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*For the Freedom of Jerusalem: The Jewish-Roman Wars*

Book proposal

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*Outline of the book*

*Introduction: From Kingship to a Roman Province or From Liberty to Slavery*

After the first achievements of the Hasmonean rebellion, Judah Maccabee, the leader of the rebellion, sent a diplomatic expedition to Rome (162 BCE). Judah and Rome formed an alliance and mutual defense agreement. About a century and a half later, a descendant of the Hasmonean family, Antigonus II Mattathias, launched a rebellion against Rome (40 BCE).

The upheaval of Jewish-Roman relations is the result of two interrelated processes: the creation of a religious ideology that promotes political independence from the Jewish side; A change in Rome's political evaluations in the Middle East. The chapter will examine these changes and their consequences, from the covenant between Judah and Rome (162 BCE) to the death of Herod (4 BCE).

At the outset, the Hasmonean rebellion was seen as a response to Antiochus IV religious persecutions, with the goal of restoring the Jews' religious autonomy. This was achieved with the purification of the temple and the abolition of religious decrees by the approval of Antiochus (164 BCE). However, the Hasmoneans continued the rebellion in an effort to establish an independent entity until it was founded in 140 BCE. Establishing the Hasmonean kingdom instilled in the ideological and religious beliefs of the Jews of Judaea the importance of political sovereignty and aroused in some groups the hope of a return to the kingdom of the House of David, a hope that has almost disappeared for centuries.

At this point, I will clarify the terms 'nationalism', 'independence' and 'liberty' in connection with the historical context in which they were stated, in order to avoid anachronism and use of these terms as is customary in modern Western thinking. I will look at the activities of the Hasmonean kings in relation to the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, in order to understand how they perceived the connection between the Hasmonean kingdom and the people who identified themselves as belonging to the Jewish ethnos around the world.

After about seventy years of independence, it was understood that when Rome took over Judaea and placed protectors of its behalf (John Hyrcanus II [63-40 BCE], then Herod [37-4 BCE]), they encountered fierce resistance. During this period, opposition to Rome was ideologically formed. Rome was now seen as the "fourth beast" of Daniel's vision, and so the political struggle was at the same time a religious struggle. I will cover the conceptual expressions and violent actions taken by rebels and the consolidation of the religious elements in their ant-Roman ideology. Violence against Rome and its protectors in Judaea created in Rome hostile perceptions of Jews and Judaism. I will briefly discuss the expressions of hostility towards the Jews in Cicero and other Graeco-Roman writers and political leaders.

Despite the inherent tensions that had already erupted several times, Herod succeeded throughout his reign (37 BCE – 4 AD) to prevent significant violent outbreaks. His policy was based on finding the balance between the political component - absolute loyalty to Rome, and the national-religious component expressed in the construction of the temple, and support of Jewish communities in the Diaspora. Herod also tried to obliterate the local leadership by 'importing' high priests from Jewish communities in Egypt. Herod's complex balancing system was able to prevent an eruption as long as he lived. When his son Archelaus came to power (4 BCE - 6 AD) the clashes erupted. Now the Romans have begun a re-evaluation of Judaea and its Jews.

*Chapter One: From Sponsorship to Roman Republic (6-26)*.

The chapter opens with the factors that led Augustus to transfer Judaea from a Roman protectorate governed by the Herodian dynasty to a Roman province controlled by a Roman governor.

Judaea's relentless tension towards Rome and its representatives, along with a new attitude toward the status of the sponsoring countries, led Judaea to become a Roman province. As stated, the political processes are intertwined and enhance cultural-religious-social processes and vice versa. In the next section I will examine how this decision was implemented and how it affected Rome's attitude during the reign of the first four governors:

* The decision to turn Judaea into a Roman province required a comprehensive census of the Jewish population and property. As a result, the first violent rebellion against Rome erupted - the Quirinius revolt. The rebels belonged to the lower classes who feared the economic consequences. Ideologically, rebellion constituted a significant landmark in seeing the Roman Empire as the embodiment of evil and evilness. From now on, anti-Roman ideology will become increasingly religious and eschatological.
* However, the first four governors managed to prevent another violent outbreak. They understood that the religious-national ideology is not acceptable by all the Jews and is not one-piece. They respected religious autonomy (I will examine archaeological and literary expressions for it), giving weight and prestige to the high priests. Thus, pro-Roman leadership was created, but one that was perceived by the public as representing the Jewish interest. And so, encouraged those who believed in the idea that Jewish culture and lifestyle could be reshaped in a way that required neither a political nor national center.

