

Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba

Groups, Normativity, and Rituals

Edited by

Benedikt Eckhardt



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THE CLAIM OF MACCABEAN LEADERSHIP AND THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

Arie van der Kooij

1. *Introduction*

The Maccabean family had obtained power by an act of usurpation, since the office of high priest had been hereditary in another family, the priestly family of the Oniads. In this contribution I will focus on the way the claim of the Maccabean leadership was justified and on the way the “ancestral” books, i.e. the Scriptures,¹ were used in order to support this claim. Since 1 Maccabees was written in order to legitimize the leadership claim of the Maccabean rulership, I will of course pay attention to this book. In doing so I will distinguish between the honorary decree to be found in 1 Macc 14, on the one hand, and on the book as a whole, on the other. In addition, I will deal with other writings of the time which seem to attest a pro-Maccabean stance—Wisdom of Ben Sira (G) and the Septuagint of Ezekiel (LXX Ezekiel).

2. *The Honorary Decree*

The Maccabean, or Hasmonean, family had taken over the rule of the nation, and the Syrian kings had conferred upon them the high priestly office (see 1 Maccabees 10), but as we are told in ch. 14, at a certain moment in history, the rulership of Simon, member of the Maccabean family, was recognized officially by the Jewish people themselves. 1 Maccabees 14 contains the text of an official document, the honorary decree (vv. 27–49),² and since this document is of an earlier date than

¹ For the designation “ancestral”, conveying the notion of authority, see the Prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira, l. 8–10.

² On the decree see e.g. Jan Willem van Henten, “The Honorary Decree for Simon the Maccabee (1 Macc 14:25–49) in Its Hellenistic Context”, in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling; Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 13; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 116–45, and *idem*, “Royal Ideology: 1 and 2 Maccabees and Egypt”, in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (ed. Tessa Rajak, Sarah Pearce, James Aitken, and Jennifer Dines;

the book of 1 Maccabees as a whole, it seems appropriate to deal with the decree on its own.³

According to 14:27–28, a “large assembly” met in the temple, on 18 Elul of the Seleucid year 172, which equals September 140 B.C.E. It was decreed by this assembly that Simon should be “their leader” and “high priest” (v. 35; cf. v. 41), or as is stated in vv. 46–47:

It was the unanimous decision of the people that Simon should officiate in the ways here laid down. Simon accepted, and consented to be high priest, general, and ethnarch of the Jews and the priests, and to exercise authority over all of them.

The terminology regarding his position varies a bit: beside the office of “high priest” he is designated as ἡγούμενος, leader, on the one hand (vv. 35, 41), and ἐθνάρχης, on the other (v. 47; cf. 15:1–2). In addition, the term στρατηγός, general, commander, is used in v. 42 as well as in v. 47. Moreover, the order of words is not the same in all instances—“leader” being the first designation in vv. 35 and 41, and “high priest” in v. 47 (cf. 15:1–2).⁴ Whatever the reason of this variety may be, it is clear that Simon was proclaimed both as high priest and as leader, including the role of chief commander of the army.⁵ All this not only pertained to his government, but as is indicated in v. 25 also to that of his descendants.

As is explained in the decree (vv. 42–44), Simon was considered to be in charge of the “temple” as well as of the “people” (v. 44) and the “country” (vv. 42–43), or, as it is put in v. 47, as the one who would officiate as leader of “the Jews” and “the priests”, exercising authority

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 265–82, esp. 266–68; Gregg Gardner, “Jewish Leadership and Hellenistic Civic Benefaction in the Second Century B.C.E.”, *JBL* 126 (2007): 327–43, esp. 332–37.

³ There is reason to believe that 1 Maccabees 14 has not cited the decree verbatim; see Van Henten, “The Honorary Decree”, 119; Gardner, “Jewish Leadership”, 332 note.

⁴ In my view, the order of v. 47 is the original one, as it is in line with evidence from the time of John Hyrcanus (cf. the Athenian decree of 105 B.C.E.: “high priest and ethnarch of the Jews” [Josephus, *A.J.* 14.151]; and compare also his coins which refer to him as being the high priest). On the Athenian decree, see Gardner, “Jewish Leadership”, 337–39.

⁵ The office of Leader seems to include the role of military leader; cf. the use of *hegoumenos* elsewhere in 1 Maccabees (e.g. 3:55; 9:30; 13:8) which clearly implies military leadership. The term *ethnarches* is only found in 15:1–2, but compare Josephus, *A.J.* 14.151 (Hyrcanus, “high priest and ethnarch of the Jews” in the honorary decree of the Athenians, dated to 105 B.C.E.).

over “all of them”. The document here reflects the constitution of the Jewish nation which consisted of two parts, the priests, on the one hand, and the “people”, i.e., the lay-people, on the other. This division is also attested elsewhere: for example, 1 Macc 7:33 speaks of “some of the priests of the temple”, and “some of the elders of the people”.

This element is also an important feature of the designation of the “great assembly” in v. 28:

the great assembly of priests, and people,
rulers of the nation, and elders of the land.

Here too, “priests” and “people” are part of the picture, but what about the “rulers of the nation” and the “elders of the land”? Since the phrase “elders of the country” seems to be an explicitation of the “people” (cf. the phrase “elders of the people” in 7:33), the expression “rulers of the nation” is likely to be taken as specification of the “priests”.⁶

Although it may seem that the “great assembly” was made up by “priests” and “people”, there is reason to believe that this phrase envisages a wider group of people. As stated in the same verse (v. 28), the decision taken at the meeting of this assembly, presumably held in the temple, was made known⁷ “to us”. Who are the “us”? The “us” is best understood in the light of v. 25, where it is said that the δῆμος asked themselves “how they could show their gratitude to Simon and his sons”.⁸ The “us” then has to do, in one way or another, with the *demos*. Our passage is easily explained, in my view, in the light of the political organization which was typical of Hellenistic cities of the time.⁹ Seen from this perspective, the “great assembly” is the gathering of the *demos*, whereas the “priests” (“rulers of the nation”), and “people” (“elders of the country”) were the ones who were presiding over the

⁶ Priests as rulers of the Jewish nation is also attested by other sources; see e.g., Hecataeus of Abdera (ca 300 B.C.E.) in Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1978), 1:28.

