**Judaism as “Citizenship” and the Question of the Impact of Rome**

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When dealing with Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman period, many scholars tend to use the vocabulary of citizenship to describe membership in the people of Israel or in a given Jewish community.[[2]](#footnote-2) The fact that Jewish authors from Antiquity use Greek political language in order to refer to the *Ioudaioi* and their institutions, certainly seems to support such a claim. There is a huge difference, however, between stating that Jewish (or non-Jewish) authors made a metaphorical use of Greek political terms to describe Jewish communities or used such a terminology in connection with the Hasmonean state, either in a matter-of-fact way or by way of analogy, and the claim that Greek (or Roman) political institutions were actually adopted by the Jews in a given context, be it in Judea or elsewhere. A critical review of the ancient evidence pertaining to the use of citizenship vocabulary in connection with the Jews is thus very much needed.[[3]](#footnote-3) That Jews could be citizens of a given city is a fact.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, do Greek and Roman authors refer to the Jews as “citizens” of a Jewish or Judean *politeia*? And what do the Jewish authors who refer to Jews as “fellow citizens” mean by the use of such a vocabulary?

Such questions are of course too far-reaching to be dealt with extensively in the framework of this paper, but it is with these questions in mind that I shall examine whether the Roman policy concerning the integration of new citizens had an impact upon Jewish practices or discourses, from the 2nd century BCE to the end of the first century CE. I shall start with a reconsideration of Morton Smith’s theory according to which the “conversion” of the Idumeans and the Itureans under the Hasmoneans was to be explained by the impact, upon the leaders of Judea, of the Roman policy of granting citizenship to Rome’s former enemies.[[5]](#footnote-5) I will then examine the way(s) Jewish authors writing in Greek during the Roman period used Greek political vocabulary in order to define membership with the Jewish people, and try to figure out to which extent these discourses are to be explained by their Roman context. Finally, I shall conclude with a few thoughts on the possible impact of Greek and Roman civic models upon rabbinic Judaism.

**1. Hasmonean Judea**

1.1 Judean “citizenship” under the Hasmoneans?

In the framework of this paper I shall focus on the case of the Idumeans, which is quite well documented.[[6]](#footnote-6) The so-called “conversion” of the Idumeans, which I would rather call a form of active “judaization” of conquered populations, has received much attention in scholarly literature dealing with the Hasmonean dynasty, and has been understood as a grant of “Judean citizenship” to a non-Judean population.

This analysis in terms of “Judean citizenship” has to do with the way scholars understand the political evolution of Judea under the Hasmoneans. In the first volume of his *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, originally published in 1937, the famous American historian Salo Baron, identifying the Hasmonean dynasty from Hyrcanus onwards with the Sadducees, wrote that

“With the expansion of the Macedonian power, the new vast empires, embracing so many disparate ethnic components, emphasized still more the supremacy of the state over the nationality, the *politeia* over the *ethnos*. The Sadducean leaders [*the Hasmoneans*] uncousciously adopted this principle. They fought the Syrian state on its own ground, erecting against it the power of the Judean state. Statehood thus became far more significant than it had ever been under the powerful monarchs of ancient Israel, and to its glory ethnic purity might readily be sacrificed. It was, therefore, only a logical consequence that Hyrcanus and Jannaeus, conquering one Palestinian province after another, should forcibly circumcise the natives and incorporate them into the national body”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Baron’s remark concerning the Hasmoneans’s choice to emphasize statehood rather than ethnicity (“ethnic purity” in Baron’s terms), the supremacy of “the *politeia* over the *ethnos*,” as he puts it, probably means that political affiliation became more important than shared ancestry, shared history and shared customs.[[8]](#footnote-8) This evolution made it possible for peoples who did not share Israelite ancestry to become members of Judean society.[[9]](#footnote-9) Baron’s remark that the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms were not “ethnic,” in the sense that they did not encompass a single *ethnos*, is correct. His analysis, however, needs some qualification, because there was no *politeia* in the Seleucid or Ptolemaic kingdom as a whole, no *politeia* corresponding to a Seleucid “state.” In other terms, one was not a *citizen* of the Seleucid kingdom; one could only be a *subject* of the Seleucid king.

In contrast with Baron, Shaye J. D. Cohen focuses on the Hellenistic *poleis* and *koina* (instead of the Hellenistic kingdoms) in order to find a model for the political evolution in Judea. In the 2nd century BCE, Hellenistic *poleis* granted citizenship to individuals who were not always ethnically Greek, on the basis of *paideia* and merit (evergetism for instance) rather than on the basis of ancestry, and this is why Shaye Cohen argues that the Hellenistic model of citizenship is the general cultural and political background against which one may understand the Hasmonean integration into the Judean state of foreigners who were not born within the people of Israel.

Shaye Cohen furthermore argues that, with the judaization of ethnic groups such as the Idumeans and their incorporation within the Judean state, a new, political, meaning of *Ioudaios* developed, that of “a citizen or ally of the Judean state,” alongside two other meanings, that of “a Judean (a function of birth and/or geography)” and “a Jew (a function of religion or culture).”[[10]](#footnote-10) Cohen thus writes: “Insofar as they [*the Idumeans and Itureans*] became citizens in a state dominated by the Judaeans, they became Judaeans themselves in a political sense, and obligated themselves to observe the ways of the Judaeans.” And again in the following pages: “The idea that the Idumaeans and Ituraeans could somehow adopt membership in the Judean state, and somehow become Judaean themselves through the observance of the Judaean way of life, presumes the definition of Judaeanness as a way of life and as a citizenship. *Idumaeans and Ituraeans could be granted citizenship in the Judean polity*.”[[11]](#footnote-11) In other terms, Shaye Cohen presupposes that there was such a thing as a Judean citizenship in the Hasmonean state.

