



Salo Wittmayer Baron

on the History of Ancient Israel

The Hasmonean Period

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Although Salo Wittmayer Baron's main field of interest was the history of the Jews in the modern era, he frequently also took examples from antiquity to illustrate the phenomena that occurred in other periods in their history.¹ In the first two volumes of his monumental work *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, he discussed the ancient history of Jews at the greatest length.² Extensive as this accomplishment was, however, it is no easy task to reconstruct the author's views on this period of Jewish history. The very nature of the book is to blame for this, as Baron endeavors to depict the panoramas of the various phenomena and transformations that took place in the Jews' religion and social life over time, from the biblical period right up to the sixth century CE. These are what he pays particular attention to, as in Judaism he saw the most significant bond joining together Jewish communities who were lacking the other important elements that integrate a nation: territory, state, and language.³

It is not easy to assess Baron's knowledge of the historical events that took place in the so distant past, as the information on them is spread throughout his text. It is impossible to analyze the whole book from this point of view. As an example, I shall only discuss those events from the

period of the Maccabean Revolt and the Hasmonean rule, that is, a period when the social and religious transformations of interest to Baron were especially intensive.⁴

These changes are depicted mostly in four subchapters of the eighth chapter of the first volume, titled “Palestinian Center” (212-49). As each of these subchapters examines a selected question, they form certain closed entities. The author discusses the religious, social, political, and historical aspects of the history of Judea, presenting them in what he considers to be their order of importance. Although, as mentioned, most comments in these parts are on the Hasmonean era, we should note that these cover a relatively long period—from Alexander the Great’s conquest of the Middle East (334 BCE) to the years preceding the outbreak of the uprising of the Jews against Rome in 66 CE, that is, the entire Hellenistic era and a large part of the Roman one.

The subchapter “Political and Cultural Relations” (*Social and Religious History*, 1:215-21) contains reflections on the situation of the Jews and the Diaspora in Judea and Egypt during the rule of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, Seleucids, Hasmoneans, and Herod. The author mentions the guarantees made to the Jews after Antiochus III’s conquest of Judea of the right to live according to the customs and religious rules of their ancestors. However, the order established by Antiochus was threatened by the religious conflict between that part of Judean society that was attached to traditional religious values and the Hellenists, who, having assimilated Greek cultural models, tried to disseminate them, seeking support from the king of Syria, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (216). The victories of the Maccabees allowed them to settle this conflict, contributing to the Jews’ reacquisition of their lost freedom and gaining rights from the next rulers of Syria (216-17). Baron notes that the Jews living in the Diaspora did not perceive the significance of this struggle, treating it as an inconsequential, local conflict in Judea,⁵ and that this position only changed when an outside cult was introduced to the temple. He also points to Jason of Cyrene as the author who played a major role in providing information about the events in Judea to the Diaspora.⁶

Of later events, Baron mentions the invasion of King Demetrius III as a consequence of the internal conflicts among the inhabitants of Judea (without giving their sources) and the resistance put up by Alexander Jannaeus.⁷ In writing about this event, he emphasizes that the Judean ruler made use of Greek mercenaries (*Social and Religious History*, 1:218).⁸ He also notes, more generally, that the Hasmonean state was a significant political

entity whose power was recognized and appreciated by Rome when it added to the bilateral treaties a clause on abidance and protection of the rights of the Jews in the lands in its sphere of influence. Baron believes that Julius Caesar's decision to entrust Hyrcanus II with the position of high priest as a reward for the help Caesar received from him when besieged by the soldiers of the Egyptian ruler in Alexandria demonstrates the importance of the Hasmoneans. This meant that Hyrcanus II was recognized as the political and spiritual leader of Judea and advocate of the interests of all Jews in the Diaspora (*ibid.*).

