the uprising.

*Chapter Twelve: From Rebellion to Reconcilation (140-220)* - In the two post-revolt generations, Jewish-Roman relations underwent a fundamental transformation. From ongoing high-intensity conflicts to completion, reconcilation and even collaboration. At the center of the chapter will be the question of whether this fundamental change is due to the Roman punitive measures following the Bar Kokhba revolt - following the uprising, the Jewish community in Judaea was destroyed, and with it the supporters of the radical ideology of liberty were eliminated; or were the changes related to internal processes in Jewish society that allowed the rise of Jewish perception and Jewish lifestyle that did not rest on national sovereignty. The nature of this post-destruction(s) Judaism will be examined from three different perspectives that complement one another even if they do not coincide: the rise of the synagogue as a communal institution; The cemetery in Beth-Shearim as a window to the Jewish elite; The Mishnah as a guide and representative of a new kind of Jewish lifestyle.

*Chapter Thirteen: Jewish Revolts - Another View* - The failure of the Jewish revolts played a significant role in the formation of Christian identity. The chapter will review the responses of the Christian and Judeo-Christian communities to these failures, and in particular to the religious significance they attributed to them. In this context, we will discuss both the historical events concerning the Christian community in Jerusalem and the cultural history and ideological developments as expressed in the writings of the Church Fathers of the time.

*Epilogue: Then and Today* - the failure of the Jewish revolts is preserved in the Jewish world thanks to a series of religious rituals and fasts. The persistence of the memory of the destruction means that the interpretation of the events of the destruction and its causes occupy an important place in the political and cultural discourse in Jewish and Israeli societies. The contemporary look at the events of those days raises a tangle of historiographical and historiosophic questions about the nature and significance of history.

*3. Competing works*

The uniqueness of this book is first and foremost in the period it covers. The chronological framework has a direct implication on how the historical narrative is presented and the ability to figure out long-term processes. In the last two decades there has been a tendency for focused over very long or rather very short periods of time. The two most important books and which have somewhat appealed to the general public demonstrate this phenomenon well. In 2007, Martin Goodman's book *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations*, was published by Penguin Books. The period covered in the book begins with Herod's rise to power in 37 BCE and ends with Constantine's victory in 312 CE, some 350 years! Goodman also included long introductory chapters describing major themes in Jewish and Roman cultures and societies (pp. 394-33), followed by another 200 pages of historical narrative description. Goodman spectacularly describes in broad brushstrokes the ups and downs of the Jewish-Roman relationship. Naturally, reviewing such a long period of time does not allow a detailed description of political and military moves measured over weeks and months and therefore cannot follow the complex dynamics of links between military measures, policy decisions and cultural and conceptual implications. Also, the broad chronological framework in Goodman's book allows to dull and underestimate the importance of Jewish revolts in the period between 66-136.

In contrast, Steve Mason's book, *A History of the Jewish War A.D. 66–74*, which was published three years ago by Cambridge University Press, focuses on a period of only eight years (74-66), the years of the Great Revolt. The book is a great scholarly achievement from every possible point of view. The reduction in chronological decline allowed Mason to describe in detail various events during the Great Revolt while a scholarly discussion of the complex of literary and archaeological findings. However, the narrow focus does not allow the chain of long-term circumstances to be described, and in particular, it harms the ability to describe the social and cultural history that spans larger durations than individual years.

Noteworthy are a number of books published in recent years that tend toward one of the two chronological approaches discussed above. Over the past five years, two very detailed books on the Bar Kochba revolt have been published. William Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian*, was published five years ago by Cambridge University Press, deals with a period of only twenty years (115-136), during which the Diaspora Revolt and the Bar Kochba revolt occurred. Horbury's principal argument is that in fact it these two revolts were a single war. Three years ago, Menachem Mor's book *The Second Jewish Revolt: The Bar Kokhba War, 132-136 CE.*, was ublished by Brill. Both books offer a very focused look at the historical period in which they are concerned and are intended to scholars.

On the other hand, several publications were issued to offer a broad view of the Jewish world in ancient times. Most notable is Seth Schwartz's book, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.*, published in Princeton University Press, in 2001. Like Goodman's book, the broad chronological range does not allow to describe the dynamics of particular events, but to present in broad movements the cultural changes that have taken place in Jewish society and Jewish way of life. These problems also characterize Simon Schama's magnificent book, *The Story of the Jews: Finding the Words 1000 BC - 1492 AD* (Harper-Collins, 2013).

The uniqueness of the proposed book, "To the Freedom of Jerusalem," is that the chronological range spread of about 7-6 generations allows a close examination of the relationship between macro and micro history. On the one hand, it will be possible to follow in relative detail military moves and policy decisions, while at the same time the broad chronological frame will allow the impact of these events on the culture and lifestyle of the Jews to be discerned. The advantage of targeted books such as Mason, Horbury and Mor's books is, of course, that they deal with a specific event and can therefore analyze it in detail. However, even in this book, despite the larger range (6-200 CE), there is still one phenomenon that is being reviewed and it is the military confrontation between Jews and Romans. This military, social and cultural phenomenon has not yet received a special monograph, and I hope this book can complete this drawback.

*4. Apparatus*

4.1 Maps - Since the book reviews military moves on both an international and local scale as well as demographic developments, about eight maps will be needed for the reader's orientation:

1. Map of the Roman Empire in the first century CE and places of Jewish settlements.
2. Map of the Land of Israel in the first century CE and places of Jewish, Samaritan and Greek settlements.
3. Map of the battles in the Galilee during the Great Revolt.
4. Map of the military moves of Vespasian and Titus in Judea.
5. Map of Jerusalem during the Great Revolt.
6. Map of the Diaspora Revolt.
7. Map of the hiding complexes and refuge caves during the Bar Kokhba revolt.
8. Map of the Jewish towns in Palestine at the end of the second century.

4.2 Photographs - The book deals with and discusses many archaeological finds, especially coins, armaments, hiding complexes and ancient scrolls. I would like to incorporate about 25 photos.

*5. Schedule* - I hope to present a first draft within about 18 months of getting started.