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# The End of Masada

# And They Cast Lots: Divination, Democracy, and Josephus

Eric D. Huntsman

κλήρω δ' ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐλόμενοι δέκα τοὺς ἀπάντων σφαγεῖς ἐσομένους, καὶ γυναικί τις αὐτὸν καὶ παισὶ κειμένοις παραστρώσας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας περιβαλὼν, παρεῖχον ἐτοίμους τὰς σφαγὰς.

*After the men had chosen by lot ten of their number who would be their butchers, and when they had laid down beside and thrown their arms around their wives and children who lay waiting, they offered themselves up for the slaughter. —Josephus, Jewish War 7.395 (author's translation)*

A gruesome scene confronted the Roman soldiers after they took the fortress of Masada. According to Josephus, they found that all but seven of the defenders had taken their own lives rather than submit to Roman slavery. The Romans, if we can believe Josephus, might have admired the resolve and courage of their foes, but the modern reader, even though separated from the event by nearly two millennia, is often troubled by it. While wondering at the resolution of those who allowed themselves to be killed, we must also try to comprehend those who were able to provide this deadly service. These men did not volunteer; rather they were chosen by lot, each one running an equal risk either to kill or be killed.

The sortition that first chose ten men for the general slaughter and then chose one of the ten to dispatch the others before killing himself appears to have been a random method of selecting men for an unwanted task. The idea of making choices by lot, however, had a long history in the ancient world, and it was a procedure that did not have ethnic or chronological limits. To understand the use of the lot in this instance of group suicide, we must first survey the religious use of lots as a method of divination. By then

examining the role of lotteries at the time of Josephus, we will be better able to evaluate his treatment of the final events of Masada.

### **Divination in the Ancient World**

Divination consists either of obtaining information by supernatural means or of securing answers to questions that are beyond human understanding. In the ancient world, many methods were developed to discern the will of the gods and to receive guidance, with or without elements of religious ceremony. Often this was done through observing and interpreting signs in the natural world, such as the flight of birds, the frequency of thunder, the movement and pattern of astronomical bodies, or the arrangement of organs in a sacrificial animal. Divination was sometimes practiced by performing a seemingly random act and allowing divine intervention to determine its outcome. The casting or drawing of lots falls into this latter category, and divination of this sort is known either as *psephomancy* (drawing of different pebbles) or *cleromancy* (drawing or casting of any type of lot).

Divination, especially the use of lots, was a common practice among the different peoples who surrounded the ancient Israelites. Many examples are found in ancient Near Eastern texts, in which a god or the gods were believed to effect the outcome of the action. Throughout Mesopotamia diviners would frequently cast two dice; one die represented a desirable result and the other an undesirable answer. The Sumerians in the south of Mesopotamia appear to have used sticks as lots, while the Assyrians in the north frequently used specially made clay dice.<sup>1</sup> The Canaanites, who preceded the Israelites in Palestine, are known to have used either marked pebbles or specially selected twigs as lots.<sup>2</sup> The Hittites in Anatolia employed oracles that might have been based upon lots, although their most common forms of divination seem to have been discerning signs in nature and in the viscera of sacrificial animals.<sup>3</sup> In northern Arabia, the practice was to draw from a number of headless arrows (*belomancy*), each of which indicated a different answer from the gods.<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean lands and in Europe, the casting of lots was likewise used to indicate the will of the gods. In

Greek oracular centers where prophecy, soothsaying, and other kinds of divination regularly occurred, the casting of lots was rare although not unknown.<sup>5</sup> Before the battle at Leuctra in 371 B.C., for instance, the Spartans inquired at the oracle of Zeus at Dodonna, where a monkey turned over an urn filled with lots.<sup>6</sup> *Klērōsis*, or the choice of an official by lot, was also used for the appointment of some priests and other temple officials, leaving the choice to the gods.<sup>7</sup>

Much of Roman religion, including the arts of divination, was borrowed from the Etruscans, who practiced elaborate methods of *augury* (discerning signs in nature, especially from the flight of birds) or of *haruspicy* (interpretation of various kinds of portents, especially from the size and shape of the internal organs of sacrificial animals, a practice earlier performed by the Hittites).<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, at several sites the use of *sortes* or lots was a feature of Italic divination. The primary center of this type of divination in classical times was the famous lottery of Fortuna at Praeneste, where an innocent child randomly drew a wooden lot to obtain an answer to a specifically posed question.<sup>9</sup> In northern Europe, the Germans also used lots. One method was to mark and throw strips of branches—the first one that a priest picked up indicated the will of the gods.<sup>10</sup> Women often played a prominent role in the consultation of lots, as seen in the trial of Caesar's aide C. Valerius Proculus during the Gallic Wars.<sup>11</sup>

