

Roman Intervention in a Seleucid Siege of Jerusalem?

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IN THE ANNALS of the decline of the Seleucid dynasty, the reign of Antiochus VII Sidetes (139–129 B.C.) is seen as a period of partial, if abortive, revival. Bevan wrote of “one more man capable of rule and of great action, one more luminous figure, whom the house which had borne the empire of Asia had to show the world before it went out into darkness.”¹ In Jewish history, Sidetes’ contemporary John Hyrcanus (135/4–104) marks the political high point of Maccabean power, and in Emil Schürer’s view he “created a Jewish state such as had not existed since the dispersal of the ten tribes, and perhaps not since the partition of the kingdom after the death of Solomon.”² It is not my purpose to assess these judgements, but simply to suggest that, in a strange and dramatic episode, when these two luminaries came into collision, it was neither the one nor the other, but the Roman senate, far removed and operating through diplomacy alone, which controlled the situation.

In 135–4, the fourth year of his reign and the first year of John Hyrcanus, the third Maccabee to rule in Judaea,³ the Seleucid Antiochus VII Sidetes invaded Palestine. He was attempting to revive the fortunes of his declining dynasty, and specifically to avenge an earlier defeat at the hands of John’s predecessor Simon the Hasmonean and restore the country to its former status as a Seleucid dependency. Simon had been murdered by his son-in-law at a drunken banquet and was succeeded as ruler and high priest by John, Simon’s third son.

Antiochus had at first made peaceful overtures to John Hyrcanus.

¹ E. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London 1902) 236.

² E. SCHÜRER, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ I*, rev. G. Vermes and F. Millar (Edinburgh 1973: hereafter ‘Schürer’) 215.

³ The text of Josephus also puts the events in the 162nd Olympiad, 132–28 B.C. His two datings might just be reconciled if the siege be supposed to have dragged on for two years or more; but in any case Porphyry’s year 3 of Olympiad 162 (Eus. *Chron.* I 255 Schoene) cannot be saved, and so some sort of error must exist in the tradition. Josephus’ first dating makes better historical sense. For a clear and complete discussion see Schürer 202–03 n.5.

canus, then changed his policy. After devastating the country, he besieged Hyrcanus in Jerusalem, and the Jewish king soon surrendered. Josephus in his narrative history of the period gives a detailed account of the siege and of the conduct of Antiochus, which he strikingly praises (*AJ* 13.236–46). When the attack from the north was making little headway, but at the same time the Jewish provisions were beginning to run out and Hyrcanus had had to expel the useless part of the population, leaving them to roam desperately between the walls and the Greek army, a seven-day truce for the feast of Tabernacles was requested and granted. Antiochus himself acted in strong contrast, Josephus points out, to the notorious Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who had flagrantly desecrated the temple and founded his own cult there. Sidetes contributed sacrifices which were handed over at the temple gates to the priests; and so men called him ‘Eusebes’, Pious. When Hyrcanus, impressed by the behaviour of Antiochus, sent a message pleading for the restoration of Jewish autonomy, the Seleucid for his part ignored the advice of those who urged him to liquidate the Jews, and promptly proposed terms, limiting himself to imposing tribute for some cities, taking hostages, and pulling down some part of the walls of Jerusalem. The Jews would not accept a garrison, owing to their dislike of outsiders, and were spared one.

Sidetes’ rather sudden withdrawal and the respect he showed for the temple are the central features of this account. When we stop to consider the sequence of events, it emerges as somewhat puzzling. Contributions to the sacrifices at subject temples are characteristic acts of Hellenistic monarchs. But what could have brought Antiochus to send a sacrifice to an enemy temple before the cessation of hostilities? The timing makes the action an unusual one, and raises questions about the Seleucid king’s motives in showing respect for a hostile god. A contribution would be intelligible as a gesture with which to mark a peace treaty; but Josephus does not treat the truce as intended to be a first step towards peace, rather saying that it was Antiochus’ piety which first persuaded Hyrcanus that he *could* make peace with him.

The explanation of piety has other drawbacks. Some years earlier, Josephus himself in his *Jewish War* had written a different account; in a brief paragraph on this incident he said that Hyrcanus, having rifled the tomb of David, *bribed* Sidetes to end the siege (*BJ* 1.61); here Josephus was offering the traditional ancient explanation of an unexpected political move. The rifling of the tomb is in fact not ignored in *Antiquities* 13; it is mentioned a little after

our passage; but there Josephus has, of course, to ascribe to it a different purpose, asserting that the money was used to pay mercenaries (13.249). Finally, we should not forget that Josephus mentions our incident also apropos of David's burial (*AJ* 7.393), where he tells the same bribery story as in the *War*:

Ἵρκανος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς πολιορκούμενος ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς ἐπικληθέντος, υἱοῦ δὲ Δημητρίου, βουλόμενος χρήματ' αὐτῷ δοῦναι ὑπὲρ τοῦ λύσαι τὴν πολιορκίαν καὶ τὴν στρατιὰν ἀπαγαγεῖν, καὶ ἀλλαχόθεν οὐκ εὐπορῶν, ἀνοίξας ἓνα οἶκον τῶν ἐν τῷ Δαυίδου μνήματι καὶ βαστάσας τρισχίλια τάλαντα μέρος ἔδωκεν Ἀντιόχῳ καὶ διέλυσεν οὕτω τὴν πολιορκίαν.