The problem with this thesis is that, from the point of view of the history of institutions, there was no citizenship in Judea at that time, because Jerusalem was not a *polis*. The city could indeed have been a *polis* or have included a *polis* if Jason’s reform had succeeded and prevailed over time.[[12]](#footnote-12) However, the revolt of the Maccabees put an end to this attempt, which was not repeated even during the reign of Herod.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Moreover, the type of state promoted by the Hasmoneans turned out to be a monarchy, in spite of the fact that the dynasty was originally a priestly family. According to Josephus, Aristobulus I was the first to have himself called “king,” but his ancestors already displayed many features of royal power. As a matter of fact, the military dimension of the Hasmonean dynasty (whose legitimacy was deeply grounded in military victory) had everything to do with royal power, and not with priestly power. High priests were not supposed to actively participate in battle, be it only for purity reasons; more fundamentally, though, the army and the battlefield were royal prerogatives according to the traditions of the Hebrew Bible. In any case, the Hasmonean state became a monarchy, which shared many features with other Hellenistic kingdoms (especially with other ethnic kingdoms such as that of the Nabateans), while obviously remaining specific in other respects (monotheism, the unicity of the Jerusalem temple, purity issues, etc.). [[14]](#footnote-14) As stated above, in the Greco-Roman world a monarchy implied that people were subjects, not citizens. Admittedly, the Hellenistic kingdoms counted numerous *poleis* and Hellenistic kings granted certain groups the privilege to change statuses and to become a *polis*, to have a gymnasium, etc.;[[15]](#footnote-15) but it is important to understand that only cities (in the political sense) had citizenships, Rome being no exception. The only citizens within the Seleucid kingdom were thus the citizens of specific *poleis*. It is thus paradoxical to speak about the development of a Judean citizenship under the Hasmoneans.

As a matter of fact, the judaization of the Idumeans nearly coincided with the official transformation of the Judean state into a monarchy. To put things bluntly, the logical consequence is that the Idumeans never became citizens of the Judean state, because during this period there were no Judean citizens and no Judean citizenship to start with. During the Hasmonean period and especially from Aristobulus I onwards, Judea was in fact as remote from the model of the Hellenistic *poleis* as it was from the model of the Roman Republic.

Still, one needs to check whether ancient writers referred to the Idumeans as new “citizens” of the Judean state, either in a matter-of-fact way, or by way of analogy with political institutions widely known in the Greco-Roman world. The transformation of the Idumeans into *Ioudaioi* is reported by a historian named Ptolemy (probably from the first century BCE or CE, since a biography of Herod is attributed to him), by Strabo and by Josephus. Let us start with Josephus, who writes that John Hyrcanus,

“after subduing all the Idumaeans, permitted them to remain in their country so long as they had themselves circumcised and were willing to observe the laws of the Judeans (εἰ περιτέμνοιντο τὰ αἰδοῖα καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίων νόμοις [or, according to mss A, M, W and E: νομίμοις] χρήσασθαι θέλοιεν). And so, out of attachment to the ancestral land, they accepted [lit.: endured] to practice the same circumcision and the same manner of life, in other [respects as well], as those of the Judeans (οἱ δὲ πόθῳ τῆς πατρίου γῆς καὶ τὴν περιτομὴν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην τοῦ βίου δίαιταν ὑπέμειναν τὴν αὐτὴν Ἰουδαίοις ποιήσασθαι). And from that time on they have been Judeans themselves (κἀκείνοις αὐτοῖς χρόνος ὑπῆρχεν ὥστε εἶναι τὸ λοιπὸν Ἰουδαίους)” (*Ant.* 13.257-258).[[16]](#footnote-16)

Josephus speaks eloquently of the Jewish *politeia* in several passages of his works, and he often speaks of Jews as “fellow-citizens,” but nowhere does he refer to the Idumeans as new citizens of the Judean state.[[17]](#footnote-17) What he says in this particular passage is that they submitted themselves to the laws of the Judeans, including circumcision, and became Judeans themselves. In which sense did they become Judeans? It remains unclear, but Josephus seems to imply (and the rest of the *Antiquities*, together with the *Jewish War*, shows) that they adopted a Judean lifestyle, that they were integrated into Judean society and became a part of this society while continuing to constitute a distinct group, probably as a consequence of their difference of lineage.

In that respect, the testimony of Ptolemy is even more telling. Ptolemy explains that Judeans and Idumeans “differ,” and that

“Judeans are those who are so originally, by nature (Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γάρ εἰσιν οἱ ἐξ ἀρχῆς φυσικοί). The Idumaeans, on the other hand, were not originally Judeans, but Phoenicians and Syrians (Ἰδουμαῖοι δὲ τὸ μὲν ἀρχῆθεν οὐκ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀλλὰ Φοίνικες καὶ Σύροι); having been subjugated by them [the Judaeans] and having been forced to undergo circumcision, to contribute [taxes] to the nation,[[18]](#footnote-18) and to keep the same customs, they were called Judaeans (κρατηθέντες δὲ ὑπ᾿ αὐτῶν καὶ ἀναγκασθέντες περιτέμνεσθαι καὶ συντελεῖν εἰς τὸ ἔθνος[[19]](#footnote-19) καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ νόμιμα ἡγεῖσθαι ἐκλήθησαν Ἰουδαῖοι)”.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The notion of “origin” (ἀρχή) in Ptolemy’s text seems to be equivalent to that of birth, genealogy or ethnicity, if one understands ethnicity as implying common ancestors. The Idumeans are called *Ioudaioi* but are not ethnically or genealogically Judean; to put it differently, they are not *beney Israel*. Moreover, in comparison with Josephus’s account, this passage merely states that the Idumeans have been called *Ioudaioi*, not that they have become *Ioudaioi*.

Later on in his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus repeatedly refers to the Idumeans as a distinct group within Judean society, and even as a distinct *ethnos* within the Judean *ethnos*. Particularly interesting is the way he describes their participation in the Judean War against the Romans, in which they showed a sincere devotion to the Jerusalem temple and what one could describe in modern terms as a kind of Judean nationalism.[[21]](#footnote-21) This episode demonstrates that the Idumeans were integrated into the Judean state or society and did not estrange themselves from it after the end of the Hasmonean dynasty. However, as Shaye Cohen emphasizes, “Josephus makes abundantly clear that the Idumeans always retained their own ethnic identity”.[[22]](#footnote-22) Thus, the question of the extent to which the Idumeans became *Ioudaioi* must remain open. But in any case, so far they are not described as being Judean *politai*.

The third testimony, that of Strabo, tells a different story than the accounts of Ptolemy and Josephus. According to Strabo, the Idumeans joined the Judeans voluntarily. The issue of the coercition used by John Hyrcanus shall not detain us here. Suffice is to notice that Strabo does not present the Idumeans as Judean citizens either. He simply states that they have joined the Judeans and share their laws or statutes (νόμιμα).[[23]](#footnote-23) Strabo describes both groups as *ethnē*, and as a Greek he is well aware that *ethnē* do not have civic institutions, hence no citizenship.

There is thus no basis to the claim that the Idumeans were granted citizenship in Judea. However, the fact remains that with John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean policy towards foreign enemies changed, at least in the case of the Idumeans. They were not expelled (as Simon did with the inhabitants of Joppa for instance), nor were they sold into slavery or massacred (of these two alternative scenarios, only the second is clearly attested in the Books of the Maccabees, especially when Judeans are attacked).[[24]](#footnote-24) The idea that former enemies could be integrated into the Judean state seems new, and it is in this respect that the question of a possible influence of the Roman policy upon the Hasmonean dynast deserves some consideration.

