

## JOSEPHUS, 1 MACCABEES, AND *HANUKKAH*

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Josephus begins his *Jewish War* with the Maccabean crisis: while kings Antiochus IV<sup>th</sup> Epiphanes of Syria and Ptolemy VI<sup>th</sup> of Egypt were disputing the suzerainty of Coele-Syria, dissention arose among ranking Judeans. The high priest Onias expelled the sons of Tobias from Jerusalem who took refuge with Antiochus and subsequently urged him to invade Judea. The king consented, took Jerusalem by storm, plundered the Temple and interrupted the sacrifices. Then a persecution of the Jews developed until reprisals began with Matthias (Mattathias), a priest of Modin, whose son Judas was able to attack the occupied city and cleanse the Temple, after an interruption of three years and six months.<sup>1</sup> He eventually “built another altar and started the sacrifices again”. After the death of Antiochus (*War* 1:31-40), Judas seems to have acted as a high priest,<sup>2</sup> though no commemoration of his deeds is extant.

The parallel account Josephus gives in the *Antiquities* is much longer but broadly similar in most respects. Among the distinctive aspects of the account is the foregrounding of the problem of Hellenization with Judas’s inauguration of the new altar. In fact, the new story is very close to 1 Maccabees, despite some differences; among them, the most significant for our purpose concerns that inauguration. We hear of a decision made by Judas and his brothers (1 Macc 4:59): “The days of the Dedication of the altar (αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ ἐγκαινισμοῦ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου) should be kept in their season from year to year for eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Kislev.” Josephus mentions the

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<sup>1</sup> This duration is given at Dan 9:27 “in the half of the week (of years)” (see 12:7, as well). After Dan 11 sketches the Hellenistic history, probably after Polybius, from Alexander through the ravages of Antiochus IV, and eventually his death after the end of the persecutions, but no Hasmonean is alluded to. At some point, that king had been prevented from invading Egypt by the Kittim, that is, the Romans. Polybius provides us with further details, but such a disparaging nickname traditionally referred to the Greeks (see 1 Macc 1:1). Indeed, using it for the Romans can hardly be imagined before Pompey’s invasion in -63, since Rome was supporting the Jewish High priest. On this issue, see Étienne Nodet, “Les Kittim, les Romains et Daniel”, *RB* 118 (2011), pp. 260-268. In other words, the Hasmonean government was not accepted by all the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Ant.* 12:286 & 414 (and § 10 of the summary), Judas was appointed high priest by the people, which is obviously an impossible, since during the Hellenistic period, the high priest was an officer of the king of Egypt or Syria, appointed by him. In Josephus’s list of all the high priests since Aaron, there is a seven-year gap between Alkimus and Jonathan, and Judas is not mentioned (*Ant.* 20:237).

eight-day festival and its date, but he offers another definition (*Ant.* 12:325): “And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call *Lights* (φῶτα), giving it this name, I think, because this right to worship unexpectedly appeared to us.” In Josephus’s account, there is no mention of a Dedication. His explanation may be beautiful, but it shows that he does not see any obvious connection between the festival and any kind of lights. In other words, he cannot depend on 1 Maccabees as it now stands in Greek, at least about this issue. This is all the more interesting because in the same context Josephus refers explicitly to another victory commemoration, the Day of Nicanor on Adar 13<sup>th</sup> (see *Ant.* 12:412, 1 Macc 7:49, and *Megilat Ta’anit*).

Moreover, Rabbinic tradition, which displays a very low esteem for the founding fathers of the Hasmonean dynasty, attests to an eight-day festival starting on Kislev 25<sup>th</sup>, with a rite of lights. It is called Dedication (חנוכה), although its very short foundation narrative can hardly be compared with that of the Maccabean crisis, since these lights commemorate a miracle involving the high priest, with the deeds of Mattathias and his sons ignored. Thus, despite the lights, the Josephan and Rabbinic traditions cannot be reconciled without stretching the evidence. It is generally understood that Josephus in his *Antiquities* paraphrased the Greek book of 1 Maccabees, and even that for the first shorter account in the *Jewish War* he summarized the same source<sup>3</sup>. Though accepted, this remains unproven, and a reassessment must first be undertaken. Following this, we will consider Josephus’s issues involving the calendar that emerge because of the conflicts between Jewish and Roman systems. The historical questions connected with the origins of the Hasmonean dynasty, however, are beyond the scope of this study.<sup>4</sup>

Some preliminary remarks about Josephus’s handling of his sources are appropriate. Broadly speaking, he is never afraid of contradictions when he rewrites in the *Antiquities*, with additional details, what he had already described in the *War*. The Maccabean commemoration is omitted in the first account, as if Josephus knew only of the dedication of Herod’s temple in summer (see *Ant.* 15:423), while it appears in *War* as an ancient custom, reflecting Josephus’s revised understanding from additional sources. This kind of contradiction is not too serious, for it is just a by-product of the recollection of tradition without written evidence.

As for Josephus’s own views, a distinction should be made between his works. His *War* received an official approval by Titus in 79 (*Life* § 363). Josephus states that it was arguably the greatest of all wars (*War* 1:1). His narrative was in fact a piece of Flavian propaganda, which served the interests of the new dynasty. Indeed, successful Roman generals were nicknamed after the nations they subdued (*Germanicus, Gallus, Africanus...*), but neither

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<sup>3</sup> This usual view is well documented by Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabaeus: The Jewish Struggle Against the Seleucids*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 151-93.

<sup>4</sup> One must agree with the remarks of Amram Tropper, *Rewriting Ancient Jewish History: The History of the Jews in Roman Times and the New Historical Method*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, pp. 63-83: the first step is an assessment of sources.

Vespasian nor Titus were ever called *Iudaicus*.<sup>5</sup> Although Judea was only a tiny portion of the Roman world, the Jews were a very significant minority scattered throughout the Empire, before, as well as after the 70 war, and their special identity could not and did not collapse. Vespasian built a “Temple of Peace” for the spoils of the war, but he never ventured to create a Jewish shrine in Rome even though the custom was to attract to Rome the gods of the nations it subdued.

The *Antiquities*, published in 93/94, was the outcome of a very different story. Josephus, who was proud of both his brilliant genealogy and his outstanding skills in Jewish matters, saw himself as a leader of his people and wanted to provide his Greek-speaking fellow Jews with a kind of handbook covering both history and law (see § I.3 below). It is interesting to observe that the historian Tacitus, who wrote more than ten years after Josephus, shows no familiarity with the works of the Jewish historian. Before relating the Judean war, Tacitus wanted to give an account of the origins of the Jews. He searched the sources available to him, as he was wont to do, and found six explanations (*Hist.* 5.2-4), but only one of them has a remote similarity to the Biblical stories. About the Jews, Tacitus only knew what could be seen from the outside. Eusebius of Caesarea (*Hist. eccl.* 3.9) claims that Josephus’s works were put into the public libraries and his statue was erected in a square of Rome. This may well have been the case for the *War*, but it is doubtful that the *Antiquities* was available in these libraries.

## I – Josephus and 1 Maccabees

Josephus reports on the Judean events of the Hellenistic period, of which the Maccabean crisis is just a part, while 1 Maccabees focuses on that crisis and ends with the appointment of John, son of the high priest Simon. In other words, this work provides the foundation story of the Hasmonean dynasty, showing the independence of Judea that became evident when John’s son Alexander Janneus was recognized as a king. We shall see that Josephus’s account parallels 1 Maccabees (2:1-13:52); however loose the parallels sometimes are, a comparison between them is useful as both depend on the same Hebrew source.

