

The Correspondence in *I Maccabees* and the Possible Origins of the Judeo-Spartan Connection*

Ory Amitay

The debate concerning the authenticity of the correspondence between Sparta and Judea related in *I Maccabees* 12:5-23 and 14:20-23 has by now a long history of its own.¹ The main stumbling block, as so often with the *argumentum e fabricatione*, is that given the absence of concrete proof of pseudonymity, or of authenticity, any conclusions necessarily remain educated guesses, subject to an intuitive assessment of probability. The case of the Judeo-Spartan correspondence is no different, and absolute certainty cannot be gained from the evidence at our disposal.

A special complication in the case at hand stems from the multiplicity of texts involved in the correspondence. An initial letter, allegedly by the Spartan King Areus to the Jerusalem High-Priest Onias, is appended to a letter purportedly sent by the Hasmonean Jonathan to Sparta sometime around 145-143 BC (more than a century after Areus' own time).² Jonathan's letter is cited in turn by the anonymous author of *IMac*, along with a second letter from Sparta, sent shortly after Jonathan's death to his heir and brother Simon (14:20-23). The number of the texts involved has given rise to a wide variety of answers to the question of authenticity. On the whole, these can be grouped

* It is a privilege and a pleasure to thank here many readers and listeners who commented on this paper in its various stages of evolution: Dr. Daniel Barbu, Yaron Ben-Ami, Prof. Ephraim David, Prof. Erich Gruen, Dr. Noah Kaye, Prof. Nikolaos Papazarkadas, Prof. Andrew Stewart, and a number of anonymous readers. Of course, they are not to be held responsible for any of the opinions and conclusions, right or wrong, expressed herein.

¹ As early as Ginsburg (1934), 118, the experience of wading through it was described as a 'hard and ungrateful task' (repeated by Katzoff [1985], 485 n. 1); it has grown immensely longer since. With some exceptions I shall refer in this paper only to the more recent contributions. For earlier scholarship see Cardauns (1967), 317 n. 1; Katzoff *ibid*.

² Letter of Areus: *IMac* 12:20-23; letter of Jonathan: 12:6-19. For the date of Jonathan's letter see Goldstein (1976), 445. The Spartan King involved is surely Areus I, r. 309-265 BC. As for Onias, current scholarly consensus weighs in favor of Onias II rather than Onias I (recently and conclusively Gruen [1998], 254 n. 32, with bibliography). Bremmer (2010), 51-52, opts for Onias I, on the basis of the negative attitude of Josephus (*AJ* 12.157-167) to Onias II (cf. Patterson [2010], 60, without argumentation). However, Josephus' reference is to Onias II's avarice, a common vice among the political class, which in no way contradicts successful diplomacy. In addition, Josephus himself puts Areus' letter in the time of Onias III (*AJ* 12:225-27), which renders his attitude to Onias II immaterial in this context.

under three categories. First, that both letters are indeed authentic documents.³ Second, that Jonathan's letter, as well as the Spartan response, are trustworthy historical documents, but that Areus' is a fabrication of some sort.⁴ Third, that the entire correspondence does not reflect any actual diplomatic exchange between Judea and Sparta, but is rather a purely literary construct with an ideological and cultural bent.⁵

In recent years the last position arguing for complete pseudonymity of the letters, and consequently denying the historicity of any actual diplomatic relations between Judea and Sparta, has received strong support. My purpose in this paper is to address some of the questions arising from this latest trend in the following manner. First and foremost, I intend to take up the question about the possible identity of the letters' author or authors, suggesting various candidates and assessing the probability of each candidacy according to the three interpretative approaches delineated above. Second, I address some details, which have had little or no impact on the discussion so far, and ask how they reflect on the various suggestions concerning authorship. These details include the phraseology used in *IMac* to introduce epistolary exchanges; the significance of ritual commemoration of Sparta during various liturgies in the Jerusalem Temple, mentioned in Jonathan's letter (12:11); as well as some long-term vestiges of the Judeo-Spartan connection, *viz.* the visit of the Spartan dynast Eurykles to Herod's court and the rabbinic Ben-Lakonia family attested as late as the second century CE. Finally, I aim to offer a possible chronological and geographical context for the nascence of the connection between Sparta and Judea.

The current trend in scholarship, aimed at rejecting any factual basis for the diplomatic exchange between Sparta and Jerusalem, begins with Gruen, who claims that the notion of the Jewish-Spartan kinship was created by some Jews who wanted 'to redefine and even to enhance their own identity in the new circumstances of the Hellenic world'. However, 'any attempt to pinpoint its emergence with precision brings frustration'.⁶ Complete lack of belief in the authenticity of any of the letters, indeed of any actual connection between Judea and Sparta, is evident also in a very recent contribution by Bremmer: 'Our conclusion must be that real diplomatic contacts never took place during the Maccabean and Hasmonean period'.⁷ Bremmer rightly points, however, that in order to remain valid, the case against authenticity should nevertheless address three essential questions: Who wrote the letters? When were they written? What

³ Meyer (1921), 30-31; Ginsburg (1934); Schüller (1956); Gutman (1958); Goldstein (1976), 457-61; Katzoff (1985), 486 (with note 2); Orrieux (1989), 171-74 (accepting that a letter was indeed sent by Areus, but arguing that its contents were altered by Jason; more below); Cartledge (1989), 36-37; Rappaport (2004), 287-88.

⁴ Hadas (1959), 87; Hengel (1974), I 72; II 50-51 n. 124; 150 n. 748; Habicht (1976), 226 n. 9a; Bickerman (1988), 144; Stern (1995), 67 n. 11; Patterson (2010), 59-68.

⁵ Cardauns (1967) with extensive mostly nineteenth-century German scholarship in 317 n. 1; Gruen (1996); (1998); (2011); Bremmer (2010).

⁶ Gruen (1996), 255; (1998), 265.

⁷ Bremmer (2010), 56.

prompted their composition? A theory regarding the identity and motives of the letters' author is indispensable for the case against authenticity.

Regarding motivation, Bremmer suggests that the letters were a literary product of Hellenistic Egypt, and were directed at Gentiles who were apprehensive about Jewish self-seclusion. The Spartans, so ran the cliché, were rather xenophobic, a reputation which nevertheless did not tarnish *their* prominent and venerable place in Hellenic civilization.⁸ 'By comparing themselves to the xenophobic but illustrious Spartans, the Jews thus cleverly, if not always successfully, tried to legitimate their own special way of life'.⁹ In other words, through an association with the Spartans an anonymous pseudonymous author attempted to win similar grace for the Jews. This explanation, however, is frustrated by the contents of the letters. The connection with Sparta is achieved through the introduction of a diplomatic relationship, complete with terms of fraternity and common mythical origins. If anything, the letters accentuate Jewish openness and friendliness, not seclusion and segregation. Such warm relations with Sparta, even if only fictitious, would only throw the tension between Jews and Gentiles in Egypt into sharper relief. Gruen, on the other hand, argues that the invention of the Judeo-Spartan familiarity 'constituted a Jewish expropriation and transformation of the Spartan mystique to declare the primacy of the Jews'.¹⁰ In other words, the fable not only helped Jews come to terms with their role in the realities of the Hellenistic world, it also served as a source of self-assurance. Such motivation can easily be ascribed to the letters' author, whether in Judea or in the Diaspora, and will be retained as a possibility throughout the discussion.

A more difficult question concerns the identity of the alleged pseudonymous author. In partial answer to the question of identity Bremmer points out that the Spartan letters were part of a wider literary phenomenon: 'in the middle of the second century BCE collections of letters circulated in Jerusalem that had to prove the importance of the Jews within the world at large'. He is also right in commenting that despite their pseudonymity, the letters were convincing enough to bring the author of *IMac* to include them in his work.¹¹ This last remark raises a further possibility: that the author of the letters is none other than *IMac* himself! One argument in support of such a theory would be that it is in his own writings, after all, that the documents in question have been transmitted. Gruen's suggested motivation (the wish to bolster Jewish pride vis-à-vis the Hellenistic world) fits well within the historical context of *IMac*, written sometime around the year 100 BC, during the expansionist stage of the Hasmonean state.¹² This possible identification also has the merit of economy, in that it does not

⁸ For a different view on third century Sparta see Mendels (1979).

⁹ Bremmer (2010), 50. Katzoff (1985), 488-89, accepting authenticity, argues along the same lines that Jonathan's purpose was to use Spartan separatism within the Hellenic world as example and precedent for similar Jewish behavior.

¹⁰ Gruen (1996), 264; (1998), 267.

¹¹ Bremmer (2010), 58.

¹² According to the last two verses of *IMac* (16:23-24), at the time of writing there already existed an account of John Hyrkanos' *Res Gestae*. This points either to late in Hyrkanos'

require the addition of an otherwise unattested anonymous author. The possibility that *IMac* was responsible for the fabrication of the Spartan letters ought, too, to be taken into consideration in support of the complete fabrication approach. Other candidates for authorship will naturally arise as we move to discuss the possibility of partial or complete authenticity.

