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Judea/Israel under the Greek Empires*

In 331–30 BCE, by military victory, the Macedonian Alexander ended the Persian Empire. He defeated the Persian king Darius at Gaugamela, advanced to a welcoming Babylon, and progressed to Persepolis where he burned Xerxes' palace supposedly in retaliation for Persia's invasions of Greece some 150 years previously (Diodorus 17.72.1-6). Thus one empire gave way to another by a different name. So began the Greek empires that dominated Judea/Israel for the next two hundred or so years, the focus of this chapter.

Is a postcolonial discussion of these empires possible and what might it highlight? Considerable difficulties stand in the way. One is the weight of conventional analyses and disciplinary practices which have framed the discourse with emphases on the various roles of the great men, the ruling state, military battles, and Greek settlers, and have paid relatively little regard to the dynamics of imperial power from the perspectives of native inhabitants, the impact on peasants and land, and poverty among non-elites, let alone any reciprocal impact between colonizers and colonized. Such approaches can be readily defended (and will necessarily be evident in this chapter in places) with the recognition of the scarcity and nature of the sources.¹ Such a dearth makes the task of assessing Judea/Israel's negotiation of life as a province of these Greek empires difficult. Where sources do exist they are largely 'top-down' from elite powerful males. It is hard enough to hear the subaltern speak even when there are non-elite sources, as Gayatri Spivak has emphasized, let alone when such

* My appreciation to Dr. Ariel Feldman for his helpful responses to an earlier draft of this chapter.

1. See, for example, Walbank, 'Sources for the Period', 1-2; Grabbe, *A History of the Jews*, 23-24; Bar-Kochva, *The Image of the Jews*. Paying particular attention to archaeological sources, Berlin, 'Between Large Forces'. Berlin identifies 'two forces' more powerful than battles, namely 'commercial opportunities and religious affiliation' (3).

sources do not exist.² The surviving historical sources, then, are patchy, sporadic, and largely unconcerned with non-elites and their circumstances.

We might also wonder, as Roger Bagnall does in a helpful article, whether terms such as ‘colonial’ or postcolonial are even commensurate with these Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires.³ Bagnall tests several definitions, similarities, and differences, before deciding that ultimately it is the imposition and inequalities of imperial power that matter for a postcolonial investigation.⁴ Such impositions and inequalities of power are certainly in play for these Greek empires though engagement with Fanon, Bhabha, and other postcolonial theorists might direct our attention more to the reciprocal, hybrid, and ambivalent nature of those interactions. But how such an investigation might be conducted is not obvious. Bagnall engages the suggestion of Edouard Will to use anthropological and sociological approaches developed from the contemporary studies of colonization and decolonization. Will suggests creating a comparative model (with appropriate modifications for context) and then testing the Ptolemaic (and Seleucid) data against it.⁵ Such a task is beyond the scope of this chapter, even if an all-embracing yet nuanced model was possible and adequate ancient data were accessible. Yet while a model and the requisite data are not available, postcolonial discussions offer insights into the dynamics of power operative in contexts of (de)colonization. While it is certainly true that by far the dominant concern of postcolonial work has been with *contemporary* expressions of imperialism-colonization, there are insights of relevance for the Greek imperialisms under consideration in this chapter.

More reasonable, then, within the space limits here is the use of what Fernando Segovia has called a ‘postcolonial optic’, a ‘way of looking’ at the complexities of imperial-colonial experiences (including dynamics of power, gender, class, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientations), and at the visions of societal interactions and humanity operative in these situations.⁶ The opening chapter of this volume has identified some of the key dynamics concerning the exercise of power in imperial-colonial contexts

2. Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’

3. Bagnall, ‘Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt’.

4. Bagnall, ‘Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt’, 229-33. The classic distinction comes from Edward Said (*Culture and Imperialism*, 9) in which imperialism refers to the practice, theory, and attitudes of a dominating center over distant territory, while colonialism refers to the center establishing settlements in the distant territory.

5. Bagnall, ‘Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt’, 225, 235-36; Will, ‘Pour une “anthropologie colonial”’.

6. Segovia, ‘Mapping’.

that a postcolonial optic foregrounds: the inequalities of power, a focus on the colonized and their agencies and voices, and situations marked by ambivalence, mimicry, and consensual-conflictive hybridity. Segovia appropriately wants to privilege the periphery over the center and the diverse colonized over the imperial—though the binaries are unstable—but given the lack of sources, a top-down perspective, at least in part, cannot be avoided in a postcolonially oriented historical discussion of these Greek empires.⁷ There is no escaping, for example, the fact that the sources give most attention to military actions and the ideology of ruling power that informed them and little to how local common people engaged them. Postcolonial concerns and dynamics, while emerging unevenly, direct our attention to the reciprocal relations being enacted between imperializer and colonized, the ambivalences created, and the often invisible powerless who are implicated in contexts that are simultaneously consensual and conflictual, accommodative and disruptive. A postcolonial optic is a means of opening up an imaginative vista to identify likely ambivalences not explicit in the surviving historical data.