1.2 Roman and Hasmonean policies

In an article published in 1978 and entitled “Rome and Maccabean Conversions: Notes on 1 Macc. 8,” Morton Smith initially explained the judaization of the Idumeans as an influence of Roman policy upon the Hasmonean dynasty. According to Smith, the Hasmoneans had adopted an “imperialistic” policy towards their neighbours which imitated that of Rome, and the fact that the Hasmoneans offered their defeated enemies an alliance and a participation in the Judean state had to be understood in light of the Roman policy of granting citizenship to Rome’s former enemies, who became Roman allies.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Later on, however, Smith distanced himself from this explanation.[[26]](#footnote-26) In his article for the third volume of *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, “The Gentiles in Judaism, 125 BCE – CE 66,” first published in a posthumous volume in 1996,[[27]](#footnote-27) Smith does not refer to the Roman model any more,[[28]](#footnote-28) and interprets the judaization of the Samaritans, the Idumeans, the Itureans and the Galileans as a political and military alliance based on a common hostility toward the Seleucids (and, for some of these groups, on a common rivalry with the Nabateans).[[29]](#footnote-29) As a consequence, Smith argues, the term *Ioudaios* came to designate “a member of the Judaeo-Samaritan-Idumaean-Ituraean-Galilean alliance.” Smith goes as far as to suppose that the expression *ḥever ha-Yehudim* on some of the coins of Alexander Jannaeus actually referred to the members of this league.[[30]](#footnote-30) The model Smith has in mind is that of an “ethnic-religious-military league.” Such leagues, he argues, “had been common in Hellenistic history. In particular the formation, growth and destruction by Rome of the Aetolian League furnish many parallels to the history of the *Ioudaioi*.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

Although Smith abandoned his initial idea concerning the influence of the Roman model upon the Hasmoneans, this idea has continued to have an impact. Building upon Smith’s original suggestion, Martin Goodman wrote in his book *Mission and Conversion*:

“(…) the notion, at least in theory, of an indefinite expansion of citizenship in this way was found in the ancient world only among Jews and Romans and, since the latter had found it strikingly advantageous in the centuries immediately preceding the Hasmonean dynasty, it would not be at all surprising if the Jewish monarchs, who were eager to maintain contact with the Romans, followed suit.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

In *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, Seth Schwartz is also directly inspired by Morton Smith’s theory when he writes that:

“When they imposed Judaism on their subjects, the Hasmoneans (…) may have been inspired by the example of their allies and friends the Romans, who had for centuries been successfully expanding their territory by combining exceptionally violent military activity with judicious grants of Roman citizenship to some of the people they conquered.”[[33]](#footnote-33)

Seth Schwartz also suggests that “Hasmonean imperialism was a small-scale version of Roman imperialism.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

Finally, another example of the impact of Morton Smith’s theory is found in Avi Avidov’s book *Not Reckoned among Nations. The Origins of the So-called “Jewish Question” in Roman Antiquity*, in which he explains Hasmonean expansionism as a mixture of aggression and integration, similar to Rome’s policy towards its enemies. Following Smith, Avidov contemplates the possibility that the Hasmoneans may have consciously followed the Roman model.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Even if there was no Judean citizenship in the Hasmonean state, the integration of the Idumeans and the careers of some Idumeans at the Hasmonean court, as illustrated by that of Antipater, Herod’s father, could in theory be compared to the integration of the Italian allies by the Romans. The problem with this general line of argumentation, however, is that it undermines a chronological issue. It seems indeed that the Romans were the only ones in Antiquity to impose their citizenship upon former enemies, in the context of the first Roman expansion, when they annexed to the city of Rome whole territories with their population.[[36]](#footnote-36) However, this type of citizenship was in general *sine suffragio*, which means that the new citizens did not enjoy the same political rights as the Romans, and remained so to speak “second-class citizens.” Moreover, from the third century BCE onwards, the Roman policy was in fact characterized by a growing reluctance to grant Roman citizenship to the Latins (who remained *socii*), and by attempts to prevent them from holding political offices at Rome.[[37]](#footnote-37) The last quarter of the 2nd century BCE in particular was marked by such a reluctance, and this Roman attitude caused great frustration among Rome’s allies, to the point that it led to the Social War, the war of Rome’s *socii*, in 91-88 BCE.

It is probably not by chance that most of the sources celebrating Roman grants of citizenship to former enemies are dated from *after* the Social War, and try to erase the memory of the policy carried out during the second century BCE, by presenting Roman generosity as a choice going back to the founder of Rome. Cicero for instance praises “the Roman capacity to turn enemies into fellow citizens;” since Romulus, he claims, “our forefathers have never ceased to make others citizens­—not only towns, but whole nations (*gentes universae*)” (*Pro Balbo* 31).[[38]](#footnote-38) Tacitus attributes a similar type of discourse to Claudius, who declares:

“What else was it that spelled destruction for the Spartans and the Athenians, militarily powerful though they were, if not their segregation of conquered peoples as foreigners? By contrast, our founder Romulus showed such wisdom that he regarded numerous peoples as his enemies and then as his fellow-citizens on the very same day!”[[39]](#footnote-39)

Such discourses were certainly not frequent in Rome at the end of the 2nd century BCE…

John Hyrcanus’s conquests, and the judaization of the Idumeans that ensued, happened between 111 and 107 BCE,[[40]](#footnote-40) one of the worst periods for the policy of integration within the *civitas Romana*, and one of great tensions. Admittedly, one could still argue that John Hyrcanus or his counsellors, having only a vague knowledge of the situation in Italy, drew inspiration from the general representation they had of the political strategy of the Romans. But it is dubious that the Roman model in itself was the factor that prompted Hyrcanus to integrate the Idumeans, especially if one considers that the beginning of Hyrcanus’s conquests is also the point at which we stop to have evidence for contacts between the Hasmoneans and the Romans (up to Pompey’s intervention).[[41]](#footnote-41) Many other factors provide better explanations, such as the need for allies, in order to control the newly conquered territories and to pursue the conquest even further; the cultural proximity between Judeans and Idumeans; the biblical genealogy making the Edomites (Idumeans) “brothers” of the Israelites, etc. All in all, thus, the hypothesis according to which the judaization of the Idumeans is to be explained by an impact of the Roman policy upon the Hasmoneans remains very unlikely.