Yet before moving to the letters themselves, an important piece of external evidence, the reference of Josephus to the Spartan letters in the *Antiquities*, still requires introduction.¹³ The first observation regarding Josephus' report of the Spartan letters is the fact of their publication. This must mean either that Josephus accepted the letters as authentic historical documents or that he saw through their pseudonymity but decided to include them in his work anyway. The second observation concerns his presentation of the material. For one, Josephus reports Areus' letter to Onias and Jonathan's letter to Sparta according to his perception of their chronology, consequently placing them in different places in his work. Interestingly, he mistakenly places Areus' letter in the time of Onias III (early second century), possibly to bring the letters closer together chronologically. Most importantly, Josephus presents information that does not appear in *IMac*. His version of Areus' letter has an appendix, specifying that the letter was delivered by one Demoteles, was written in tetragonal letters, and was stamped by a seal featuring an eagle holding a serpent.¹⁴ Thus, despite a clear connection with the text cited by *IMac*, Josephus 'evidently had additional information as well'.¹⁵

How does the testimony of Josephus reflect on the question of authorship? If the letters are indeed the work of an anonymous pseudonymous author as Gruen and Bremmer argue, Josephus' information requires no special explanation. It makes good sense that such a literary product would include some details of delivery in order to increase its credibility. The decision by *IMac* to omit these details could be ascribed to literary reasons. On the other hand, if the letters were written by *IMac* himself, and if we join the consensus in clearing Josephus from the suspicion of independent fabrication, we would then have to assume an initial independent production of the letters, including the details of delivery, which were eventually omitted from the book itself. It is not easy to see, however, why *IMac* should first invent these details, and then find it necessary to omit them.¹⁶

It is now time to turn to some issues which have thus far had little impact on the discussion as a whole. First among these regards the terms used by *IMac* himself in

time or to that of Aristoboulos or Yannay-Alexander. Furthermore, *IMac* was originally written in Hebrew, clearly aiming at a local audience. On the date and original language of *IMac* see Abel (1949), xxi-xxiv, xxviii-xxix; Goldstein (1976), 14-16, 62-64; Gruen (1998), 265 n. 86; Rappaport (2004), 9-10, 60-61.

¹³ *AJ* 12:225-27 (Areus); 13:164-170 (Jonathan).

¹⁴ Josephus refers to Demoteles again in Jonathan's letter, probably a part of his otherwise evident literary reworking of the correspondence.

¹⁵ Gruen (1998), 254 n. 33.

¹⁶ Thanks to the *Scripta Classica Israelica* editorial board for this observation.

reference to the Spartan letters. Their first introduction appears at 12:5, where *IMac* explicitly states that the letters in his work — both Jonathan’s and the appendix ascribed to Areus — are each a certified copy (ἀντίγραφον) of a preexisting text. The same term appears again in the body of Jonathan’s missive (12:7,19) in relation to the initial letter by Areus. In other words, *IMac* asserts that his reproduction of Jonathan’s letter relies on an official transcript, an original document.

Now the text of *IMac*, especially its second half, contains more than two dozen references to written correspondence.¹⁷ In the majority of cases the author uses various forms of expression to introduce the contents. Only in five cases does *IMac* claim to have used an official transcript.¹⁸ These are:

(a) 8:22 — the letter from Rome to Judas concerning a military alliance. The letter is said to have been inscribed on bronze tablets, and sent to Judea as a token of remembrance (εἶναι παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖ μνημόσυνον).

(b) 12:5,7,19 — *IMac* purports to give the *antigraphon* of Jonathan’s letter to the Spartans, which in turn contains the *antigraphon* of Areus’ letter.

(c) 14:20 — a Spartan letter to Simon after Jonathan’s death, cited according to an *antigraphon*. According to this letter the Spartans recorded the words of the Jewish messengers in writing and deposited them in the public archives in Sparta. The *antigraphon* of their decision was also sent to Simon (§§22-23).¹⁹

¹⁷ The list below contains only cases where an act of writing is mentioned explicitly, and is organized according to the introductory phrase. With infinitive: 1:41, 10:59, 12.1-2. κατὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους (with slight variances): 1:44-51, 10:17, 10:25, 10:51. λέγων, λέγοντες: 5:10, 8:31, 10:55, 11:42, 11:57. ὅπως: 9:60, 12:4, 15:19, 16:18-19. εἶπεν or ἔγραψεν followed by direct speech: 10:3-4, 15:22. τοῦ with infinitive: 11:22. ἐπιστολάς ἐχοῦσας τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον (with slight variances): 11:29, 15:1-2. ἐπιστολάς ἐν αἷς ἐγγράπτο τάδε 15:15. ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολήν τοιαύτην followed by direct speech: 13:35.

¹⁸ Another *antigraphon* in *IMac* appears in 11:31, introducing the letter of the short-lived Seleukid monarch Demetrios I to his minister Lasthenes, a certified copy of which had been forwarded to Jonathan, with a requirement to publish it in a visible place (ἐν τόπῳ ἐπισημῶ 11:37). Note, however, that *IMac* does not claim to have used the original document here (ἐπιστολάς ἐχοῦσας τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον 11:29). Interestingly, the word *antigraphon* is used in Demetrios’ letter to bracket the contents, much the same as in Jonathan’s letter to Sparta.

¹⁹ According to Goldstein (1976), 485, 492-94 (accepted by Rappaport [2004], 310-11) this Spartan letter was sent on a bronze tablet, and received a public hearing in Jerusalem. His assumption, if correct, would be strong support indeed in favor of authenticity, since of all the details which any pseudonymous author might come up with, a claim that the document existed in imperishable material and received wide publicity would unnecessarily jeopardize pseudonymity. Unfortunately, Goldstein’s explanation is unlikely for two reasons: first, because according to *IMac* the letter was intended to renew relations which had been established already in the time of Judas, a clear reference to his alliance with Rome (a); second, because of the specific mention of a bronze tablet, a mode of recording which is not mentioned anywhere else in relation to Sparta, but is related in the exchange with Rome. Goldstein (1976), 494 argues that the mentions of Rome and of Judas are interpolations

(d) 14:25-27 — a decision by the Judean *demos* to acknowledge Simon's rule with a written charter. The text is given as *antigraphon*. The original text is to be inscribed in bronze and put in a public place on Mt. Zion, whereas the *antigrapha* are to be deposited in the treasury, to be kept by Simon and his sons (§§48-49).

(e) 15:24 — a letter by the Roman magistrate Lucius,²⁰ recognizing Jewish rights, is sent to King Ptolemy and to various other monarchs and communities (including Sparta). Simon, now instated as leader of Judea by a strong coalition, receives an *antigraphon*.

One obvious common feature of the group above is the correlation between the use of *antigrapha* and the field of international diplomacy. Of the five cases in question two concern Judea's relations with Sparta (*b,c*), another two relate to relations with Rome (*a,e*). The exception is Simon's home charter (*d*), which looks internally to domestic politics. Nevertheless, in the local sphere too the diplomatic achievements of the Hasmoneans vis-à-vis Rome and Sparta are perceived by *IMac* as a central pillar of Hasmonean legitimacy and rule. The successful reception of Simon by Sparta and particularly by Rome is given by *IMac* as a major cause in the decision of the Judean *demos* to recognize his leadership.²¹

This dossier of *antigrapha* can be categorized also according to the specified techniques of recording the documents. The two prominent documents in that respect are the Roman treaty of Judas (*a*) and Simon's charter (*d*) — both distinguished by the use of bronze tablets and by a specific reference to their function as a memory aid.²² On the other hand, the *antigraphon* of Lucius' letter (*e*) and those of the Spartan correspondence (*b,c*) lack a specific mention of bronze or stone as means of recording, nor do they specify any public display in Judea. Now it stands to reason that, if pseudonymous, the two Spartan letters (*b,c*) are the work of a single author, and this for two reasons: the letter to Simon mentions a Jewish embassy which had reached Sparta, whose message had been made public in the official records there; the Spartan letter speaks about a *renewal* of friendship and hails the Jews as brothers (a term used already in the letter ascribed to Jonathan).²³

which followed a confusion in the arrangement of the original Hebrew text, but his suggestion seems to me too speculative.

²⁰ In all likelihood Lucius Caecilius Metellus, consul in 142: Bickerman (1937), 175; Abel (1949), 267; Goldstein (1976), 492; Rappaport (2004), 341.

²¹ Cf. especially 14:40.

²² Roman treaty (8:22) — εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖ μνημόσυνον. Simon's charter was set up in stone on Mt. Zion; the *antigraphon* was in bronze (14:25). The authenticity of the Roman treaty, too, has come under attack (for bibliography see Schürer [1973-87], I 171-72 n. 33; Rappaport [2004], 220). The extreme hypercriticism of this claim has been demonstrated by Schürer *ibid.* and Gruen (1984), I 42-46. In addition, the mention of such specific memory aids as public copies set out in stone and bronze speaks volumes in favor of the document's authenticity.

²³ 14:22 — renewal; §20 — brothers; Gruen (1998), 258-59; Bremmer (2010), 55.

How does the consideration of the five *antigrapha* reflect on the candidates for authorship proposed so far? According to Bremmer, parts or all of Lucius' letter (*e*) are the work of a second pseudonymous author.²⁴ Bremmer's analysis stands to reason in its own right, but is nevertheless highly uneconomical, in that it forces us to hypothesize a second pseudonymous author, with his own context and motives. A stronger case may be made in favor of *IMac* as the actual author of the letters. The main merit of this suggestion lies in its economy: instead of two pseudonymous authors and two credulous writers (*IMac* and Josephus) who fell for the fabrications, we would have one agent alone (*IMac*) responsible for the production of the entire correspondence. Motivation can easily be supplied from the field of politics. At the time *IMac* was writing his history of the Maccabean brothers, their heirs still had to fend off strong claims against their legitimacy — in particular against their right to hold on to the High-Priestly office.²⁵ As we have seen, diplomatic success is perceived by *IMac* (14:40) as a powerful promoter of positive public opinion, and the Spartan connection plays an important role in enhancing and securing Simon's position in his own community. Authentic or not, The Spartan letters may thus be perceived as a product of Hasmonean propaganda in the field of internal politics.