## Divination in Ancient Israel

Despite the prevalence of lot-casting in the ancient world, the ancient Israelites rejected many methods of divination of neighboring cultures around them because they were associated with pagan, magical practices.<sup>12</sup> The primary injunction against such “magical” practices appears in Deuteronomy 18:10–12, which prohibits divination, “observers of times,” enchanters, witches, and necromancy. Nevertheless, Israelite practice accepted that Yahweh, as the one true God, was able to produce signs or influence the outcome of events just as the surrounding people believed that their gods did. Some forms of divination besides direct prophecy received sanction, namely the expression of God's will through

the ephod, the Urim and Thummim, and the casting of certain kinds of lots.

The way the ephod, a part of the priestly regalia, was used in divination is unclear. Its use was lost before the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek Septuagint in the mid-third century B.C., but it probably had a revelatory function because, in the case of the high priest at least, the ephod held the breastplate that contained the Urim and Thummim.<sup>13</sup> These latter devices were the most direct, mechanical means available to the Israelites for discerning God's will.

Although the Urim and Thummim are attested seven or possibly eight times in the Old Testament,<sup>14</sup> there is little agreement in the academic world as to their exact nature and function. At some time before the Babylonian captivity, they must have been lost, stolen, or moved, for it is generally agreed that no postexilic Jew had seen them or knew exactly how they were used.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the very meaning of the terms is uncertain, although some Hebrew roots for Urim and Thummim have been proposed based upon the Septuagint translation of them as *dēlōsis* (revelation or manifestation) and either *alētheia* (truth) or *teleōsis* (perfection). The underlying Hebrew plurals are commonly postulated to mean something like "lights" and "perfections."<sup>16</sup>

A prevalent theory today is that the Urim and Thummim were actually lots that, like the Mesopotamian version of the same, were cast in order to obtain either a yes or no answer from Yahweh. This view is based largely on the Septuagint version of 1 Samuel 14:41, which reads, "Then Saul said, 'O Lord, God of Israel, why have you have not answered your servant this day? If the guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim; and if you indicate that it is in the people of Israel, give Thummim.' And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped."<sup>17</sup> Such a practice could account for two otherwise unspecified forms of divination in which a single person was identified by successively narrowing the congregation by choosing first a tribe out of Israel, then a clan from that tribe, then a family from that clan, and finally a single individual out of that family.<sup>18</sup>

Later in Israelite history when the Urim and Thummim were either lost or their use forgotten, the most common form of divination

was the use of *gôrālōt* or conventional lots. Attested seventy-eight times in the Old Testament, this kind of lot was one of the most frequently used Israelite tools, and references to its use with sacrifices and in the temple indicate that it functioned under divine auspices.<sup>19</sup> For example, on the Day of Atonement, Aaron cast lots over two goats to determine which would be sacrificed to the Lord and which would be driven out into the wilderness, carrying away Israel's iniquities (Lev. 16:8-10). Lots continued to be used throughout the intertestamental period, and their use to reveal God's will appears in the New Testament in Acts 1:26 when Matthias, the apostolic successor to Judas, was selected by lot.<sup>20</sup>

### **Divination in Hellenistic and Roman Times**

By the time of Josephus, such lotteries were no longer used only as a means of divination. Among the Greeks and Romans, for example, sortition, or the selection of officials and public duties according to lot, had become standard practice. Although this form of selection may have originally indicated that the gods were making their choice known,<sup>21</sup> in fifth-century Athens the use of the lot was seen by Aristotle as a prime feature of democracy.<sup>22</sup> As Athenian democracy developed, direct elections seemed to favor aristocrats since they had the money and name recognition necessary to garner votes, whereas selection by lot from a pool of candidates (*klērōsis ek prokritōn*) seemed to guarantee that any citizen had a chance for high office.<sup>23</sup>

Even the Romans, whose balanced political system under the so-called republic tried to limit the excesses of democracy and afford public positions to the qualified, used the lot in the distribution of tribes in voting, the selection of legates and *interreges*, the empaneling of juries, and in the assignment of *provincia* or "spheres of action" to elected magistrates.<sup>24</sup> The lot device most frequently used by the Romans was the *sitella*, an urn with a narrow mouth that was filled with water and small balls marked with either a name or a province.<sup>25</sup> The mouth was so narrow that only one lot could float to the surface to be drawn first.