**2. The acceptance of new “citizens” in the Jewish communities of the Roman empire**

2.1 Jewish use of civic vocabulary in the Diaspora

If one looks at the books of the Septuagint that were translated from Hebrew, very few occurrences of *politēs*, *politeia*, *politeuma* or *politeuomai* are found. In Genesis 23:11, the expression *beney ‘ami*, “sons of my people,” used by Ephron the Hittite, is translated by *politai*. In Proverbs 11:9.12, 24:28, Jer 36:23 (LXX; TM 29:23), 38:34 (LXX; TM 31:34), the term *politēs* is used to translate the Hebrew *re‘a*, “neighbour”; finally, Zechariah 13:7 uses *politēs* for *‘amit*, “fellow”. Insofar as ancient Israel was a monarchy and not a *polis*, it is not surprising that the Jewish translators refrained from using civic vocabulary in their work.

In Jewish literature written directly in Greek during the Hellenistic and Roman period, the situation is very different, and the use of Greek political vocabulary in order to describe the Jewish people and its laws can be traced back to the 2nd century BCE at least. In the *Letter of Aristeas* and in 2 Maccabees, for instance, the members of the Jewish *ethnos* are described as fellow citizens, *politai*.[[42]](#footnote-42) The term *politeia* is used as well and generally refers to the constitution or the body of laws and customs followed by the Jews, who are fellow *politai* to one another, no matter where they dwell, insofar as they live under the same laws.[[43]](#footnote-43) The main idea is that the Law of Moses is the ancestral constitution of the Jewish *ethnos*.[[44]](#footnote-44) In one case at least, 2 Maccabees 13:14, *politeia* may however designate the body of the citizens, a meaning that goes back to Aristotle and which is frequent in Philo’s work.[[45]](#footnote-45)

In the Hellenistic and Roman world, Jews were sometimes citizens of the *poleis* in which they dwelt. From the first century BCE onwards, some Jews also received Roman citizenship.[[46]](#footnote-46) Jews in the diapora therefore had quite an extensive knowledge of the way civic institutions worked. The fact that they tended to describe membership with the Jewish *ethnos* in terms of citizenship, despite the fact that Jerusalem was not a *polis* and the subsequent lack of a Judean citizenship, tells a lot about the power of attraction of the Greek model upon the Jews.

For sure, Jewish communities in the Diaspora were sometimes organized as *politeumata*.[[47]](#footnote-47) However, these *politeumata* were not civic bodies, but rather a kind of association. Members of a *politeuma* were not necessarily citizens of the city in which the *politeuma* was found, but on the other hand, membership in a *politeuma* was not necessarily incompatible with a proper local citizenship.[[48]](#footnote-48) Whatever the exact status of the Jewish communities (whether they were *politeumata* or not), some sources attribute a lot of autonomy to the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, to the point of describing a kind of self-administration. Thus Josephus attributes to Strabo the following statement:

“And it has come about that Cyrene, which had the same rulers as Egypt, has imitated it in many respects, particularly in notably encouraging and aiding the expansion of the organized groups of Jews (τὰ συντάγματα τῶν Ἰουδαίων), which observe the national Jewish laws (τοῖς πατρίοις τῶν Ἰουδαίων νόμοις). In Egypt, for example, territory has been set apart for a Jewish settlement, and in Alexandria a great part of the city has been allocated to this nation (τῷ ἔθνει τούτῳ). And an ethnarch of their own has been installed, who governs the people (τὸ ἔθνος) and adjudicates suits and supervises contracts and ordinances, just as if he were the head of a sovereign state (ὡς ἂν πολιτείας ἄρχων αὐτοτελοῦς).”[[49]](#footnote-49)

Even if Josephus is to be trusted and these are the exact words of Strabo, he is merely comparing the Jewish *ethnos* with a civic entity. The Jewish ethnarch behaves *as if* (ὡς) he were the head of a sovereign *politeia*. It does not mean that the Jewish group is in fact a *politeia*. It is still described as an *ethnos*. Nonetheless, this text may help understand why Jews in the Diaspora sometimes called themselves *politai* of a Jewish polity.

2.2 Proselytes as new “citizens”

Philo of Alexandria seems to be the first to formulate the idea that proselytes who choose to embrace the creed and the lifestyle of the Jews become citizens of the *politeia* of Moses.[[50]](#footnote-50) In this case, *politeia* refers to the community of the citizens rather than to the constitution.[[51]](#footnote-51) Of course, in Philo’s work, the discourse about the integration of new “citizens” into the *politeia* of Moses is a metaphor, not a political reality, but some of his remarks probably have to do with the phenomenon of non-Jews joining the Jewish community in Alexandria.

According to Philo, the proselytes, as new citizens in the Mosaic *politeia*, receive rights that are equal to those of native citizens. In the treatise *On the Special Laws*, in particular, Philo writes:

“51 […] These last he calls ‘proselytes,’ or newly-joined, because they have joined the new and God-loving commonwealth (*politeia*); they disregard mythical fictions and seize the pure truth. 52 Thus, while giving equal honour (*isotimia*) to all in-comers with all the privileges which he gives to the native-born, he exhorts the old nobility to honour them not only with marks of respect but with special friendship and with more than ordinary goodwill. And surely there is good reason for this; they have left, he says, their country (*patris*), their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and holiness. Let them not be denied another city (*polis*) or other ties of family and friendship, and let them find places of shelter standing ready for refugees to the camp of piety […]. 53 Yet he counsels them that they must not, presuming on the equality before the laws (*isonomia*) and the tributes (*isoteleia*) which He grants them because they have denounced the vain imaginings of their fathers and ancestors, deal in idle talk or revile with an unbridled tongue the gods whom others acknowledge, lest they on their part be moved to utter profane words against Him Who truly is. […]”[[52]](#footnote-52)