The subchapter "Theocratical Regime" (*Social and Religious History*, 1:221-27) looks at the place of Jerusalem and the role of the Hasmoneans in the religious life of the Jews. This subchapter begins with the claim that, as long as Jerusalem had the character of a city-state, all the inhabitants of Judea were able to participate in political and religious life. According to Baron, the symbolic event that confirmed the functioning of this practice, but also the last of its kind (compare 223), came in 142 BCE, when representatives of all groups of Judean society assembled in Jerusalem, summoned by Simon. This gathering defined the foundations of Simon's rule as leader of the state, as well as determining the principles of how it would be passed on to his successors.⁹ Baron argues that the Jewish city-state lost its previous character definitively when the Hasmoneans extended the limits of their control to beyond the borders of Judea (222). The increased territory required that power be exercised in such a way to allow the leaders of Judea increasingly autocratic rule. We should also add that this never took on the form of either despotic rule or Hellenistic-style monarchy (223). However, the rulers' reinforcement of their position did not entirely deprive the society of the opportunity to express unfavorable opinions, evidence of which was the government of John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus. The Pharisees played a major role in articulating these opinions, and only Salome Alexandra made a compromise with them. Significant in this was something that the Pharisees had been demanding for a long time: division of the political and religious functions that, under the Hasmoneans, were overlapping. Alexandra kept political power for herself, while Hyrcanus II, the elder of her two sons, was given the position of high priest (223). Yet this solution did not keep the state from shocks. Her death after nine years of rule led to a fierce struggle for power between the sons, joined by the supporters of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This concluded when Pompey occupied Judea, which thus lost its independence.

One important consequence of the Hasmonean conquests noted by Baron was that social conflicts in the state were sharpened, especially between the rich aristocracy and the masses of population that they held in contempt due to most of them coming from various ethnic groups that were compulsorily Judaized after the conquest.¹⁰ This Judaization, carried out by John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus in the areas of biblical Israel that they conquered, voluntary or otherwise, led to a growth in social conflicts in Judea. These were also caused by the Hellenistic cities on the coast and in Decapolis, the vast majority of whose inhabitants were guilty of oppression of the Jewish element (225).¹¹

A method used by the Hasmoneans in the political and religious unification of their country was references to the slogans and biblical models of the rulers of Israel. Assessing these actions, Baron expresses the opinion that they brought limited results: “They nevertheless wielded much less authority, willingly accepted by their subjects, than even the much-abused monarchs of ancient Israel” (225). According to him, it was the Pharisees—at this time playing a major role similar to that of the biblical prophets—who hampered the realization of the Hasmonean plans (225–26). Their teachings, and especially those concerning religious laws, led to deep political divisions being formed in society. As an example, Baron quotes the conflict provoked by a group of Pharisees questioning John Hyrcanus’s right to hold the position of high priest owing to a supposed blemish in his origin, the source of which was a rumor about his mother being enslaved by the Syrians during the Maccabee Revolt (227).¹² His refusal to resign from the function led to an open conflict between the Pharisees and John Hyrcanus, which continued, to varying degrees, while his successors were in power.

The subchapter “Politics and Martyrdom” (*Social and Religious History*, 1:227–33) discusses the nature of the Maccabee Revolt and of the phenomenon of the Hellenization of Judea. For Baron, there is no doubt that the cause of the uprising was a religious and national conflict, and all other issues related to the conflict were of secondary significance.¹³ The causes of this conflict, he argues, lay in the process of the Hellenization of the Jews. By adopting a Greek lifestyle, they lost their cultural and religious identity, and assimilation ensued. Baron refers to the first book of Maccabees, mentioning the most important manifestations of the process of Hellenization, which affected mostly the higher classes. He clearly shows that Judea’s lower social strata remained unaffected by Hellenization, and preserved the traditions of their ancestors. Their position made a patriotic

reaction to the repressions of Antiochus IV possible, and this ultimately led to the liberation of Judea from outside rule and the Jewish rejection of Hellenistic culture (228-29).¹⁴