However, as will be clarified at the end of the chapter, Roman policy was based on internal contradictions that could not persist for long. Therefore, since the days of Pontius Pilate, Jews and Romans embarked on a course of political and religious clashes, with these two elements sometimes not being discerned.

*Chapter Two: The Governor and the Emperor - Two Turning Points (41-26)*.

The fourth decade of the first century saw two turning points in the Romans and Jews’ assessments of each other. Pontius Pilate (Roman governor in Judaea, 36-26) took a hostile and violent approach compared to his predecessors. Both literary and archaeological sources indicate different ways in which he harmed Jews and their religious beliefs. The hostility towards Rome has erupted in two ways:

1. Violent spontaneous outbursts against Roman forces in Judaea.
2. The proliferation of Messianic and eschatological movements that expected cosmic transformation that brought about the downfall of Rome.

As the expressions of hostility increased, Pilate had to exert greater power, and Judaea began to appear as a chronic problem. The story of Jesus and his disciples revealed the messianic and national expectations of the Jews and the aggressive measures that were taken by the Roman governor. The political conflict was integrated into the intra-Jewish social conflict. The Gospels reveal the alienation between the lower strata that supported the radical movements and the priestly and Pharisee elite who collaborated with the Romans

Several years after Pilate's removal, Emperor Caligula (37-41) demanded his statue to be placed in the Jerusalem Temple. The mobilization against Caligula encompassed the Jews of Judaea and the Diaspora, especially the Jews of Egypt. I will dwell on the unique situation of Egyptian Jewry and the activities of this community and its leader, the philosopher Philo, in favor of the Temple. The Jewish unity caused Jews and Romans alike to assume that the Jewish public was capable of political and perhaps even warlike unified action. This awareness was expressed a few decades later in the preparations for the Great Revolt, and in the measures Rome took after the suppression of the revolt.

The more serious consequence of the Caligula affair was that many Jews lost faith in Rome and the Roman Emperor as defenders of Judaism and Jews. This distrust was a fertile ground for the further expansion of radical ideas and movements that began considering seriously the possibility of taking arm against Rome.

*Chapter Three: Broken Dream - from Agrippa to Florus (66-41)*.

After Caligula's death, the Romans appointed Agrippa, Herod's grandson, as the King of Judaea. The appointment was seen by many as a withdrawal of Rome from Judaea. Paradoxically, this appointment may have accelerated the ideological and social processes that led to the Great Revolt. Agrippa only reigned for three years until he passed away (41-44). Some of his actions fostered hopes of restoring Jewish sovereignty. While another aspect of his policy was a continuation of the Herodian tradition of cooperation with Rome. His untimely death has made it impossible to establish a clear policy. The hopes he raised contributed indirectly to the establishment of an anti-Roman feelings and ideology.

After Agrippa’s death, Judaea turned back a Roman province. During this time (44-66), three processes, nurtured each other, convinced many Jews there was no other way but a revolt against Rome.

* The Roman governors began to lean more and more on the Graeco-Syrian population in Judaea. These have held many key positions and served on the Governor’s policing powers. This fed the hostile images on both sides. The hostility of the Graeco-Syrians towards the Jews seeped into Roman officials, on the other hand, the Jews saw the Romans as heirs and collaborators with the Graeco-Syrians with whom they were in ongoing conflict since the Hasmonean period. I will discuss some expressions of this triangle that have pushed the Jews to the brink of revolt, most notably the conflict between Jews and Greeks in the capital of the province – Caesarea.
* The frustration of the 'withdrawal' of Jewish independence/sovereignty after Agrippa's death, along with the departure of the Roman governor from the Jews, gave a significant boost to the development of eschatological and messianic expectations.
* The polarization within Jewish society among the rich priestly elite and alongside them some of the Pharisees as opposed to lower social strata, made the recognized Jewish leadership, i.e. families of the high priesthood and Pharisees, irrelevant for larger sections in Jewish society.