Yet if the wish to benefit from the Spartan mirage may be cited as political motivation for pseudonymous activity around 100 BC, why not two generations earlier, at the time of Simon's consolidation of power? In other words, may it not be that the original author of the letters was Simon himself, or someone in his close circle? One argument in favor of this suggestion would be that it points to a known agent with a clear motive: the letters will have been composed to facilitate Simon's own rise to power. Furthermore, it explains why *IMac* opted to include the material in his work. After all, if the Spartan letters were indeed independent and inauthentic documents, we would have to ask how the author of *IMac*, much closer than us to the events and to the centers of power in Judea, did not recognize them for what they were; or if he did, why he chose to include them nonetheless. If, on the other hand, the letters were written at the behest of Simon, the founder of the Hasmonean dynasty, it is easy to see why the author who celebrated the dynasty should trust the documents which today strike us as so odd, or at least turn a blind eye to their dubious authenticity. Thus, as an interim conclusion, within the range afforded by the modern view on the pseudonymity of the Spartan letters three possible identifications may be suggested: Simon the Hasmonean, the author of *IMac*, or an anonymous pseudonymous author.

A second issue which has not received its due share of attention derives from a statement made in Jonathan's letter (12:11). Addressing its purported Spartan audience, Jonathan's letter declares:

We therefore remember you constantly on every occasion, both at our festivals and on other appropriate days, at the sacrifices that we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and proper to remember brothers (NRSV).

²⁴ Bremmer (2010), 57 with note 51.

²⁵ Joseph. *AJ* 13.288-96; *Bavli Qiddushin* 66a.

This statement is a fine example of the myth-ritual approach.²⁶ According to the logic of Jonathan's letter, the diplomatic connection between the two polities relies on myth (fraternity through Abraham) and is rehearsed and reinforced through liturgical means (prayers and sacrifices).

The details of this declaration deserve closer attention. The first detail of note is that the language of the letter is deeply invested in the act of commemoration (μυνησκόμεθα; μνημονεύειν). Committal to memory is presented as a way of preserving and promulgating the commitment of one community to the other. When did such public commemoration take place? Throughout the year — it was celebrated on 'festivals' and 'other appropriate days';²⁷ and throughout the years — the letter refers to the commemoration in the present tense (μυνησκόμεθα, προσφέρονεν). The underlying assumption is thus that the Spartan commemoration is still a part of the temple routine even as the letter is written. More generally, the honors paid by Jerusalem to Sparta are described as an incessant (ἀδιαλείπτως) activity which takes place ἐν παντί καιρῷ.²⁸ The existence of such temple protocol will have involved an initial process of decision making, and may be presumed to have been a source of discussion thereafter. It stands to reason, therefore, that the Spartan commemoration, if historically factual, will have been known to a considerable number of people, from temple personnel through ordinary Jerusalemites to the crowds of pilgrims who frequently visited Jerusalem on the 'festivals and other appropriate days'.²⁹

Now, two assumptions are generally made about pseudonymous authors: (a) that they normally endeavor to disguise pseudonymity; and (b) that, like any other author, they are free to include in their text or to exclude from it anything they wish unless constrained by special circumstances. In consequence of these assumptions, the information about the Spartan commemoration presents a strong argument for the historicity of the Judeo-Spartan connection. After all, why would any pseudonymous author invent such a damning detail, which would expose the documents' true nature to anyone with the means of knowing whether such commemoration did or did not in fact take place? To press the point further, according to Bremmer 'it is unthinkable that the Jews would remember the Spartans during their sacrifices and festivals', which assertion is used in turn against the letters' authenticity.³⁰ Yet the fact is that the thought did occur

²⁶ For an exposition and history of the myth-ritual approach see Versnel (1990).

²⁷ According to Goldstein (1976), 454, the 'festivals' are the three pilgrimage festivals, whereas the 'other appropriate days' would include for example the other Tishrei holidays. The comparison to *IMac* 10:30 may indicate that Sabbaths were not included in this case. Appropriate days which may be considered in this regard are those events which eventually became a part of *Megillat Ta'anit*.

²⁸ At all times, all the time, on every occasion, or even 'throughout the years', as in Goldstein's translation (1976), 444.

²⁹ Philo, for one, visited the Jerusalem temple at least once (*Prov.* 2.64); see also Schneck (2005), 36-37.

³⁰ Bremmer (2010), 54.

to whoever wrote Jonathan's letter. Alternatively, if such a detail were indeed so unthinkable, its inclusion in the purportedly pseudonymous letters would be all the more unreasonable and illogical.³¹

Nor is there is any reason to reject this practice *a priori*. To begin with, the expression of diplomatic relations through ritual kinship is by no means an isolated phenomenon. As noted by Jones:

just as the Jews ... assure the Spartans of their prayers, so the people of Camarina in Sicily, passing a decree in honor of Cos, assert that *we continue to cherish the memory of our kinship (συγγένεια) with (the Coans) by inviting them and other founders both to our public sacrifices, which we received from them, and to our festivals.*³²

Another example for the expression of civic affinity through ritual kinship comes from a mid-second century inscription from Antiochia on the Pyramos (Magarsos), where such a connection with the Antiochenes on the Kydnos is celebrated in public ceremonies of prayer and oath-taking.³³ The projection of good-wishing, expressed through public prayer, parallels in spirit the Spartan commemoration mentioned in Jonathan's letter.

The Jewish perspective, too, does not leave room for objection.³⁴ In the Persian period sacrifices and prayers were conducted in the Jerusalem Temple for the life of the King and his sons.³⁵ In the *Letter of Aristeas* (§45) the High-Priest Eleazar assures Ptolemy II Philadelphos that sacrifices had been made on his behalf (together with that of his family and friends), accompanied by prayers of the people. *IMac* 7:33 mentions sacrifices conducted in Jerusalem in honor of the Seleukid Demetrios I. In Roman times sacrifices in honor of the Emperor were a daily affair in Jerusalem.³⁶ Finally, later rabbinic tradition had no qualms about making Simon the Just claim before Alexander the Great that the Temple was home to many a good prayer on his behalf.³⁷ The historicity of some of these accounts may be doubtful, but the general spirit of approval can hardly be mistaken.

³¹ This difficulty increases the closer one draws to the Temple, where more people would be aware of the minutest details of ritual routine.

³² Jones (1999), 78; *SEG* 12.379.19-23. For the elaborate use of religious means in regulating relations and for the role of festivals as mnemonic devices concerning interstate kinship see Goldstein (1976), 451; LiDonnici (1999); Low (2007), 57-58.

³³ *SEG* 12.511. Thanks to Dr. Noah Kaye for drawing my attention to this inscription.

³⁴ On Gentile participation in worship at Jerusalem see generally Schürer (1973-87), II 309-13.

³⁵ *Ezra* 6:10 (MT). Cf. Papyrus Cowley № 30 line 26, 31.25 (= Cowley [1923], 113, 120); *Baruch* 1:10-13 (projected back to Babylonian times); with Rappaport (2004), 216.

³⁶ Philo, *Leg.* 157, 232, 317; Joseph. *BJ* 2.197, 409, 417; *Ap.* 2.77. Smallwood (1981), 147-48; Rappaport (2004), 286. Note particularly *BJ* 2.409, where Josephus remarks on the cessation of gifts and sacrifices 'by no stranger' (μηδενὸς ἀλλοτρίου) and the response of the conservatives in §417, that accepting sacrifices from foreigners was a time-honored custom.

³⁷ *Scholion to Megillat Ta'anit* on Kislev 21st (Parma and Oxford Mss. = Noam [2003], 100-103, 262-65); *Bavli Yoma* 69a; with Amitay (2008), 237-40. Cf. *Mishnah Avot* 3.2.

Finally, the historicity of the Judeo-Spartan connection is corroborated by a key piece of evidence which has not yet been mentioned here — the famous story of Jason's flight to Sparta, told in *II Maccabees* 5:9-10. At the heart of the matter lies the fact that the renegade Jewish ex-high-priest is said to have chosen Sparta as his final place of exile exactly because of the notion of Judeo-Spartan kinship.³⁸ Since, for chronological reasons, Jason cannot have been influenced in his choice by an alleged relation fabricated by anyone from Jonathan's time onward, it must follow that a connection between Judea and Sparta had already been established well before his time.³⁹

In light of all this, we arrive at a second interim conclusion. Given the strong emphasis of the assorted *antigrapha* in *IMac* on international diplomacy, the detailed description of the Spartan commemoration in Jonathan's letter, and the corroborating evidence from *IIMac* about Jason's flight to Sparta, the historicity of the diplomatic relations between Judea and Sparta in the second century BC appears to be vindicated. It is in this light that we ought to address again the authenticity of Jonathan's letter (*b*) and of the Spartan response (*c*).

The first observation to be made is that, in itself, the historicity of the diplomatic relations does not necessarily entail that the letters are authentic. Strictly speaking, it is within the realm of possibility that these factual ritual *realia* were mentioned in an otherwise pseudonymous text. Let us examine therefore the likelihood of such a scenario in the case of each of the three putative pseudonymous authors suggested so far.