Baron writes little about the Maccabee Revolt itself, but he does note that historians reconstruct its historical course mostly on the basis of the first and second book of Maccabees. He considers the religious aspects of the uprising to be the most important, paying particular attention to the question of martyrdom for faith, mentioned by both the second book of Maccabees and the book of Daniel. He also points to Mattathias's destruction of the altar in the presence of a Syrian dignitary, which he sees as an act of self-sacrifice in the struggle to defend the religion of his ancestors, carried out without regard for the consequences (231). According to Baron, this assured Mattathias of being remembered in the Talmudic tradition, which is silent about the deeds of his sons (231). He sees the religious dimension of the Maccabee Revolt, and in particular the acts of martyrdom associated with it, as having found a much more lasting response in the Diaspora than in Judea itself, as demonstrated by the work of Jason of Cyrene (231-32). Baron argues that, for generations of Jews, the examples of martyrdom (not only from the time of the Maccabee Revolt but also from the great revolt against Rome of 66-72 CE) were among the main factors in remaining true to their faith, irrespective of the external circumstances. He calls the Maccabee Revolt itself the first religious war in history (233).¹⁵

The subchapter "Political Conflicts" (*Social and Religious History*, 1:233-38) contains reflections on the situation in Judea after freedom was secured, when the common front of the struggle with the enemy ceased to be necessary, and the particularistic interests of the rulers came to the fore. According to Baron, when victory came, it unexpectedly turned out that the leadership of Judea lay in the hands of the social groups that were most imbued with Hellenistic influences. However, while some of the elites did not intend to abandon the Greek models, others were ready to return to the traditions of their forefathers. These differing attitudes led to tensions among the elites and to confrontation. Baron regards the rivalry between the Pharisees and the Sadducees as being the most characteristic expression of these tensions (233-34).¹⁶

The Sadducees strove to establish a state on the lands of biblical Israel, the foundation of which was to be based on religious uniformity at the cost of ethnic unity. In order to achieve this goal, both John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus pursued a policy of forced Judaization of the

conquered biblical lands. According to Baron, the natural consequence of this approach came when John Hyrcanus joined the Sadducee camp.¹⁷ This exchange also resulted in legends appearing on the coins of John Hyrcanus and his successors in the paleo-Hebrew language, as well as iconography referring to traditional religious symbols (235-36). Baron also states that the Hasmoneans ordered that a lamp be used in every house as a symbol of the feast of Chanukah that they had instituted.¹⁸

Baron's opinions and reflections on the history of Judea under the rule of the Hellenistic rulers and the Hasmonean dynasty cited here constitute the largest part of what he has to say on this period of the history of ancient Israel. Associated references and interjections can also be found in those parts of *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* in which the author discusses matters of a historical, religious, and social nature in broad chronological terms. These need not all be quoted, as they contain neither his personal opinions nor especially important observations or interpretations useful for reconstructing Baron's views on this era.

Readers of Baron's work will not find a complete or coherent picture of the Hasmonean era, even though he devotes a great deal of space to this period. Instead, he concentrates entirely on those events and phenomena that constitute a useful point of reference for discussion of the religious and social problems of the time. In examining the aforementioned transformations and phenomena, although he refers to their historical context, Baron generally does not analyze it in depth. Much more frequently, he chooses to present the activity of important historical figures or to describe selected events in general terms, without probing further into the causes and effects linking them. Bearing in mind the concept and objectives of his discourse, this treatment of the historical background should come as no surprise. Yet this does not keep some of his conclusions on historical context from being imprecise and not always comprehensible; indeed, many of them are highly disputable.

However, any harsh criticism of Baron's position on historical issues is not justified. We ought to remember that much time has elapsed since the publication of both volumes of his work on Jewish antiquity, and their contents should be judged from this point of view. Only several years later did academic works that marked out entirely new directions in research on this history of the Hasmoneans and the importance of this period in Israel's history see the light of day. In the second half of the twentieth century, many archaeological excavations were also carried out in Israel

that showed the Hasmonean period in an entirely new light and meant that many incorrect opinions on it could be verified. At the same time, there was intensive development in research on Judaism during the Second Temple period, Jewish literature of the Hellenistic period, Hasmonean numismatics, and the Hellenistic world. The accomplishments in all these fields contributed to the formation of a picture of the Hasmonean period that differed entirely from that which had previously dominated. Baron himself did not deal with this period of history, which meant that he had to make use of the results of other scholars' research. The bibliographical references in his footnotes leave no doubt that he was familiar with both the books and the articles on ancient Israel published by 1951 in the main scientific periodicals.