These three processes created despair and frustration of the present, which in turn gave hope for a radical change of the reality. These hopes were not to be satisfied with a political change only. I will discuss a few examples of relatively big groups who were leaded by charismatic leaders who promised to bring about religious and national redemption immediately. Although the Romans were able to cope with the sporadic outbursts, they failed to rebuild trust in them and the aristocratic Jewish leadership. Moreover, many people of the elites felt that the Roman policy had stabilized for the benefit of the alien population, and so requiring them to seek popular support among the Jews of Judaea. One outcome was the rising of commitment for the Jewish population and their beliefs over the commitment for the peace of the Roman forces.

By this time, the two ideological extremes had already been formulated. At one end, mainly the descendants of Herod's house cooperated and received full acceptance of Rome. The other side has probably been dubbed by this time “Zealots” (*Qanaim*), and bind without heather a religious obligation and national sentiment. For them accepting Rome's reign means idolatry, which is why war must be fought for independence from Rome to death. Most of the Jewish public moves between these two ends without deciding at this time.

*Chapter Four: To Revolt or Not to Revolt (I) (Spring 66 - Fall 66).*

At the beginning of this chapter, I will briefly review the events that led to the deterioration of Jewish-Roman relations during 66: (1) deciding Rome in favor of the Greek population in Caesarea, (2) defiant activities of Rome's forces in Jerusalem. These actions expedited the decision by many Jews who debated between the various ideological extremes described at the end of the previous chapter

At the heart of this chapter lies the dilemma faced by the Jewish population as to whether the time had come for an all-encompassing revolt against Rome. Two events will be highlighted:

1. The refusal of senior Temple staff officials to offer sacrifices for the Roman Emperor in the summer of 66 was most likely meant to signal the gravity of Jewish anger against Rome. The Romans understood the decision as a call for rebellion. At this point, however, most Jews probably did not yet support the revolt.
2. The event that motivated many Jews—including some in the upper classes—to join the rebellion was Castius Galus's failure to take control of Jerusalem and his defeat during the withdrawal from Jerusalem in November 66.

The chapter will also look at how military events were interpreted by the Jews from a religious perspective and the various reactions the events generated. On the one hand, many Jews regarded Galus’s retreat as a divine endorsement of the revolt, while others chose to cooperate with Rome and did not shy away from expressing that cooperation politically and culturally.

*Chapter Five: The Galilee - Birrthplace of Histrians and Generals (Spring 67 - Winter 67)*.

The chapter follows Flavius Josephus’s preparations for the clash with the Roman army. Relying on literary sources and archaeological findings, it examines the military steps taken by the Romans in Galilee and their social and ideological implications. The events in the Galilee largely marked Jewish society's fracture lines and the Roman policy during the uprising. Among the Jews, three different groups formed.

* In Sepphoris and other rich cities, opponents of the uprising have intensified. These made sure to express allegiance to Rome and were rewarded with generous hand as seen from the literary and archaeological sources.
* Josephus is a typical representative of the Jerusalem elite who joined the rebellion but was aware of the dangers and rescues involved. The surrender of Josephus and his move to the Roman side was a quite extreme step on the part of someone who was until recently the commander of the rebellion, but as we shall see later, quite a few of his social circles were to follow in one way or another.
* John of Giscala, represents the Jewish leadership that embraced the fanatical ideology, and saw the war in Rome, not just a military confrontation to achieve realistic goals. This ideology incorporated powerful religious motifs that essentially prevented any possibility of compromise or surrender later in the rebellion.

*Chapter Six: Civil War - Between Rome and Jerusalem (Winter 68 - spring 70)*.

This chapter reviews the links between the civil war in the Roman Empire (The Year of the Four Emperors, 69) and events in Judaea. After conquering the Galilee (11/67) there were no significant military developments due to the civil war following the assassination of Nero (9/6/68). Jews were given a time-lapse that was interpreted in contradictory ways. The moderate Jewish leadership probably sought to end the conflict peacefully by reaching a comfortable surrender agreement. The radical groups saw the Roman Civil War as a clear sign that God himself was helping the Jewish revolt. The internal debate in Jewish society developed into a bloody civil war, the liquidation and murder of moderate leaders, and the rise of radical groups. The ideological radicalization of the rebellion was accompanied by a fierce struggle between the rebel factions themselves, presumably because of different and contradictory religious conceptions and hopes.