This passage is a digression inserted by the historian into the biblical narrative, and so it is evident that this is the version that he himself remembered and believed at the time of writing. Two points emerge. First, there was a sudden and mysterious end to the war, which required explanation. And second, the early Josephus knew nothing of the theme of the pious Antiochus, and not only when he wrote the *War* (*ca* A.D. 75) but also in the early stages of the composition of the *Antiquities* (any time between 75 and 93/4) he believed that bribery had been the principal factor. New information obtained during the composition of *AJ* 13 must have led him to think differently; at that stage, Greek historiography, rather than Jewish oral tradition, will have been responsible for the change.

On grounds of probability, too, the version of the incident found at *AJ* 13 is not likely to be Jewish propaganda. Patriotic Jewish sentiment, in contrast to the later and cosmopolitan Josephus, could hardly regard with very great favour a man who had had the temerity to lay siege to Jerusalem. What is more, there are signs that he was not so regarded. Apart from the notion that it was bribery that made him withdraw, there are the accusations of greed and corruption (*πλεονεξία, φανλότης, παρανομία*, 13.225–26) levelled at him by Josephus in connection with his reneging on his agreement with Simon, John Hyrcanus' predecessor, and the same implication in the *I Maccabees* version of the incident (15.25ff).

Thus, Josephus' assessment of Antiochus' character apropos of the siege is an unexpected one. And we do, in fact, have solid evidence that its source was a Greek historian. For a narrative which contains features unmistakably related to Josephus' account is to be found among the fragments of Diodorus (34.1). The presenta-

tion of the incident there is very similar to Josephus'. The advice offered to Antiochus, that he should exterminate the Jews after their capitulation, appears in Diodorus in an extended form. Diodorus' source for this part of his history is generally thought to be Posidonius,⁴ and, in spite of recent reserve, this is quite possible;⁵ but it does not matter to our argument what the name of the Greek historian was. It must simply be noted that Josephus' immediate source was probably one of the two Greek works which he names in connection with the period of John Hyrcanus' high priesthood—the *Universal History* of Nicolaus of Damascus (13.249) and the *Histories* of Strabo (13.286).

It is true that as they stand the two narratives, of Josephus and Diodorus, have very different effects—at any rate if we are to judge by the excerpted passage of Diodorus that survives; and it is reasonable to do so, for it is not likely that Photius, its preserver, significantly compressed it. For Photius was interested in what Diodorus had to say about Jews, and sought out relevant passages (Cod. 244, 379a–381a). In any case it would make no material difference to our argument if, in what follows, Photius' name were substituted for that of Diodorus. Most of the space in the passage cited by Photius is taken up with the speech of the malevolent advisers, which recalls and endorses Antiochus Epiphanes' treatment of the Jews. It includes an outrageous account of an ass-cult which Epiphanes had found in the temple, as well as a description of the Jewish religion; and it approves his sacrifice of a sow on the altar. The rest is told in a few words: Sidetes dismissed the charges against the Jews, exacted the tribute due, and dismantled the walls

⁴ It is widely believed that Posidonius is the source of Diodorus from book 32 onwards. See the literature listed in H. Strasburger, "Posidonius on Problems of the Roman Empire," *JRS* 55 (1965) 42 n.28. G. Busolt, *Jahrb. für cl. Phil.* 36 (1890) 321ff, is fundamental. See also Jacoby *ad FGrHist* 87 (p.157). The Diodorus fragments are omitted from the recent edition of Posidonius by L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd (Cambridge 1972), on the grounds that Posidonius is nowhere there mentioned by name.

⁵ One of the main arguments against the attribution is that the attitude to the Jews of the Diodorus passage is so different from that found in Strabo 16.2.34–40, which is also often attributed to Posidonius. But this falls away with the demonstration (see *infra*) that in Diodorus we have only half the original presentation. Josephus' ascription of anti-Jewish statements to Posidonius at *Ap.* 2.79ff is no guide, for apparently all that Josephus knew of what Posidonius had said came through Apion's invocation of him as an ally: there are no signs elsewhere in Josephus of independent knowledge of Posidonius. Furthermore, Josephus' wording, in the surviving Latin translation of this section, does not even allow us to judge precisely with what statements Posidonius is supposed to be associated. Cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* I (Jerusalem 1974) 141–44.

of Jerusalem. In spite of Sidetes' rejection of the advice, the negative picture of Judaism is not really cancelled. Sidetes' sacrifice is not even mentioned.

In Josephus the story looks different. The contrast with Antiochus Epiphanes is brought in earlier, and is used to cast additional credit on Sidetes, not to indicate a possible course of action for him: while Epiphanes had bespattered everything with pig-fat, Sidetes had sent bulls with gilded horns to sacrifice. Then we get Hyrcanus' submission, and Antiochus' rejection of his anti-Jewish advisers, on the grounds that he believed the Jews to be truly pious. Here the negative judgement of the advisers becomes insignificant.