⁷ For the verb γνωρίζω compare 1 Esdras 6:11. The verb is in the singular, and this is presumably due to the idea of one particular person who made the announcement on behalf of a particular body.

⁸ Cf. van Henten, “The Honorary Decree”, 120. Interestingly, as we know from Polybius (6.14.4), in the Roman constitution of his time it was the *demos* which, among other things, “had the right to confer honours”.

⁹ The situation as attested in 1 Maccabees 14 seems to differ from Hellenistic cities of the time, because the text does not speak of an assembly of the city (Jerusalem) only but also includes the country (cf. “the elders of the land”).

great assembly (cf. the *boule* in cities like Athens and Alexandria).¹⁰ So they took the decision and made this decision known to the “us”, i.e., to the *demos*, or more precisely, to “the rest of the *demos*” (for this expression, see 1 Macc 12:6 and 14:20). And as is indicated in v. 40 and in vv. 46–47, the latter confirmed the decision.¹¹

Thus, Simon was elected high priest and leader by the national assembly. According to the decree, the honours were bestowed on him and his family because of the benefactions done to the people, in particular the glorious deeds of Simon listed in vv. 32–40. As has been pointed out by scholars, this procedure “matches a pattern of benefactions common in Hellenistic honorary decrees”.¹² So the Hasmonean leadership was justified by reference to the virtues and merits of members of the Maccabean family, and of Simon in particular. Notably, Scripture does not seem to play any role in the decree, but this may simply be due to the nature of the document.¹³

Finally, it is also to be observed that Simon was designated high priest and leader, but not “king”.¹⁴ This is not to deny, however, that the terminology used comes quite close to this idea, in particular the term “ethnarch”, as it evokes the idea of a leader who is “head of state and king in all but name”.¹⁵

3. *Sirach*

There is evidence, however, that Scripture did play a role in justifying the claim of Maccabean leadership. The Wisdom of Ben Sira in its Greek version is one of the writings of the time which is of interest in this regard. Before dealing with the translation made by the grandson, it is appropriate first to dwell on the Hebrew version produced by the grandfather.

¹⁰ As to Alexandria, see P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 1:93–95.

¹¹ Cf. van Henten, “The Honorary Decree”, 122.

¹² Van Henten, “Royal Ideology”, 266. See also Gardner, “Jewish Leadership”, 334–37.

¹³ Compare Gardner, “Jewish Leadership”, 334.

¹⁴ Hence, the absence of a crown (diadem); cf. Gardner, “Jewish Leadership”, 336.

¹⁵ E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian. A Study in Political Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 4. Cf. the way the function of “ethnarch” is described by Josephus in *A.J.* 14.117.

The Hebrew book of Ben Sira has two parts, A. the section of chs. 1–43 containing wisdom, and B. the chs. 44–50, called the “Praise of the Fathers” (*laus patrum*). Unlike the first part, the Praise of the Fathers is heavily based on the Jewish Scriptures. This section presents a rather detailed depiction of leading figures of ancient Israel. It is true that, as Di Lella puts it, the author “attempts to show how Israel’s ancestors have something significant to say to believers of his day”, but, as has been pointed out by scholars, since ch. 50, containing the praises of the high priest Simon, is to be seen as the climax of the whole section, the Praise of the Fathers ultimately serves the legitimation of the high priesthood of the author’s time, the office then being held by members of the Oniad family.¹⁶ Important passages are to be found in 45:24–25 and 50:24.

To begin with the latter passage, 50:24 reads,

May his (God) kindness toward Simon be lasting;
may he fulfill for him the covenant with Phinehas
so that it may be not abrogated for him or for his descendants,
as (long as) the days of heaven.

The view expressed here makes it clear that the legitimacy of the high priest Simon and his descendants was based on the covenant with Phinehas. This verse is closely related to the other passage, 45:24–25, which is about the covenant God made with Phinehas for an eternal high-priesthood:

Therefore on him (i.e., Phinehas) too God conferred an ordinance, a
covenant of peace,
to provide for the sanctuary,
so that to him and to his descendants
should belong the high priesthood for ever,
and also his covenant with David, the son of Jesse, from the tribe of
Judah;
the heritage of fire before His glory,
the heritage of Aaron for all his descendants.

¹⁶ See e.g., Otto Mulder, *Simon the High Priest in Sirach 50. An Exegetical Study of the Significance of Simon the High Priest as Climax to the Praise of the Fathers in Ben Sira’s Concept of the History of Israel* (JSJSup 78; Leiden: Brill, 2003); Jeremy Corley, “A Numerical Structure in Sirach 44:1–50:24”, *CBQ* 69 (2007): 43–63. See also Pancratius C. Beentjes, “Happy the One who Meditates on Wisdom” (*Sir.* 14,20). *Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 123–33.

This passage presupposes the story about Phinehas in Num 25 (esp. vv. 12–13), but it strikes one that it also contains a reference to the covenant with David. Some believe that the putting together of the two covenants is merely meant as drawing a parallel between them.¹⁷ Others have argued, and convincingly so, that, since the syntax of the H text is to be regarded as running on from verse 24 into verse 25—which explains why there is no verb in the first clause of v. 25—the passage as a whole testifies to the view that the covenant of David was considered to be associated with the covenant with Phinehas: God conferred to him the covenant of peace... *and also* his covenant with David.¹⁸ For the scholar Jesus Ben Sira and his milieu, “the office of high priesthood embodied in his time all the offices of Israel’s history, including the royal office established in the Davidic covenant”, as Pomykala puts it.¹⁹ The high priest is presented as someone who is also having royal status and glory.