To conclude, it is worth focusing on one more aspect of the image of the Hasmonean era that, although it does not concern it directly, is hugely important for better understanding and depiction of the complex form of the religious phenomena taking place in the period. At the time when Baron was writing the two volumes of his work devoted to antiquity, the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were just coming to light. Today, this discovery is generally seen as one of the most spectacular archaeological finds of the twentieth century in the Middle East. As we know, scholars were initially unable to make an accurate interpretation or pinpoint the religious background of the author of these texts—whose number grew rapidly following further discoveries in the 1950s and 1960s. It also took some time before they would appreciate their significance. Evidence of the position of scholars from this time can also be found in Baron's work; he too did not devote much space or attention to these manuscripts (*Social and Religious History*, 2:52-54). Based on the opinions of those scholars who had previously dealt with the texts found in the Cairo Genizah, he repeated that they had come from within sects associated with the Pharisees, since some of the newly discovered manuscripts showed certain similarities to these.¹⁹ However, he rightly stated that the conflict that it related between the Master of Justice (as the leader of the community in which they came about had come to be known) and the "Wicked Priest," his rival, could have taken place during the rule of the last Hasmoneans or the times of Herod,²⁰ when these fierce social clashes, combined with religious disputes, led to the development of considerable tensions in Judea (2:54).²¹

In assessing the picture Baron paints of the Hasmonean era, it is hard not to notice how significant a role he attributes to the religious attitudes of the Jews and their influence on the outbreak of the Maccabee Revolt

and the social and religious situation of Judea at this time, as well as the negative effects of Hellenization. This point of view reflects the views that dominated in the academic literature of the time. In more recent studies, it has been criticized in depth. More attention is paid to the variety of factors that led to the outbreak of the uprising of the Jews against Seleucid rule. According to many scholars, the fiscal factor was much more important than the religious one.²² The opinions of researchers on the objectives and character of the Hasmoneans' religious and social policy, propaganda, and ideology also differ from Baron's position.

Despite the passage of time, the vision of the religious and social history of the Jews in antiquity presented by Salo Wittmayer Baron has not lost its cognitive value. By treating this vision as a summary of a certain stage of research, it is easier for us to evaluate the changes that have taken place in it in the last few decades. Yet this is not the only reason for the importance of this work's place in historiography: this is also due to what was for the mid-twentieth century a rather unusual method of constructing the picture of the past. At the time, it was an original, pioneering approach to portray the history of the Jews by tracing the changes taking place in their religious and social lives over a long historical perspective. Only well over a decade later would this way of analyzing the past be applied in European historiography. Even today, therefore, as specialization in historical research has progressed much further, the verve of Baron's work remains impressive.

Notes

- ¹ Compare Salo W. Baron, *The Jewish Community, Its History, and Structure to the American Revolution*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1942), 1:31-156; 3:6-33.
- ² Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vols. 1-2: *Ancient Times*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 1:493; 2:415. This is the extended second edition of the work first published in three volumes in 1937 as a collection of lectures given by Baron at Columbia University. The second edition discussed the period of ancient Israel very succinctly.