On the one hand, the idea that the “native-born” (αὐτόχθων, *ezraḥ* in Hebrew) and the proselyte (προσήλυτος or ἐπηλύτης, *ger* in Hebrew) are equal in front of the Law is found in several passages of the Pentateuch, for instance in Exodus 12:49 (in connection with Passover) or in Leviticus 19:34. On the other hand, several concepts used by Philo in these paragraphs, such as *isotimia* (§52), *isonomia* and *isoteleia* (§53), are thoroughly Greek and are absent from the Septuagint. By emphasizing *isotimia*, *isonomia* and *isoteleia*, however, Philo tends to define the Mosaic *politeia* as a “structure of integration” rather than a “structure of participation,” to use Philippe Gauthier’s expressions.[[53]](#footnote-53) Gauthier distinguishes between Greek citizenship, characterized by active “participation” in the political life of the *polis*, and Roman citizenship, characterized by an emphasis on rights and duties – that is, on status and “integration” – rather than on actual participation in the institutions. It must be emphasized that until the beginning of the first century CE at least, Hellenistic *poleis* still functioned as “structures of participation.”[[54]](#footnote-54) Conversely, Cicero’s definitions of citizenship “insist on the community of law (and thus on the common status of the citizens), and […] leave aside every idea of participation in political life (hence the functions of the citizens).”[[55]](#footnote-55) A comparison between Philo’s discourse about the Mosaic *politeia* and Cicero’s writings about the Roman *civitas* shows that both put the emphasis on the community of laws and on the equality of the citizens before the Law. Philo therefore tends to reflect about the Jewish *politeia* according to the Roman model of citizenship rather than according to that of the Greek *poleis*.[[56]](#footnote-56) Of course, this is in many respects logical, insofar as the Jewish communities in the diaspora mainly shared biblical traditions and the Law of Moses; their common “citizenship” was thus first and foremost based on common law (no matter which aspects of their lives this law actually regulated, and whether it pertained mainly to the cultic and the ethical spheres), rather than on the participation in common institutions.[[57]](#footnote-57) The insistance on the legal dimension of one’s membership with the Mosaic *politeia* was in fact a logical outcome of the centrality of the Law (Torah) for the self-definition of the Jews.

In the section *Peri Philanthrôpias* of the *De Virtutibus* (*On Virtues*), Philo deals again with the issue of proselytes, describing them as those who want to become members of the “*politeia* of the Jews,” an expression which makes the meaning of *politeia* as “community of citizens” even clearer. In connection with Deuteronomy 23:8-9, which prescribes to let the Edomites and the Egyptians enter the *qahal Israel* (*ekklēsia Kuriou*) in the third generation, he writes:

“And if any of them should want to cross over to the polity of the Jews (κἂν εἴ τινες ἐθελήσειαν αὐτῶν μεταλλάξασθαι πρὸς τὴν Ἰουδαίων πολιτείαν), they are not to be scorned unyieldingly like the children of enemies, but are to be treated in such a manner that the third generation is invited into the congregation and granted that share of the divine oracles into which the native- and noble-born are also rightfully initiated” (*Virt.* 108).[[58]](#footnote-58)

Obviously, Philo depends here on the biblical verse and follows it rather closely, hence the reference to the integration of the enemies only in the third generation. Why did Philo select this biblical verse in order to demonstrate the benevolence (*philanthrōpia*) of the Law of Moses towards outsiders? There were other, and probably more convincing passages that Philo could have chosen in connection with proselytes. This particular passage from Deuteronomy, however, represents one of the very few texts referring to the integration of former enemies into the congregation of Israel. The reference to former enemies (*via* their descendents) may thus be seen as a deliberate echo of the Roman or pro-Roman discourse celebrating the grants of citizenship to former enemies, as in Cicero’s *Pro Balbo*, when Cicero praises “the Roman capacity to turn enemies into fellow citizens” (§31). Moreover, Philo sees in the openness of the Mosaic *politeia* an expression of Moses’s *philanthrōpia*. Interestingly enough, Rome was praised for its *philanthrōpia* precisely because it granted Roman citizenship to foreigners, including former enemies.[[59]](#footnote-59) Thus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus praises the Romans for having become the most illustrious nation,

“not only by their humane (*philanthrōpos*) reception of those who sought a home among them, but also by sharing the rights of citizenship with all who had been conquered by them in war after a brave resistance, by permitting all the slaves, too, who were manumitted among them to become citizens, and by disdaining no condition of men from whom the commonwealth might reap an advantage, but above everything else by their form of government, which they fashioned out of their many experiences, always extracting something useful from every occasion.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

Later on, Dionysius affirms that Rome is “the most hospitable and friendly of all cities (κοινοτάτην τε πόλεων καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτην)” (*Roman Antiquities* 1.89.1), and this Roman *philanthrōpia* has to do with the integration of many foreigners into the population and civic body of the city. It thus seems that in *De Virtutibus*, Philo is reproducing pro-Roman or Roman discourses, but in connection with the people and the laws of Israel.

All in all, and even if Philo’s two main sources of inspiration obviously consisted of the Pentateuch and Greek philosophy, I think it is not far-fetched to suppose that the Roman notion of citizenship, or at least the ideological discourse surrounding it, had an influence on Philo’s presentation of the *politeia* of the Jews. Philo was certainly aware of Greek pro-Roman discourses like that of Dionysus of Halicarnassus; he spent enough time in Rome to be exposed to such voices, and to those of the Romans themselves.

Later on, Philo’s line of argumentation was taken over by Josephus, especially in *Against Apion*, in which Josephus describes the Jews as joyfully welcoming those who want to live under their laws and as granting them citizenship. Using well-known stereotypes about the Spartans, Josephus contrasts the Jews with the Lacedaemonians, who in the ancient world were characterized by their *xenēlasia*, their practice of expulsing foreigners in order to avoid the corruption of their ancestral laws:[[61]](#footnote-61)

“260 They (the Lacedaemonians) perhaps might reasonably be criticized for their churlishness (or: misanthropy): for they would not grant anyone the right of citizenship (*politeia*) or of residence among them. 261 We, on the other hand, are not inclined to emulate other people’s customs, but gladly welcome those who wish to share ours; and that would be evidence, I take it, of both benevolence (*philanthrōpia*) and generosity (*megalopsychia*)”.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Josephus uses *politeia* in the sense of “constitution” or “right of citizenship” rather than as a way to designate the Jewish people or the Jewish community, as Philo does. But he shares several ideas with Philo, such as the fact that Jewish “citizenship” mainly implies a life in accordance with the Mosaic laws (an idea shared by the Hellenistic Jewish tradition as a whole),[[63]](#footnote-63) or that the openness of the Mosaic *politeia* to new citizens is a proof of its benevolence (*philanthrōpia*). Josephus’s underlying argument is that in this respect, Jews and Romans share common values: in *Against Apion*, Josephus also praises the Romans for their readiness to integrate new citizens, in a way that is comparable to Cicero’s *Pro Balbo* (31), Dionysius’s *Roman Antiquities* (1.9.4; 1.41.1), and later on Dio Chrysostom’s *Discourses* (41.9) and Aelius Aristides’ *Encomium of Rome* (63-65, 98).[[64]](#footnote-64) Moreover, the contrast between Jews and Spartans in Josephus’s *Against Apion* is strongly reminiscent of the way Greek or Roman authors contrasted the Romans and the Spartans (or the Athenians) on the issue of citizenship grants.[[65]](#footnote-65) What still remained allusive in Philo’s writings is now made very explicit by Josephus.