Before the crisis, Josephus gives details that appear only in 2 Maccabees, a very different story of the crisis, which ends with Judas’ victory over Nikanor, the Syrian general, that is, well before the emergence of the Hasmonean dynasty, as the comparison chart below shows:

<i>Antiquities</i> 12:	2 Maccabees:
237-47 rivalry between high priests, sons of Simon the Righteous: Onias, Jesus-Jason and Onias-Menelaus. Antiochus IV, expelled from Egypt, plundered Jerusalem.	3-5: rivalry and struggles between the high priests; Antiochus IV’s two campaigns in Egypt and his plundering Jerusalem; his leaving behind hostile governors at Jerusalem and Gerizim.

From 2 Macc 5:22-23 & 6:1-2, we learn that there had been in the ancient

<sup>5</sup> This surprised the Roman historian Cassius Dio, 66.7.2, and maybe others.

past two Israelite temples, Jerusalem and Gerizim.<sup>6</sup> Josephus gives several details on Samaritan affairs (see next table, § 257), though 1 Maccabees is mute about them, and ignores any pre-Hasmonean dynasty.

As for the crisis itself, we can focus on the beginning and end of their accounts, since the parallelism is less close and entails a difficult chronology. Here is the beginning:

<i>Antiquities 12:</i>	<i>1 Maccabees 1:</i>
248-56 <i>two years later</i> , Kislev 25 <sup>th</sup> : Antiochus overcame Jerusalem by treachery; plundered Temple treasury; forbade the daily sacrifices; took captives; built a citadel for a Macedonian garrison; built a pagan altar upon the Jewish one; ordered swine sacrifices everywhere; forbade circumcision. and practicing Jewish religious,	1-10 Antiochus IV, heir of Alexander. 11-5 Hellenizing by lawless Jews. 16-28 Antiochus IV subdued Egypt, and plundered the Temple. 29-53 <i>Two years later</i> , Syrian officers plundered Jerusalem; Gentile cults were enforced in the whole kingdom.
hence persecutions of the faithful.	54-61 Kislev 25 <sup>th</sup> : pagan altars and cults. Prohibition of Jewish customs. 62-3 persecutions of the faithful.
257-64 a petition of the Samaritans.	~

<sup>6</sup> See Yitzhak Magen, *Mount Gerizim Excavations II. A Temple City*, Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008, pp. 171-180; the large shrine was active since the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. at least.

<i>Antiquities</i> 13:	1 Maccabees
215 ~	13:52a <i>commemorating the reconquest of the Citadel (2<sup>nd</sup> month, 23<sup>rd</sup> day).</i>
215-7 Simon <i>razed the Citadel and leveled its hill in three years.</i>	13:52b Simon strengthened the temple hill and <i>dwelt in the Citadel.</i>
218-222 Tryphon against Demetrius II.	14:1-4 Tryphon against Demetrius II.
~	14:4-15 <i>eulogy of Simon.</i>
~	14:16-24 <i>diplomacy: Rome and Sparta.</i>
~	14:25-49 <i>official honors for Simon.</i>
223-4 Antiochus VII with Simon against Tryphon.	15:1-14 Antiochus VII <i>wrote to Simon and won over Tryphon.</i>
227b Simon's alliance with Rome.	15:15-24 <i>Roman recognition of Simon.</i>
225-7a Antiochus VII sent Cendebeus, but Simon defeated him.	15:25-16:10 Antiochus VII sent Cendebeus, but Simon defeated him.
228-35 Simon treacherously slain and succeeded by his son John <i>Hyrchanus.</i>	16:11-end: Simon, treacherously slain, is succeeded by his son John; <i>details.</i>
236-44 Antiochus' invasion of Judea.	~

If we consider this context, the most significant lacuna in Josephus's account is the Roman document extensively quoted at 1 Macc 15:15-24, dated -142, by which the consul Lucius recognized Simon as the high priest of the Jews. Seen from the perspective of Rome, this entailed the recognition of a nation much larger than the Judeans dwelling in Judea. Normally, Josephus is careful to quote as many Roman edicts involving Jewish affairs as possible,<sup>7</sup> and we can be sure that he would not have omitted the one of most ancient provenance. Thus, we may justifiably conclude that for this passage his source was *not* 1 Maccabees.

Below, I provide a more detailed comparison of the genuinely parallel portions, *Ant.* 12:265-13:330, and 1 Macc 2:1-13:52. The main additional features in either side are italicized:

<i>Antiquities</i> 12-13	1 Maccabees
12:276-7 the rebels <i>appoint as their leader</i> Mattathias; he resolves to fight on the Sabbath and gathers a large force.	2:41-2 Mattathias rebels; he and his friends took the Sabbath decision, and a company of <i>Hasideans</i> joined with them.
278-84 Mattathias' short testament speech, without Biblical figures.	2:49-60 Mattathias' <i>Biblical</i> testament speech (including references to

<sup>7</sup> See Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World: The Greek and Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998, pp. 388-408.

<i>Antiquities 12-13</i>	1 Maccabees
	§11 Abraham, Joseph... Daniel).
293 Antiochus, with mercenaries from the islands, prepares for spring.	3:27 Antiochus gathers his army and provides a year's pay.
322: <i>Daniel had prophesied the ruin.</i>	(See Dan 7:25 & 11:31; <i>Ant.</i> 10:275.)
325 Kislev 25 <sup>th</sup> : 8-day feast of <i>Lights</i> .	4:59 Kislev 25 <sup>th</sup> : 8-day <i>Dedication</i> .
341 Timothy's army includes <i>Arabs</i> .	5:37 Timothy gathers another army (no Arabs mentioned).
354 He adds a rich <i>temple of Artemis</i> .	6:2 Antiochus hears of Elymais.
358 <i>Polybius on Antiochus' death</i> .	~
385 Alkimus, also called <i>Jakeimus</i> .	7:5 Alkimus high priest.
387-8 <i>Onias' temple, #1</i> .	~
396 Bacchides and Alkimus kill 60 Jews in spite of peaceful oaths.	7:13-17 the 60 Jews include <i>Hasideans</i> and the <i>narrator quotes Ps 79:2-3</i> .
402 <i>Nicanor and Demetrius at Rome</i> .	~
414 <i>Judas high priest after Alkimus</i> .	~
414 Roman victories (including Iberia and <i>Carthage</i> ); nothing on institutions.	8:1-16 Roman victories (including Spain); <i>strength of Roman institutions</i> .
433-4 praise of Judas (as <i>high priest</i> ).	9:21-2 shorter praise.
13:36 <i>on Demetrius' character "as we have related elsewhere"</i> .	~
41 building the walls of the city.	10:11 building the walls of <i>Mt Zion</i> .
45 Alexander elects Jonathan high priest, with the title of "my friend".	10:20 high priest of your nation; you are to be called "the king's friend".
50 tax exemption: Judea and three districts, Samaria, <i>Galilee and Perea</i> .	10:30 tax exemption: Judah and three districts from <i>Samaria-and-Galilee</i> .
54 ~	10:39 <i>Ptolemais given to Judea</i> .
59-61 <i>Battle Demetrius / Alexander</i> .	10:50 ~
62-73 <i>Onias' temple, #2 (see 12:387)</i> .	~
74-9 <i>dispute in Alexandria between Jews and Samaritans, before Ptolemy</i> .	~
86 Demetrius II' arrival with <i>mercenaries from Crete and Lasthenes</i> .	10:67 Demetrius II's arrival.
92: 3000 cavalry and 8000 infantry.	10:77: 3000 cavalry and large infantry.
103 Ptolemy VI wants to <i>help Balas Alexander, his son-in-law</i> .	11:1 Ptolemy VI wants to <i>subdue</i> by trickery Alexander's kingdom.
106-8 Ptolemy and <i>Ammonius' plot</i> .	11:8 Ptolemy arrives at Seleucia.
115 <i>Ptolemy gives up ruling Syria</i> .	11:19 ~
116-20 <i>Defeat &amp; flight of Alexander</i> .	~
125 Judea and the three districts of Samaria and <i>Joppa and Galilee</i> .	11:28 to free from tribute Judea and three districts and Samaria.