- ³ “For the Jews, as such, their religio-cultural heritage is the all more vital, because they have so long lacked the other basic elements of human group life—territory, state and language. Next to the blood ties of common descent, it is primarily this heritage that makes Jews Jewish; ... The unity of Jews and Judaism thus has a deep meaning, and the interrelation between the two, the interplay of the social and religious forces throughout the entire course of Jewish history, appears to be of controlling significance” (*Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 1:3-4). Baron devoted an entire chapter to these relationships and other related problems: “Jewish Society and Religion” (1:3-31).
- ⁴ Baron uses the term “the Maccabees” to refer to the representatives of the family ruling Judea after 164 BCE. In contemporary academic literature, this name is only used to refer to the first generation of the Hasmonean family, which brought the uprising stirred up in 164 BCE to a victorious end (Mattathias, Judah, Jonathan, Simon). The term “Hasmoneans,” meanwhile, extends to all the others who ruled after Simon.
- ⁵ “To most of them it undoubtedly appeared at first as but an internal conflict between the Palestinian Hellenizers and conservatives—which it indeed was in its initial phases—and their private sympathies may well have been predominantly on the side of the protagonists of Hellenistic culture” (*Social and Religious History*, 1:217).
- ⁶ This opinion is not entirely justified. The extensive historical work of Jason of Cyrene, which described in detail Judah Maccabee’s battle with the forces of Antiochus IV (compare 2 Macc 2:19-23), did not enjoy great popularity among contemporary readers (compare 2 Macc 2:23-24), owing to both its size and its hardly gripping narrative. More popular was its abridged version (*epitome*), compiled by an anonymous author, today known as the second book of Maccabees. This is proven by the fact that, in 124 BCE, priests from Judea (2 Macc. 1:1-10) sent this shortened and edited version of Jason’s work as an enclosure to their letter addressed to the Jewish community in Alexandria. However, it is unclear what of the original ideology of Jason of Cyrene’s work remained in the second book of Maccabees. There is no doubt that the editorial interventions of the epitomist, and his convictions (compare 2 Macc 2:25-31) certainly determine the ideological tenor of the book. Despite the huge amount of literature on the ideology of the second book of Maccabees, the opinions they espouse can be reduced to two main streams. Many authors claim that the focus of attention of the second book of Maccabees is found in the Jerusalem Temple (compare Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* [Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981]), while their few adversaries argue that, like the first book of Maccabees, its ideological standpoint is that of the Hasmonean view (compare Sylvia Honigman, *Tales of High*

Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochus IV [Oakland: University of California Press, 2014]).

- ⁷ Compare Edward Dąbrowa, “Demetrius III in Judea,” *Electrum* 18 (2010): 175-81. The main source of internal tensions in Judea was the conflict of the king with the Pharisees. In his account of the expedition of Demetrius III to Judea, Josephus does not mention the Pharisees’ efforts to encourage the Syrian ruler to intervene in Judea. However, the author of the *Peshar Nahum* (4Q169, 3-4 I, 1-2), found among manuscripts at Qumran, leaves no doubt as to their close cooperation in the struggle against the king of Judea. See James H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History: Chaos or Consensus?* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Jerusalem: William B. Eerdmans / Yad Ben-Zvi, 2002), 112-15; Hanan Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Jerusalem: William B. Eerdmans / Yad Ben-Zvi, 2008), 117-31; Edward Dąbrowa, “The Hasmoneans in the Light of the Qumran Scrolls,” in Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov, and Matthias Weigold, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Text, Languages, and Cultures*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:501-10, esp. 507-8; and Kenneth Atkinson, “Historical References and Allusions to Foreigners in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Seleucids, Ptolemies, Nabateans, Itureans, and Romans in the Qumran Corpus,” *The Qumran Chronicle* 21 (2013): 1-33, esp. 16-18.
- ⁸ Alexander Jannaeus was not the first ruler of Judea to employ mercenaries. The first to enlist them in his service was John Hyrcanus, shortly after Antiochus VII Sidetes ended his siege of Jerusalem and before departing for Parthia alongside the king of Syria (Jos. BJ 1.61; 7. 393; AJ 13. 249). The motives for this decision are unclear. Another to make use of mercenaries, to a greater degree still than her predecessors, was Salome Alexandra; compare Edward Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans and Their State: A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010), 159-64.
- ⁹ See 1 Macc 14:41-45; Dąbrowa, *Hasmoneans*, 109, 112-13, 115-16, 135.
- ¹⁰ “The Judean aristocracy, the party dominating the country from Jerusalem, looked with contempt on the masses, a large part of which had been converted to Judaism but a short while before” (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:224).
- ¹¹ The problem of forced Judaization carried out during the rule of John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus, with its form and objectives, is often discussed by scholars. Without doubt, it did not result from any particular religious stance of these rulers. From the beginning of the struggle with Antiochus IV, the Hasmoneans used it not so much as a form of repression as a tool of religious and cultural unification of their state and foundation of their rule of the conquered territories; compare Steven Weizman, “Forced Circumcision and the Shifting Role of Gentiles