But what about the Greek version of the Wisdom of Ben Sira, produced by the author’s grandson in Egypt, about 115 B.C.E.?²⁰ In his version, the passage under discussion reads in translation as follows,

Therefore a covenant of peace was made with him
that he should exercise authority over the sanctuary and his people
so that he and his posterity should have
the dignity of priesthood for ever,
as well as the covenant with David

¹⁷ E.g. Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n.Chr.* (AGJU 1; second ed. Leiden: Brill, 1976), 155; Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 514; Benjamin G. Wright III, “Eschatology without a Messiah in the Wisdom of Ben Sira”, in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. Michael A. Knibb; BETL 195; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 313–23, at 318.

¹⁸ See Pancratius C. Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach* (Nieuwegein: Diss. Katholieke Theologische Hogeschool, Amsterdam, 1981), 188–90. Beentjes regards the clause about the covenant of David as the continuation of v. 24b (“so that to him...”), but it is more likely to consider this clause as a continuation of the main clause of v. 24a (“God conferred on him...”). This reading does justice to the word “also” as well as to the use of “his” in the phrase “his covenant with David”. See furthermore James D. Martin, “Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective”, *OtSt* 24 (1986): 107–23, at 115–16.

¹⁹ Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism. Its History and Significance for Messianism* (SBLEJL7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 142. Cf. Michael Pietsch, ‘Dieser ist der Spross Davids...’ *Studien zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Nathanverheißung im alttestamentlichen, zwischentestamentlichen und neutestamentlichen Schrifttum* (WMANT 100; Neukirchen-Vluy: Neukirchener, 2003), 168–69.

²⁰ For this date, see Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom*, 9.

the son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah;
 the heritage of the king is an individual one only;
 the heritage of Aaron is also for all his descendants.

This version reflects a concept slightly different from the one attested in the Hebrew version because in this case the phrase about the covenant with David makes good sense if taken as a continuation of the preceding ἵνα-clause.²¹ So according to G the covenant with David is considered to be part of the covenant with Phinehas, and not as being added to it. The wording, “the dignity, splendour (μεγαλεῖον) of priesthood”, refers to the high priesthood, in line with the Hebrew of this verse.²² But there are also differences between this version and the Hebrew one, differences which, as has been observed by scholars, strongly suggest that the Greek version reflects the political reality of the time.²³

First, the addition “of his people” in v. 24 is of interest: “he (Phinehas) should be the chief of the sanctuary and *of his people*”. The Greek text is in line here with the description of the leadership of Simon, the Maccabean, as presented in the decree of 1 Maccabees 14. Both texts have in common a leadership of the priests (the temple) and of the “people” as well. Notably, the expression προστατεῖν ἁγίων καὶ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ in Sir 45:24 is very much the same as προσστατῆσαι πάντων in 1 Macc 14:47 (“all of them”, i.e., “priests” and “Jews”; see above).

Second, the Greek version has the clause “the heritage of the king is an individual only”, whereas the Hebrew text reads, “the heritage of fire before his glory”. Unlike the latter which is meant to give a characterization of the priestly task—to bring the burnt offerings before God—the former emphasizes the dynastic principle as typical of the Davidic covenant.²⁴ This element too fits the contents of the decree in 1 Maccabees 14.

Thirdly, it is to be noted that Sir 50:24 in Greek does not refer anymore to the covenant with Phinehas in relation to the high priest Simon, son of Onias, and his descendants, as is the case in the Hebrew text. It reads:

²¹ As to the accusative reading (διαθήκην; cf. Ziegler), see also the ἵνα-clause in v. 26, which presents a parallel case (an accusative form [τὴν δόξαν] constituting the second subject).

²² Compare the expression ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας (see e.g. Sir 50:1).

²³ See e.g. Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom*, 514.

²⁴ See also Pietsch, *Spross Davids*, 170.

May his kindness remain constantly with us
and may he save us in our days.

The fact that the grandson has eliminated any links between Phinehas and the high priestly family of the Oniads is easily explained as a reformulation of the text for the sake of the Hasmonean claims.²⁵

Thus, the Greek version of Sirach seems to reflect an ideology of Maccabean leadership that is in line with the decree of 1 Maccabees 14. Unlike the latter, however, the legitimation is based on specific elements from Scripture, namely, on the covenant with Phinehas and on the covenant with David. As the Greek version illustrates, the justification was arrived at by way of modifications of an earlier text (in Hebrew), which was intended to support the claim of the Oniad family. The fact that the clause about the covenant with David is best regarded as a continuation of the $\iota\nu\alpha$ -clause implies that the reference to this covenant is meant to highlight the notion of the dynastic principle as is explained in the next clause (“the heritage of the king is an individual one only”).

4. LXX Ezekiel

The Septuagint is marked by a great diversity as far as the style of translation is concerned. It does not display a unity as one would expect of a project aiming at the translation of the Scriptures as a whole, like in the case of translations such as of Aquila, Symmachus, or of Jerome. Hence, the books making up the LXX, at least in the time prior to the *kaige*-Theodotion recension, cannot be regarded as a “Bible translation project”. It therefore should be asked for which reason each book, or set of books (Pentateuch), might have been translated into Greek, and whether this was done in order to serve particular interests of the translator and his milieu. The legitimation of leadership (claims) was a major issue in Jewish circles in the Hellenistic period, and it is my working hypothesis that this topic was one of the main reasons why “biblical” books were translated into Greek.

²⁵ Cf. C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple. A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 82.