<i>Antiquities</i> 12-13	1 Maccabees
127 Aphairema, Lydda, Ramathain.	11:34 Aphairema, Lydda, <i>Rathamin</i> .
129 <i>mercenaries</i> from <i>Crete</i> & islands.	11:38 troops recruited from the islands.
131 <i>Diodotus</i> or Tryphon of <i>Apamea</i> went to <i>Malchus</i> (מלכו) the Arab.	11:39 Tryphon went to <i>Imalkue</i> (ימלכו) the Arab.
133 Jonathan sent envoys <i>with gifts</i> .	11:41 Jonathan sent request.
138-142 Jonathan helped Demetrius to storm and recover Antioch.	11:47-51 a different description of the storming of Antioch.
143 Demetrius wanted Jonathan to <i>pay all the taxes required from the Jews</i> .	11:53 Demetrius oppressed Jonathan greatly.
144 Tryphon (and Antiochus VI) took over Antioch and the <i>elephants</i> .	11:56 Tryphon captured the beasts and took over Antioch.
145 beaten, Demetrius retired to Cilicia.	11:56 ~
146 from the <i>region</i> of Tyre to Egypt	11:59 from the <i>Ladder</i> of Tyre to the <i>border</i> of Egypt.
147 <i>Jonathan, pleased, sent envoys</i> .	11:60 ~
148 the cities of Syria and <i>Phoenicia</i> gave Jonathan <i>no troops</i> .	11:60 all the army of Syria gathered to Jonathan as <i>allies</i> .
154 Demetrius wanted Jonathan to be attracted to the Galileans, <i>his people</i> .	11:63 Demetrius' large army came to Kadesh in Galilee to beat Jonathan.
156-7 Simon at Beth-zur; <i>siege details</i> .	11:65 Simon took over Beth-zur.
159-60 Jonathan and ambush <i>details</i> .	11:68-9 Jonathan survived an ambush.
163 Jonathan killed <i>two thousand</i> .	11:74 Jonathan killed <i>three thousand</i> .
165 letters to kings of <i>Asia and Europe</i> .	12:4 Romans sent letters everywhere.
165 the Jewish envoys went to <i>Sparta</i> .	12:5-6 Jonathan wrote to the Spartans.
171-3 <i>notices on the Jewish schools</i> <sup>8</sup> .	~
175 Jonathan ran to Hamath, encamped <i>at 50 stades</i> from Demetrius.	12:26 Jonathan ran from Jerusalem to Hamath, then encamped there.
176-7 <i>details</i> of Jonathan's scheme.	12:28 Jonathan's scheme.
180 Simon went through all <i>Judea and Palestine</i> as far as Ascalon.	12:33 Simon marched through the country as far as Ascalon.
183 Jonathan began to build in Jerusalem, sent Simon in the country.	12:37-8 <i>details</i> on the strengthening works of Jonathan and Simon.
184-7 <i>Parthians captured Demetrius</i> .	12:39 ~
192 the people of Ptolemais shut the gates, and <i>Tryphon</i> captured	12:48 the people of Ptolemais shut the gates, and they captured Jonathan.

<sup>8</sup> The passage is out of place here, but it provides a context to John Hyrcanus's crisis with the Pharisees and changing allegiance, see Joseph Sievers, "Josephus, First Maccabees, Sparta, The Three *Haireseis* – and Cicero", *JSJ* 32 (2001), pp. 241-251.

<i>Antiquities</i> 12-13	1 Maccabees
Jonathan.	
197 After Jonathan's capture, Simon called the people to the <i>Temple</i> .	13:2 After Jonathan's capture, Simon gathered the people at Jerusalem.
210-2 the Modein family monuments, seen by Josephus.	13:27-30 the Modein new monument, which "remains to this day".
213 The <i>people chose</i> Simon as high priest (after Jonathan's funeral).	13:36 Demetrius wrote to "Simon the high priest and friend of kings".

When Josephus paraphrases texts that we know from other sources, such as the Bible or the *Letter of Aristeas*, his rendering is in general free, as he introduces other sources, with the purpose of placing the Jews into the histories of the major empires. Both features are conspicuous here; e.g. at 12:354, Josephus quotes Polybius about Antiochus IV's death, and most probably cited other chapters from the Greek author that are now lost. For an example of such free adaptations, we read at 1 Macc 12:1 "Jonathan saw that the time was favorable to him (ὁ καιρὸς αὐτῷ συνεργεῖ)", while Josephus has "when he saw that by God's providence all his affairs were going to his liking" (13:163), though the differences in diction should not be deemed significant.

It has been recognized that 1 Maccabees at it now stands in Greek has the typical style of other LXX books translated from the Hebrew, with Semitic features and phrases that are sometimes difficult to understand. On the contrary, Josephus and his assistants wrote freely in Greek, with no Semitic coloring beyond the proper names. This would suggest that precedence should always be given to 1 Maccabees over Josephus to restore the original source. However, we have seen that Josephus did not know 1 Macc 13:52-end, since he omits several details, above all the Roman decree recognizing Simon as high priest of the Jews (15:15-24). Given this, Josephus may depend on a different Hebrew source, and the comparison must be refined.

At times, the divergence between 1 Maccabees and Josephus can disappear when a common Hebrew source is restored – or more accurately, when the very literal renderings of 1 Maccabees are misleading. Here is a sample showing various cases:<sup>9</sup>

– 1 Macc 3:9b-10a, at the end of an ode to Judas' prowess, gives a strange phrasing καὶ συνήγαγεν ἀπολλυμένους – καὶ συνήγαγεν Ἀπολλώνιος ἔθνη καὶ ἀπὸ Σαμαρείας δύναμιν μεγάλην, "he gathered together the perishing ones; and Apollonius gathered together Gentiles and a large force from Samaria". We may wonder at these "perishing ones", a possible dittography of the Greek, and also at the fact that Apollonius is not properly introduced. On the contrary, Josephus summarizes the ode and clearly introduces Apollonios (*Ant.* 12:287): "Hearing of this, Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, took his force of men". This better phrasing allows us to restore an original Hebrew ישמע אפולוניוס שר שמרון ויאסף

<sup>9</sup> Modern Hebrew translations of 1 Maccabees have been issued: Abraham Kahana, ספר המכבים א', Tel Aviv: Maqor, 1931 (almost Biblical); Uriel Rappaport, *The First Book of Maccabees*, Jerusalem, Yad Ben-Zvi Press: 2004 (modern Hebrew).



גוי. We cannot conclude that the *vorlage* of 1 Macc was corrupt; for the problem obviously arose from the Greek tradition.