From the Roman side, as the Jewish rebellion grew, so it became apparent to Vespasian that suppression of the rebellion could be a powerful propaganda instrument to establish his rule. We will discuss the significance of his coronation as imperator on the land of Judaea on 1/7/69.

*Chaer Seven: For the Freedom of Jerusalem - Siege and Destruction (Spring 70 - Summer 73)*. This chapter continues to follow the political decisions and military moves culminating with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. It analyzes military and political decision-making processes from two different perspectives: that of the rebels and that of Titus and the Roman army.

The continuation of the siege forced each side to examine the other and to look for ideological and political justifications. In the rebel’s camp, the religious ideology that denied any surrender to Rome grew stronger and so the expectations for an immediate intervention of God. Religious radicalization, along with the famine, has led to the terror regime of the rebels, which culminated in mass suicides in Jerusalem and Masada.

For the Roman side, Jewish toughness was interpreted as a characteristic of Judaism and Jews. For Rome, too, the war has become from a military combat to a struggle to eradicate the symbols of Judaism. This is expressed by Titus' decision to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem upon the end of the rebellion and even more so in the decision to close the Temple of Onias in Egypt. The last decision is turning a spotlight to the place of the Diaspora Jewry in the uprising, and I will devote a brief discussion for it.

*Chapter Eight: Judaea Capta or from Jerusalem to Yavneh? (117-73)*.

The destruction of the Temple led to a new appreciation of Judaism by both the remaining of the Jewish leadership and the Roman government. This chapter will examine change and continuity in demographics, social norms and religion in Jewish society after the event.

Although the rebellion was suppressed, the ideology that fed the rebellion did not disappear and with it the expectation for radical change. I will look at the changes in messianic expectations through reading texts then written [Ezra IV, Baruch the Syriac etc.]. Then I will follow the paths in which messianic and rebellious ideas reached the Jewish communities in the Diaspora and especially in Egypt.

At the same time, religious conceptions began to emerge during this period that internalized the loss of the temple and sovereignty, preferring to concentrate on nursing the tears within Jewish society. It is possible that the center founded by Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai in Yavne, and Rabban Gamliel's activities were intended to fulfill these goals. However, Yavne's influence on the political aspects was limited (see below). Yavne's main contribution was the creation of a religious system that the temple is not centered on.

Like the Jews, the Romans also re-evaluated Judaism and the Jews. The Roman punishment measures, most notably the imposition of the Jewish tax on all Jews in the Roman Empire, gave the impression that in Roman eyes the campaign was not between the Jews of Judaea and the Roman army, but it was a clash of civilizations between Rome and Judaism. The victory march and the monuments erected in Rome not only contributed to the glorification of the Flavian dynasty but also to the establishment of the image of Jews and Judaism as anti-Roman.

The Diaspora uprising (115-117) was a direct result of the ideological and social processes described. Jews in the Diaspora, especially Egypt, Libya and Cyprus, interpreted the Roman policy as anti-Jewish activity and reacted in affinity to the radical ideology that came from Judaea. On the other side of the hill, the Diaspora rebellion reinforced the Roman view that there is a problem with Judaism. Here, too, as in the Great Revolt, the Romans resorted to total suppression of the rebellion, the result of which was the destruction of the Jewish communities in Egypt and Libya. The rebellion probably left a mark on Hadrian, one of Trian’s generals who took part in suppressing the rebellion.

*Chapter Ten: The Bar Kokhba Revolt (117-136)*.

The reasons underlying the Bar Kokhba revolt are still disputed. I will deal with two interrelated factors: first, the Roman policy towards Jerusalem, including the decision to establish a pagan city and to rename it Aelia Capitolina after the emperor Hadrian; second, the religious-redemptive meaning attributed by the Jews to these Roman measures. I will examine whether connections can be drawn between the ideology that underpinned the Great Revolt and the Diaspora Revolt and the religious-redemptive ideology that prompted the Bar Kokhba rebellion. Simon Bar Kusba (Bar Kokhba), the leader of the rebellion apparently enjoys the support of the rabbis and the vast majority of the public in Judaea. In light of this, I will examine the connection between the social situation in Judaea and the religious-messianic ideology.