The most immediate candidate, both chronologically and onomastically (i.e. in that he is known by name), is Simon. As we have seen, both in the construction of his narrative (14:4-49) and in his particular use of *antigrapha*, *IMac* stresses the importance of Hasmonean international success as a means of gaining legitimacy for Simon's official claims to leadership. This is particularly true of the Spartan letter, addressed first and foremost to Simon himself and receiving a prominent place in the buildup towards his charter (*d*). The letter to Simon makes some clear references to its circumstances. For one, it declares that the Spartans kept their own copy in their archives, open for public perusal. In addition, it explicitly names the two ambassadors who brought back the letter: Noumenios son of Antiochos and Antipatros son of Jason. Why, we should ask, would Simon include the names of these two dignitaries, when anyone who was anyone in Judea at the time (that is, the very same people whose support he needed the most) will have been familiar at least with their names and could know whether or not

³⁸ That Jason first tried his luck in Transjordan and in Egypt (*IIMac* 4:26, 5:8) is of little consequence here. These destinations may have been chosen so long as Jason still thought he had a fighting chance. Sparta, on the other hand, was to be his final place of retirement.

³⁹ According to Gruen (1998), 259, 'the ascription of motive can hardly count as independent testimony. It means only that the tale of the συγγένεια was known to the author of *II Maccabees* or to Jason of Cyrene'. Still, what would have been the motivation of either writer for adding this unnecessary detail, unless it corresponded to some actual happenstance?

they had ever visited Sparta? Why risk detection by drawing attention to where the copy might lie? And more fundamentally, given that he could just as easily capitalize on an existing relationship with Sparta, and considering the wide publicity necessary for the letters to be effective, why should Simon bother with such a tricky fabrication in the first place?

Moving to the anonymous pseudonymous author, a claim can be made that he included a reference to the Spartan commemoration in the otherwise spurious letters. At least, this agrees well with the wish to bolster up a Jewish self-image.⁴⁰ After all, Jonathan's letter does present a strong Judean polity, protected to the point of independence by a powerful deity, and confident enough to offer benevolent blessings to foreign nations. Still, some difficult questions arise. First and foremost, who did write the letters and for what reason? A plausible motive has been suggested above, yet could not the same goal have been achieved by using authentic material, such as existing diplomatic relations were bound to produce? Secondly, when were the letters written? Evidently later than Simon (the addressee of the second letter) and earlier than the composition of *IMac*, the author had a very narrow window of opportunity and many living memories to contend with. Finally, if the letters were pure invention, who would be in a better position than *IMac* to expose them for what they were?⁴¹

Or can the author of the letters be *IMac* himself? The main argument so far in favor of this possibility lies in its economy. Instead of hypothesizing an otherwise unknown and unattested writer (and possibly a second one as the putative author of Lucius' letter [e]), *IMac* as the source of all pseudonymous documents requires considerably less explanation. In addition, he is somewhat more distant from the actual events, and might thus worry less about his readership's familiarity with major state events which had or had not taken place two generations earlier. Still, as argued above, the external evidence of Josephus seems to indicate that if the letters were indeed written by *IMac*, he ought to have produced them independently of his work. This assumed practice would indicate an awareness on his behalf that someone might want at some stage to check the original documents.⁴² However, since actual relations did in all likelihood exist between Judea and Sparta, what reason would *IMac* have for this spurt of inventive writing? Might not this surge of creativity detract rather than add to the impression of the powerful and internationally successful Hasmoneans? Yet another difficulty with this scenario is that if all Spartan-related material is indeed pseudonymous, its inclusion and role in *IMac* would involve Simon in a bold-faced disinformation conspiracy (as a recipient of one of the letters, and the main beneficiary from the exchange, he can hardly be dissociated

⁴⁰ Gruen (1998), 263-64; 2011, 305-306.

⁴¹ We may assume that *IMac* would not want to damage his credibility by the inclusion of patently fictitious documentation. We may also ask, in such a case, how and where the material was preserved for Josephus to have had independent access to it.

⁴² Which is, we have to assume, what Josephus did unless we explain his additional details as yet another invention.

from it). This would run counter to Simon's otherwise resplendent image in *IMac*.⁴³ On the whole, then, a scenario in which any of the three theoretical pseudonymous authors included a fictitious text à-propos the historical diplomatic relations seems rather unlikely.

Before summing up this part of the discussion, a final consideration still demands our attention regarding the long-term vestiges of the Judeo-Spartan connection. The time period covered by the discussion of the letters in *IMac* spans the first half of the third century to ca. 100 BC. Yet a special sense of affinity between the two polities is attested, or at list hinted, in later sources as well. The earliest of these appears in Josephus (*BJ* 1.425-27), and concerns the history of King Herod. At the heart of the story stands the Spartan potentate Eurykles, an ambitious man, who had come to power in his city supporting Octavian against Antonius, and successfully carved for himself a niche of real power within the Augustan settlement.⁴⁴ Having run into some trouble at home, and in dire need of hard cash to fund his activities, Eurykles paid a visit to Jerusalem. There, besides wreaking havoc at court and contributing to the downfall of Herod's Hasmonean heirs, he managed to secure a hefty sum of fifty talents which he needed for further activities. The point pertinent to the case at hand is Josephus' statement that when the Spartan arrived in Jerusalem, he was received with pleasure by Herod and by everyone around him 'because of his fatherland' (διὰ τὴν πατρίδα, *BJ* 1.515).

A possible connection between this incident and the Spartan letters was detected already by Whiston (in a note to his translation). The validity of this connection depends on our understanding of διὰ τὴν πατρίδα. On a minimalist interpretation, one could argue that this expression refers to the fame of the Spartans generally, without connection to the Spartan letters.⁴⁵ Furthermore, this expression may reflect nothing more than Josephus' own historicizing conclusion. After all, he wrote about the Spartan letters and could well make the connection himself. If either option is correct, the incident as a whole is only marginally relevant to the topic at hand. Nevertheless, since a

⁴³ Simon receives a rosy description in *IMac*. Note especially 14:4-15, an idyllic portrayal of his reign, when people seat untroubled under their vines and figs. This depiction clearly refers back both to the tranquil periods under the Judges and Solomon (*Judges* 3:11, 3:30, 8:28; *IKings* 5:5), and to the classic portrayal of the positive side of the End of Days (*Micah* 4:4). See also Amitay (2008), 244-45.

⁴⁴ For Eurykles and Herod see *BJ* 1.513-531; *AJ* 16.301-310. For the Spartan's career and family see Taylor and West (1926); Bowersock (1961); Lindsay (1992); Balzat (2005); Spawforth (2012): s.v. in index. Bowersock (1961), 115, raises the possibility that 'Herod was furnishing hospitality to Eurycles in return for hospitality received at Sparta during the two journeys of the Jew as King to the city of Rome'; the suggestion is accepted by Lindsay (1992), 293.

⁴⁵ For the celebration of Sparta in Augustan Rome see Spawforth (2012), 86-102.

long-standing relationship between Sparta and Judea is highly probable, it is in this light that 'because of his fatherland' is best understood.⁴⁶

Even so, the Eurykles incident is hard to interpret. On the one hand, it is possible to argue that once the fabricated letters were included in *IMac*, the story spread and was widely believed. Eurykles could either have somehow heard about the strange pro-Spartan proclivity in Jerusalem, or else he may have been completely ignorant of it, merely trying his luck with the liberal eastern king who had marched through the Hellenistic cities of Syria, Asia Minor and Greece (Sparta included) in a grand parade of euergetism a few years earlier.⁴⁷ On the other hand, it is also possible that Eurykles was well aware of the Judeo-Spartan connection. According to the Spartan letter to Simon (c) the message of Jonathan's embassy was deposited in the state archives. As a leading member of the ruling elite at Sparta, Eurykles will have had easy access to them. If so, the authenticity of the Spartan letter to Simon, as well as that of Jonathan, may be vindicated. Unfortunately, unless a lost fragment of Nikolaos of Damascus containing details of Herod's Hellenic tour and of Eurykles' adventures in Jerusalem should by chance come to light, the state of the evidence does not allow a clear decision either way.

A very different cluster of evidence attesting to the Judeo-Spartan connection has survived in a number of mainstream rabbinic texts from late antique and early medieval times, concerning a family of second-century CE Judean rabbis. The most notable member of this family was one R. Shim'on Ben-Yosi Ben-Lakonia. A student of the famous R. Shim'on Bar-Yoḥai, Ben-Lakonia was considered an authority on both *halakhah* and *aggadah* (roughly, law and myth). He was related by marriage to Shim'on Bar-Yoḥai's son, R. El'azar, and was even appointed as the tutor of R. El'azar's son, a famous playboy whom Ben-Lakonia managed to save from a life of debauchery. Both student and master were lauded for this transmutation of character by R. Yehudah Nasi, president of the *Sanhedrin* and codifier of the *Mishnah*.⁴⁸

The relevance of R. Shim'on Ben-Lakonia lies of course in his unique patronymic. The source of the name remains a matter for guesswork. Was the family tied by formal

⁴⁶ According to Richardson (1999), 286 n. 98, 'a supposed relationship between Jews and Spartans might have accounted for the beginning of a friendship between the two rulers'.

⁴⁷ For Herod's building project in Greece and Asia Minor see Richardson (1999), 201-2. The crown of Herod's euergetism among the Hellenes was his sponsorship of the Olympic Games. According to Josephus, by Herod's time the Olympic Games had become the last remnant of Greek antiquity; and they, too, were faring badly. On his way to Rome, Herod not only acted as president of the games but also set up a fund for the payment of future prizes. Thus, says Josephus, Herod not only benefited Hellas but also the entire inhabited world. In the present context it is well to remember that according to mainstream Greek mythology, it was none other than Herakles who founded the Olympiad (Pind. *Ol.* 10).