The comparison suggests that some material from the source has been omitted by Diodorus; and, particularly, that Sidetes' sacrifice in the temple, which does not appear in Diodorus, was to be found in the source. The structure of the Diodorus passage, as it stands, is defective. It has a very abrupt end—the long anti-Jewish exposition of his advisers being simply ignored by the king. The latter's reasons for acting seem to be missing; there is only the very weak explanation in terms of the king's virtue—*ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς μεγαλόψυχος ὦν καὶ τὸ ἦθος ἡμέρος*—which might well be contributed by Diodorus himself. If this is so, Diodorus was more antagonistic to Judaism than his source: the latter will have presented the case *for* the Jews as well as that *against* them, probably in two parallel speeches, and perhaps even showing the former as the stronger. As for the sacrifice of the golden-horned bulls, we find the incident which Josephus describes mentioned in a work ascribed to Plutarch (*Apophth. Reg., Mor.* 184F) in words that are almost identical:

Τῶν δὲ Ἰουδαίων, πολιορκούντος αὐτοῦ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, πρὸς τὴν μεγίστην ἑορτὴν αἰτησαμένων ἑπτὰ ἡμερῶν ἀνοχάς, οὐ μόνον ἔδωκε ταύτας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύρους χρυσόκερως παρασκευασάμενος καὶ θυμιαμάτων καὶ ἀρωμάτων πλῆθος ἄχρι τῶν πυλῶν ἐπόμπευσε· καὶ παραδούς τοῖς ἐκείνων ἱερεῦσι τὴν θυσίαν αὐτὸς ἐπανήλθεν εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον. οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι θαυμάσαντες εὐθὺς ἑαυτοὺς μετὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν ἐνεχείρισαν.

It is improbable that Plutarch (or his imitator) quarried this story from Josephus,⁶ and much more likely that he learnt it from the common source of Josephus and Diodorus (or a derivative of that

⁶ Cf. Stern (*supra* n.5) 564. There is no evidence that Josephus was noticed by contemporary pagan Greek authors.

source). Thus we can with a fair degree of confidence clear the story of the suspicion of being an invention of Josephus, or an importation from some Jewish apologist.

We can now easily disentangle the personal contribution of Josephus. In what he writes, Sidetes' sacrifice is, as we have seen, linked by a contrast made by the author with that of Epiphanes, to the discredit of the latter; while in Diodorus, Epiphanes figures as a glorious exemplar adduced by the advisers. It is this latter arrangement which more likely occurred in the source, since Diodorus had less need to think of a change here than Josephus. Josephus, then, by making the simple transfer, has effected a great modification in the tone of the whole narrative, in exactly the opposite direction to that of Diodorus—excluding most of the anti-Jewish argument, to which the source gave a hearing. It was probably Josephus, too, who added the name of the Jewish festival, Tabernacles, for which Antiochus is said to have granted the truce and sent the sacrifices. This was the seven-day festival which fell at a suitable time of year, the end of the campaigning season.

A feature found only in Josephus is the ascription to Antiochus VII of the title 'Eusebes', and it is not a title associated with that monarch elsewhere.⁷ But that is no puzzle. Birkman⁸ explored the mechanics of the attribution of such titles, showing that ancient authors combined indiscriminately many different kinds of names for kings—official appellations, popular epithets, cultic titles, and so forth—and also that different names were used concurrently in different places. It occasions little surprise, therefore, that the title 'Eusebes' does not recur. It should not then be regarded as Josephus' invention, nor as having necessarily come to him through Jewish tradition.

The title given the king, and the story as a whole, shed credit

⁷ Except again by Josephus, at *AJ* 7.393 (the passage about David's burial), and also at *Ap.* 2.82, according to an excellent emendation by Niese of *MSS' dius* to *pius*.

⁸ *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938) 236ff; E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique* II (Nancy 1967) 346–47, has no reason to say that Josephus ascribes this title to Antiochus "faussement." In a partially erased inscription from Acre (Y. H. Landau, *IEJ* 11 [1961] 118–26) which records a dedication to Zeus in the name of an Antiochus who is most likely the VIIth, the king is styled 'Soter', 'Euergetes', and 'Kallinikos'. 'Euergetes' is attested also on coins; 'Soter' would support the testimony of Josephus (*AJ* 13.222 and 271) to that title; and 'Kallinikos' is given nowhere else. T. Fischer, however, *Untersuchungen zum Partherkrieg Antiochus' VII* (Diss. Tübingen 1970) 102–09, argues that the Cleopatra also mentioned must be invoked as the monarch's mother, and that therefore Antiochus VII cannot be in question. It is interesting that Antiochus X, grandson of VII, was regularly styled 'Eusebes'.

upon Antiochus. This element of justification is prominent, and we naturally ask why. An answer readily suggests itself, for we can formulate a reasonably strong hypothesis about the realities underlying the incident, and hence see that the tradition found in Diodorus, Josephus, and pseudo-Plutarch serves to conceal something.