As an illustration of this thesis I will deal with LXX Ezekiel,²⁶ by discussing passages in chs. 21, 28, 34 and 37. LXX Ezek 21:25–27 (= MT Ezek 21:30–32) is the first one which is of interest to our topic. It reads thus:²⁷

25 And you profane, wicked leader of Israel
 whose day has come; in the time of injustice is (the) end.
 26 Thus says the Lord:
 You have taken off the tiara and put on the crown.
 It shall not be such.
 You have abased that which was high, and exalted that which was low.
 27 Injustice, injustice I will make it.
 It shall not be as such until he comes to whom it belongs
 and I will present it to him.

As to v. 25, the context is about the coming siege of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and it therefore stands to reason to think here of king Zedekiah, designated in Greek ἀφηγούμενος, “leader” (cf. MT, v. 30). According to MT, Zedekiah will be punished; he has to lay down, or he will be stripped of the signs of his royal authority, the turban and the crown: “thus says the Lord, Remove the turban, and take off the crown” (MT, v. 31).

Things are different in LXX, however. Zedekiah is called “profane” (βέβηλος, v. 25; MT לִלְוִי) because he is accused of having profaned the sacred order by taking off—with his “profane” hands—the tiara, the turban, from the head of a high priest, and by putting on the crown (στέφανος), on his own head presumably. According to the terminology of the time, the term στέφανος, conveying the notion of royal dignity, refers to the headdress of a high priest, as is clear from texts such as 1 Macc 10:20 and Sir 45:12. This act of Zedekiah is strongly condemned as “injustice” (v. 27).

The passage then continues, “It will not be as such, until he comes to whom it belongs, and I will present it to him”. Unlike MT (v. 32), which seems to carry the idea that the new ruler will be an ideal one since “justice” will be given to him, i.e., someone who will rule with justice,

²⁶ For the first commentary on this part of LXX, see John W. Olley, *Ezekiel. A Commentary based on Iezekiel in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2009).

²⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Ezekiel and the Profane Leader”, in *The Book of Ezekiel and its Influence* (ed. Henk Jan de Jonge and Johannes Tromp; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 43–52.

the Greek text is about a new leader of Israel to whom the insignia of the high priesthood will belong, the crown in particular, because God will present them to him. The underlying Hebrew (מִשְׁפָּט) has not been taken in the sense of “judgement” or “justice”, but as “right” (cf. Deut 21:17). As a result of this and other modifications, the Greek of Ezek 21:27b contains a prophecy that announces a new leader who also will be high priest. In his case it will be legitimate, and not a matter of injustice any more, to appoint such a leader.

From the perspective of the mode of reading prophecies at the time of the translator, it is plausible to assume that this passage was meant to legitimize the Maccabean rulership. The underlying idea seems to be that the house of David had ended with the wicked Zedekiah, and that the Maccabean leadership—the coming leader of v. 27b—was to be regarded as the legitimate new rulership of Israel, a rulership marked by the combination of being “leader” as well as “high priest”. Thus, LXX Ezekiel seems to represent a Scripture-based legitimation of a leadership that is in line with the type of leadership defined in the decree of 1 Maccabees 14.

Other oracular passages in LXX Ezekiel, which announce a new ruler, are to be found in chs. 34 and 37, and one wonders whether they might fit, and if so, might add to the picture presented above. Ezekiel 34:23–24 predicts that God will set up over Israel “another (so P967; the major MSS read “one”, in line with MT [“one”]) shepherd” who is called “my servant David”. He will feed the people, and he shall be “ruler” (ἄρχων; MT מֶלֶךְ). Ezekiel 37:22–25 contains a prophecy which is very similar. In both sections, the LXX offers the term *archon*, in 34:24 and 37:25 for Hebrew *nasi*, and in 37:22, 24 for Hebrew *melek*. In most cases in Ezekiel, Hebrew *melek* is translated by *basileus* (e.g., 1:2; 17:12, 16; 19:9; 21:19), except in two instances: 28:12 (about the king of Tyre) and the two verses in Ezek 37 just mentioned.²⁸ According to Duguid, the rendering *archon* in 28:12 and in 37:22, 24 may simply be due to harmonization, the former with 28:2 (MT *nagid*—LXX *archon*), and the latter with 34:24 and 37:25 (MT *nasi*).²⁹ This observation makes sense, but there may be more to it because the question arises why the translator chose to do so.³⁰

²⁸ In 43:7, 9 Hebrew *melek* (plur.) has been rendered as *hegoumenos*.

²⁹ Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (VTSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 23. For a survey of opinions, see Ashley S. Crane, *Israel's Restoration. A Textual-Comparative Exploration of Ezekiel 36–39* (VTSup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 123–24.

³⁰ Cf. Crane, *Israel's Restoration*, 124.

Unlike the kings of Babel and Egypt who are called “king”, the ruler of Tyre and the coming David share the designation *archon*. As to the former, it is important to note that in LXX Ezek 28:12–19 he is presented as someone who is also high priest because the jewels of his vestment are identical with those of the high priest as described in LXX Exod 28:17–20. As Lust has put it, the prince of Tyre is “to be identified with the prince-high priest in Jerusalem”.³¹ So the choice of *archon* in Ezek 28 may reflect the idea of a “ruler”, who is also high priest, just as in LXX Ezekiel 21.

But what about chs. 34 and 37? These chapters do not contain any reference to a priestly function, so it might be asked in which way the passages about the predicted “ruler”, who is also referred to as “David”, fit the ideology of ch. 21. Let us look to the relevant passages in more detail.

