

Inscription as Proof-text: the Roman–Hasmonean Treaty as “Quoted” in the *First Book of the Maccabees* and Flavius Josephus’ *Antiquities*

The history of the 400-year relationship between the Romans and Jews is full of conflicts and contradictions. The only surviving historian of the first part of this period is Flavius Josephus, whose works are form the turning point of this relationship. The decisive character of Josephus’ works is the apology, because he intended to prove to the Romans that the Jewish religion and people rightly deserve honour from the “masters of the world”. In order to verify this, Josephus often quoted official documents issued by the Roman government on behalf of the Jews. These decrees guaranteed the religious autonomy (*politeuma*) of the Jewish communities spread all over the Roman Empire. The documents presented by Josephus have been much discussed over the last century and a half (Mendelssohn 1875; Niese 1876). In the mid-70s, Hörst Moehring argued that Josephus’ documents are apologetic forgeries (Moehring 1975: 136), but Miriam Pucci Ben-Zeev at the end of the 20th century was rather positive in connection with the documents quoted by Josephus: “*Senatus consulta*, decrees and letters written by Roman magistrates, imperial edicts, *mandata*, and Greek decrees quoted by Josephus, follow the general structure and use the same language, vocabulary and style as those appearing in the Greek and Roman official documents preserved in the extant inscriptions and papyri” (Pucci Ben Zeev 1998: 357). In our days Claude Eilers claims that at least in one case (an Athenian decree quoted in *Ant.* 14. 149–155) we cannot speak of forgery or dishonesty, only “plenty of incompetence” (Eilers 2008: 211).

The object of my paper is to compare two quotations of a historically important document: the treaty of Juda Maccabi and the Roman senate quoted in both the First Book of the Maccabees (1Macc 8:23–30) and Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 12. 417–419). Because the treaty is not mentioned in any non-Jewish sources, some scholars have doubted that it is real. A.N. Sherwin-White (1984: 74; cf. Fischer 1980: 134) argued that it was a forgery perpetrated to make the Maccabees look good. On the other hand, Dov Gera notes the similarity in form between the Roman-Jewish treaty and other comparable agreements, arguing that it really was signed (Gera 1998: 306–312). At first glance it is clear that the two texts cannot be verbatim translations of one and the same document. On the basis of the surviving *senatusconsulta* (collected by Sherk 1969) we can claim that the document “quoted” in 1Macc has been significantly transformed. It is an interesting question, whether this transformation was already made in the original Hebrew text of 1Macc or only the Greek version. Quoting such an important document was inevitable for both authors, but they accomplished it in different ways. Josephus remained closer to his original text, while the author of 1Macc transformed it into a literary text. These two methods can be ascribed to different historiographic approaches (the more rhetorical Hellenistic and the more pragmatic Roman) and different audiences (Hellenized Jews and Romans).

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