It might be helpful to recall the discussion of three key terms from Chapter 1. *Ambivalence* denotes the ambiguity, the instability of the imperial–colonized situation, especially the dynamic of both attraction toward and resistance of the imperializing power.⁸ Fanon captures this ambivalence in his statement that ‘the colonized subject is a persecuted man [*sic*] who is forever dreaming of becoming the persecutor’.⁹ A key part of this conflictual-complicit dynamic is, as Bhabha emphasizes,¹⁰ that of *mimicry* wherein the subordinated repeats and appropriates the imperializer’s language, culture, structures etc., and thereby confuses the ‘simple’ dynamic of imperial ‘power over’. Mimicry occurs in the colonized’s cultural context but the presence of this invasive ‘other’ disrupts local culture, creating an emerging *hybridity* and new space. In turn, though, mimicry can never be an exact re-presentation; it is, rather in Bhabha’s famous phrase, similar, ‘almost the same but not quite’,¹¹ an imperfect copy. It has the potential for parody, menace, instability; it often leads to mockery thereby challenging and decentering imperial

7. Segovia (‘Mapping’, 70–74) notes that much postcolonial discussion has focused on ‘imperial–colonial formations’ in ‘the eighteenth through to the twentieth centuries’ while the empires from which the biblical texts emerge and which Judea/Israel negotiated have received relatively little attention. It is this lack of attention that this chapter and volume seek to redress.

8. Bhabha, *The Location*, 85ff, 102ff.

9. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 16.

10. Bhabha, *The Location*, 90–92.

11. Bhabha, *The Location*, 86.

authority. For Bhabha, the imperial–colonial interaction is reciprocal in impacting all parties. The mixing or hybridity of languages and cultures identifies a crucial interdependence of, or reciprocity between, imperial power and the colonized, constituting what Bhabha calls an ‘in-between’ or interstitial or third space marked by contest and hybridity, constructed and deconstructed identities, negotiated traditions, and diverse cultural differences.¹²

One dynamic not given significant attention in Chapter 1 above will come to the fore in this chapter. This dynamic concerns the phenomenon of horizontal violence whereby fractures, including violent fractures, occur among those under power especially as vertical power is exerted on them. Frantz Fanon, in his study of imperial power dynamics in the French colony of Algeria, examines the creation and role of horizontal violence as vertical imperial power is asserted.

The native is a being hemmed in... The first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits. This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess; his dreams are of action and aggression... The colonized man will first manifest this aggression which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the natives beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime... The settler keeps alive in the native an anger which he deprives of an outlet; the native is trapped in the tight links of the chains of colonialism. But we have seen that inwardly the settler can only achieve a pseudo petrification. The native’s muscular tension finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions—in tribal warfare, in feuds between septs, and in quarrels between individuals.¹³

In Fanon’s analysis, horizontal struggles—whether tribal or individual, physical or verbal—are multi-faceted. They result in part from subjugated people being hemmed in and contained by imperial controls and from restriction without outlet. Antagonisms and fractures also exist ‘between the colonized excluded from the benefits of colonialism and their counterparts who manage to turn the colonial system to their advantage’.¹⁴ And fractures attest to considerable imperial (vertical) pressures. Fanon observes that ‘violence among the colonized will spread in proportion to the violence exerted by the colonial regime’.¹⁵

12. Bhabha, *The Location*, 1-5, 37; on the period as an ‘intensely difficult, volatile, and creative time’ involving the redefinition of Judea as ‘competing versions of tradition negotiated with competing imperial powers’, see Kurtz, ‘The Social Construction’.

13. Fanon, *Wretched*, 1963 edn, 52-54; 2004 edn, 15-16.

14. Fanon, *Wretched*, 2004 edn, 67.

15. Fanon, *Wretched*, 2004 edn, 46-47.

In addition to containment, horizontal struggles develop because the oppressed mimic, as Bhabha also emphasizes, the competitiveness and violent domination that mark the imperial situation. Violent domination 'has been deposited in his own bones'. The subjugated yearn for power while simultaneously and angrily resisting the assertion of it over them. Yet as Fanon also argues, horizontal violence is a means of avoiding direct confrontation with the oppressor since the oppressed know that they cannot win such struggles. Rather, they turn on each other with attacks that substitute for attacks on the oppressor. Assuming imitation of the oppressor, and noting the ambivalence and simultaneity of displacement of yet identification with the oppressor, Paulo Freire observes in relation to Latin American struggles, 'Because the oppressor exists within their oppressed comrades, when they attack those comrades they are indirectly attacking the oppressor as well'.¹⁶ That is, horizontal violence occurs as oppressed groups in negotiating imperial power self-protectively substitute attacks on other oppressed groups for direct confrontation with the imperializer whose power seems too great. Lashing out against similarly oppressed groups deflects open and direct attacks on the too-powerful oppressor even as it mimics their power. Horizontal violence thus attests the ambivalences of the imperial-colonial situation, simultaneously the restricting pressure of overwhelming imperial power, its imitation or mimicry as both an expression of desire and a strategy of resistance, and its engagement by avoidance and attacks on substitute groups.¹⁷