The end of the war was unexpected. Hyrcanus' provisions had not yet run out, and he was apparently making successful sallies against the enemy shortly before the feast of Tabernacles (13.239–40). He would have required some inducement to yield when he did. The terms of the treaty (245ff) may be regarded as having offered him this, for his power remained effectively unimpaired and his kingdom was not actually diminished. Tribute was owed to Sidetes only on those cities, such as the coastal town of Joppa, which had been outside Judaea but had been conquered by John's predecessor. Yet, according to the message which the latter had once received from Sidetes (*I Macc.* 15.28), not only Joppa and Gazara and other towns in the same category but even the citadel in Jerusalem were claimed by the Seleucids. And indeed we may wonder why Antiochus had gone on to besiege Jerusalem at all, if he was only interested in the disputed border towns; he could have withdrawn after retaking them. So he must have wished to inflict a total defeat on John. He achieved considerably less than this. Josephus reports the curious fact that owing to their *ἀμιξία*, their dislike of foreigners, the Jews refused to accept a garrison in Jerusalem, and Antiochus acceded to their request. Again, his alleged respect for the Jewish way of life is used as the explanation of a concession. The Jews offered hostages, including Hyrcanus' brother, and an indemnity of 500 talents instead. *τὴν στεφάνην τῆς πόλεως* was, Josephus says, to be pulled down: this strange expression may well have meant not the whole walls but the battlements alone, and in that case the gesture would have been a symbolic one.⁹

It is therefore surprising that, with the notable exception of Schürer in the early editions of his work, the prevailing opinion has been that the terms were very harsh.¹⁰ Subsequent events speak

⁹ See Schürer 204 n.6 on the interpretation of this expression. But the precise statement of Josephus is in my view to be preferred to the vaguer Diodorus and Porphyry. And *cf.* *BJ* 4.117: part of the walls of Giscala removed *νόμῳ καταλήψεως*.

¹⁰ See for example G. de Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani*² III (Firenze 1960) 204–06; M. S. Ginsburg, *Rome et la Judée* (Paris 1928) 65ff; J. Klausner, in *World History of the Jewish People* VII, ed. A. Schalit (1972) 212–13. Though Schürer in his early editions stressed

against this view; for Hyrcanus retained sufficient resources to allow him to mount major expeditions into Syria and Samaria as soon as he heard of the death of Antiochus in 129 B.C. (13.254). And his personally accompanying Antiochus on the elaborate and luxurious Parthian expedition (where the Seleucid met his death) is the gesture of an equal and an ally, not of a humble subject. On this campaign Antiochus expressed his regard for Hyrcanus by honouring his request for a two day halt in Assyria at the Lycus (Zabatus) river, so that the Jewish contingent might not have to march during a festival (or the Pentecost and the Sabbath preceding it, according to Josephus' interpretation).¹¹ This, then, is the position in which the treaty must have left him.

Some factor must have intervened to break the impasse, and induce Antiochus to sacrifice, and then offer generous terms. Klausner suggested that he had become anxious to go off to Parthia. But we know of no recent change in the situation there; Parthian power had been expanding, under Mithridates I, for over a quarter of a century; and Antiochus' brother Demetrius had been a Parthian prisoner since 140. The hypothesis that the crucial change in the situation was a statement from Rome is here explored.

One of the more remarkable of the public documents preserved by Josephus is a decree of the Roman senate ascribed by him to the time of John Hyrcanus and inserted in his narrative just after the death of Antiochus VII, but not dated to any precise moment in John's period of rule (13.259ff). Clearly, Josephus, or the historian who was his source, took it from a collection of documents, and did not himself know where it fitted into the historical picture; though he seems (without basis) to describe it as a confirmation treaty made at John's accession. The decree, after the formal preamble, contains first some of the requests transmitted to the senate by three named Jewish envoys; these center on the barring of Antiochus' troops from Jewish territory and the return of places captured in war. Then there is the senate's brief resolution; the rest of the senate's response, which is to defer further discussion, follows as indirect statement, and Josephus' excerpt concludes with

their mildness (see the English translation of the third edition, I.1 276ff), later he appears to have somewhat moderated this opinion. No clear comment either way is made by A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire des Séleucides* (Paris 1913) 375.

¹¹ *AJ* 13.249–53; the other main sources on this campaign are Diod. 34.15–17; Just. 38.10; App. *Syr.* 359; Porphyry, *FGrHist* 260F32.19. The campaign is fully discussed by Fischer (*supra* n.8). Its chronology is uncertain, but it seems to have begun in 131 B.C.; Fischer tentatively proposes two campaigns.

the senate's arrangements for the envoys' return home (to be assisted by a further *senatus consultum*). The short resolution is the most important part of the document; it simply asserts the renewal of the Roman alliance and friendship with the Jewish people—presumably the one that had first been made in 161 B.C. under Judas Maccabaeus, and repeated under Simon.¹² It is most reasonable to identify as Antiochus VII the Antiochus mentioned in the Jewish request which precedes the decree. This request includes a demand for the reversal of a situation in which Antiochus possessed cities—Gazara, Joppa, Pegae—taken from the Jews in war, and we know from Josephus' narrative that they had been at issue, and had probably fallen, in the war conducted by Sidetes which ended with the siege of Jerusalem (while in his earlier war against Simon they had not fallen). The other possible identification, adopted by a small number of scholars, is with the troubled son of our Antiochus, Antiochus IX Cyzicenus. But the (albeit few) known facts of his reign include no campaign of the relevant kind, only an unsuccessful attack on Samaria; and the only reason for assigning this document to him is the existence, in another context in Josephus, of an even more problematic document which seems to refer to a similar situation, and to Antiochus IX.¹³

If we prefer Sidetes, the negotiations must be put either during or after his second war in Palestine, and it has not been found easy to decide between the two. The name of the presiding praetor,