According to LXX Ezek 34:23–29, God will raise up “another” shepherd, and he, “my servant David”, will feed them (v. 23). He, “David”, will be “ruler” in the midst of the people (v. 24). The rest of the passage is marked by a strong interest in “peace” (vv. 25, 27, 29). God will make “a covenant of peace” “with *David*” (MT “with *them*”), and the evil beasts will be destroyed from the land. There will be rain, the trees of the plain will yield their fruit, and they will live upon their land in “hope of peace”, being delivered by God from the hand of those who enslaved them (v. 27). They shall no longer be for plunder for the nations, they shall live in “hope”, “and there shall be no one who terrifies them” (v. 28).

LXX Ezek 37:22–28: God will give them, “Joseph/Ephraim” and “Juda” (see vv. 16–19), into “one nation” in his land, and they will have “one ruler” (v. 22; MT “king”). God will rescue them from all their lawless acts and will cleanse them. And “my servant David” shall be “ruler in their midst” (MT “king over them”). They shall “walk by my ordinances and keep my judgments and perform them” (v. 24). And God will make “a covenant of peace” with them which is also referred

³¹ Johan Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint”, in *Congress Volume Salamanca 1983* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 36; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 174–91, at 190. In a recent contribution, Lust argues that the Greek text goes back to a Hebrew text that referred to the rejection of Israel’s leader in Jerusalem (cf. Bogaert); see Johan Lust, “Ezekiel’s Utopian Expectations”, in *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech and Eibert Tigchelaar; JSJSup 122; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 403–19, at 411–12. However, whatever the *Vorlage* may have been, the Greek text as we have it clearly is about the ruler of Tyre (28:12).

to as “an everlasting covenant”, and all this is related to the presence of the sanctuary of God in their midst (v. 26).

The picture of the new leader in both chapters is characterized by two elements, the designation “ruler” (*archon*) and the reference to “David”. As noted above, the term *archon* is used consistently in both chapters. The new ruler is associated with peace and prosperity as well as with liberty since the people will no longer be enslaved by the nations. He is the one ruler of one nation consisting of Juda and of Joseph. Under his rule, the people will walk by God’s ordinances and keep his judgments.

As to the other aspect, the use of the name “David”, it is to be noted that the new ruler will be a leader *like* David, a concept to be distinguished from a new ruler being a son of David. As argued above, in LXX Ezekiel 21 the new leader is seen as a successor to the kings of the house of David, representing at the same time a different model of leadership because the role of high priest is included. On the assumption that the “David” of chs. 34 and 37 is the same figure as the new leader of ch. 21, the designation “ruler”, and not “king”, can be seen as reflecting the type of leadership which is to be found in the decree of 1 Maccabees 14—“leader” (not “king”) and high priest—focusing on the first element, though. This is also in line with Sir 45:24–25 G, which, as pointed out above, presents an ideology according to which the Davidic element is part of the rulership of the high priest.

It is true that the choice of *archon* in chs. 34 and 37 is a literal rendering of *nasi*’ as is the case elsewhere in the book (chs. 1–39),³² but it is also true that the way the new ruler is presented in both chapters in LXX Ezekiel can be understood as serving propaganda purposes of the Maccabean house. This may answer the question of why the two instances of *melek* in ch. 37 have not been translated more literally.³³

³² The rendering of Hebrew *nasi*’ in chs. 40–48 is different. For the role of the leader in the temple cult in this section of the book in Greek, see Michael Konkel, “Das Ezechielbuch zwischen Hasmonäern und Zadokiden”, in *Juda und Jerusalem in der Seleukidenzeit. Herrschaft—Widerstand—Identität. Festschrift für Heinz-Josef Fabry* (ed. Ulrich Dahmen and Johannes Schnocks; BBB 159; Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2010), 59–78, esp. 64–65. (Differences of equivalency do of course touch on the disputed issue of the unity of LXX Ezekiel. For a recent and balanced statement on the matter, see Olley, *Ezekiel*, 15–16 [“There is some diversity within much similarity”, p. 16]).

³³ As to the Vorlage, I share the view of W. Zimmerli and M. Greenberg (for their view, see Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 121 [Greenberg] and 124 [Zimmerli]).

As predicted in ch. 34, the reign of the new leader will be marked by “peace”. Interestingly, according to the Greek version, God will make a covenant of peace “with David”, instead of “with them” (the people) according to MT (v. 25). As we have seen, the “covenant of peace” also occurs in Sirach 45 which in turn goes back to Numbers 25, referring to the covenant of God with Phinehas. A covenant of peace “with David”, however, is not attested in the Hebrew Bible, and one wonders what it might convey in LXX Ezek 34:25. In the light of Sir 45:24–25 (G) (compare also Mal 2:7), the phrase “covenant of peace” related to David fits the conclusion drawn above, evoking the idea of a “leader” who is also a high priest.³⁴ But LXX Ezek 34:25 also seems to mark a difference between Sir 45:24–25 (G), on the one hand, and LXX Ezekiel, on the other. Whereas the former testifies to a leadership that pertains primarily to the high priesthood, the emphasis in LXX Ezekiel is on a rulership like David, i.e., primarily a leader (and shepherd) of the people. This is in line with the promise of a peaceful life in the land, as depicted in 34:23–29.³⁵

Finally, if read as predictions that were considered by Jewish scholars as coming true in the time of the Maccabean leaders, one might think of the reign of Simon which is depicted as a time of peace in 1 Macc 14:4–15.³⁶ The difficulty, however, is that this passage is part of the propagandistic nature of the book as a whole dating to a later period of time (see below). Moreover, there is one particular motif in Ezekiel 34–39³⁷ which seems to fit well the reign of John Hyrcanus I (135–104), i.e., the prediction that the ruler will be the head of “one” Jewish nation which includes “Joseph” (ch. 37). For it was Hyrcanus

³⁴ Cf. Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Ezekiel and Hasmonaean Leadership”, in *Interpreting Translation. Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (ed. Florentino García Martínez and Marc Vervenne; BETL 192; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 437–46, at 445.