My argument is that a postcolonial reading of this period illumines some of the ambivalent dynamics that comprise Judea/Israel's continual yet shifting negotiation of the imperial power of the Greek empires. The plural term 'empires' signals a significant way in which this chapter differs from the preceding and following ones. While those chapters focus on a single power ruling Judea/Israel—Assyria, Babylonia, Persia,

16. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 44.

17. For example, Josephus attests increasing fractures in Judea/Israel and Jerusalem during the 66–70 war as imperial pressure intensifies (e.g. *J.W.* 4.377–97, 503, 544–84; 5.1–38; Eleazar, John, Simon). See Chapter 6. Carter argues for the phenomenon in relation to Matthew's Gospel ('Matthew: Empire, Synagogues') 285–308, esp. 303–308. For a discussion of recent European empires, see Abernethy, *The Dynamics*. Abernethy notes horizontal violence between Hindus and Muslims in India and between competing groups in Kenya and Malaya under British imperialism, in Vietnam under French control, and among groups in the former Belgium Congo. For black-on-black violence in South Africa during the 1980's and 1990's struggle with apartheid and white power, see Hamber, 'Who Pays for Peace?' 238–41.

Rome—this chapter focuses on multiple Greek empires with divergent metropolises:¹⁸ Alexander the Macedonian, the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Seleucids of Syria, and the Hasmoneans of Judea/Israel. The continuity among the first three entities exists in that Ptolemy and Seleucus—after whom both dynasties were named—were companions of Alexander.

I begin in Section I with the power asserted by the Macedonian king Alexander ('the Great' so-called) and his successors (the *Diadochi*) who after his death in 323 BCE fought one another for his spoils of wealth, land, power, and legacy (ca. 323–ca. 280 BCE). Then in Section II, I discuss the Ptolemaic dynasty based in Alexandria (ca. 280–200 BCE). Third, in Section III, after the battle at Paneion, the center of power over Judea/Israel moves to the Seleucid dynasty based in Antioch in Syria (ca. 200 BCE). At first, it was 'business-as-usual' in imperial ways (200–175 BCE), but then, in Section IV, arises the perplexing terror of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE). Section V considers its aftermath, including Israel's independence in ca. 142 BCE until, the Roman takeover in 63 BCE. I observe the not surprising dynamic of mimicry that emerges as Israel, now independent from empire yet marinated in it, undertakes its own imperial expansion until it loses its independence to the Romans in 63 BCE. In each context I identify ways in which power was asserted and justified, and, where possible, the ambivalent ways in which power was experienced and negotiated.

The diaspora will not be in focus in this discussion, nor will interactions with the Samaritans. Limits of space often prescribe a generalized more than a detailed consideration of numerous complex issues.

Finally, the matter of nomenclature needs consideration. In imperial contexts, naming imposes power and determines significance as Josephus, an interstitial, colonized, elite, Jewish, Flavian client, understood very well. Commenting on the changing names of nations, Josephus observes somewhat polemically that 'it is the Greeks who are responsible for this change of nomenclature, for when in after-ages they rose to power, they appropriated even the glories of the past, embellishing the nations with names which they could understand and imposing on them forms of government as though they were descended from themselves' (*Ant.* 1.121). Claiming the past, renaming and rewriting it, and inserting oneself where it is advantageous to do so and humiliating for the subjugated are common imperial strategies. In the same process of naming, colonized peoples assert their own identities, recreating (a version of) their past, language, and identity, and constructing a third space and face.

18. Bagnall ('Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt', 231) disputes the language of 'metropole'.

What, then, to call the land and people in focus in this study? A wide range of terms exists among scholars, with perhaps Palestine being a favorite. According to Arrian (*Anab.* 7.9.8), the conqueror Alexander asserts his claim of ownership in identifying three areas, Coele-Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. Appian (*Syr.* 8.50) identifies areas of Syria, Coele-Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. Dio Cassius subsequently endorses a threefold division of Coele-Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia (Dio Cassius, 53.12.7). The Ptolemies seemed to continue the Persian use of the official name Judah¹⁹ within the larger territory of what they called the province of Syria and Phoenicia.²⁰