¹² And perhaps already under Judas' successor Jonathan. These famous treaties have been repeatedly discussed, especially in the late nineteenth century, and are now generally regarded as largely genuine. For the texts see *I Macc.* 8 and *AJ* 12.414–19; *I Macc.* 12.1–4 and .16 and *AJ* 13.163–70; *I Macc.* 14.24, 15.15–24 and *AJ* 14.145–48. On the problems they raise, and for bibliography, see first Schürer 171–72, 184, and 195–96; more fully, D. Timpe, “Der römische Vertrag mit den Juden von 161 v. Chr.,” *Chiron* 4 (1974) 133–52. The *senatus consultum* at *AJ* 14.145–48, referred by Josephus to Hyrcanus II, which has itself spawned a vast literature, has sometimes, alongside our document, been put under Hyrcanus I; an L. Valerius presided over its signing, and an L. Valerius was praetor *ca* 134. But the argument that we have here some of the same ambassadors, the same gift of a shield, and substantially the same treaty as is associated with Simon in *I Macc.* is telling; see now A. Giovannini and M. Müller, “Die Beziehungen zwischen Rom und den Juden im 2 Jh. v. Chr.,” *MusHelv* 28 (1971) 160–66.

¹³ See Schürer's excellent discussion of this point, 205–06 n.7. For the case in favour of Antiochus IX, of whom very little is known but who fought over the remains of the Seleucid kingdom with his half-brother Antiochus VIII Grypus between *ca* 116 and 95, see Giovannini and Müller (*supra* n.12) 156–60, whose interpretation is a modification of that of Th. Reinach, *REJ* 38 (1899) 161–71; but it is not explicitly argued from the historical circumstances. The decree that suggests, by its similar contents, the later date for our decree, is the one from the Pergamene archive discussed *infra*.

Fannius son of Marcus, does not offer a date, since neither the identification of the Fannius in question nor the careers of the Fannii of the period are secure.¹⁴ The post-war period involves, as Schürer saw, the problem that according to the peace treaty the disputed cities remained in Jewish hands (albeit subject to tribute); it is thus hard to see how the Jews could request their return. If Antiochus had broken the treaty and failed to return the cities, John would hardly have accompanied him to Parthia. Various dates shortly following Antiochus' death have, more recently and somewhat arbitrarily, been proposed; but the document implies that aggression against the Jews is still taking place, and the disastrous familial wars of the Seleucids at the time make this impossible. It is scarcely credible even that the king's arrangements should have remained in force. Only one serious argument has been offered against fitting the negotiations into the war period; it alone has persuaded most scholars, although it rests upon one of the Jewish proposals whose text is uncertain. I suggest a reading of that text which will eliminate the difficulty as well as clarify the diplomatic situation.

The crucial words are: *καὶ ὅπως τὰ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐκεῖνον ψηφισθέντα ὑπὸ Ἀντιόχου παρὰ τὸ τῆς συγκλήτου δόγμα ἄκυρα γένηται*. These words, it has been argued, imply that the war is already over.¹⁵ And it is true that if we are to make *any* sense of the clause as it stands it must be taken as referring to the king's arrangements, as decreed in a final settlement.

The difficulty would be reduced by adopting the alternative MS reading (of F, V, and L) *ψηλαφηθέντα*, which would mean 'handled', 'touched', and so 'attempted'.¹⁶ For the 'attempts' referred to, unlike the decrees, could have occurred well before the

¹⁴ See Schürer 205–06 n.7. On the problem, which Cicero already could not resolve, whether there were one or two C. Fannii in the Gracchan period, see now G. V. Sumner, *The Orators in Cicero's Brutus* (*Phoenix* Suppl. 11 [1973]) 53–55 and 173; Broughton, *MRR* I 509, thinks in terms of only one C. Fannius, and is anxious to downdate his praetorship in order to bring it closer to his consulship. Fischer (*supra* n.8) 67 follows the same line of reasoning.

¹⁵ See for example Fischer (*supra* n.8) 72–73 (with the additional argument that only after the mighty Antiochus' death would a reversal of his settlement be conceivable); M. Stern, "The Relations between Judaea and Rome during the Reign of John Hyrcanus," *Zion* 26 (1961) 9 (in Hebrew), who also selects a date in the years following Antiochus' death; Bevan (*supra* n.1) 303.

¹⁶ This reading is preferred in Schürer 205 n.7, presumably as the *lectio difficilior*. Stern (*supra* n.15) would seem to be mistaken in maintaining that which word appears in the text makes no difference to the chronological implications of the whole.

war was finished. This way out, however, is barred. The association of the passive participle with the adjective *ἄκυρα*, which has the precise technical meaning ‘invalid’, ‘unratified’, and is applicable to decrees, laws, and the like, guarantees the correctness of *ψηφισθέντα*. Things which have been merely attempted could hardly become *ἄκυρα*.