in Hasmonean Ideology,” *Harvard Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (1999): 37-59; Zeev Safrai, “The Gentile Cities of Judea: Between the Hasmonean Occupation and the Roman Liberation,” in Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld, eds., *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zecharia Kallai* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 63-90; Israel Shatzman, “Jews and Gentiles from Judas Maccabaeus to John Hyrcanus according to Contemporary Jewish Sources,” in Shaye J.D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz, eds., *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism: Louis H. Feldman Jubilee Volume* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 237-70; Edward Dąbrowa, “Religion and Politics under the Hasmoneans,” in Robert Rollinger and Brigitte Truschnegg, eds., *Alterum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2006), 113-21; and Edward Dąbrowa, “The Hasmoneans and the Religious Homogeneity of Their State,” *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 8 (2010): 7-14.

- ¹² Most scholars attribute responsibility for instigating the conflict with the Pharisees to John Hyrcanus on the basis of Josephus (AJ 13, 288-296; cf. BJ 1, 67); see also Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition—Critical Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 215-30; Dąbrowa, *Hasmoneans*, 78-80; Eyal Regev, *The Hasmoneans: Ideology, Archaeology, Identity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 155-60. Yet some are also proponents of the tradition maintained in the Talmud (bQidd. 66a) that links the beginning of the conflict with Alexander Jannaeus. The credibility of this view is supported by the arguments cited by Mark J. Geller, “Alexander Jannaeus and the Pharisee Rift,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30, no. 2 (1979): 202-11.
- ¹³ “[F]rom the days of the Maccabean revolt, religious and nationalist conflicts came to overshadow all other matters of national and international policy” (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:228). See also below note 22.
- ¹⁴ This unequivocal assertion demands mitigation. Despite invoking biblical tradition and the customs of their ancestors, the Hasmoneans succumbed to the process of Hellenization. Hellenistic models are present above all in their political ideology and style of exercising power; compare Regev, *Hasmoneans*, 18-25, 124-28.
- ¹⁵ “To all intents and purposes the Maccabean revolt was the first ‘war of religion’ in history” (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:233).
- ¹⁶ Baron devoted more space and attention to the problem of the ideological and theological differences dividing the two groups in the second volume (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 2:35-46).
- ¹⁷ “Hyrcanus, seeking territorial and political aggrandizement, had to become a Sadducee, although he is reported to have been, in his youth, an active adherent of Pharisaism” (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:235). See above note. In fact, this change was a more a political than a religious one and was caused by a dispute with

the Pharisees over Hyrcanus's uniting of secular and religious power. At its basis lay the question of the purity of his origin, raised by the Pharisees, as mentioned above.