⁴⁸ The basic loci are: *Yerushalmi Brakhot* 2.3; *Ma'asarot* 3.4; *Eruvin* 3.4; *Psaḥim* 6.1. *Bavli Shabat* 49b; *Psaḥim* 51a, 86b; *Baba Meṣi'a* 85a; *Shvu'ot* 18b; *Zvaḥim* 62b; *Bekhorot* 38b. *Shir haShirim Raba* 4.24, 5.23; *Qohelet Raba* 1.9, 9.4; *Vayiqra Raba* 25 (*ad fin.*; Margalioth ed.). For more details about the family see Amitay (2007).

proxenia to Sparta?⁴⁹ Had R. Shim'on's family resided for a certain period among the Lakedaimonians before returning to *Eretz-Israel*?⁵⁰ Or could R. Shim'on and his family have descended from a Spartan convert to Judaism?⁵¹ For the lack of firmer evidence it is impossible to get closer to the actual story of the Ben-Lakonia family. Admittedly, the evidence concerning the Ben-Lakonia rabbis does not bear directly on the question of the letters.⁵² Nevertheless, it does provide us with a sense of hindsight, with which to approach the assessment of probability. The striking Lakonian nomenclature testifies to a strong and enduring Spartan impact in Judea. It seems highly unlikely that an *ad hoc* pseudonymous work of the second century BC should continue to influence Judean society for three centuries and more, well into Roman times. It thus corroborates the conclusion that actual relations between Sparta and Judea were in fact an historical reality rather than a mere literary construct.

In light of all this, the recent trend in scholarship, which argues for complete pseudonymity of the Spartan letters and denies the historicity of any diplomatic connections between Judea and Sparta, is open to serious objection. The ramifications of introducing the Spartan commemoration into traditional cultic practice in the Temple, the richness of detail contained in the short notice in Jonathan's letter, the necessity of publicity for the letters to achieve their intended propagandistic role, and the ease with which the allegedly false information could have been exposed as an invention, all make Jonathan's letter and the Spartan response a fairly improbable invention for any pseudonymous author, and weigh the scales heavily in favor of authenticity.

It is now time therefore to consider the significance of the Spartan commemoration in the Jerusalem Temple as historical fact, beginning with the immediate questions: why, when and by whom was it established in the first place? A straightforward answer is provided by Jonathan's letter. Since, on the practical level, it appears as a cultic representation of and memorial aid to diplomatic relations between Judea and Sparta, this practice ought to have been established in celebration of a significant point in the relationship between the two polities, most likely its inception. An obvious context is provided by the letter of Areus. This letter too, however, has been received with suspicion, even by many prominent scholars who are otherwise willing to accept the historicity of Jonathan's letter.

⁴⁹ Cf. Lakon son of Aeimnestos, a Plataian *proxenos* of the Lakedaimonians during the early years of the Peloponnesian war (Thuc. 3.52.5); as well as Lakedaimonios son of Kimon, a contemporary Athenian general (Thuc. 1.45.2). See also Herman (1987), 21.

⁵⁰ The only reported case of a Jewish *émigré* in Sparta is that of the ex-high-priest Jason. On the improbability of an established Jewish community in Sparta see n. 82 below.

⁵¹ Two outstanding examples of contemporary converts, who came to play major parts on the rabbinic scene, are 'Aqilas "the Convert", translator of the *Torah* (*Shmot Raba* 30.12; *Yerushalmi Hagigah* 2.1=77a; Silverstone [1931]) and R. Meir, one of the pillars of the *Mishnah* (*Bavli Giṭin* 56a, 57b with parallel in *Sanhedrin* 76b).

⁵² Bremmer (2010), 56-57.

The first and foremost reason for suspicion has been the peculiarity of the notion of Judeo-Spartan kinship through Abraham. Hadas, who initiated the debate on this topic, accepted without reservation the genuineness of Jonathan's letter, but rejected the possibility of Spartan self-identification through Abraham. 'Claims of relationship between hellenic and non-hellenic peoples were proffered not by the Hellenes, but by the non-Hellenes,' as can be seen in other comparable cases from the Hellenistic period.⁵³ On the whole, the common practice was for foreigners to identify themselves with a Greek persona, rather than the other way around. Further reasons for doubt have been found in the language of Areus' letter. For one, the enquiry 'about your peace' has a Semitic flavor to it.⁵⁴ Even more so the offer to share cattle and goods, which is considered odd in the Spartan context, sounds like a biblical paraphrase.⁵⁵ Together with the mention of Abraham as the common forefather, practically every word in Areus' short letter has fallen under suspicion as the product of a Jewish writer.

Those scholars who accept the authenticity of Jonathan's letter, yet reject that of Areus', have logically sought a different explanation for the origin of the Judeo-Spartan connection. One solution, offered by Hengel, ascribes the legend of kinship between Judea and Sparta to a Jewish Hellenistic mythographer, whom he associated with the reform party in Judea 'well into pre-Maccabean times'.⁵⁶ This suggestion is open to two major objections. First, it leaves a rather narrow window of opportunity for invention and dissemination. As Bremmer rightly points, if no Judeo-Spartan affinity did in fact exist, its legend had to come into being long enough before Jason's own time for him to have taken it seriously.⁵⁷ Second, it is dubious that the authorities in Jerusalem should institute ritual commemoration of Sparta merely on a notion set about by an overly

⁵³ Hadas (1959), 85-87 (quote from p.87). Cardauns (1967), 318 finds the notion that a Spartan King should consider himself to be of Abrahamic origin to be inconceivable. Hadas' line of argument is followed closely by Patterson (2010), 59-68, who also agrees with Hadas in ascribing the authorship of Areus' letter to Jonathan (see below).

⁵⁴ 12:22: *περὶ τῆς εἰρήνης ἡμῶν*. Grimm (1853), 186; Schüller (1956), 258; Cardauns (1967), 318; Goldstein (1976), 461. Cf. *Daniel* 3:31, 6:26 (אנשׁ יי כמלשׁ). But compare the more natural Greek of *Let. Arist.* 45: *διασώζει σοι τὴν βασιλείαν ἐν εἰρήνῃ*, not too dissimilar from the supposedly suspicious Greek of the letter.

⁵⁵ Cf. *I Kings* 22:4, *II Kings* 3:7. Grimm (1853), 187; Goldstein (1976), 450-51; Gruen (1998), 259; (2011), 305. See however Xen. *Lac.* 6.3, who does mention cases of community of property, in this case servants, dogs and horses. From the Spartan point of view, the implication would be an unusually special honor: enjoying a privilege shared only by Spartan citizens. Thanks to Prof. Ephraim David for this locus.

⁵⁶ Hengel (1974), I 72; II 50-51 n. 124; 150 n. 748. Followed by Habicht (1976), 226 n. 9a; also by Stern (1995), 67 n. 11, who considers the proclamation of common descent from Abraham too improbable and assumes an anonymous pseudonymous author between Areus' time and Jonathan's. The context and the motivation of this author are left, however, without comment.

⁵⁷ Bremmer (2010), 50.

inventive mythographer. It is scarcely possible that such commemoration should still be celebrated down to Jonathan's time.

A more direct approach is taken by Hadas, arguing that Areus' letter was written by Jonathan or at his bequest, yet accepting that 'the writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are related which the spurious letter mentions probably did exist, and was probably what suggested the composition not only of the spurious letter but even of Jonathan's own genuine letter'.⁵⁸ This reconstruction, too, raises some difficult issues. To begin, the Spartan letter to Simon indicates clearly that Jonathan's initiative was positively received. As we have seen, the Spartans call the Jews 'brothers' and deposit Jonathan's letter in their public archives (*IMac* 14:20-23). If Areus' letter were a Jewish fabrication, and a bad one at that, it would likely have aroused suspicion in Sparta, which in turn might lead to a rejection of the Jewish overture. The same is true for Jonathan's request to renew the fraternity between the two communities (*IMac* 12:17). Unless some sort of past diplomatic rapport had been recorded at Sparta, Jonathan's request for renewal might sound jarring. With inquisitiveness about the past growing strong in second century Sparta, such a fabrication might be even harder to pass off.⁵⁹ A graver difficulty arises from Jonathan's tone in reference to Areus' letter, which certainly sounds dismissive, and according to Gruen even 'borders on patronizing'.⁶⁰ Assuming that Jonathan actually sent a letter to Sparta, why would he not fabricate a letter by Areus to which he himself could respond in a more positive manner? All the more so, given that the diplomatic history of Jerusalem and Sparta was bound to supply him with many facts to support his message, why resort to fabrication in the first place?

Finally, an ingenious suggestion has been made by Orrieux, who believes that Areus did in fact send a letter to Onias, but argues that the original contained nothing at all about common kinship. This particular bit of information is explained as an interpolation by none other than Jason himself, who did so in order to cushion his exile in Sparta.⁶¹ Still, it is hard to see why Jason should make up such a wild claim when he could just as easily have benefitted from the good relations established between the communities, especially since such an invention, if met with no recognition, might bring him more harm than good. On the other hand, the expression of diplomatic relations through fictitious kinship was perfectly acceptable practice in the ancient Mediterranean, and gives no particular reason for suspicion in the case at hand.⁶²

Thus, if the case against the authenticity of Areus' letter is to be maintained, new arguments will have to be provided in answer to the questions raised above. Nevertheless, it is the duty of anyone who would argue for authenticity to address all the

⁵⁸ Hadas (1959), 87.

⁵⁹ On the sharp increase of literacy in Sparta from the second century onwards see Boring (1979), 81-88.