But is the sense of the whole sentence with the reading *ψηφισθέντα* really satisfactory? It is not usual for a monarch victorious in war to make his dispensations by way of proposing decrees or casting votes. Where would this be done, and what would constitute invalidation of it? Nor can the language be metaphorical, given the constitutional precision of the context. For the ordinances of a monarch there were a number of words available in Greek as equivalents to the Latin *decreta*. *διάγραμμα* and *ἐντολή* are used in Hellenistic royal documents. *διάταγμα* came into use during the Roman principate. *δόγμα* is used of the emperor’s census decree in *Luke* 2.1. A cognate of *ψηφίζω* is found once in apparent reference to an individual ruler’s decision, and that is in the edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander, where it may refer to the emperor’s policies; but a quite different interpretation is preferred by Dittenberger. In Sophocles, *Antigone* 60, *ψῆφος* is simply a metaphor for the verdict of the tyrant, who is envisaged as casting a solitary and decisive vote against Antigone. For the verb *ψηφίζω* there seem to be no comparable instances. The Jewish requests in our document are clearly part of the official senatorial record; it is indisputable that accurate Greek versions of *senatus consulta* were produced at Rome; and even if some changes have been made in texts transmitted by historians, we should hardly expect *ψηφισθέντα* to have been altered.¹⁷ Dissatisfaction with this word on the part of a learned scribe was perhaps what gave rise, through a correction,

¹⁷ See C. Bradford Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934); H. J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions* (American Studies in Papyrology 13 [Toronto 1974]) 126–31. For Tiberius Julius Alexander, OGIS 669.1; the prefect claims that his fiscal leniency *συμφέρειν . . . καὶ ταῖς κυριακαῖς ψήφοις*; the emperor’s wishes may be meant, but Dittenberger comments on the inappropriateness of *συμφέρειν* (instead of *συμφέρεσθαι*) if that interpretation be adopted, and suggests the sense ‘rationes’ for *ψήφοις*. On Greek *senatus consulta* see P. Viereck, *Sermo Graecus* (Göttingen 1888); R. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (Baltimore 1969) 13ff. H. W. Moehring, in “The *Acta pro Judaeis* in the “Antiquities” of Flavius Josephus etc.,” in *Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty III* (Leiden 1975) 142, shows that AJ 13.260–64 is a formally correct SC, lacking only the mark of approval. His further argument, however, for the spuriousness of this and other documents, on the basis of the latter omission alone, does not command support.

to the more *recherché* *ψηλαφηθέντα* in some mss. Naber's emendation *ληλατηθέντα*, 'plundered', fulfills the same function, but it gives poor sense, and it too fails to satisfy the requirement of suiting the predicate.

The remedy is simpler. The *ψηφισθέντα* may be not Seleucid but Roman, passed in behalf of Antiochus. For I would argue that *ὑπό* is a corruption of *ὑπέρ*, and the passage should read: *καὶ ὅπως τὰ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐκεῖνον ψηφισθέντα ὑπὲρ Ἀντιόχου παρὰ τὸ τῆς συγκλήτου δόγμα ἄκυρα γένηται*. The word *ὑπό* is suspect because this unexpected form appears, with good ms attestation, in place of the more usual *ὑπ'*. Josephus is an author who is generally to be found observing elision in prepositions, even when reproducing documents. In fact, later in the same sentence all the texts (save only the Peirescian excerpts) read *ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου* (263). It is true that some mss (AMVW) offer the same in our passage; but not the Palatine codex, which Niese valued most highly and which led him to retain an unusual *ὑπό* in his text. We may follow what must have been his line of reasoning, and suppose that a scribal correction produced *ὑπ'* in those mss that have it. The original *ὑπό* then requires explanation, and it could have arisen, at some stage in the transmission either of the document or of the text of Josephus, through an error for *ὑπέρ*; such an error would be easy to make, especially with *ὑπ' Ἀντιόχου* appearing two lines below.

This emendation gives a better reading than any previously offered. And we can now fit the document into an intelligible historical situation. Decrees in Antiochus' favor will recently have been voted in the senate, and the Jews wanted them annulled. Perhaps Antiochus' magnificent gifts of 134 B.C. to Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia¹⁸ were not unconnected with them. And there are two significant earlier occurrences: in the late 140s the pretender Tryphon had sent a golden victory statue to the senate in an attempt to persuade them to recognize him as king, but they inscribed it instead with the name of the murdered boy Antiochus VI; while it is probable that, shortly afterwards, when Scipio Aemilianus and his colleagues went on the famous embassy that settled various matters in the East, and renewed Rome's ties with many kings and peoples, they endorsed the claim of Antiochus VII to the Seleucid throne.¹⁹ Antiochus, then, will have seen that his best chance of

¹⁸ Livy, *Per.* 57. According to Cicero (*Deiot.* 19.7), gifts from Attalus III arrived at that time; but there is no need to suspect a doublet.

¹⁹ On Antiochus VI see Diod. 33.28a. On the embassy, and the sources for it, see A. E.

rebuilding his kingdom was under Roman patronage. The senatorial decrees in his favor must have come during the early stages of the war, before the siege of Jerusalem. But now Simon, Apollonius, and Diodorus, the emissaries from Judaea, were arguing for the reversal of the pro-Antiochus decrees and maintaining that they were contrary to a previous senatorial decree. That was presumably the one issued in favor of Simon, which they had just described Antiochus as contravening by holding Joppa, Gazara, and Pegae. On this later occasion, the Jews elicited a new expression from the senate of the Romans' friendship for and alliance with the Jewish people; it need not even have taken the form of a proper SC, although the Greek *ἔδοξεν* suggests that it probably did. Their other proposals were shelved for subsequent discussion (13.265, where *τῶν πραγμάτων*, the better reading, will be the affairs discussed in the Jewish request), and the text does not indicate what happened to the resolutions in support of Antiochus.