Although the Greeks and Romans continued to speak of the role of *Tyche* or *Fortuna* (Greek and Latin respectively for "fortune")

or “chance”) in the decisions reached by lots, apparently the use of lots had begun to be seen as a method of making some decisions more random or more fair. In accordance with Greek political thinking, lots were democratic in that they gave each participant, regardless of station, an equal chance.

Casting lots as a fair means of making a difficult choice might have been the rationale employed following the unsuccessful defense of the Galilean fortress of Jotapata during the early stages of the Jewish War. Josephus and forty others managed to hide from the Romans in a cave but, after some discussion, resolved that the only way out for them was through mutual suicide.<sup>26</sup> They decided to draw lots in order to determine the order of their deaths: the drawer of the first lot was to be killed by the drawer of the second, who was to be killed by the holder of the next lot. The use of lots made the process fair, random, and, if we can use the Greek meaning of the term here, democratic. Josephus managed to draw the final lot, and when he and the second to the last participant were left, they decided not to follow through with the suicide pact, and both turned themselves over to the Romans rather than die at their own hands. This result, of course, leads to the suspicion that Josephus had somehow “fixed” the lots, a practice that apparently has been common as long as lots and other devices of chance have been used.<sup>27</sup>

### **Lots at Masada**

At last we have arrived at the point in our discussion at which we can consider the use of lots in the mass suicide at Masada.<sup>28</sup> There is no indication in the text that the defenders of Masada necessarily felt that Yahweh himself determined the death order, although the most religious of them might have believed that this was the case since God was sovereign over all. Instead, the ten men were selected randomly by lot, thereby distributing the responsibility fairly among them all. Physical proof of this lottery may actually exist. During the extensive excavations of Masada by Yigael Yadin, twelve *ostraca* or pottery sherds were found in room 113, a long, narrow chamber running north and south. Each of these *ostraca* had a different name written on it, and among



these was one sherd that bore the name of the leader of the Sicarii, Eleazar ben Yair.<sup>29</sup> One of these sherds can be discarded as incomplete, but could the remaining eleven ostraca not be the actual lots used in that final, desperate selection?

Several problems, however, arise regarding the suicide at Masada. The first difficulty centers on these very ostraca. The number of surviving sherds itself causes suspicion.<sup>30</sup> According to Josephus, the first sortition selected ten men out of the entire number of adult males on Masada. Thus there should have been numerous inscribed sherds. Admittedly many of them might not have survived, but pottery pieces once broken are virtually indestructible and since all eleven were found together, at least some others should have survived. There was a second sortition that chose one man out of the ten who was to dispatch his nine companions after the first round of slaughter was completed. In that case, there should have only been ten sherds, not eleven. On the other hand, these ostraca could have been used to elect leaders or, if they were used as lots, might as easily have been used for distributing stores.

Another problem stems from Josephus's account of the suicide. According to our historian, everyone was killed prior to the Roman taking of Masada except for two women and five children who had hidden themselves in a cistern. Strangely, few remains of the 960 corpses that were said to greet the Romans were found in the fortress itself. The Romans, of course, could have cremated (which would have left some traces) or moved the bodies.

Strangely, some of the only skeletal remains which Yadin found in his excavations were *not* in the confines of Masada itself. Three skeletons were found on the lower terrace of the Northern Palace, and 25 others were found in a cave part way down the southern slope. Yadin supposed that the Romans had tossed the bodies there in order to dispose of them.<sup>31</sup> This view has come under attack: one cannot easily get the bodies to the cave from the fortress above, and the question remains as to why only 25 of 960 bodies were placed there. A more plausible explanation is that these 25 Jewish defenders tried to flee from the Romans and hid in the cave where they were later found and killed.<sup>32</sup> The fact that not all of the Sicarii killed themselves, together with the fact that numerous small fires were set in different places in Masada, such as

the courtyard, rather than the one large fire that Josephus claims that the defenders had set to destroy their goods, undermines the credibility of our historian's account of Masada's final hours.