³⁵ LXX Ezek 37:24–26 may hint at the priestly side of the coin of the leadership of “David”: v. 24 is about David as “ruler in their midst” (MT “king over them”), whereas v. 26 speaks of “my sanctuary in their midst”.

³⁶ For this suggestion, see Konkel, “Ezechielbuch”, 69–70.

³⁷ The different chapter order in MT (37/38–39) and LXX/P967 (38–39/37) is a disputed matter. Opinions differ regarding the question of which order might be considered the primary one and how to evaluate the evidence on the level of content. For recent contributions to this issue, see e.g., Crane, *Israel's Restoration*, 216–20; Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel. A Commentary* (LHB/Old Testament Studies 482; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 205–206; Anja Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Ez 34–39* (BZAW 391; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 60–5; Konkel, “Ezechielbuch”.

who, ca 113 B.C.E., captured Shechem and Mount Gerizim and subdued the Samaritans.³⁸ Furthermore, the announcement of the destruction of Edom/Idumea in ch. 35 might well have been applied to the conquest of the Idumean territory by Hyrcanus.³⁹ All this points to a dating for LXX Ezekiel in the last decades of the second century B.C.E. In view of the notion of “David” as “ruler”, and not as “king”, the year 104 B.C.E. may be seen as the *terminus ad quem*.⁴⁰

5. 1 Maccabees

I now return to 1 Maccabees by raising the question of whether the ideology of leadership as found in the decree in ch. 14 is in line with other passages of the book. The book as a whole dates from a later period than the decree in ch. 14. Whereas the latter goes back to 140 B.C.E.,⁴¹ the former is to be dated about 100 B.C.E., i.e., in the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76).⁴² Hence, one may wonder whether the book reflects the same ideological stance as does the decree, both as to the type of leadership (in ch. 14: leader and high priest, or the other way around) and as to its argumentation (non-scriptural in ch. 14, due to the genre of the document).

³⁸ See Edward Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans and their State. A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions* (Electrum 16; Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010), 73 note 25.

³⁹ Olley is of the opinion that in no passage of LXX Ezekiel “David” is to be the deliverer (Olley, *Ezekiel*, 474; for a similar view, see Crane, *Israel’s Restoration*, 125). It is true that the leader like David is nowhere presented as a deliverer. However, the fact that, according to the prophetic discourse, God is the one who liberates the people, does not exclude the idea that a figure like David might be involved, the more so since the use of this name easily evokes this type of action.

⁴⁰ As far as its language is concerned, LXX Ezekiel 1–39 is dated by P. D. M. Turner between 150 and 50 B.C.E.; see P. D. M. Turner, *The Septuagint Version of Chapters I–XXXIX of the Book of Ezekiel. The Language, the Translation Technique and the Bearing on the Hebrew Text* (Diss. Oxford, 1996).

⁴¹ On the question of whether the text of the decree is cited verbatim in 1 Macc 14, see note 3.

⁴² The final part (16:23–24) presupposes the full reign of John Hyrcanus (135–104). Cf. e.g., Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees* (AB 41; New York: Doubleday, 1976), 62–72; Mathias Delcor, “The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Hellenistic period”, in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. II* (ed. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 409–503, at 459; Erich Zenger et al., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (fifth ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 319 (Helmut Engel).

The passage of the book, which is important to our subject matter, is to be found in 1 Maccabees 2, a chapter related in some respects to ch. 14.⁴³ It is here that the family is introduced who will save Israel from the big troubles—Mattathias and his sons belonging, as is said in v. 1, to the priestly family of Jojarib (“the sons of Jojarib”). The speech delivered by the *pater familias* at the end of his life is of particular interest to our topic (vv. 50–64).

Mattathias said to his sons:

Now, children, be zealous in the law, and give your lives for the covenant of our fathers. Remember the works of our fathers, which they did in their generations, and receive great glory and an everlasting name. (vv. 50–51)

In what follows examples of heroes are given—beginning with Abraham and ending with Daniel and his friends—who stood firm, showed zeal for the law (Phinehas, and Elijah), and were rescued or rewarded in one way or another.

61 Therefore, keep in mind from generation to generation that all who hope in him will not weaken...

64 Children, be brave, and be strong in the law, for by it you will be glorified.

Thus, this speech is meant as a strong appeal to his sons to be zealous for the law as did Abraham and others before them. The forefathers are presented here as examples to be followed, in a way similar to the Praise of the Fathers in Sirach. Notably, just as with Ben Sira, the references to the forefathers by Mattathias also contain evidence pertaining to the issue of legitimation. As has been observed by scholars, this certainly applies to verse 54:

Phinees our father, by becoming zealous with zeal,
received a covenant of everlasting priesthood (διαθήκην ἰερωσύνης αἰωνίας).

⁴³ On the relationship between ch. 2 and ch. 14, see Jan Willem van Henten, “Das jüdische Selbstverständnis in den ältesten Martyrien”, in *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie* (ed. Jan Willem van Henten; StPB 38; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 127–61, at 151–53. On the legitimizing role of ch. 2, see Othmar Keel, “1 Makk 2—Rechtfertigung, Programm und Denkmal für die Erhebung der Hasmonäer. Eine Skizze”, in *Hellenismus und Judentum. Vier Studien zu Daniel 7 und zur Religionsnot unter Antiochos IV.* (ed. Othmar Keel and Urs Staub; OBO 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 123–33.

Phinehas is mentioned earlier in ch. 2. In v. 26 we are told that “Mattathias showed his fervent zeal for the law, as Phinehas had done when he killed Zimri son of Salu”. Phinehas is not only their father, father of the priestly family of Jojarib, but Mattathias who was acting in Modin, in disobedience to the royal decree by killing the Jew who was going to sacrifice on the pagan altar, is depicted here as doing the same thing as did Phinehas, who is considered to be “the glorious ancestor and exemplar” of the Maccabees or Hasmoneans.⁴⁴ Taking the two references (v. 26 and v. 54) together, the underlying idea is that Mattathias and his descendants have “the right to be (high) priests”⁴⁵ because acting as Phinehas had done, he is supposed to have been rewarded in the same way as was his prototype.