These appeals to Rome have far more point during than after the war.²⁰ *τὰ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐκεῖνον ψηφισθέντα ὑπὲρ Ἀντιόχου* are all those pro-Antiochus statements made since the beginning of the war or in connection with it. The senate did not respond to all the Jewish requests, but as on previous occasions confined itself to the vague treaty of friendship, together with a promise of future discussion, an assertion that there should be no further injustice, and an offer to pay for the envoys' return journey. The Jews hoped that Roman representatives would go out and supervise the return of the disputed cities, and these were probably never sent (13.263). Yet Rome's statement was obviously to be taken seriously. A re-assertion of her alliance with the Jews was an adequate condemnation of Antiochus' attack on them. No more had to be said; and it is clear why she did not want to commit herself to a full accep-

Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (Oxford 1967) 127 (esp. n.3) and 138–39; and also Astin's "Diodorus and the Date of the Embassy to the East of Scipio Aemilianus," *CP* 54 (1959) 221–27. For arguments supporting the view that Scipio's embassy backed Antiochus VII, see Th. Liebmann-Frankfort, *La frontière orientale dans la politique extérieure de la République romaine* (Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, Mémoires 59.5 [1969]) 121–22.

²⁰ That Jerusalem is not explicitly mentioned in the document is not grounds for ascribing it to a phase of the war before the city was under siege, as does E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden 1976) 10. We should not expect the Jews to have made a naked request that Rome arrange for the siege to be lifted; the senatorial record gives a list of some of their formal demands, and these are such as are relevant to a future settlement of the area. The envoys would, however, first have apprised the senate of the current situation, in a 'briefing' which would not have entered the record.

tance of the Jewish requests, for this would have meant taking the Jewish view on a future settlement, and being obliged to send out representatives to evaluate the damage done by Antiochus and to supervise the return of the disputed cities. Moreover, the timing of her response may have worked out felicitously. It presumably reached Jerusalem, both through the Jewish envoys and by other channels of information, at a time when the siege seemed to be dragging on. In terms of Roman interests, the intervention made good sense: to have given Antiochus Rome's blessing for an operation on the periphery of Jewish territory was one thing; to allow the status quo to be substantially altered by a renewed Seleucid grip on Jerusalem was quite another. And for Rome to weaken her support of the Seleucid king, and to hint disapproval of his action by expressing friendship for his enemy, was enough to make him step back. In the generation after a Roman legation's instructions had made Antiochus IV withdraw from Egypt, there is no difficulty in understanding how Rome could impose her will on the East by words alone.²¹ To judge from Livy's account (44.19), this episode is indeed a close parallel, for Antiochus is said to have been besieging Alexandria and within sight of success when told to withdraw by Popilius Laenas and his colleagues. Certainly, through the mid-second century, Rome's authority is unquestionable, however erratic the exercise of it was and however indeterminate her general objectives.²²

There is in fact evidence of her issuing positive orders in the very area with which we are concerned, in another *senatus consultum* from Josephus, embedded in a decree of Pergamum.²³ This orders that no injury be done to the Jews, who are Roman allies, that

²¹ See E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae* (Oxford 1958), esp. 111; Stern (*supra* n.15) 1ff. Cf. the comment in Justin 35.3.9, *facile tunc Romanis de alieno largientibus*. The notion that Rome may be responsible for the moderation of Antiochus VII is hinted at by Will (*supra* n.8); it is dismissed by Bouché-Leclercq (*supra* n.10) 376–77 for the inadequate reasons that she was too busy at the time and that the document may not be genuine. Schürer offers in passing the suggestion of Roman intervention.

²² All three features have now been admirably illustrated for the case of Anatolia by A. N. Sherwin-White, "Roman Involvement in Anatolia, 167–88 B.C.," *JRS* 67 (1977) 62–75. I believe that E. S. Gruen, "Rome and the Seleucids in the Aftermath of Pydna," *Chiron* 6 (1976) 73–95, claims too great a degree of inertia in Rome's eastern policy.

²³ *AJ* 14.247ff. Cf. the decree in favour of Simon, which had been sent to Demetrius, Attalus, Ariarathes, Arsaces, Sampsame, Sparta, Delos, Myndus, Sicyon, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyn, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene, as well as to Simon himself (*I Macc.* 15.22–24). The existence of this document (whatever its application) in the Pergamene archive, proves that on occasion copies really were distributed.

Antiochus restore all places taken from them, that they may tax goods exported from Jewish harbours (except by Ptolemy king of the Alexandrians, also a Roman ally), and that the garrison be expelled from Joppa, in accordance with the Jews' request. Instructions about the safe return of the Jewish envoys are also included. In fact, our chronological case could be buttressed by placing this decree in the historical context under discussion, as Schürer, following Mendelssohn, proposed; for it could be the follow-up of the decree discussed above, a firm order from Rome to Antiochus. One of the five Jewish envoys has the same name as one of the three in the first decree, Apollonius son of Alexander. As Schürer also saw, however, the dating of this decree is even more difficult, and will remain speculative. The text has 'Antiochus son of Antiochus' (14.249), which is correct for Antiochus IX but not Antiochus VII (who was son of Demetrius), and emendation of the name is a last resort. We should not therefore rely on it for our argument, and there is nothing to be gained by discussing it further here.²⁴

There is in any case enough to suggest an explanation of the abrupt termination of hostilities and the character of the settlement. And we now understand the genesis of the account in our sources. The king would wish at all costs to expunge his humiliation from the record. Weakness was explained as piety and magnanimity; and for this to be possible, the Jews had to be held up as worthy recipients. Antiochus Sidetes may well have been characterized by *εὐσέβεια*; but the historians protest too much. Hyrcanus' account, by contrast, would probably have emphasized the Roman alliance with Judaea, which Antiochus' altogether omitted (the treaty reached Josephus from elsewhere, as we have seen). Still, Hyrcanus was no doubt able to approve of the sacrifice with which Antiochus marked his withdrawal, and this approval will have led to a rapprochement, and to John's going on the Parthian expedition.