⁶⁰ Gruen (1998), 264.

⁶¹ Orrieux (1989), 174-75. But if so, how did the interpolated copy reach Jonathan? Logically, the only copy of it will have been presented by Jason to his Spartan hosts.

⁶² On Greek kinship diplomacy in general see Jones (1999); Patterson (2010).

queries of the deniers and to supply a fitting historical context in which the letter can at least make sense.

An initial point to be made concerns the basic tenet which underpins the argument against authenticity, namely that the tone and style of Areus' letter are decidedly un-Spartan. In Gruen's words, 'no Spartan would have expressed himself in that manner'.⁶³ However, it is dangerous to assert what language any third century BC Spartan would or would not be likely to have used, given that evidence for contemporary Spartan self-expression is anything but abundant. As a matter of fact, considering the weight and importance of Sparta in Hellenic civilization in general, one is impressed with the relative lack of first-hand Spartan literary remains.⁶⁴ For all it is worth, the brevity of both Spartan letters in *IMac* at least justifies their description as laconic.

Secondly, the letter's alleged author, Areus, was a very untypical Spartan King. To give but a few examples: during his reign we witness the first silver coinage of Sparta — a significant departure from traditional Spartan practice. In addition, some of these coins bear Areus' crowned head as well as his name, openly following the coin-types of Alexander.⁶⁵ In the Chremonidean decree we find the highly unusual formula 'the Lakedaimonians and Areus', flying in the face of the established diarchic system of Sparta.⁶⁶ Indeed, these (and other) peculiarities agree with the claim of the third-century historian Phylarchos that Areus eagerly sought to establish a royal court, and that under his reign Spartan society underwent major societal changes.⁶⁷ Thus, the un-Spartan character of the letter is congruent with the eccentric nature of this unusual Spartan King.⁶⁸

Yet another argument in support of Areus' letter is that without it we are left also without a tangible reason for the institution of the Spartan commemorations. The Jerusalem Temple stood at the heart of the Judean community, serving as the focal point of both religious and profane worlds. Temple service was taken with the utmost seriousness, and the introduction of any Spartan element had both religious and political significance. It seems highly unlikely that anything Spartan should be introduced into regular Temple service merely on the basis of an imaginative invention by a mythographer, whether in Jerusalem or elsewhere. Thus, unless we accept Areus' letter, we ought to hypothesize a different set of circumstances for the initial diplomatic

⁶³ Gruen (1998), 259.

⁶⁴ A central conclusion of the study of Spartan literacy by Boring (1979), with particular reference to the third century on pp. 50, 54.

⁶⁵ On Areus in general see Cartledge and Spawforth (1989), 28-37. For the coins in particular p. 35 with n. 18 on p. 239.

⁶⁶ For the text see *Syll.*³ 434/5; with translation: Burstein (1985), 77-80 №56; Austin (2006), 130-33 №61. The Lakedaimonians and Areus: lines 26, 28-29, 40, 54-55.

⁶⁷ In Ath. 141f-142b.

⁶⁸ Compare also the report by the little known Spartan writer Aristokrates (in Plut. *Lyk.* 4), that Lykourgos had traveled to India and even met with some gymnosophists! This fashioning of the ancient Spartan lawgiver after the image of Alexander demonstrates Spartan susceptibility to the changing circumstances of the Hellenistic world.

contact between Sparta and Judea. However, there is no evidence at all in support of such a hypothesis. It is thus at least more economical to accept Areus' letter as authentic.

The first step in that direction must be the establishment of a motive. Eduard Meyer, who accepted that the letter cited in *IMac* was in fact a doubly-translated version of an original letter by Areus, connected the Spartan overture with Jewish presence in the Ptolemaic army. Egyptian military might was an important mainstay for the Spartan King.⁶⁹ Ginsburg, following more or less along the same lines, suggested that the Spartan King may have wanted to establish an official connection with Jerusalem in order to bolster the diplomatic standing of his own city as part of his bid to return Sparta to international prominence. The Jewish connection is also explained as means of gaining the favor of Ptolemaic Egypt.⁷⁰ This approach was taken a step further by Goldstein, who suggested that Areus may have reached out to Judea, claiming brotherhood and kinship, in order to increase the chances of attracting Jewish soldiers 'to fill up the depleted Spartan ranks'.⁷¹ Finally, Orrieux and Cartledge point independently to the likely possibility that Areus was looking to hire Jewish mercenaries to fight for him in the Chremonidean war, and that his letter is to be read as part of this attempt.⁷²

The idea that Jewish mercenaries could be enlisted to take part in the wars of the Hellenistic world is realistic enough. Even before the dawn of the Hellenistic age Jews are found garrisoning a military position in upper Egypt — the famous community of Yeb-Elephantine.⁷³ Closer to the case at hand we find Jewish involvement in a number of Hellenistic armies. According to Josephus, Alexander invited Judean Jews to join his army, an offer eagerly taken up.⁷⁴ The generation following Alexander's death saw various examples of Jewish mercenaries under Greek command. In Egypt they were enlisted by Ptolemy I Soter and established as garrisons both in Egypt and in Kyrene.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Meyer (1921), 30-31.

⁷⁰ Ginsburg (1934), 119. The wide extent of Areus' diplomatic activities is evident in the Chremonidean decree (n. 66 above).

⁷¹ Goldstein (1976), 457, 461 — presumably also to have some Jews settle in Lakonia and share in the Spartan state! This seems far-fetched, but cf. *Xen. Lac.* 6.3 and n. 55 above.

⁷² Cartledge (1989), 36-37; Orrieux (1989), 171, 174.

⁷³ For the military character of this Jewish community see Cowley (1923), xvi; Porten (1968); Modrzejewski (1995), 21-26.

⁷⁴ Joseph. *AJ* 11.339 and *Ap.* 1.192, which takes for granted a Jewish presence in Alexander's army. The historicity of Josephus' story about the visit of Alexander to Jerusalem has been rejected by a vast majority of scholars. For an introduction to the scholarship see Gruen (1998), 189-198. The rejection of the story, however, does not necessarily condemn this particular detail.

⁷⁵ *Let. Arist.* 13-14, particularly 36: a letter by Ptolemy II Philadelphos himself. According to Honigman 2003, 72 the letters are fictional. Still, this fabrication must have been aimed 'to bolster the plausibility of the narrative' (*ibid.*), which in turn supports the factuality of Jewish soldiers, as well as the public awareness to their existence. This is corroborated

Nor was Ptolemy alone among the Diadochoi in employing Jewish mercenaries in his army. According to Josephus (*AJ* 12.119) Seleukos I Nikator made use of them in his own army, while Diodorus Siculus (20.97.7) preserves the memory of one Ananias, a Jew by name, who fought and died for the freedom of Rhodes during the famous siege by Demetrios Poliorketes. All these examples precede Areus' efforts in the latter part of his reign, and could well have provided him with the idea to try and recruit Jewish soldiers to his army.⁷⁶ Of course, as far as we know no Jewish contingent ever took part in the Chremonidean war. Yet our sources for the period are far from satisfactory, and their silence cannot be adduced here as evidence. Military and diplomatic histories are full of high-profile alliances which afterwards had little effect on the turn of events.⁷⁷

Jonathan, too, understood Areus' letter as a request for military alliance (12:9). This is remarkable, because on the face of it Areus' letter says no such thing.⁷⁸ A possible solution may be found in the strange statement: 'your cattle and property are ours, and ours yours' (*IMac* 12:23). As we have seen, this expression has been deemed more Scriptural than Spartan, strongly echoing *I Kings* 22:4 and *II Kings* 3:7: *I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses*.⁷⁹ The key to understanding this allusion lies in its biblical context. Both verses are put in the mouth of the ninth century Judean monarch Jehoshaphat, both times in a positive reply to an offer of military alliance by his contemporary Israelite counterpart — first the infamous Ahab against the King of Aram, then Ahab's son Jehoram against the Moabite rebel Mesha. Areus' statement may thus be explained neither as a product of difficulties in translation nor as an invitation 'to settle on Spartan territory' and share 'in land and serf labor', but rather as an offer for military alliance, couched in biblical idiom.⁸⁰

But whence the Spartan knowledge in Scripture? Areus' letter opens, it is true, with an assertion that knowledge of kinship through Abraham was found in some unspecified text (to be discussed presently). Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that any such writings would have been detailed enough to allow the Spartan King such a deep understanding of biblical idiom. If the historicity of Areus' letter is accepted, it seems to imply some sort of Jewish involvement in the process of composition.⁸¹ How are we to explain such a putative Jewish involvement? Early scholarship postulated the presence

further by Joseph. *Ap.* 2.44. On Jewish soldiers in Egypt in general see Tcherikover (1963), 30-44 and Applebaum (1979), 131-38, who emphasizes the military character of initial Jewish settlement in Egypt and Kyrene and dates it to 312 BC.

⁷⁶ Two or three generations after Areus the Seleukid monarch Antiochos III recruited some Babylonian Jews and used them as garrison in Asia Minor (Joseph. *AJ* 12.147-153).

⁷⁷ Judas' pact with Rome is but one obvious example, on which see Gruen (1984), 43: 'Roman alliances whose terms bear little resemblance to their consequences are quite common'.

⁷⁸ Goldstein (1976), 450.

⁷⁹ Goldstein (1976), 451; Gruen (1998), 259 with note 59. MT text: כסוסיך, כעמי כעמך, כסוסי כמוני כמורך.