– 1 Macc 3:12, after Judas' victory over Apollonius, concludes: καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν Ἀπολλωνίου ἔλαβεν Ἰουδᾶς καὶ ἦν πολεμῶν ἐν αὐτῇ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας “Judas took the sword of Apollonius and he used it in battle all the days (of his life)”. Josephus says, however, that Judas took “as spoil the sword that Apollonius was then using, and kept it for himself” (*Ant.* 12:287). This allows us to see that the Greek of 1 Macc, albeit a very literal rendering, is misleading, because a Hebrew participle may indicate a circumstance prior to the battle, and the Hebrew can be restored as ויקח יהודה את הרב אפולוניוס והוא נלחם בו כל ימיו. Despite Josephus, all the translators have understood that Apollonius' sword became Judas's ensign, without observing that in fact Apollonius trod on the footsteps of Goliath (see 1 Sam 17:51-4).

– 1 Macc 3:17: when the Jews saw the Greek army, they said to Judas: “How can we fight... We are faint, for we have eaten nothing today (ἀσιτοῦντες σήμερον)”; but Josephus explains that “they had fasted” (νενηστεύκεσαν, *Ant.* 12:290), hence the corresponding Hebrew צמים היום, the Latin translation correctly understood: *faticati ieiunio*. This was a devotional fast before a battle; according to Joel 2:15, a communal fast can be proclaimed when difficult circumstances arise, preferably on Monday and Thursday (see also *m. Taanit* 1:4-6).

– 1 Macc 3:41 records that the Greek general Lysias and his army, who camped at Emmaus, “were joined by a force from Syria and the land of aliens (δύναμις Συρίας καὶ γῆς ἀλλοφύλων)”. In the LXX, ἀλλόφυλοι is the normal rendering of פלשתים “Philistines”, and such was most probably the underlying Hebrew, since for Josephus, the additional forces came “from Syria and the territories surrounding (Emmaus)”, that is, from the territories of the Biblical Philistines in the Shephelah (*Ant.* 12:299), which he calls elsewhere Παλαιστίνη “Palestine”. As for “Syria”, it makes little sense here, because Lysias and his army came from Syria, and it can be surmised that the Hebrew already had a minor error ארם “Syria” for אדום “Edom, Idumea”.

– 1 Macc 4:7: Before the battle at Emmaus, the Jews were afraid, for they “saw (εἶδον) the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified...and themselves were well trained in war (καὶ οὗτοι διδασκτοὶ πολέμου)”. The nominative here reflects a kind of mechanical translation, plainly indicating that the Jews were properly trained, which does not match the context, since they were afraid. Josephus' statement is more likely (*Ant.* 12:300): “When Judas saw the great number of his adversaries, he tried to persuade his own soldiers, etc.” The underlying Hebrew is easy to restore: והם למודי מלחמה, ויראו את מחנה הגוים, (with a phrase occurring at 1 Chron 5:18, LXX καὶ δεδιδαγμένοι πόλεμον).

– 1 Macc 5:28: Judas took Bozrah “and killed every male by the edge of the sword (πᾶν ἀρσενικὸν ἐν στόματι ῥομφαίας)”, from הרב (not בפּי). Here Josephus renders (*Ant.* 12:336) “he destroyed all the males able to fight”, perhaps from a different text like הרב נושא הרב, כל זכר נושא הרב, for at 12:347 the same phrase of 1 Macc 5:51 gives Josephus a closer πᾶν ὅσον ἄρρεν ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ κτείνας.

– 1 Macc 6:35...38: In the battle of Beth-Zechariah, the Syrians distributed

the elephants εἰς τὰς φάλαγγας “among the phalanxes”, and the rest of the horsemen were stationed on the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy καταφρασσόμενοι ἐν ταῖς φάλαγγιν “while being protected by the phalanxes”. The military operation is not clear, since the “phalanx” is a part of the army (as at *Ant.* 12:426), but Josephus explains that the elephants followed one another, because of the narrow space (*Ant.* 12:371). Thus, the elephants were moving in ravines, which seems more plausible, and φάλαγγξ should be corrected twice into φάραγγξ “ravine”, the underlying Hebrew being נחלים. Again, the Greek tradition was corrupt here.

– 1 Macc 6:37 says that upon each elephant were “thirty” armed men in a wooden tower, which is clearly impossible; Josephus is content with “towers and archers” (*Ant.* 12:371). The Hebrew offers a solution<sup>10</sup>: the word שלישים “thirds” and especially “three-man team” (e.g. on chariots, see Exod 14:7; 1 Kgs 9:22) can be misread as שלושים “30”, suggesting, perhaps, that the translator did not pay attention.

– 1 Macc 9:2 states that king Demetrius sent an army, which “went by the road that leads to Galgala (ἐπορεύθησαν ὁδὸν τὴν εἰς Γαλγαλα) and encamped against Mesaloth (παρενέβαλον ἐπὶ Μαισαλωθ) in Arbela (τὴν ἐν Ἀρβηλοῖς)”. The geography here seems problematic since Galgala-Gilgal is close to Jericho (in Benjamin), while Arbela is close to Magdala, near the sea of Galilee, and Mesaloth is unknown. Josephus offers a better explanation (*Ant.* 12:421): “He came to Judea and encamped at Arbela, a town in Galilee, and after besieging those who were in the caves, etc.” First, “Galgala” must indeed be corrected into “Galilee” (confusion of similar words גלגל/גליל); second, the caves in the cliffs around Arbela are well known,<sup>11</sup> with galleries and access paths, which corresponds to a possible meaning of מסלות (root סלל), while the translator of 1 Maccabees, uninterested in geography, was satisfied with a transcription.

– 1 Macc 9:26: Judas’ friends were brought to Bacchides, who “took vengeance on them and made sport of them,” καὶ ἐξεδίκηα αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐνέπαιζεν αὐτοῖς. The order of the verbs seems awkward, but Josephus has “he first tortured them at his pleasure, then made an end of them in this way” (*Ant.* 13:4). This makes better sense and suggests a Hebrew original that was rendered too literally in 1 Mac: וינקם מהם והוא לועג להם.

– 1 Macc 9:61: Bacchides’ scheme was spoiled, and “they seized about fifty of the leaders of this wrong (καὶ συνέλαβον ἀπὸ [...] τῶν ἀρχηγῶν τῆς κακίας) and killed them”. The context demands that the killers were Jonathan’s men, though it may seem strange to suggest that they perform his enemy’s vengeance. On the contrary, Josephus says that Bacchides, enraged at the renegades for having deceived him, seized fifty of their leaders and killed them (*Ant.* 13:25). Now, if we surmise that 1 Macc renders ויתפשו כהמישים מראשי הרעה, with the verb in the active voice, it is also possible to read it as a *nifal*, and to render the

<sup>10</sup> This is to be preferred to the Greek explanation of Alfred Rahlfs, “Die Kriegselefanten im I. Makkabäerbuche”, *ZAW* 11 (1934), pp. 78-80, that Λ “30” could be a slight corruption of Δ “4”.

<sup>11</sup> Later, the “brigands”, who would not accept Herod as a king because he was not of Jewish origin, took refuge in these caves (*War* 1:310; *Ant.* 14:415).

sentence: “and were seized about fifty of the leaders of this wrong”, that is, Josephus’s meaning, which is more consistent.