Thus, to save face, Antiochus eulogized the Jews and Judaism, and the king's propaganda entered the Greek historical tradition.²⁵ But for late Hellenistic writers and their readers, the showing of respect to Jews would occasion some surprise and require explana-

²⁴ On the historical issues involved in dating this decree within the period of activity of Antiochus IX, see Fischer (*supra* n.8) 73–82.

²⁵ Cf. E. Bickermann, "Ritualmord und Eselskult," *MonGeschWissJud* 71 (1927) 171–87 and 255–64, who emphasizes that it was an important virtue for a Hellenistic king to show respect for foreign cults.

tion: justification was provided in the discussion between the king and his advisers; the debate in Diodorus' source would probably have been, in effect, a consideration of the merits and demerits of the Jewish way of life. Such a debate had no place in Josephus, where the merits naturally dominate. Yet in other respects it is Josephus who has preserved more of the original account, and has enabled us to detect its *Tendenz* (which suited his own purposes well enough), as well as the reasons which dictated it.

This reconstruction of the events, together with the emended text of one of the Jewish proposals in the senatorial decree of friendship, yields several points of significance. The Roman decree has been shown to fit best the situation during the actual siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus VII: that is not a new interpretation, but the case for it is now strengthened. It has emerged that the Romans were committed to Antiochus as well as to the Jews, and had expressed (no doubt ambiguous) support for him some time before the re-assertion of the alliance with the Jews. Rome, in other words, had been hedging her bets, and her by now traditional protection of the Jews did not impede her freedom of action in other directions. Most striking, it now seems that the intervention of Rome in connection with the war, while, as usual, only verbal, was in this case totally effective—perhaps precisely because of her involvement with both parties.²⁶ For Antiochus' *volte-face*—his behaviour to the Jews was nothing less—is best explained as a response to outside intervention. Rome will have ended the siege, and persuaded this far from ineffectual monarch to put aside his ambitions of restoring Jerusalem to full Seleucid control, an obvious step towards reviving the erstwhile power of his kingdom. It may be that the strength manifested by the Jewish state in recent years had encouraged Rome in this policy of securing its preservation as a counterweight to the Seleucids. Fortunately for Rome, she would be spared an extension of her complex double involvement, by the death in 129 of Antiochus VII, and with it the end of the possibility of Seleucid resurgence.

If this reconstruction be correct, it must be conceded that Rome's alliances with the Jews were not merely symbolic gestures. Not all

²⁶ Comparable situations are not hard to find. When Rome, through Popilius Laenas, told Antiochus IV to stop fighting Ptolemy Physcon, she had alliances with both sides: Livy 44.19.6–14, and see still J. W. Swain, "Antiochus Epiphanes and Egypt," *CP* 39 (1944) 88–92, on the problems involved. In 156 B.C., when Prusias of Bithynia made war on Attalus II of Pergamum, Rome was associated with both sides and tried to stop the war; see Sherwin-White (*supra* n.22) 62–63.

of them were vacuous,²⁷ for in this case she demonstrably had both the will and the ability to act, without herself becoming involved in any military activity. The reassertion of the alliance was a form of response which had by now become traditional and which had a clear meaning for the parties concerned. Thus the senate, in that obscure phase of its dealings with the East, the 130s B.C., has here been seen actively wielding the authority which it undoubtedly possessed.

In conclusion, it is worth summarizing the intellectual repercussions of the incident, of which we have detected at least traces. Jerusalem came temporarily into prominence as the sphere within which Rome and the Seleucids jockeyed for position. The question of the character of the Jews and their religion became for a brief moment important. Antiochus VII, even had he wished it, could not have treated Jerusalem as Antiochus IV had done (and as, Diodorus maintained, his own advisers urged him to do), because his power was limited; and it was necessary for him to find justifications for diverging from that precedent. The expressions of unusually high respect for the Jews, which were a consequence, entered the pagan literary tradition—later to be virtually expunged by the man who produced the one-sided version we find in Diodorus; and then, again, to be picked up enthusiastically by Josephus. It was the Romans who were responsible for what happened; but it may also be said that it was the existence of Judaea as a nearly independent and growing power, there for the Romans to play off against the Seleucids, that brought about favourable reports of her and her people. So that expression of public esteem for the Jewish cult was not the outcome of religious sentiment, or learned investigation, but simply of the contemporary state of international relations.²⁸

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²⁷ As maintained, at least in the case of the earliest alliance, most recently by Gruen (*supra* n.22) 86–87.

²⁸ This paper has been improved at various times by suggestions from Professor F. Millar.