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

In this book, I build upon my earlier work on Josephus as an exegete and provide a comprehensive study of Josephus' contribution to the crystallization of the Halakha which focuses on the similarities (and dissimilarities) between his work and the tannaitic sources, as well as contemporary Second Temple sources. The book begins by providing a clear definition of Halakha and offers an explanation of 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 the work of Josephus and its relation to other laws in the Pentateuch. Further analysis is applied to the laws in the books of Leviticus-Deuteronomy and on laws that appear outside the Pentateuch. Throughout, 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 that Josephus may have had access to in his exegetical work. I have drawn clear conclusions about the interpretative traditions that Josephus had access to and worked within, and about how he used them.

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

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

What distinguishes this book from earlier treatments is its isolation of halakhic 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 pointing out 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 took each one, often differently from the rabbis. In the process, I consider the LXX rendering, parallels in Josephus elsewhere, and the question of the possible influence of Roman law. This contributes the main 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 series “Contemporary Jewish Studies” 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 with teaching 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 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.