– 1 Macc 12:7-9 Areius, king of the Spartans, had sent a letter to Onias, a former high priest of Jerusalem, in which he states his desire for alliance and friendship, but Jonathan replies: “Though we have no need of that, since we have as encouragement (παράκλησιν ἔχοντες) the holy books, we have decided to renew the brotherhood etc.” Areius’s letter, given as an addendum (v.19-23), states that, according to a written document concerning the Spartans and the Jews, they are both of the family of Abraham, and thus should share their cattle and possessions. The role of the holy books of the Jews is not clear, and we may wonder at such a sharing between Judea and Sparta, which were hardly neighbors. Josephus has placed Areius’s letter at the time of Onias (*Ant.* 12:226-7), replacing Spartans with Lacedemonians, mentioning the Spartan courier Demoteles, and omitting the cattle (probably for the sake of plausibility). As for Jonathan’s reply, he gives a different version (*Ant.* 13:167). The letter, brought by Demoteles, concerned the kinship between the Jews and Spartans, “though we need no such evidence, because of what has been convincing (πεπεισθαι or πεπιστεῦσθαι) in our sacred writings”. This is not the place to discuss the possible relationship between Spartans and Jews,<sup>12</sup> but only the different word choice for the written “proof”: a common Hebrew source to “encourage” and “convince” could be משתדל, from the Aramaic root שדל.

– 1 Macc 12:26: Jonathan prevented Demetrius from entering Judea, and sent spies to his Syrian camp, “and they returned (καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν) and reported to him, etc.” Josephus explains that the scouts “had captured some men (τῶν δὲ κατασκόπων... τινὰς συλλαβόντων), who revealed to him that the enemy, etc.” (*Ant.* 13:175). The Hebrew original has an ambiguous form וישבו, which can be understood either from שׁוּב (“return”, as 1 Mac), or from שׁוּבָה (“capture”, so Josephus), which better fits the context.

– 1 Macc 13:11: After Jonathan’s capture, Simon gave a speech offering encouragement to the people of Jerusalem, and then “he sent Jonathan the son of Absalom to Joppa, and he drove out the people who were in it (τοὺς ὄντας ἐν αὐτῇ), and he remained there in it (καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ ἐν αὐτῇ)”. That Jonathan afterwards stayed at Joppa seems redundant, but Josephus says that Simon sent Jonathan while he himself remained to guard Jerusalem (*Ant.* 13:202). Thus, the underlying Hebrew of καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ ἐν αὐτῇ can be restored והוא נשאר שם, referring to Simon; the Greek of 1 Mac, too literal, is misleading.

To sum up, the unavoidable conclusion is that Josephus and Greek 1 Maccabees, in the closely parallel portions, depend on one original Hebrew source.<sup>13</sup> However, the Hebrew may have developed in several stages, for a

<sup>12</sup> The same question surfaces elsewhere. According to 2 Macc 5:5-9, when a rumor arose of Antiochus IV’s death, Jesus-Jason, son of Simon the Righteous, tried to reconquer Jerusalem, but he failed and was driven into exile, and eventually died, “having embarked to go to the Lacedemonians, in hope of finding protection because of their kinship”. Here, the reference is clearly Sparta itself, but the implications are not clear.

<sup>13</sup> A slight doubt remains, for in both 1 Macc and Josephus’ story, the spelling of the Greek proper names is identical, which cannot be said of the Hebrew ones, see Guy Darshan, “The

significant difference must be observed: Josephus does not include the Biblical allusions that are found in 1 Macc (2:49-60: Mattathias' testament; 7:13-17: Ps 79:2-3<sup>14</sup> quoted after the murder of the Hasideans). This suggests that he witnesses an earlier Hebrew stage.

The same conclusion maintains for the chapters where the parallelism is looser, *i.e.* 1 Macc 1 and 14-16, which we examined above. Josephus is confused about the Kislev 25<sup>th</sup> event, and he ignores a commemoration as well as a major Roman decree, to which we may add his strange explanation of the Dedication.

The previous remarks on Josephus's Hebrew sources can be placed within a broader context. In the prologue of the *Antiquities*, he introduces his work with two statements: first, it "embraces our entire history and political constitution, translated from the Hebrew records," and second, he assures, nothing will be added or omitted. The latter assertion is obviously false, for he adds many traditions and offers commentary; he also omits many details, indeed sometimes whole episodes (*e.g.* the story of the golden calf). In other words, what he calls a translation is actually more a creative paraphrase. As for the first of the two statements, he expands it with an allusion to the earlier undertaking described in the *Letter of Aristeas*, that is a translation of the Pentateuch made at the request of king Ptolemy II (283-246 BCE),<sup>15</sup> Josephus states that only that part was translated, and no other books. This suggests that he was unaware of the prologue of Ben Sirach's translator (ca. 132 BCE), who witnessed that the Greek renderings of "the law, the prophecies and the other books differ not a little as originally expressed" (l. 24-26 Rahlfs).

Sometimes, Josephus alludes to his reliance upon a Hebrew source. In regard to Jonah, he claims to report the story as he found it in the Hebrew books (*Ant.* 9:208). About Daniel, he clearly states that he translates into Greek the books of the Hebrews, and refers the original to a reader who wants to know more (*Ant.* 10:218). According to 1 Kgs 22:42, the name of Jehoshaphat's mother was "Azubah", which means in Hebrew "abandoned, forsaken", an unusual name for a woman. Josephus inadvertently translates it to "Abidah", which has the same meaning in Aramaic (*Ant.* 8:315). Thus, reading a work in Hebrew, he spontaneously thought in Aramaic, the language of his country (see *War* 1:3 f.). More generally, his transcription of Hebrew names differs from the Septuagint, although later Christian copyists had a propensity to harmonize. A good example is given with queen Athaliah (עַתְלִיָּהוּ): Josephus writes Ὀθλία (*Ant.* 9:96) instead of LXX Γοθολία, both adequate transcriptions following different rules.<sup>16</sup>

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Original Language of 1 Maccabees: A Reexamination", *Biblische Notizen* 182 (2019), pp. 91-110.

<sup>14</sup> Ancient authorities (Jerome) saw this Assaf psalm as a prophecy on Antiochus IV's persecution, which makes very much sense. In another Assaf psalm, the *targum* understood the "blasphemy of the foolish man" of Ps 74:22 as an allusion to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was indeed nicknamed *Epimanes* "foolish".

<sup>15</sup> See Benjamin G. Wright III, *The Letter of Aristeas*, Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2015, pp. 21-30.

<sup>16</sup> A fuller statement on Josephus's Bible is given by Étienne Nodet, *The Hebrew Bible of Josephus*, Leuven / Paris: Peeters, 2018, pp. 1-14 and 260-3.

Josephus had a clear view of Scripture as a collection of 22 books: 5 of Moses, 13 Prophets and 4 of wisdom and praise (*AgAp* I:39-40), which reasonably matches the Masoretic Hebrew text, by grouping Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah. He reports that during Titus's triumph in 71, all the spoils of the temple were shown in the parade, including as the last item the copy of "the law of the Jews" that was to be stored in Vespasian's palace, and not exhibited in his Temple of Peace (*War* 7:150.162). Later, he said that Titus presented him with "the sacred books" (*Life* § 418), most probably the same to which he referred in *War*.

Besides the Biblical books, the plural "Hebrew records" of Josephus's prologue may indicate other documents, for he occasionally mentions poetic texts kept in the temple, including a piece on the miracle of water at Rephidim (*Ant.* 3:38), a prophetic song of Moses (4:303), and the miraculous stopping of the sun (*Ant.* 5:61, cf. the *Book of the Upright One* of Josh 10:13). These are not included in Scripture, for Josephus clearly distinguishes between them. Sometimes, even for miraculous events of which he is not fond, he explicitly refers to the "holy books" (*Ant.* 1:13, 2:347, 10:210).