A third problem revolves around the very issue of suicide. First, was suicide against Jewish law at the time? It was not explicitly, although it was certainly against the spirit of the law as demonstrated by Josephus himself in his speech against suicide at Jotapata.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the defenders of Masada could be exonerated according to *Hillul Hashem*, where their suicide can be compared to the example of Phineas in the Torah.<sup>34</sup> Second, did the mass suicide really occur as Josephus presented it? Suicide, particularly under circumstances such as these, was accepted in much of the rest of the ancient world.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of the legality or acceptance of suicide, we are not certain that all 960 really died at their own hands. One imaginative argument maintains that the suicide did not happen at all; the Romans murdered everyone, and Josephus concocted the Masada suicide to compensate for the fall of Jotapata and his own escape from the suicide pact there.<sup>36</sup> One strong argument against this view and for the veracity of Josephus's account is that it must have happened because there were too many witnesses; both the Roman soldiers and the prisoners of war who had served them would have seen or heard about the carnage atop Masada.<sup>37</sup>

One of the most important of these witnesses would have been the Roman general Flavius Silva. He was serving as *consul ordinarius* in Rome in A.D. 81, just as Josephus was finishing his *Jewish War*. One assumes that he would have contradicted Josephus if the latter had blatantly fabricated the account. Nevertheless, as an educated Roman familiar with the standards of the rhetorical historiography of the time,<sup>38</sup> Silva could have accepted an exaggerated account as long as it had some basis.<sup>39</sup> Ancient writers of history regularly exaggerated and embellished their accounts for effect, and the image of besieged citizens preferring death to capture was a common historiographic trope.<sup>40</sup>

Another factor in favor of some historical license on the part of Josephus is the excessively close parallel with the situation at Jotapata. The respective speeches given by Josephus and Eleazar are similar in form even though they come to different conclusions.

At Jotapata, Josephus created a speech for himself that condemned suicide; at Masada he wrote a speech for Eleazar<sup>41</sup> that praised suicide and publicly confessed that the Sicarii had started the war and that they were being punished for their sins.<sup>42</sup> The message here is subtle but clear. Josephus submitted but lived; the Sicarii refused to submit but died to the last man, woman, and child.

This negative picture of the defenders of Masada is supported by Josephus's overall depiction of them. They were, after all, *lēistēs*, or bandits, just like the Zealots in Jerusalem had been.<sup>43</sup> They had victimized Jewish noncombatants as well as Roman soldiers. In fact, contrary to the Hollywood glamorization of the defenders of Masada, Josephus's account of the siege of Masada ignores their supposed bravery or military skill.<sup>44</sup> If their suicide can be compared to anything, it is to the fruitless suicide of the stoic philosophers in Rome who were opposed to the Flavian emperors,<sup>45</sup> a comparison that works nicely for these Jewish opponents of the same regime.

What actually happened? It is probable that some of the defenders on Masada chose suicide over capture; others tried to escape or died fighting. Nevertheless, there was neither opportunity nor unanimity for the kind of mass action described by Josephus.<sup>46</sup> When the Romans entered Masada, they found many bodies of those who had killed themselves, and they might also have found some lots lying about. Those who did take their own lives and those of their wives and children might have employed ostraca, either potsherds specially prepared for this purpose or existing ones that had been used for distribution and other routine decisions, to determine the order of their death. Josephus took this information and embellished it, borrowing from classical historiography the motif of city defenders taking their own lives.

Since the use of a lottery in a suicide scene is not found in any of the Greek or Roman authors available to Josephus, it was enough of an innovation that the involvement of lots does not seem to have been a literary invention. Lots were probably used either at Jotapata or by some at Masada. It is doubtful that divine determination, whether in the minds of the Sicarii or in actuality, had anything to do with the use of the lot here. Instead the drawing of lots injects an element of chance or randomness, which

reveals a democratic equality in the death of both those who submitted to death and those who inflicted it. The key to Josephus's rendering of the Masada suicide scene is then found by contrasting it with the suicide pact at Jotapata. Josephus was not glamorizing the action of the Sicarii; rather he expanded the suicide of a few of the defenders of Masada to include almost all of them in order to illustrate that the entire effort of the Sicarii was vain, bound for failure, and led all of them equally to death.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>O. R. Gurney, "The Babylonians and Hittites," in *Divination and Oracles*, ed. Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker (London and Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 165; Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim: A Study of an Old Testament Means of Revelation* (Kampen: Uitgeverij van den Berg, 1986), 170.