- ¹⁸ “The early Maccabeans seem to have adopted the lamp as an outward symbol of their newly proclaimed festival of Hannukkah. ... In consonance with the popular victory and the ensuing democratic basis of their regime, the Maccabeans apparently made the illumination obligatory upon every household” (Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:235). We have no basis for confirming the correctness of this claim.
- ¹⁹ The discoveries of new texts that took place in subsequent years contributed to a number of changes in this opinion; compare Charlesworth, *Pesharim*. The publication of further documents from Qumran made it clear that at least some of them originated in a local religious community of an individual social and theological nature, whose characteristics diverged from the stream of Judaism based at the Jerusalem Temple. However, many of the texts discovered in the caves around Qumran are theologically clearly different from the community's doctrinal documents. Scholars have suggested several arguments to explain these differences. One of these suggests that some of the texts found at Qumran could have come from the library of the Jerusalem Temple. They were hidden in the caves at the Dead Sea at the time of the revolt against Rome. Regardless of how the author of specific texts was, these manuscripts are a testament to the sheer number of original theological conceptions existing in Judaism at the time in which the community was present at Qumran.
- ²⁰ “In this struggle between the followers of the *moreh sedeq* ... and the entrenched power of ha-kohen ha-rasha', however, the social disequilibrium in the country in the late Maccabean and Herodian age comes clearly to fore” (*Social and Religious History*, 2:53); “The description of the Wicked Priest who had begun to rule ‘in the name of truth’ but who was spoiled by power and, forgetting the divine commandments, began to squander on women the money squeezed out from his people (on Hab. 2:6) might fit particularly well Aristobulos II. But it could also apply to almost any other Maccabean high priest or, less directly, to any high priest officiating in the Herodian era” (2:54). Compare Charlesworth, *Pesharim*, 28-40.
- ²¹ The theological nature of the documents from Qumran, concealment of the identities of historical figures behind hard-to-decipher cryptonyms, and the lack of references to the present day have meant that scholars have spent a long time disputing their time of origin. Today, with the content of all the documents found at the Dead Sea known, it is assumed on the basis of the historical allusions contained in them that at least some of the doctrinal texts of the Qumran community date to the second and first centuries BCE; see Michael O. Wise, “Dating the Teacher of Righteousness and the *floruit* of His Movement,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 1 (2003): 53-87; Charlesworth, *Pesharim*; Eshel, “Dead Sea”; Atkinson, “Historical

References.” Based on a paleographical analysis of the writing on these documents, we can date them to the period from the third to the first century BCE.

- ²² This is the conclusion reached based on the latest studies on the history of the Seleucid state under the rule of Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV. Analyzing the sources, scholars have pointed out that, during these rules, the royal administration took steps to increase fiscal and administrative control over the temples, leading to a significant restriction of their autonomy and weakening in the power of priests. Such actions are attested for Iran, Babylonia, Syria, and Palestine, so they must also have affected the Jerusalem Temple; compare Philippe Clancier and Jean Monerie, “Les sanctuaires babyloniens à l’époque hellénistique. Évolution d’un relais de pouvoir,” *Topoi* 19, no. 1 (2014): 181-237; Dov Gera, “The Seleucid Road towards the Religious Persecutions of the Jews,” in Marie-Françoise Baslez, Olivier Munnich, eds., *La Mémoire des persécutions. Autour des livres des Maccabées* (Paris and Louvain: Peeters, 2014), 21-57; Gilles Gorre and Sylvie Honigman, “La politique d’Antiochos IV à Jerusalem à la lumière des relations entre rois et temples aux époques perse et hellénistique (Babylonie, Judée et Égypte),” in Christophe Feyel and Laetitia Graslin-Thomé, eds., *Le projet politique d’Antiochos IV* (Nancy: Association pour la Diffusion de la Recherche sur l’Antiquité, 2014), 301-38; Laurienne Martinez-Sève, “Les sanctuaires autochtones dans le monde iranien d’époque hellénistique,” *Topoi* 19, no. 1 (2014): 239-77; Maurice Sartre, “Histoire et mémoire(s) des Maccabées,” in Baslez and Munnich, eds., *La Mémoire des persécutions*, 1-20; Honigman, *Tales*. As far as we know, in no case did they bring any direct intervention in worship, and this is why the Maccabee Revolt should be regarded as a reaction to this policy. Its initial aim was to defend the threatened privileges of the Jerusalem Temple, not to fight for restoration of the religious rights denied to inhabitants by Antiochus IV. This interpretation of the sources is the key to a correct interpretation of the famous passage from 1 Macc (1:41-53) that mentions Antiochus’s decree ordering the implementation of a common religious system for the whole Seleucid state. According to both Sylvie Honigman, “The Religious Persecution as a Narrative Elaboration of a Military Suppression,” in Baslez and Munnich, eds., *La Mémoire des persécutions*, 59-76; and to Sartre, “Histoire et mémoire(s),” 15-18, religious persecutions in Judea were the result of the uprising instigated by Jason at a time when Antiochus was in Egypt. For an outline of the major views and hypotheses concerning the causes of the Maccabee Revolt, see Honigman, *Tales*, 11-32.