After the list of the holy books, which ends with Artaxerxes in the Persian period, Josephus adds, putting prophets and historians on the same level: "From Artaxerxes to our time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit, because there is no exact succession of the prophets". These additional books are hinted at in the introduction quoted above, when Josephus writes that the "Hebrew records" cover the entirety of Jewish history. This is obviously broader than the "Hebrew holy books", which only correspond to the first eleven books of the *Antiquities*. In fact, Josephus uses Jewish legends about Alexander the Great's arrival, then other Jewish scattered stories for the early Hellenistic period. All these Judean events are hardly mentioned by the Greek historians. In other words, Judean traditions were kept in some post-Biblical Hebrew writings that Josephus was able to use, but of which he was unaware when he wrote the *War*.

We can conclude that Josephus did not rely upon 1 Maccabees in Greek;<sup>17</sup> on the contrary, his version of the facts, through a Hebrew source, should be deemed more faithful to the events that actually happened.

## II – The Calendars and *Hanukkah*

Josephus never deals with calendar problems, although it was a complicated issue by his time, because there were several Jewish systems, besides various local traditions, as well as the official Julian calendar. The most widespread was the luni-solar Babylonian calendar, with a year of 12 lunar months or about 354 days, which necessitates an additional month every 3 years or so, the obvious problem being the decision-making body, since every city could rule on that

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<sup>17</sup> Against the common view, which is well represented by Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrayal of the Hasmoneans Compared with 1 Maccabees", in *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, Leiden: Brill, 1996, p. 137–63.

matter. The natural year of 365.25 days, which does not depend on the moon, had been known for centuries,<sup>18</sup> but Julius Caesar, in his capacity of *pontifex maximus*, was the first to enforce it in 45 BCE, for fiscal and trading reasons, and it spread rapidly.

For various datings, Josephus uses both the Macedonian and Hebrew month names. After Alexander, with the beginning of the Seleucid era in 312 BCE, that nomenclature was identified with the Aramaic one of the Babylonian luni-solar calendar, and Josephus uses it even for the Persian period. For instance, for the affair of the foreign wives, Ezra summons the culprits and they appear in “the 9<sup>th</sup> month, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month” (1 Esd 9:5), which Josephus renders somewhat automatically “the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month, which is called Kislev by the Hebrews and Apellaios by the Macedonians.” This, however, is an anachronism.<sup>19</sup>

In the Syriac churches, the Seleucid era was in use until the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE. The Julian calendar was introduced at various times,<sup>20</sup> and the Aramaic names were progressively identified with the Latin system,<sup>21</sup> creating a simple correspondence table:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It had been recognized of old, in Babylonia, that 19 solar years and 235 lunar months are very nearly of the same duration; the Babylonian Jews were conversant with these natural features. The astronomer Meton tried to introduce this Babylonian science at Athens in 432 BCE, but failed, see Diodorus Siculus, 12.36.2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Josephus skipped over calendar problems: see Étienne Nodet, “Calendriers bibliques : Salomon, Éléphantine, *Jubilés*, Dédicace”, *Trans* 39 (2010), pp. 119-148.

<sup>20</sup> It was done officially at the Council of Nicaea in 325, see Barry Blackburn & Leofranc Holford-Strevens, “Calendars and Chronology”, in: *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, Oxford, 1999, pp. 659-737.

<sup>21</sup> In fact, Seleucus 1<sup>st</sup> had identified Nisan with Artemisius, but for some reason a discrepancy slipped in later; it was fixed, or more exactly accepted, before Pompey’s arrival (63 BCE), see Elias J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1980, pp. 24-25. As for the Latin names, Josephus uses them only in Roman decrees (translated from Latin).

<sup>22</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> month is Nisan (see Exod 12:1), but for his description of the sacrifices over the year, Josephus begins with the 7<sup>th</sup> month (*Ant.* 3:239), that is, the autumnal New Year’s Day, by which the years are reckoned (see *m.Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:1).

1 Hyperberetaius = Tishri (7) = October	7 Xanthicus = Nisan (1) = April
2 Dius = Marheshvan (8) = November	8 Artemisius = Iyyar (2) = May
3 Apellaius = Kislev (9) = December	9 Daisius = Sivan (3) = June
4 Audynaius = Tebet (10) = January	10 Panémus = Tammuz (4) = July
5 Peritius = Shebat (11) = February	11 Lous = Ab (5) = August
6 Dystrus = Adar (12) = March	12 Gorpiaiuis = Elul (6) = September

However, Josephus displays some inconsistencies. In the first category (Aramaic system) we find plain mistakes, which suggests a lack of familiarity. For example, according to *Ant.* 4:84, Aaron died “on the first day, by lunar reckoning, of the month called by the Athenians Hecatombaeon, by the Macedonians Lous, and by the Hebrews Sabat”. But the source (Num 33:38) has “the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month”, when the 1<sup>st</sup> month includes Passover (*i.e.* Nisan, see Exod 12:1). In other words, Josephus should have said “Ab” (or “Abba” in Aramaic) and not “Shebat”, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> month from Tishri, the other beginning of the year. Incidentally, the allusion to “lunar reckoning” is of no consequence, because of the lack of communal commemoration. In this, Josephus may have paid a kind of lip service to Babylonian tradition.

The second category (Macedonian) is more interesting. According to *Ant.* 2:311, the Israelites had to prepare the Passover sacrifice of the lamb on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month “called by the Egyptians Pharmuthi, by the Hebrews Nisan, and by the Macedonians Xanthicus”. Of course, Nisan-Xanthicus may or may not belong to the Babylonian luni-solar system, but Pharmuthi has been adjusted to April of the Julian calendar by a reform of Augustus in 22 BCE,<sup>23</sup> so that Nisan 10<sup>th</sup> must be identical to April 10<sup>th</sup> at Rome. This is all the more significant that in the sequel Josephus explains (2:313): “To this day we keep the sacrifice in the same customary manner.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, Josephus at Rome mentions the Jewish Passover custom as it is performed there, with a traditional coloring. So, Josephus may have adopted the Roman calendar in some way, but he would not claim to have done so.

But this does not imply that such was the situation everywhere, especially by the eastern Barbarians. Indeed, Rabbinic tradition explains, before and after 70, how the months were fixed in Judea by observing the new moon. From there, the information was transmitted as far as Babylonia by a succession of fire signals

<sup>23</sup> See Marshall Clagett, *Ancient Egyptian Science: Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1989, pp. 47.

<sup>24</sup> There is a rabbinic controversy which may shed some light on this testimony (*b.Pesahim* 53a-b). A certain Theodosius (or Theodore), at Rome, wanted to institute (or restore) the roasted paschal lamb (גדי מקולס), and they sent from Yabneh to tell him that, if he had been a less important person, he would have been excommunicated. As to why he was important, some say that he was a scholar, others that he possessed a power that could be dangerous. Both opinions suit Josephus quite well, in his position as a recognized writer and high-ranking imperial freedman. The name of Theodosius (“gift of God”), is obviously not the same as Joseph, but it could be the translation of the Hebrew Mattathias (“gift of Yhwh”), which was precisely the name of Josephus’ father (*Life* § 3).

lit on a row of mountains (*m.Rosh ha-Shanah* 2:1-4). This suggests that the eastern Jews resisted Roman normalization and were faithful to the Babylonian tradition. Later, towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent., we hear of a more precise Tannaitic saying (*b.Menahot* 110a): “Westward from Tyre they do not know Israel, nor their Father who is in heaven”. Somehow, most of the Greek-speaking word was excluded.<sup>25</sup>

However, more than 20 years after the fall of Jerusalem, Josephus was optimistic about the expansion of Judaism everywhere in the Roman empire. In *AgAp* 2:168-188, he explains that the Greek philosophers are indebted to Moses, an apologetic view introduced by Aristobulus of Alexandria in the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BCE. Moreover, Josephus follows Philo’s statements that many Gentiles are attracted by Jewish customs, especially the Sabbath rest and the ways of learning, but neither encourage a full conversion of Gentiles, which would entail circumcision.