<sup>2</sup>Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 170.

<sup>3</sup>Gurney, "Babylonians and Hittites," 142-57; Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 170.

<sup>4</sup>Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 170-71; see also the arrow lottery used to distribute tribal meals among the Arabs, in Hugh Nibley, *The Ancient State: The Rulers and the Ruled*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry, vol. 10 of *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 9.

<sup>5</sup>J. S. Morrison, "The Classical World," in Loewe and Blacker, *Divination and Oracles*, 98; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. "Divination." See also Franz Heinevetter, *Würfel- und Buchstabenorakel in Griechenland und Kleinasien* (Breslau: Koebner, 1912); and W. R. Halliday, *Greek Divination* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1967).

<sup>6</sup>Callisthenes, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 124 F22a and b; Cicero, *De Divinatione* 1.34, 76; 2.32, 69.

<sup>7</sup>C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 228.

<sup>8</sup>William Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Augustus* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 292-304. For a survey of the two major types of divination, see *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. "Augures" and "Haruspices."

<sup>9</sup>Otto, "Fortuna," in *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1912), cols. 23-27 (hereafter cited as *RE*); R. Hans, "Praenestine Sores," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts (röm. Abt.)* (1987): 131-62, especially 137-39. See also Nibley, *Ancient State*, 161.

<sup>10</sup>The main primary source for German practice is Tacitus, *Germania* 10. See also H. E. Davidson, "The Germanic World," in Loewe and Blacker, *Divination and Oracles*, 116–22.

<sup>11</sup>Caesar, *Galic Wars* 1.47.

<sup>12</sup>Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1994), 233.

<sup>13</sup>Cryer, *Divination*, 277–82; Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 58–61. Eric J. Olson maintains that there were different types of ephods and that the idol, the vestment, and the divinatory device were each different from the others. Eric J. Olson, "Divination in Ancient Israel" (master's thesis, Harvard University, 1969), 11–15.

<sup>14</sup>Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65. Depending upon the rendering of the verb in 1 Samuel 14:41, there may be an eighth attestation. In actuality, not all of these references refer to the Urim and Thummim as a pair: sometimes either appears separately, or the order is reversed.

<sup>15</sup>Cryer, *Divination*, 275. Both Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65 seem to indicate that the Urim and Thummim were no longer present but that their restoration was awaited.

Van Dam holds that the process of using the Urim and Thummim consisted of the high priest first receiving revelation, which revelation was spoken to the congregation and then confirmed by a physical manifestation of the Urim and Thummim. Under his argument, the problem after the exile was not so much the loss of the Urim and Thummim but rather the lack of an inspired high priest who could use them. Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 126–32.

Urim and Thummim, although not necessarily the same Urim and Thummim held by the Old World high priest, represent within an LDS context one mechanical form of revelation. See Omni 1:20–21; Mosiah 8:13–19; 21:26–28; 28:11–20; Ether 3:21–28; 4:1–7; Doctrine and Covenants 10:1; 17:1; Abraham 3:1–4; and JS-H 1:35, 42, 52, 59, 62. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 3:222–26.

<sup>16</sup>Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 4, 76–79. Josephus never uses the Greek expression *dēlōsis kai alētheia*, although in several passages in *Antiquities* (for example, 3.163, 166, 185, 216–17; and 4.421) he seems to refer to them as part of the high priest's breastplate, especially when their flashing was seen as a sign that God was present with the Israelites.

<sup>17</sup>See Olson, "Divination in Ancient Israel," 15–17. Van Dam vigorously rejects this so-called lot theory for the Urim and Thummim. Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 38–39.

<sup>18</sup>Cryer, *Divination*, 277. For Achan's guilt, see Joshua 7:16–26; and for Saul's selection as king, see 1 Samuel 10:17–24.

<sup>19</sup>Cryer, *Divination*, 276–77; Olson, "Divination in Ancient Israel," 17; Van Dam, *Urim and Thummim*, 118–22.

<sup>20</sup>Johannes Munk, apparently trying to dismiss the use of a lottery among the early Christians, argues that this verse "can be understood as voting by ballot rather than drawing lots." Johannes Munk, *Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 9. See also Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 2:32–33. The Greek texts

can be understood variously. Following Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. “κλήρως,” 435, the phrase ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς means “they gave them (namely the candidates) lots,” and the lot of the candidate that was chosen identified the new Apostle. Alternatively, other Greek manuscripts of Acts 1:26 read ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτῶν, meaning “they gave, or cast, their lots.” Obviously, it is unclear from the New Testament what kind of procedure the Apostles followed.