⁸⁰ Goldstein (1976), 450-51, 471 — who formulated, and rejected, the interpretation followed here.

⁸¹ Cf. Gruen (1998), 259; (2011), 305.

of a Jewish colony in Sparta, which would provide a proper explanation for any Judaizing idiosyncrasies in Areus' letter. It seems, however, that a Jewish community in Sparta is more likely the invention of modern scholars.⁸² On first assumptions, it would not be illogical for Areus to have consulted Jewish associates before sending his letter to Jerusalem in order to prepare for it in the best possible way. High diplomacy is important business, and one could reasonably expect Areus to have invested in collecting intelligence and securing counsel before dispatching any such embassy.

Another important point involves the diplomatic situation of the various parties in the game. As the Chremonidean decree clearly shows, Areus brought with him to the coalition against Antigonos Gonatas a wide array of allies. These comprised a considerable contingent of Peloponnesian cities, but also some Cretan communities, and most importantly Ptolemy Philadelphos.⁸³ Areus' embassy was sent to Jerusalem, a principality under Ptolemaic suzerainty. Gruen cites this fact as evidence against the authenticity of Areus' letter.⁸⁴ But it may also imply that Areus' overture first received Ptolemy's sanction. In fact, a number of reasons can be thought up why such a direct approach by the Spartan King to the Ptolemaic principality of Judea could work in favor of both monarchs.

From all indications, Areus' primary goal appears to have been the recruitment of military aid, allied or mercenary, in view of the impending clash with Antigonos. As we have seen, by this point Jews were already employed in the armies of the Ptolemies (both in Egypt and in Kyrene), the Seleukids, and more ominously with Demetrios Poliorketes, Antigonos' father. Good relations with the Jerusalem High-Priest would be useful for attracting into service available fresh forces from Judea, not yet employed in the service of any other army. In other words, a formal alliance, backed up by an invented mythical affinity, might give Areus an edge in a competitive market.

Another benefit which might accrue from the notion of kinship between Sparta and Judea involves the propaganda employed by the anti-Antigonid coalition. The Chremonidean decree makes an effort to emphasize the role of Athens and Sparta at the head of the alliance, in clear reference to the Persian Wars.⁸⁵ In this respect, a fictitious kinship with the Jews — whether those in Ptolemy's army or fresh forces recruited by

⁸² Argued convincingly by Schüller (1956). The main argument against a Jewish community in Sparta remains the fact that it is not mentioned, or even hinted, anywhere in the sources. One possible exception, not considered by Schüller, is the rabbinic Ben-Lakonia family. But this evidence is much later, and can be explained in a number of alternative ways (see above). The notion of a Jewish community in Sparta is still retained, however, by Oliva (1971), 207.

⁸³ Chremonidean decree, lines 16-26. For the decree see n. 66 above.

⁸⁴ Gruen (1998), 256.

⁸⁵ Lines 8-15 in the decree, with Habicht (1997), 144 — 'the king of Macedonia is indirectly branded as a new Xerxes'; O'Neil (2008), 66-67. In reality Sparta was considerably stronger than Athens, while Ptolemy Philadelphos was likely the chief motivator.

Areus — could help the coalition portray them as fellow Greeks fighting for the common liberty of ‘all Hellas’ rather than as foreign mercenaries.⁸⁶

For Ptolemy, suzerain of Judea and ally of Sparta, any military support which could be marshaled for the war in Greece, especially if it did not come at his expense, will have been welcome. If any Jewish soldiers took part in the eventually ineffective expeditionary force of Patroklos, Ptolemy’s admiral, Areus’ letter would have a special meaning for them. Needless to say, no such Jewish contingent is attested anywhere in our sources and it remains completely hypothetical. Yet if any indication of Jewish presence were to be found, for example, among the archaeological remains left behind by Patroklos’ navy, it should be seen as strong and positive support for the authenticity of Areus’ letter.⁸⁷

A more subtle interest on Ptolemy’s side may have involved contemporary affairs in Kyrene and the circumstances of the First Syrian War.⁸⁸ In the mid 270s the Ptolemaic realm suffered a serious loss with the successful revolt and secession of Magas. More dangerously still, the new rebel-king of Kyrene took to wife a daughter of Antiochos I, and followed up the diplomatic alliance with a military one, joining the Seleukid King in a coordinated attack on Egypt from both west and north-east. As it happened, this combined effort came to naught. In the Levant Ptolemy skillfully overpowered the forces of Antiochos, while in Libya Magas was hindered by the rebellion of local nomadic tribesmen. Nevertheless, Kyrene retained her independence under Magas, and the danger of a renewed alliance remained. One reason for Ptolemy’s support of Areus may well have been his wish to bring over Spartan interests and sentiment in Kyrene to his side.⁸⁹ As we have seen, an ostensible Jewish presence in Kyrene goes back

⁸⁶ I am thankful to Prof. Nikolaos Papazarkadas for drawing my attention to the importance of pan-Hellenic propaganda in the Chremonidean decree. Cf. in this context also Plutarch *Arat.* 38.4-6, who criticized Aratos for allowing Antigonos ‘to have filled Akrokorinthos with Illyrian and Gallic arms’ rather than yield to the Spartan Kleomenes who, for all his lawlessness and arbitrariness, was nevertheless a Heraklid. This may be a gloss by Plutarch, but may also represent real time sentiment.

⁸⁷ On Patroklos see Habicht (1997), 144-46; O’Neil (2008), 71-72.

⁸⁸ Paus. 1.7.1-3.

⁸⁹ The Spartan connection to Kyrene hardly needs elaboration. Herodotus’ famous excursus on the foundation history of Kyrene (4.145-158) begins with Spartan mythology preceding the Trojan War. The fact that Kyrene itself was actually founded by people from Thera did not impede the image of the Spartan origins, Thera itself being a Spartan foundation. Note also the Lakedaimonian Chionis, winner of seven races at Olympia, who partook in the expedition of Battos and aided him in the foundation of Kyrene and in the wars against the Libyans (Paus. 3.14.3). Spartan influence on Kyrene is evident also in the existence of an ephorate, in the celebration of the Karneia and in the myth of Menelaos’ journey there on his return from Troy (Malkin [1994], 48-57). At the turn of the fourth century CE bishop Synesios of Kyrene still boasted his Heraklid and Lakedaimonian heritage (*Letter* 57), quoted Leonidas (*Letter* 113), and prayed that his own deeds ‘may become the traditions of Kyrene and Sparta’ (*Hymn* 5).

probably to 312 BC, and had a distinct military character from the outset.⁹⁰ The newly found friendship and fraternity between Jews and Spartans, both closely connected with Philadelphos, could then supply Egypt with a solid base through which to monitor and influence developments in Kyrene.⁹¹

Having established a plausible context for the initial contact between Sparta and Judea, we ought to address what has probably proved the biggest puzzle for modern readers: the Spartan self-reference to Abraham. According to the letter itself, the Spartans discovered Abraham in a written work (12:21). Unfortunately, the laconic letter writer spared us any further detail regarding the name and authorship of the work in question. The obvious suspect has long been Hekataios.⁹² Now, Hekataios certainly met Jews and wrote about them. He is even reported to have sojourned in Sparta for a while, providing his hosts with an opportunity to learn from him and to acquaint themselves with his works.⁹³ Unfortunately, Hekataios' work is lost, and of those surviving fragments which can be securely ascribed to him, none mentions Abraham in any way.⁹⁴ Alternatively, if we accept Ptolemy's involvement in the affair, it is easy also to assume a consultation with a knowledgeable Jewish agent, either from Egypt or from Judea, which would provide an explanation for all biblical allusions in the letter.

That said, Abraham is not a bad choice for the role of cultural mediator. The first reason for his suitability lies in his remote antiquity. This chronological remoteness supports the suspense of disbelief required for the myth to play its role in cultural mediation.⁹⁵ Furthermore, despite his patriarchal role in the biblical framework story, Abraham is nevertheless pre-Jewish, even pre-Israelite. His unique identity as a Hebrew makes him at the same time both "one of us" (from the point of view of the author of *Genesis*) and the progenitor of a whole plethora of foreign nations. Indeed, at the very

⁹⁰ Joseph. *Ap.* 2.44; Applebaum (1979), 131-38.

⁹¹ A Jewish-Spartan association through Kyrene was postulated long ago by Büchler (1899), 128. According to Bickerman (1988), 185 'we may guess that the Spartan relationship to the Jews was thought out at Cyrene, a[nother] Spartan colony, in order to improve the status of Jewish settlers there'. Both took Areus' letter to be inauthentic.

⁹² Ginsburg (1934), 120-21; Gutman (1958), 110-11; Schüller (1956), 261; Bremmer (2010), 47-49.

⁹³ Plut. *Mor.* 218b; *Lyc.* 20. The identification of Plutarch's Hekataios "the sophist" with Hekataios of Abdera is accepted unequivocally by Gutman 1958, 110, with some doubt by Tigerstedt 1974, II 87.

⁹⁴ Joseph. *AJ* 1.159 does mention a work by Hekataios *On Abraham*, a fragment whereof is preserved in Clement's *Stromata* (5.14.113). Ginsburg (1934), 121 suggests that 'Areus could have been familiar' with it. Today it is generally accepted, however, that this work is in fact pseudepigraphical (Bar-Kochva [1996], 2-3 with bibliography). Nevertheless, such a work did exist, and it is notable that its anonymous author assumed his readership would accept without too much suspicion a work dedicated by Hekataios to the Hebrew Patriarch.