**Conclusion**

Whereas the analysis of the sources pertaining to the integration of non-Judean groups within the Judean polity in Hasmonean times does not corroborate the hypothesis of an influence of Roman policies upon the Hasmonean rulers, the impact of Roman definitions of citizenship and of ideological discourses surrounding Roman policies of citizenship can definitely be felt in the works of the two main Jewish authors writing in Greek in the context of the Roman empire. In the way they described the integration of foreigners (proselytes) into the Jewish people, both Philo and Josephus were influenced by the surrounding Roman or pro-Roman discourses about Roman “generosity” in granting citizenship, by the argument about the connection between the superiority of Rome and its willingness to welcome new citizens, as well as by the Roman notion of citizenship as status, based first and foremost upon common laws. While not giving up completely on the importance of birth and ancestry, so fundamental in the biblical worldview, both Philo and Josephus thus came to relativize “ethnicity” or lineage and to celebrate the importance of virtue and piety (linked to the observance of the laws) in the definition of what they called Jewish “citizenship.”[[66]](#footnote-66)

1. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n. 614 424. It was part of the ERC Judaism and Rome, and has been realized within the framework of the CNRS and Aix-Marseille University, UMR 7297 TDMAM (Aix-en-Provence). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See in particular Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), to which I shall return below; Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *Un peuple de philosophes : Aux origines de la condition juive* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), esp. 151–59. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For such an enquiry concerning Philo’s work, see Caroline Carlier, *La cité de Moïse : Le peuple juif chez Philon d’Alexandrie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). On the Jewish communities in the diaspora and their experience of Greek political institutions, see in particular John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); Margaret H. Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); Bradley Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire: Rights, Citizenship and Civil Discord* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Josephus records attacks on the citizenship rights of Jews in Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea, Scythopolis and other cities of Syria. See Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities*, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Smith, “Rome and Maccabean Conversions: Notes on 1 Macc. 8,” in *Donum Gentilicium*, ed. David Daube (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For a more detailed treatment of the issue of “forced conversions” under the Hasmoneans, see my forthcoming book, *In Search of the Promised Land? The Hasmonean Dynasty Between Biblical Models and Hellenistic Diplomacy*, to be published with Vandenhoeck& Ruprecht. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 163–64. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a review of different definitions and theories of ethnicity, see Christel Müller, “Introduction: La fin de l’ethnicité ?,” *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* Supplément 10 (2014): 15–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For a similar yet different theory, see Benedikt Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft: Politische Figurationen judäischer Identität von Antiochos III. bis Herodes I.*, Studia Judaica 72 (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). According to Eckhardt, the Hasmonean dynasty (at least from Hyrcanus I onwards) was characterized by a relativization of the criterion of birth or lineage, which applied to both the leadership of the people and to the definition of the people itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 118 and 127. The emphasis is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See 1 Maccabees 1:11-15; 2 Maccabees 4:7-15.18-19. For a recent analysis of the Maccabean crisis that pays particular attention to political and fiscal issues, see John Ma, “Relire les *Institutions des Séleucides* de Bikerman,” in *Rome, a City and its Empire in Perspective: The Impact of the Roman World through Fergus Millar’s Research*, ed. Stéphane Benoist (Leiden, Brill, 2012), 59-84; *id.*, “Re-Examining Hanukkah,” in *The Marginalia Review of Books*, 9 July 2013 (http://themarginaliareview.com/archives/3083); *id.*, “Notes on the Restoration of the Temple,” in *Seleukeia:* *Studies in Seleucid History, Archaeology and Numismatics in Honor of Getzel M. Cohen*, ed. Roland Oetjen and Francis Xavier Ryan (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, forthcoming in 2017); Sylvie Honigman, “The Religious Persecution as a Narrative Elaboration of a Military Suppression,” in *La mémoire des persécutions : Autour des livres des Maccabées*, ed. Marie-Françoise Baslez and Olivier Munnich (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 31–48; *id.*, *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochos IV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), esp. 387–404. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. On the status of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Roman period, see the detailed and still decisive demonstration by Victor A. Tcherikover in “Was Jerusalem a ‘Polis’?,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 14/1-2 (1964): 61–78. He aptly shows that the vocabulary used in the sources cannot be taken at face value: “It follows that under the procurators ‘archons’, a ‘boule’, and a ‘demos’ did exist in Jerusalem, but the archons were not *archons* in the Greek sense, nor was the boule a *boule*, nor the demos a *demos*. *Throughout, the Greek names, borrowed from the Hellenistic world, reflected ancient Jewish institutions—the product of the evolution of the Jewish people through the ages*” (74, emphasis in the original text). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See Maurice Sartre, “De Pétra à Jérusalem… et retour !,” in *East and West. Papers in Ancient History presented to Glen W. Bowersock*, ed. T. Corey Brennan et Harriet I. Flower (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008), 159–80; Christian-George Schwentzel, *Juifs et Nabatéens : Les monarchies ethniques du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romain* (Rennes: PUR, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See the case of Tyriaion (or Toriaion) in the Pergamene kingdom for instance, known through inscriptions. On the relevance of this case for the situation in Jerusalem before the Maccabean uprising, see Honigman, *Tales of High Priests and Taxes*, 29–30, 212, 277–78, 363–64. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. My translation. Another passage in the *Antiquities* evokes this episode very briefly, in connection with the story of the friendship between Herod and Costobar: “Hyrcanus had altered their way of life (or: constitution [*politeia*]), and (made them adopt) the customs and statutes of the Judeans (τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἔθη καὶ νόμιμα)” (*Ant.* 15.254, trans. Ralph Marcus, LCL, 119–21, slightly modified). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. On Jews or Judeans as fellow citizens (*politai*), see for instance, in the *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.21 (Moses and the Israelites), 4.314 (Moses speaking to the Israelites), 5.54 (the Gabaonites request to become fellow citizens of the Israelites), 5.265 (the Israelites are the fellow citizens of Jephtah’s daughter), 6.75, 7.291, 8.361, 8.370, 9.80, 10.269 (at the time of Daniel), 11.176 (at the time of Nehemiah), 12.46 (in Ptolemy’s letter, following the *Letter of Aristeas*), 12.54 (in Eleazar’s letter, following the *Letter of Aristeas*), 12.161-162 (in connection with Onias), 12.252 (to designate the inhabitants of Jerusalem, or of Judea in general, during Antiochus’s “persecution”), 12.269 (Judeans as fellow citizens of Mattathias), 12.323 (Judas and his fellow citizens), 12.433, 13.287 (Chelkias and Ananias as fellow citizens of the Egyptian Jews), 14.226 (diaspora Jews as fellow citizens of Hyrcanus II), 15.375 (an Essene called Manaēmus recommends to Herod to behave with mildness towards his fellow citizens), 17.239 (Archelaus is accused of having massacred the citizens in the Temple), 20.205 (the high priest Anaanias is held in high esteem by his fellow citizens). On the other hand, in connection with a particular place Josephus often uses the term vaguely, with the meaning of “inhabitants” (see *Ant.* 5.247, 9.99; *Life* 42-43, 135 or 346 for instance). The term *politai* has thus different meanings in Josephus’s work, and does not necessarily imply the existence of civic institutions. Hence, in *Ant.* 8.370, the king Achab refers to the Israelites who are his subjects as *politai*, and in book 15, which deals with the rule of Herod, the Judeans are repeatedly designated by the term *politai*. In such cases *politēs* simply means a fellow Israelite or Judean (for an analysis of *politēs* in the Septuagint, see below). But as far as the Idumeans are concerned, Josephus never speaks about them as *politai*, no matter in which sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Concerning this translation, see also Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 113. For the meaning of συντελεῖν εἰς as “contribute (financially) to” or “pay (a certain amount of money) for,” see Thucydides 2.15.2; 4.76.3; Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 28; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 95. It is this meaning that underlies the translation “to belong to,” “to be counted among” (as in Stern, *GLAJJ* 1:356, where one reads “to be counted among the Jewish nation”). See the explanation in Liddell-Scott: “συντελεῖν εἰς τοὺς ἱππεῖς, etc., strictly *to pay* to the knights or the class of knights and so, to *belong* to this class or body (because at Athens all citizens were classed acc. to their τίμημα, or rateable property); then, generally, to belong to it, be counted in a class or body…” (Liddell-Scott, 1444). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Both Théodore Reinach and Menahem Stern replace the ἔθος found in the θ group of mss with ἔθνος. See Reinach, *Textes d’auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme* (Paris, 1894 [new edition Paris: Belles Lettres, 2007], 88); Stern, *GLAJJ* 1:356. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This brief passage is found in the article Ἰδουμαῖοι in the treatise *De adfinium vocabulorum differentia* of Ammonius, which dates from the beginning of the 2nd century CE at the latest. See Stern, *GLAJJ* 1:355-356. I have used Menahem Stern’s translation, but also modified it. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See in particular *War* 4.278-279; Alan Appelbaum, “ ‘The Idumaeans’ in Josephus’ *The Jewish War*,” *JSJ* 40/1 (2009): 1–22. Josephus describes the Idumeans as an unruly and undisciplined *ethnos* (*War* 4.231). In *War* 4.243, the chief priest addresses the Idumeans as a distinct *ethnos*, but later on at 4.263 the term *ethnos* seems to include both the Judeans and the Idumeans. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.2 and 34; Stern, *GLAJJ* 1:287, 294–311. According to Israel Shatzman, the account of Strabo refers to a period that preceded the conquest of Idumea by John Hyrcanus; see Shatzman, “On the Conversion of the Idumeans,” in *For Uriel. Studies in the History of Israel in Antiquity Presented to Professor Uriel Rappaport*, ed. Menahem Mor *et al.* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2005), 213–41 (Heb.). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. On these strategies, see Israel Shatzman, “Jews and Gentiles from Judas Maccabaeus to John Hyrcanus According to Contemporary Jewish Sources,” in *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism: Louis H. Feldman Jubilee Volume*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 237–270; Karl Trampedach, “The War of the Hasmoneans,” in *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith: Old Testament Faith Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, ed. Gabriella Signori (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 61-78; and my forthcoming book, *In Search of the Promised Land ?* [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See Smith, « Rome and Maccabean Conversions ». [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Thus Shaye Cohen reports: “Smith himself came to recognize that the Roman policy is probably an analogy to, rather than a source for, the Hasmonean practice” (*The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 127, note 49). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In Morton Smith, *Studies in Historical Method, Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism*, edited by Shaye J.D. Cohen; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 130/1 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 263–319. See also “The Gentiles in Judaism, 125 BCE – CE 66,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. III. The Early Roman Period*, ed. W. Horbury, W. D. Davies and J. Sturdy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 192–249. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. There is one exception at p. 211, but in a different direction. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Smith, “The Gentiles in Judaism, 125 BCE – CE 66,” at 205 and 208. See also Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Ibid.*, p. 210 et 215-216. The meaning of the reference to the *ḥever ha-Yehudim* found on Hasmonean coinage is debated. For some it refers to the Jewish people of Judea as a whole, whereas for others it refers to a council, a kind of *boulē*. See in particular Christian-George Schwentzel, *Juifs et Nabatéens*, 88–91; Eyal Regev, *The Hasmoneans: Ideology, Archaeology, Identity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 186–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Smith, “The Gentiles in Judaism,” 210, note 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (London: Oxford University Press – Clarendon Press, 1995), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Schwartz, *ibid.*, note 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Avidov, *Not Reckoned among Nations. The Origins of the So-called “Jewish Question” in Roman Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 110–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See Michel Humbert, *“Municipium” et “civitas sine suffragio” : l’organisation de la conquête jusqu’à la guerre sociale* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1978); *idem*, “Le *status civitatis*. Identité et identification du *civis Romanus*,” in *Homo, caput, persona: La costruzione giuridica dell’identità nell’esperienza romana*, ed. Alessandro Corbino, Michel Humbert and Giovanni Negri (Pavia: IUSS Press, 2010), 139–73, esp. 140–41. See also Myles Lavan’s article in this volume, in which he writes: “In the earliest phases of Roman expansion, naturalisation was employed as a means of organising and controlling conquered populations. It was a status imposed on rebellious, not loyal, aliens – a striking inversion of later practice.” [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See Edmond Frézouls, “Rome et les Latins dans les premières décennies du IIe siècle av. J.-C.,” *Ktèma* 6 (1981): 115–32, who emphasizes that the Roman policy in the second century BCE completely went against the conventional (and later) image of Rome as granting citizenship “generously”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. On Roman “generosity” in attributing citizenship, see Philippe Gauthier, “ ‘Générosité’ romaine et ‘avarice’ grecque : sur l’octroi du droit de cité,” already referred to in the introduction to this volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Annals* 11.24, trans. by J. C. Yardley, *Tacitus. The Annals: The Reigns of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2008), 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. On the chronology of Hyrcanus’s conquests, see the recent article by Israel Shatzman, “The Expansionist Policy of John Hyrcanus and his Relations with Rome,” in *Iudaea socia – Iudaea capta. Atti del convegno internazionale Cividale del Friuli, 22-24 settembre 2011*, ed. G. Urso (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012), 29–77. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Chris Seeman, *Rome and Judea in Transition: Hasmonean Relations with the Roman Republic and the Evolution of the High Priesthood*, American University Studies Series VII, Theology and Religion 325 (New York: P. Lang, 2013), 203–43. For a different perspective, see Shatzman, “The Expansionist Policy of John Hyrcanus”; Samuel Rocca, “The Hasmonean State and Rome: A New Appraisal,” *REJ* 173/3-4 (2014): 263–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See for example 2 Maccabees 5:6, 23; 9:19; 15:30; *Letter of Aristeas* 3, 126. In 2 Maccabees, the *politai* are not the citizens of Jerusalem, but the members of the *ethnos* as a whole. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Caroline Carlier, *La cité de Moïse: le peuple juif chez Philon d’Alexandrie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 77-126. In the *Letter of Aristeas*, for instance, the Egyptian Jews are the fellow citizens of the high priest in Jerusalem (see *Letter of Aristeas* 36, 44). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See for example 2 Maccabees 4:11; 8:17; 4 Maccabees 17:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Carlier, *La cité de Moïse*, 97-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See *Ant.* 14.228, 232, 234, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See *Letter of Aristeas* 310 for a reference to a Jewish *politeuma* in Alexandria; P. Polit. Jud. for references to a Jewish *politeuma* in Herakleopolis (James M. S. Cowey and Klaus Maresch [eds.], *Urkunden des Politeuma der Juden von Herakleopolis (144/3–133/2 v. Chr.) (P. Polit. Iud.)*, Papyrologica Coloniensia, Sonderreihe XXIX [Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2001]). For the epigraphical evidence from Cyrene, see Gert Lüderitz and Joyce M. Reynolds, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1983). See also the article of Peter Oakes in the present volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Ritter, *Judeans in the Greek Cities*. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.116. Trans. by Ralph Marcus, LCL, 509. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See Katell Berthelot, Philanthrôpia judaica*.* *Le débat autour de la “misanthropie” des lois juives dans l’Antiquité* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003), 272–79; Carlier, *La cité de Moïse*, 171–217. A similar idea, *mutatis mutandis*, is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians (2:12), when the author recalls the Gentile Christians that before their conversion, they were “aliens from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise” (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆςπολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας). In this case the *politeia tou Israēl* is equivalent to membership with the people of Israel.