<sup>21</sup>V. Ehrenberg, “Losung (κλήρωσις, *sortitio*),” in *RE*, 13.2 (1927), cols. 1451–67.

<sup>22</sup>Aristotle, *Politics* 1317b18–1318a3.

<sup>23</sup>Pseudo-Aristotle, *Athenian Politics* 22.5; Ehrenberg, “Losung,” cols. 1467–90; Hignett, *History of the Athenian Constitution*, 226–32.

<sup>24</sup>Ehrenberg, “Losung,” cols. 1493–97.

<sup>25</sup>For examples of the *sitella*, see Cicero, *Natura Deorum* 1.38.106; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 25.3.16; and *Auctor ad Herennium* 1.12.21.

<sup>26</sup>Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.340–91.

<sup>27</sup>Ehrenberg, “Losung,” cols. 1493–97, for Roman abuses of the lot. Josephus’s alleged arrangement of the death order at Jotapata has led to a famous mathematical problem that seeks to explain how the historian did it. For “Flavius Josephus’ Permutation,” see W. Ahrens, *Mathematische Unterhaltungen und Spiele*, 2d ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1910), chapter 15.

<sup>28</sup>Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.395.

<sup>29</sup>Yigael Yadin and Joseph Naveh, “The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions,” in *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports*, ed. Joseph Aviram, Gideon Foerster, and Ehud Netzer (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989), 28–31. For a review of these findings, see Ehud Netzer, “The Last Days and Hours at Masada,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 17, no. 6 (1991): 22–23, 28.

<sup>30</sup>Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Masada: Literary Tradition, Archaeological Remains, and the Credibility of Josephus,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, nos. 1–2 (1982): 398 n. 42.

<sup>31</sup>Yigael Yadin, *Masada: Herod’s Fortress and the Zealots’ Last Stand* (New York: Random House, 1966), 197.

<sup>32</sup>Cohen, “Masada: Literary Tradition,” 394–95.

<sup>33</sup>Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.361–82. See the discussion of suicide by Daniel K. Judd, “Suicide at Masada and in the World of the New Testament,” in this volume.

<sup>34</sup>Shubert Spero, “In Defense of the Defenders of Masada,” *Tradition* 11, no. 1 (1970): 31–43.

<sup>35</sup>See Yolande Grise, “De la fréquence du suicide chez les Romains,” *Latomus* 39, no. 1 (1980): 17–46; and Anton van Hoof, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-killing in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>36</sup>Trude Wiess-Rosmarin, “Masada Revisited,” *Jewish Spectator* 34 (1962): 29–32.

<sup>37</sup>Louis H. Feldman, “Masada: A Critique of Recent Scholarship,” in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. Jacob Neusner, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 3:218–48.

<sup>38</sup>See Eric D. Huntsman, "The Reliability of Josephus: Can He Be Trusted?" in this volume.

<sup>39</sup>Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 400. See also Cohen's comment, "If any ancient historian loved exaggerations and embellishments, it was Josephus; we may therefore suppose that his Masada narrative is not an unalloyed version of the truth." Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 393.

<sup>40</sup>Cohen documents sixteen examples from Greco-Roman literature in which desperate defenders destroy their property and kill their women and children before capture. Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 386-90.

<sup>41</sup>For Eleazar's speech as a literary creation, see Huntsman, "Reliability of Josephus."

<sup>42</sup>David J. Ladouceur, "Masada: A Consideration of the Literary Evidence," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 21, no. 3 (1980): 247-52. For an analysis of the *logos/antilogos* arrangement of the two speeches, see Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 396-97.

<sup>43</sup>For the difference between the two groups, see Solomon Zeitlin, "Masada and the Sicarii," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 55 (April 1965): 305; and Kent P. Jackson, "Revolutionaries in the First Century," in this volume. For the censure that Josephus places upon Jewish extremists as the cause of the war, see Huntsman, "Reliability of Josephus."

<sup>44</sup>Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 400.

<sup>45</sup>Ladouceur compares Eleazar's speech to those of the Stoic opposition. It is clearly not the type of speech that a Jewish extremist would compose. Ladouceur, "Masada: A Consideration," 253-57.

<sup>46</sup>Cohen, "Masada: Literary Tradition," 397.