However, in my view, there is another passage in the speech of Mattathias that is of great interest as far as legitimation is concerned, namely, verse 57:

David, by his mercy, inherited the throne of kingship forever (θρόνον βασιλείας εἰς αἰῶνας).

In a detailed discussion of this verse, Pomykala aptly described the question of how to interpret this verse as follows: “In relative isolation, 2:57 could easily be understood to express a continuing hope for the emergence of a davidic royal figure on the throne of Israel... Yet, within its context in 1 Maccabees this interpretation of 2:57 is difficult to maintain, since it is widely recognized by scholars that the purpose of 1 Maccabees was to legitimate the Hasmonean dynasty”.⁴⁶ To solve the dilemma he asserts that the phrase εἰς αἰῶνας should not be taken to mean “forever”, but rather as referring to “the lengthy period of time in which davidic kings ruled Israel and Judah” (p. 155).⁴⁷ Furthermore, since the verse is part of a listing of heroes meant as examples and models of piety leading to a reward, he is of the opinion that “the davidic dynasty tradition served the author of 1 Maccabees not as a promise awaiting fulfillment, but as a biblical prototype to be imitated” (p. 158).

⁴⁴ Hayward, *The Jewish Temple*, 82.

⁴⁵ J. Sievers, *The Hasmoneans and their Supporters. From Mattathias to the Death of John Hyrcanus I* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 31. See also Hengel, *Zeloten*, 158.

⁴⁶ Pomykala, *Davidic Dynasty*, 152–53. Cf. Pietsch, *Spross Davids*, 199–202.

⁴⁷ For a similar view, see Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 240.

I agree with Pomykala and others that our verse is not to be understood as expressing the hope of a new son of David, the more so since the verse does not speak of the covenant with David (hence, it is not appropriate to use the phrase “the davidic dynasty tradition” here). I also think that David is presented here as a prototype to be imitated. However, I do not agree with Pomykala’s understanding of the phrase εἰς αἰῶνας, because it should be taken in the sense of “forever”. What then to make of the reference to David?

It is my contention that v. 57 should be read in conjunction with v. 54. Both verses are about leadership, both share the notion of “forever”, and, as we know from Sirach 45 (H and G), Phinehas and David were both part of a particular leadership ideology. The issue at stake in Sirach is the relationship between the covenant with Phinehas (high priesthood) and the covenant with David (kingship), the latter being incorporated, according to Sirach 45 (G), in the covenant with Phinehas in order to highlight the dynastic principle. Things are a bit different in 1 Maccabees. Phinehas and David are both depicted as exemplars to be imitated, the result being a particular reward. As we have seen, Mattathias acted as Phinehas, but who is the one who acted as David, the implication being that the Maccabean family would inherit “the throne of kingship”?

Apart from Mattathias, the three main figures in 1 Maccabees are Judas, “the Maccabee” (chs. 3–9), Jonathan (chs. 10–12) and Simon (chs. 13–16). It is interesting to note that the way Judas and Simon are described differs from the picture given of Jonathan, as the latter does not display any “biblical” (scriptural) references and elements that mark the presentation both of Judas and Simon. As to our question, the way Judas is depicted is most interesting, since biblical references and allusions are to be found in chs. 3–9, which strongly suggests that he is seen as the one who acted as David. The following passages are significant in this regard:

1 Macc 3:4: “And he (Judas) resembled a ‘lion’ in his works and was like a ‘whelp’ roaring in the hunt”. Notably, the comparison made here reminds one of the prophecy about the leadership of Judah in LXX Gen 49:9: “A lion’s whelp you are, Judah; from a shoot, my son, you went up. When you reclined, you slept like a lion and like a whelp. Who will rouse him”? Compare also LXX Mic 5:8.

1 Macc 4:30–33:

And he (Judas) saw the powerful army, and he prayed and said, ‘Blessed are you, the saviour of Israel, who smashed the attack of the powerful one by the hand of your servant David, and delivered the camp of the foreigners into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul and of the bearer of his armour. Entrap this camp in the hand of your people Israel, and let them be put to shame in their army and their cavalry. Give them cowardice, and melt the boldness of their strength, and let them be shaken in their ruination. Subdue them by the sword of those who love you, and let all those who know your name praise you with hymns.’

This is a telling passage as far as the comparison between Judas and David is concerned.

1 Macc 5:62: “But they were not of the seed of those men to whom was given salvation to Israel by their hand”. Judas, the Maccabean, and his brothers are considered to be of the seed like the seed of David. For Judas, as “saviour”, see also 1 Macc 9:19–21, a passage which refers to 2 Sam 1:19–27 (David mourning about the death of Saul and Jonathan):

And Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother and buried him in the tomb of their fathers in Modein, and wept for him. And all Israel mourned him with great mourning and grieved many days and said, ‘How has the mighty one fallen, saviour of Israel!’

In addition, other passages to be noted are:

1 Maccabees 4: The liberation of Sion, and the rededication of the temple, a topic quite similar to the tradition about David as narrated in 2 Samuel 5–6 and 1 Chronicles 13–15.

1 Maccabees 7: The story about the battle between Nicanor and Judas (vv. 26–50) contains a few elements that are of interest for our topic. First, in v. 41, Judas encourages his men by referring to the slaying by the angel of the Lord of a great number of people in the Assyrian army at the time of king Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:36 // Isa 37:35). Secondly, v. 47 contains a parallel to 1 Sam 17:54, because it is told that the Jews “cut off Nicanor’s head”, as David did with Goliath, and his right hand, and they brought and displayed them at Jerusalem.