Beyond minor commemorations of good tidings, there are two Jewish festivals that were instituted after Moses – the first was Purim in the middle of Adar, with the book of Esther as its foundation story. According to *Ant.* 11:295, “the Jews celebrate it”, and not “we celebrate it”, which suggests that Josephus keeps his distance from it, perhaps because the story mentions neither Judea nor the Promised Land. In any case, it is unknown to the Qumran documents, but the *Mishna* has a tractate about it, *Megillah*.

The second of the rabbinic festivals is the Dedication or “Lights”, about which Josephus affirms “we observe this festival” (*Ant.* 12:325), suggesting that it was important for him. For Josephus, political freedom matters: Judas Maccabee fought for it (*Ant.* 12:312) and in 67 Josephus himself did the same, but he was captured by the Romans.<sup>26</sup> As for the connection to the festival with lights, the easiest hypothesis is to follow Josephus’ method of moving the date of Passover into the Roman system. More precisely, Kislev can easily become December, in order that Kislev 25<sup>th</sup> coincides with the winter solstice on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, after which the days grow longer. The sun does not, as it were, die, so that it is possible to celebrate *sol invictus*. For an unknown reason, the Julian reform did not put the consular New Year’s day upon the solstice, and as a consequence there was an 8-day period between it and Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. In many cultures – not too close to the Equator – there are rites of fire or

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<sup>25</sup> This is not the place to discuss the gap between Josephus’ 2<sup>nd</sup>-Temple Judaism and the Rabbinic system, see Hugo D. Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, pp. 54-101, who sees a continuity; but Moshe D. Herr, “The Identity of the People of Israel during Second Temple Times and after its Destruction: Continuity or Change”, *Cathedra* 137 (2010), pp. 27-62 (in Hebrew), is much more cautious; he observes that the Tannaitic characters and events are not attested outside the Rabbinic sources, which display a very cryptic approach to history.

<sup>26</sup> He never connects Passover with political freedom: the first one in Egypt was the starting point of a difficult journey in the wilderness, and the Gilgal Passover was just a first step into Canaan (*Ant.* 5:21).



light to accompany the renewal of the sun's heating and illumination.<sup>27</sup> It seems, therefore, that there was such a non-Jewish rite in Rome, which was somehow Judaized, and Josephus knew it.

Rabbinic tradition does not have a tractate on the Dedication, but only scant allusions. The rite of the feast is described in a *baraita* (*b. Shabbat* 21b). Each evening throughout the eight-day holiday, lights are lit, their number increasing by one each day; the set of lights is to be put at a window, for it must be seen from outside. An extra light, which is called "servant" (*שמע*), is lit to provide light for pragmatic needs because it is forbidden to use the others for anything besides publicizing the *Hanukkah* miracle. In regard to that miracle, no details are provided about the defeat of the enemies, but at the end of the crisis, one of the main aspects of the rededication of the Temple was the lighting of the Menorah. However, they found only one cruse of pure oil, which could last only one day. Miraculously, that cruse lasted eight days, until a new supply could be made available. This recalls Elijah's miracle with the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:16), as a kind of private miracle. The primary aim of this *Hanukkah* story was, apparently, to avoid mentioning any divine assistance in military matters, and to replace it with a useless, albeit significant, miracle. After all, one may wonder whether it could have been an issue to postpone for a week the official lighting of the Menorah!

Now, we may observe that this Rabbinic rite includes some details that may remind one of a solstice rite. The set of lights or candles has to be placed on a window; the Hebrew word for the extra "servant" can be read as "sun" (with another vocalization, *שמע*); and additional light every day, with increasing illumination. There is even a controversy about this last matter: Beth Hillel say "one more light every day", but Beth Shammai demand "one less light every day" starting from eight. This makes sense in the luni-solar Kislev, because the 25<sup>th</sup> falls almost always before the winter solstice, and some may have wanted to accompany the last decline of the autumnal daylight. In short, we cannot exclude a discreet influence of a Roman custom, duly adapted to the Jewish calendar.

But no influence of the Hasmonean saga was accepted. Josephus's representation of the fate of the town of Emmaus, on the border of the Judean hills (modern *Amwas*), reflects this view. Josephus begins with Judas Maccabee's holy war, prepared according to the rules of Deut 20. His victory there over the Greeks opens up the way towards Jerusalem (1 Macc 4:24f). Josephus mentions the place as a meeting point of "brigands" or zealots (*War* 2:63-71). The Romans understood its strategic location and set up a garrison.<sup>28</sup> Later, it had a bad reputation in Rabbinic sources. According to Yohanan b. Zakkai, the founder of the Yabneh academy, the sages who joined Yabneh increased their wisdom, while those who went to Emmaus lost it and forgot their Torah. Among the latter was his disciple Eliezer b. Arakh, one of the teachers of

<sup>27</sup> See the broad synthesis of Julian Morgenstern, "The Chanukka Festival and the Calendar of Ancient Israel", *HUCA* 20 (1947), pp. 1-136 & 21 (1948), p. 365-496.

<sup>28</sup> See Emmanuel Friedhiem, "Quelques remarques sur l'introduction du culte de Jupiter Héliopolitain à Emmaüs-Nicopolis à l'époque romaine", *RB* 109 (2002), pp. 101-108.

R. Aqiba.<sup>29</sup> The same symbolism surfaces in the story of two disciples of Jesus', who after the latter's death traveled from Jerusalem to Emmaus<sup>30</sup>. According to Luke 24:21, they had hoped that Jesus of Nazareth would be "the one to redeem Israel", *i.e.* to expel the foreign domination; but they were sadly traveling in the opposite direction of the victorious route of Judas Maccabee. The risen Jesus appeared to them, and eventually from Emmaus they went back cheerfully to Jerusalem.

We can close this section by providing a Rabbinic view on 1 Maccabees. Origen provides a list of the Biblical books of the Jews, with their Hebrew names,<sup>31</sup> and adds 1 Maccabees as an "external book",<sup>32</sup> with a Hebrew subtitle to be translated "Book of the dynasty of the rebels to God", referring to the first Hasmoneans.<sup>33</sup> That Origen knew of the Rabbinic view has been confirmed by an inscription.<sup>34</sup> To sum up, the Rabbis did not see themselves as heirs of any dynasty of high priests or kings from the Second Temple period, which matches to a great extent their manner of handling the *Hanukkah* festival.

### III – Conclusions – Questions

1. When he wrote the *Jewish War*, Josephus knew of the Maccabean crisis, which was mainly on account of the rivalry between ranking Jews. His source was somewhat similar to Daniel's descriptions, though he mentions neither the Hellenization problem nor any commemoration. However, he was aware of Herod's dedication of his Temple, in summer (*War* 1:401).