The second part of the chapter offers as detailed a picture as possible of the war between the Jews and the Roman army. This section is based on a careful analysis of archaeological remains, most notably, the hiding complexes and the refuge caves, the numismatic finds and the letters of Bar Kokhba. It also examines whether these sources provide evidence of Jewish opposition to the revolt. Two questions will get special attention: Whether Jerusalem was conquered by the rebels, and the extent of the Galilee participation in the uprising.

The third part of the chapter deals with the results of the rebellion. In the demographic aspect, the Jewish community in Judea has ceased to exist. The Romans did not settle for the physical consequences of the war but took several punitive measures: Jerusalem's name was changed to Aelia Capitolina; The province of Judaea was now called Palestina; The Jews were banned from entering Jerusalem; and apparently for a certain period of time, some of the Jewish religious commandments were also forbidden to perform in public. These punitive measures indicate that the Rome saw the religious element as a significant part of the war against the Jews. At the same time, the Rabbis expressed their hostility to Rome in harsh words. Rome was called the kingdom of evil.

*Chapter Eleven: From Rebellion to Reconciliation (140-220)*.

The ending of the previous chapter described the intensification of the conflict between Jews and Romans. Nevertheless, the two post-revolt generations saw a fundamental transformation in Jewish-Roman relations. Jewish life in the Galilee were experiencing a cultural and social boom. There was a strong Jewish leadership, headed by a Roman-recognized Patriarchate, and even the church fathers testified to its power. More importantly, under Rabbi Judah the Patriarch (180-220), the Mishna - a set of laws and regulations for managing Jewish life in all aspects – was created.

At the center of this chapter lies the question of whether this shift was due to the punitive measures taken by the Romans after the Bar Kokhba revolt, when they destroyed the Jewish community in Judaea and eliminated the supporters of the radical ideology of liberty, or to internal processes in Jewish society that allowed for the rise of a Jewish perspective and lifestyle that did not rest on national sovereignty and a Temple. The nature of this post-destruction/s Judaism will be examined from three different, complimentary angles: the rise of the synagogue as a communal institution, the cemetery in Beth-Shearim as a window to the Jewish elite and the Mishnah as guide to 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 Christianity. This chapter reviews the responses of the Christian and Judeo-Christian communities to the failed uprisings and, in particular, the religious significance they attributed to them. The first part of the chapter describes how the radical social movement founded by Jesus adopts a passive political agenda in Paul's day. The contrasting positions of Jesus' disciples and the bulk of the Jewish population were reflected in the Great Revolt. While many Jews took part in one way or another in the rebellion, the Christians, including the Jewish-Christian, left Jerusalem and moved to the Pella at the very beginning. The failure of the Great Revolt provided Christians a basis for deepening the rift with Jews and Judaism, and proof that Christianity was intended to replace Judaism.

That, Jews who were aware of these ideological processes also reacted by raising the partitions and removing the Christians, now called *Minim* - heretics. Nevertheless, there were still intermediate groups during this period who want to belong to both religious worlds.

The failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt, of course, intensified the Christian's arguments against Judaism. I will follow the increasing expressions of hostility on both sides, and their effect on the patterns of Judeo-Christian conflict over the generations.

*Epilogue: Then and Now*.

The failure of the Jewish revolts is commemorated in the Jewish world by a series of rituals and fasts. The perpetuation of the memory of the destruction was in the interest of both Jews and Christians. The Jews remembered that they would always be foreigners in other countries and expected to return to their homeland. For Christians, the destruction was the ultimate proof of Christianity's victory over Judaism. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the memory of the destruction and the failure of the rebellion occupy a significant place in the internal Jewish and intra-Israeli discourse. I will look at how Ninth of Av, the day in which the Temple was destroyed, became a day dedicated to the political and ideological rifts of Israeli and Jewish society.