    Before Philo, there may be one example of the idea that a proselyte becomes a fellow citizen of the Jews. It is found in 2 Maccabees, in the letter written by Antiochus IV when he gets ill and declares that he wants to become a Jew: “To the respected Jews, fellow citizens, many greetings, health and success (from) the King and Governor Antiochus” (2 Macc 9,19: Τοῖς χρηστοῖς Ιουδαίοις τοῖς πολίταις πολλὰ χαίρειν καὶ ὑγιαίνειν καὶ εὖ πράττειν βασιλεὺς καὶ στρατηγὸς Ἀντίοχος; trans. by Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* [Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008], 350). However, the text is full of irony, and the king is merely imitating the Jews’ language. Daniel R. Schwartz aptly writes in his commentary: “The king speaks like a Jew (as promised in v. 17 and exemplified in v. 20), denoting the Jews as his ‘fellow citizens’ […]. This too is part of the joke” (Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 361). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. According to Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, the Jewish *politeia* in Philo is Jewishness itself, a status and a way of life: “Le sentiment qui s’impose est que la *politeia* que Philon revendique pour ses coreligionnaires n’est rien d’autre que la judéité elle-même, comme statut individuel et comme mode de vie conforme aux préceptes de la Tora » (*Un peuple de philosophes*, 157–58). However, see Carlier, *La cité de Moïse*, 126, 202–3 (on *politeia* as the community of the *politai*). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Spec.* 1.51-53, transl. F. Colson, LCL, 127–9 (slightly modified). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Philippe Gauthier, “La citoyenneté en Grèce et à Rome : participation et intégration,” *Ktèma* 6 (1981): 167–79 (at 169 and 171); Claude Nicolet, *Le métier de citoyen dans la Rome républicaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 19762). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Gauthier, *ibid.*, 172–73. See also Anna Heller and Anne-Valérie Pont (ed.), *Patrie d’origine et patries électives : les citoyennetés multiples dans le monde grec d’époque romaine : actes du colloque international de Tours, 6-7 novembre 2009* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, Paris: diff. de Boccard, 2012), esp. at 9–15. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Gauthier, *ibid.*, 172 (my translation from the French). See for example Cicero, *De Legibus* 1.23; *De Re Publica* 1.49. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. However, as Gauthier emphasizes, in Polybius’s political thought one finds significant evolutions which show that a *polis* could now be conceived of in a very different way, for example in connection with a *koinon*. See Polybius, 2.37.10-11, and Gauthier, *ibid.*, 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. The synagogue was of course a community institution, but it was local. According to Philo, the *politeia* of Israel extends much farther than the local community in a given place; it includes all the observant members of the people, no matter where they are. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Trans. by Walter T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria. On Virtues: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 65 (very slightly modified). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See Berthelot, *Philanthrôpia judaica*, 37–43. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Roman Antiquities* 1.9.4, trans. Earnest Cary, LCL, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. On these stereotypes, conveyed mainly by Athenian voices, see Plato, *Laws* XII, 949 e; Thucydides, 1.144.2 and 2.39.1-2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.17.1-2; François Ollier, *Le mirage spartiate*, 2 vol. (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1933-1943). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Against Apion* 2.260-261, trans. John M. G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus. Against Apion* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 317–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See also *Against Apion* 2.210. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See *Against Apion* 2.40. On this passage see Sylvie Honigman, “Philon, Flavius Josèphe, et la citoyenneté alexandrine : vers une utopie politique,” *JJS* 48/1 (1997): 62–90; Katell Berthelot, *Philanthrôpia judaica*, 42–3, 340; Barclay, *Flavius Josephus. Against Apion*, 190–91. On Josephus’s proximity to Dionysius in the *Against Apion*, see David L. Balch, “Two Apologetic Encomia: Dionysius on Rome and Josephus on the Jews,” *JSJ* 13/1-2 (1982): 102–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See for instance Tacitus, *Annals* 11.24 (see note 38 above). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For a similar position attributed to the Spartan king Agis by Plutarch, see *Life of Agis* 10.3. This point represents a major difference between the views of Philo and Josephus concerning the proselytes and those of the rabbis later on. On the importance of lineage in the rabbinic worldview and its implications for converts, see Gary G. Porton, *The Stranger Within Your Gates: Converts and Conversion in Rabbinic Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, chapter 10; Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)