⁹⁵ This is clearly Abraham's role also in the confirmation of alliance between Hyrkanos' Judea and the city of Pergamon, as reported by Josephus (*AJ* 14.255), where Abraham is mentioned as a chronological marker.

moment of his quintessential covenant with Yhwh Abraham is styled by the deity ‘a father of many nations’ (*Genesis* 17:4-6). Yet another reason is that at one point in his career Abraham does in fact become embroiled in international politics and war (*Genesis* 14). An appeal to him may thus set a convincing mythological precedent for enlisting Jewish help in fighting a foreign war. Still, there remains an unsolved question: how are we to explain the Spartan choice to adopt this foreign figure, while omitting any mention of their own national Hero Herakles? A possible and economical answer is that the choice was made in accordance with the letter’s intended audience. Areus need not have worried about possible discrepancies which alarm modern analytical scholars, but will rather have concentrated on currying favor with the Jerusalem High-Priest. According to the interpretation suggested above, Areus had a very specific goal — gaining goodwill in Jerusalem in order to encourage Jews to enlist to his army. With such purpose in mind, giving pride of name to the courted party would be a small price to pay.

To conclude: as stated from the outset, the state of the evidence does not allow a decisive solution to the controversy concerning the Spartan letters. The additions to the discussion offered in this paper involve, first and foremost, the inclusion of the letters in the dossier of *antigrapha* and the detailed mention of the Spartan commemoration at the Jerusalem Temple. I have argued that the combination of the inherently public nature of the Spartan commemoration with the emphatic use of foreign diplomacy for furthering Hasmonean political home interests, entailing as they surely did a considerable amount of publicity, weighs strongly for the historicity of actual diplomatic relations between Sparta and Judea. This conclusion, in turn, decreases the likelihood of complete pseudonymity for the entire correspondence. Any argument in favor of complete pseudonymity will have to explain the Spartan commemoration, as well as take into account the relations between the authenticity of the Spartan letters and the other three *antigrapha* given by *IMac*. It would be much easier, and more economical by far, simply to accept that Jonathan’s letter is in fact what it purports to be.

As for the authenticity of Areus’ letter, it too benefits from the consideration of the Spartan commemoration, if only in that it offers a direct and economical answer to the necessary question regarding the circumstances which accompanied the establishment of the relationship between the two communities. A viable context for Areus’ overture to Judea is supplied by the events of the first Syrian War, the secession of Magas and the impending Chremonidean War. Apparent familiarity with Biblical background and idiom is to be explained through consultation with a Jewish agent — in itself not an unreasonable assumption. The question of the writings allegedly consulted by the Spartan themselves must for now remain open.

Finally, we ought to regard the long term vestiges of Spartan influence on Judean society, exemplified by the remarkable onomastics of the Ben-Lakonia family, and possibly by the unanimous sympathy for Eurykles in Herod’s court. That some Lakonian connection should survive for four centuries after the first recorded point of contact seems to indicate a deep Spartan impression on Judean society. All these arguments seem to me to weigh in favor of complete authenticity.

Bibliography

- Abel, Felix-Marie. (1949). *Les Livres des Maccabées*. Paris: Librairie Lecoffre.
- Amitay, Ory. (2007). 'Some Ioudaio-Lakonian Rabbis', *SCI* 26, 131-4.
- (2008). 'Why Did Alexander the Great Besiege Tyre?', *Athenaeum* 96, 91-102.
- (2010). *From Alexander to Jesus*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Applebaum, Shimon. (1979). *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Austin, Michel M. (2006). *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: a selection of ancient sources in translation*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: University Press.
- Balzat, Jean-Sébastien. (2005). 'Le Pouvoir des Euryclides à Sparte', *ÉtCl* 73, 289-301.
- Bar-Kochva, Bezalel. (1996). *Pseudo-Hecataeus, On the Jews: Legitimizing the Jewish Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bickerman, Elias J. (1937). *Der Gott der Makkabäer*. Berlin: Schocken.
- (1988). *The Jews in the Greek Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bonnet, Corinne. (1988). *Melqart: cultes et mythes de l'Héraclès tyrien en Méditerranée*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Bowersock, Glen W. (1961). 'Eurycles of Sparta', *JRS* 51, 112-18.
- Bremmer, Jan N. (2010). 'Spartans and Jews: Abrahamic Cousins?', in Goodman, M., G.H. van Kooten and J. van Ruiten (eds.). *Abraham, the Nations, and the*

- Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bradford, Alfred S. (1977). *A Prosopography of Lacedaemonians from the Death of Alexander the Great, 323 B.C. to the Sack of Sparta by Alaric, A.D. 396*. München: C.H. Beck.
- Büchler, Adolf. (1899). *Die Tobiaden und die Oniaden*. Vienna: Alfred Hölder.
- Burstein, Stanley Mayer. (1985). *The Hellenistic Age from the Battle of Ipsos to the death of Kleopatra VII*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Cardauns, Burkhardt. (1967). 'Juden und Spartaner: zur hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur', *Hermes* 95, 317-24.
- Cartledge, Paul and Antony Spawforth. (1989). *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta, a Tale of Two Cities*. London: Routledge.
- Cowley, Arthur E. (1923). *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon.
- Ginsburg, Michael S. (1934). 'Sparta and Judea', *CPh* 29, 117-22.
- Goldstein, Jonathan A. (1976). *I Maccabees*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Grimm, Carl L.W. (1853). *Das Erste Buch der Maccabäer*. Leipzig: S. Hirzl.
- Gruen, Erich S. (1984). *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- (1996). 'The Purported Jewish-Spartan Affiliation', in Wallace, R.C. & E.M. Harris (eds.). *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History, 300-146 B.C., in Honor of E. Badian*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 254-69.
- (1998). *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- (2011). *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gutman, Yehoshua. (1958). 'The Correspondence with Sparta', in *The Beginnings of Jewish-Hellenistic Literature*. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute. (Hebrew)
- Habicht, Christian. (1976). *2. Makkabäerbuch*. Gütersloh: Mohn.
- (1997). *Athens from Alexander to Antony*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hadas, Moses. (1959). *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hengel, Martin. (1974). *Judaism and Hellenism*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Herman, Gabriel. (1987). *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Honigman, Sylvie. (2003). *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: a Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Jones, Christopher P. (1999). *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Katzoff, Ranon. (1985). 'Jonathan and Late Sparta', *AJP* 106, 485-9.
- LGPN = Fraser, P.M. and E. Matthews (general editors). 1987-2000. *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- LiDonnici, Lynn. (1999). 'The Ephesian Megabyzos Priesthood and Religious Diplomacy at the End of the Classical Period', *Religion* 29, 201-14.
- Lindsay, Hugh. (1992). 'Augustus and Eurycles', *RhM* 135, 290-7.

- Lipiński, Edward. (1970). 'La fête de l'ensevelissement et de la resurrection de Melqart', in Finet, A. (ed.) *Actes de la XVII^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*. Ham-sur-Heure: Comité Belge de Recherches en Mésopotamie, 30-58.
- Low, Polly. (2007). *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece: Morality and Power*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Malkin, Irad. (1994). *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendels, Doron. (1979). 'Sparta in Teles' *περὶ φυγῆς*', *Eranos* 77, 111-15.
- Meyer, Eduard. (1921). *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*. Stuttgart & Berlin: J.G. Cotta.
- Modrzejewski, Joseph. (1995). *The Jews of Egypt: from Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. (1975). *Alien Wisdom: the Limits of Hellenization*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Noam, Vered. (2003). *Megillat Ta'anit: Versions, Interpretation, History*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi (Hebrew).
- Oliva, Pavel. (1971). *Sparta and Her Social Problems*. Prague and Amsterdam: Academia & Hakkert.
- O'Neil, James L. (2008). 'A Re-Examination of the Chremonidean War', in McKechnie, P. & P. Guillaume (eds.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and His world*. Leiden: Brill, 65-89.
- Orrioux, Claude. (1989). 'La 'parenté' entre Juifs et Spartiates', in Lonis, R. (ed.) *L'étranger dans le Monde Grec*. Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 169-91.
- Patterson, Lee E. (2010). *Kinship Myth in Ancient Greece*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Rappaport, Uriel. (2004). *The First Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Hebrew Translation and Commentary*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi. (in Hebrew).
- Richardson, Peter. (1999). *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Schüller, Sepp. (1956). 'Some Problems Connected with the Supposed Common Ancestry of Jews and Spartans and Their Relations During the Last Three Centuries B.C.', *JSS* 1, 257-68.
- Schürer, Emil. (1973-87). *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)* (rev. ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman). Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Silverstone, Alec E. (1931). *Aquila and Onkelos*. Manchester: University Press.
- Smallwood, Mary E. (1981). *The Jews under Roman Rule*. Leiden: Brill.
- Spawforth, Antony. (2012). *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Stern, Menahem. (1995). *Hasmonean Judaea in the Hellenistic World: Chapters in Political History* (ed. D.R. Schwartz). Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar.
- Syll.* = Dittenberger, Wilhelm. (1960). *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Hildesheim: Olms.

- Taylor, Lily Ross and A.B. West. (1926). 'The Euryclids in Latin Inscriptions From Corinth', *AJA* 30, 389-400.
- Tcherikover, Victor. (1963). *The Jews in Egypt: in the Hellenistic-Roman Age in the Light of the Papyri*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press.
- Tigerstedt, Eugene N. (1974). *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity* (3 vols.). Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Versnel, Henk S. (1990). 'What's Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander: Myth and Ritual, Old and New', in L. Edmunds (ed.), *Approaches to Greek Myth*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 21-90.

University of Haifa