2. When he wrote the *Antiquities*, he had a Jewish post-Biblical documentation in Hebrew, which was broadly unknown to the Greek historians that he consulted to retrieve additional details. We can distinguish two main parts: first, scattered pieces about Alexander's arrival, and after him about the Egyptian domination of Coele-Syria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE; second, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BCE until Pompey's arrival (63), facts of Jewish history within the Syrian domination.

3. That second part included the Maccabean crisis, with many disjointed

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<sup>29</sup> See *Abot de-Rabbi Nathan*, A14 and B29. "Emmaus", which transcribes חמאות or חמות "hot springs", can be transcribed back עימעוס, hence a derogatory pronunciation עימעום "confusion, blurring".

<sup>30</sup> "About sixty stadia" or seven miles, according to the best mss; this does not match the distance to Emmaus-Nicopolis (*Amwas*); most probably, the final writer was not any more aware of the Biblical significance of Emmaus.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Church History* 6.25.2; the traditional Hebrew names are transcribed: βερεσιθ, σεμωθ, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Like the ספרים היצוים prohibited (or strongly advised against) by *m.Sanhedrin* 11:1.

<sup>33</sup> The transcription given by Eusebius is σααβηθησααβανεελ, which can be deciphered as ספר בית סרבני אל; this has to be understood negatively "against God" (see *j.Taanit* 4:5, 68d).

<sup>34</sup> See Michael Avi-Yonah, "The Caesarean Inscription of the 24 Priestly Courses", *Eretz Israel* 7 (1964), pp. 24-28, who shows that the addition of מרובי מרום "refusing the Most High" to the name Yoyarib, *i. e.* Mattathias' priestly course, is very derogatory, although it is the first of these courses (see 1 Chron 24:7). According to *t.Taanit* 2:1, Yoyarib's course has been moved away from servicing.

episodes. Two new commemorations were reported. On Kislev 25<sup>th</sup>, Judas' symbolic victory over the Hellenization of the Temple; and on Adar 13<sup>th</sup>, his major victory in a battle against the Syrian general Nicanor, who had posed a threat to the Temple.

4. The book 1 Maccabees in Hebrew was constructed from that very part, but with major changes, including the addition of Biblical allusions (mainly 2:49-60 & 7:13-17) and Roman documentation (8:1-16 & 15:15-24). In addition, the Kislev 25<sup>th</sup> feast became the "Dedication of the Altar," mentioned with another commemoration, the liberation of the Citadel (13:52, 2<sup>nd</sup> month, 23<sup>rd</sup> day).

5. The book looks much more like a foundation story of the Hasmonean dynasty, since it ends when Simon, the second high priest, has a son John Hyrcanus who succeeds him. The summary of the latter's deeds is similar to the final notices of the ancient kings of Israel and Judah in the books of Kings. Since the general outlook of the story is favorable to the Romans, it is difficult to date though likely when Roman domination over Judea became significant, that is, after Pompey's arrival in 63 BCE. However, it could be, too, a kind of manifesto against Herod (40-4 BCE), who was careful to eliminate everything Hasmonean. In any case, Josephus did not know it as it now stands.

6. As for Josephus's guess about the feast of Lights, it is a product of the Julian calendar, in which the eight days of the festival run from the winter solstice (Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>) through the beginning of the consular year (Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>). The days have stopped getting shorter, and the light of the sun begins to extend every day, hence a kind of rite to accompany it, as we can find in various cultures.

7. The Rabbinic tradition was not very fond of the Hasmoneans, and it went as far as performing a *damnatio memoriae*: the names of Mattathias and his sons never appear, and a Hebrew version of 1 Maccabees was given a very scornful subtitle. The reason may have been that Judas's fighting to recover Jerusalem, and especially the holy war at Emmaus, with a kind of Messianic scent (1 Macc 4), could have been a model for Bar Kokhba's Messianic endeavor, which failed and was utterly rejected by the Rabbis. But the *Hanukkah* days were a significant eight-day fact of the calendar, as Josephus witnessed, and it was necessary to say something of God's providence without involving any military prowess.

In all these observations, the intricacies of the Maccabean crisis were not dealt with, nor were the problem of Hellenization. But about the 8-day Dedication, a short comparison with the parallel account of 2 Maccabees is appropriate. According to 2 Macc 10:1-7, Judas Maccabee and his followers, having purified the Temple, "celebrated the purification of the sanctuary in the manner of the feast of Booths, remembering how not long before, during the feast of Booths, they have been wandering in the mountains; therefore, bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches, etc."

This celebration entails two problems. First, the rationale for a rehearsal of the feast of Booths, which by itself has nothing to do with the purification of the sanctuary, is not apparent, even more so that it is described as a joyful procession *without* booths. Second, according to 2 Macc 8:30-33, Judas and his followers had already come to Jerusalem after some victories over the Greeks; and after dividing the spoils, they had held a feast. The two Jerusalem celebrations are

separated by the story of Antiochus IV's death (2 Macc 9). We may add that, according to the documents quoted at 2 Macc 11:27 & 38, the Syrian persecution had already ceased in Nisan of that year (164 BCE), some eight months before Kislev 25<sup>th</sup>.

Now, it can be shown that this would-be feast of Booths is a literary fiction. At 2 Macc 1:1-9, there is prefixed a letter dated 124 BCE, quoting a previous letter dated 143, by which the Judeans urged the Jews in Egypt "to keep the days of the feast of Booths (τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς σκηνοπηγίας) in the month of Kislev".<sup>35</sup> In the LXX, σκηνοπηγία "tent-pitching" is the normal rendering of "feast of Booths" (סוכות), but here it is misleading. The point at issue in the letter is that, some 40 years after the Maccabean crisis, the Egyptian Jews did not recognize the new Hasmonean dynasty, which indeed had nothing to do with the traditional Oniads. That Kislev feast should obviously be the Dedication, viewed as the starting point of the legitimate dynasty as ruling the legitimate Temple.

But outside the LXX, σκηνοπηγία can mean "shrine-pitching", too, or even "temple-building", depending on circumstances. In the present context, the meaning is a plain "temple-restoring", and we are home. The story of the "purification of the sanctuary" at 2 Macc 10:1-7 is just a literary device, prompted by the prefixed letter, to give the whole book a pro-Hasmonean color. However, this is artificial, because the content of the book is mainly a foundation story of the "day of Nicanor" (Adar 13<sup>th</sup>).

The conclusion of the book offers simply: "from that time the city has been in the possession of the Hebrews" (2 Macc 15:37). This inflates the parallel of 1 Macc 7:50: "And the land of Judah had rest for some time." Moreover, Alkimus had been appointed high priest one year before Nicanor's death, in 161 BCE (1 Macc 7:21), so that the conclusion of 2 Maccabees is actually a remarkable statement. There is no authority in Jerusalem, Jewish or other, and a kind of free access to the Temple is suggested.<sup>36</sup> In other words, a gate is open for pilgrims. We may wonder what circumstances this could have possibly reflected, since according to 1 Macc 13:52, the reconquest of the city by the high priest Simon was performed much later, in 142 BCE.

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<sup>35</sup> See Elias J. Bickermann, "Ein jüdischer Festbrief vom Jahre 124 v. Chr.," *ZNTW* 32 (1933), pp. 239-251.

<sup>36</sup> See Hermann Lichtenberger, "Jerusalem und der Tempel im 2. Makkabäerbuch", *Theologische Zeitschrift* 69 (2013), pp. 386-399.