So it turns out that Judas is depicted by the use of references to the traditions about David in particular (as well as Hezekiah): he is presented as the one who acted as David. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Simon is presented in a way similar to Solomon. This is particularly clear in 1 Macc 14:4–15, the passage in which the reign of

Simon is described as a time of peace and prosperity, similar to the reign of Solomon, as depicted in 1 Kings 5.⁴⁸

Thus, the way the two components of priesthood and kingship are presented in 1 Maccabees 2 (vv. 54, 57) and applied in the story of the Maccabean family as told in the book is best explained as testifying to a justification of a type of leadership consisting of the office of high priest and that of kingship in one person, that is to say, a priest-king. If so, these verses in 1 Maccabees 2 mark a subtle but significant shift from the terminology used in the decree of ch. 14: instead of being a ruler who is high priest and leader/ethnarch, the final testament of Mattathias conveys the promise that his family will be rewarded, because of their pious deeds, not only with the office of high priest, like Phinehas, but also with the heritage of the royal throne, as was the case with David. Seen from a historical point of view, the emphasis on the royal side of the coin has to do with the fact that the Maccabean rulers liberated the people from the Macedonian yoke and conquered the land, as did David before them.⁴⁹ Moreover and more importantly, it put them “on an equal footing with rulers of neighboring countries”.⁵⁰

This ideology of a priest-king fits the date of the book as a whole (ca. 100 B.C.E.) as given above. Alexander Jannaeus was a Maccabean ruler who was both high priest and king. He was the one who, as did his predecessor Aristobulus I (104–103), assumed the royal title.⁵¹ According to 1 Maccabees this title was not something new; rather, it was fully justified because of the promise made by Mattathias and by the fact that Judas in particular had acted like David, the implication being that the Maccabean family had inherited “the throne of kingship”.⁵²

⁴⁸ The passage in 1 Maccabees 14 is also marked by the fulfilment of prophecies: v. 9, cf. LXX Zech 8:4, and v. 12, cf. LXX Mic 4:4. See Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Zechariah as Witness to an Early Interpretation of the Book”, in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence* (ed. Christopher Tuckett; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 53–64, at 63.

⁴⁹ Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 134.

⁵⁰ Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans*, 114. See also Christian-Georges Schwentzel, “Images du pouvoir et fonctions des souverains hasmonéens”, *RB* 116 (2009): 368–86, at 382.

⁵¹ According to Josephus (*A.J.* 13.301), Aristobulus was the first to accept the title of king, but Strabo (*Geogr.* 16.2.40) says that Alexander Jannaeus was the first to declare himself king. See Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans*, 85.

⁵² The phrase “high priest forever” in the decree (1 Macc 14:41) may represent part of a reworking of the original text in order to provide a hint at the priest-king concept. This is not unlikely as the expression “high priest forever” in v. 41 reminds one of

6. *Concluding Remarks*

By way of summarizing statements, I would like to make the following remarks:

1. The honorary decree of 1 Maccabees 14 offers a legitimation of the Maccabean leadership by the national assembly in the year 140 B.C.E. The reasons for the confirming of Simon and his family as the rulers of the nation, rulers defined as high priest and ethnarch, or as leader and high priest, are their glorious deeds resulting in glory and freedom for the nation. All this was in line with the Hellenistic practice of honouring leaders because of benefactions. Due to the genre of the decree, the Jewish Scriptures were not used in order to justify the claim of leadership.
2. Sirach (G) and LXX Ezekiel plausibly reflect a legitimation of the Maccabean leadership based on Scripture. Both writings, dating to the time of John Hyrcanus (135–104), allude to a type of leadership that is in line with the decree, namely, that of a high priest who is also “ruler” or “leader” of the people, not “king”. It is interesting, however, to note that both sources seem to reflect a different emphasis as far as the two components of this type of leadership are concerned: Sirach (G) testifies to a view in which the high priestly office is the primary one, whereas LXX Ezekiel seems to reflect a strong emphasis on the other side of the coin, that of a rulership like David.

Sirach (G) was produced in Egypt by a Jewish scholar from Judea, the grandson of the author of the Hebrew text of the book. The same may be true for LXX Ezekiel: the translation could have been made in Egypt, although it is also possible to think of Palestine (Jerusalem), like 1 Maccabees and LXX Esther. Be this as it may, both writings are best understood, in my view, as instruments for

Ps 110 (LXX 109):4 (“priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek”), that is to say, of a psalm that reflects the ideology of a priest-king. On the relationship between 1 Macc 14:41 and LXX Ps 109:4, see Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Psalms and the First Book of Maccabees”, in *The Old Greek Psalter. Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (ed. Robert J. V. Hiebert, Claude E. Cox and Peter J. Gentry; JSOTSup 332; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001), 229–47, at 238–39.

the propaganda of the Maccabean leadership among the Jews in Egypt.⁵³

3. 1 Maccabees as a whole, dating to about 100 B.C.E., is a piece of propaganda that mirrors a view of leadership that is not the same as defined in the decree of 140 B.C.E. There is reason to believe that it testifies to a (subtle) shift towards a new form of government: a leader who is both high priest and king, just as in Hellenistic states of the time. The argument for this view is based on a particular use of the Phinehas and David traditions (1 Macc 2:54, 57). It is interesting to note that, just as in the decree, the recognition of leadership is a kind of reward, but unlike the decree, the reward is now related to the idea of acting like Phinehas, as well as and even more importantly so to the idea of acting like David. As is clear from the book as a whole, the emphasis is on the Davidic component, that is to say, on the monarchic paradigm.⁵⁴

⁵³ For a similar view, see Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture. Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 80.

⁵⁴ Cf. Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs. The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 289.