When local peoples name themselves, naming can also be act of resistance, contesting attempts to ‘own’ land, traditions, and peoples, and negating the defining power of the colonizer. The name ‘Israel’ pervades the Pentateuchal tradition, writings that have significant import throughout this period as the following discussion will attest. Under the Hasmoneans, the name ‘Judea’ emerges into prominence. In turn, the term ‘Israel’ has some prominence in several second-century texts (Judith, 32×) including one of the accounts of the Maccabean struggles (over 50 times in 1 Maccabees) and on the coinage of the rebels of 66–70 CE and 132–35 CE.²¹ Perhaps Israel was the nomenclature of preference among some under the power of these Greek empires at least in the third and second centuries. Given this uncertainty yet recognizing the importance of the issue and a possible preference of its subjugated peoples, I will use the hybrid form Judea/Israel throughout as a symbol of imperial–colonial contest.

I.

Alexander the Macedonian (336–323), his Conquests, and Successors (*Diadochi*)

Alexander was the sort of man about whom legends quickly developed, making historical discussion difficult.²² When he died in 323 BCE at the

19. Kindler, ‘Silver Coins’.

20. Hölbl, *A History*, 23. On variations in name and geography for the area commonly referred to by scholars as Coele-Syria, see Bosworth, ‘The Government of Syria’, 48–50.

21. Goodblatt, ‘From Judea to Israel’. See also the discussion below in Chapter 6.

22. The bibliography on Alexander is extensive. Helpful discussions include Galinsky, *Classical and Modern Interactions*, esp. ‘Multiculturalism in Greece and Rome’, 116–53; Bosworth, *Alexander and the East*; Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*;

age of thirty-three, he had as king, general, and warrior, conquered the world's major super power Persia, and created an empire stretching from Greece in the west to India and Afghanistan in the east and to Egypt in the south. Here follows a brief, selective, and 'top-down' account (no doubt a mix of fact and fiction) of his accomplishments.

In 336 BCE, after his father king Philip II of Macedonia was murdered, the twenty-year old Alexander became king. Immediately in 336–335, he secured his position as head of the Greek states and harshly subdued and enslaved non-submissive Celtic tribes in Thrace and the city of Thebes. The severity of the action sent a clear message to the other Greek states who readily recognized that compliance was the best course for survival.

By 334 BCE, Alexander, well-schooled in an ideology of kingship that valued military performance, launched his action against the Achemenid or Persian Empire, crossing the Dardanelles into Asia at the head of some 30,000 foot-soldiers (including archers and javelin throwers) and 5,000 cavalry. This action, inherited it seems from his father and perhaps intended initially to free Greek cities from Persian control in Asia Minor, lasted for the rest of his life and ultimately consumed him. He did not return to Macedonia. He engaged Persian forces in battle, initially winning victories at the Granicus river in northwest Asia Minor in 334 and at Issus, the crossroads of Asia Minor and northern Syria, in 333 BCE. The Persian king Darius III escaped, though Alexander captured Darius' mother, wife, and children.

Alexander headed south to protect his southern flank, taking control of Syria, Judea/Israel, and Egypt (without a battle) in 332–331. In Egypt he was proclaimed Pharaoh and son of the Egyptian god Osiris, founded the city of Alexandria, visited the famous oracle of Zeus-Ammon at Siwah Oasis, and then marched his army northeast crossing the Tigris and Euphrates rivers into the heart of the Persian Empire. At Gaugamela he again defeated Darius in October 331 but again Darius escaped as he had done at Issus. Alexander entered Babylon and Perseopolis, the Persian capital, which Alexander looted and burned, gaining vast wealth. He pursued the fleeing Darius to Ecbatana and beyond. By mid-330, however, Darius had been murdered by Bessus, one of his own satraps. Alexander honored Darius with burial in the tombs of the Persian kings and in 329 captured and executed the murderer Bessus.

Roisman, *Brill's Companion*; Worthington, *Alexander the Great*; Lane Fox, *The Classical World*, 221-32; Green, *The Hellenistic Age*; Heckel and Tritle, *Alexander the Great*; Anson, *Alexander the Great*.

Alexander was not just the victor over Darius; he established himself as king of Persia on the basis of his military victory. For the next three years (330–327), he continued to pacify the eastern Persian Empire (modern day eastern Iran) and invaded India. In 326 he defeated king Porus of the Punjab in western India at the Hydaspes river. Weary of the never-ending campaign, his army revolted and he turned back. At Susa in 324 he organized a five-day, Persian-style, wedding in which he married two women, one of whom was Stateira, eldest daughter of the defeated Darius. Women and arranged marriages secure imperial power. Some ninety of his officers married Persian women. A further army revolt took place when Alexander tried to include Persian troops in his army. Alexander's response was to execute some leaders and increase army pay.

His attention, apparently, turned to the southwest and he formulated plans to extend his power into Arabia. But at Babylon he became ill—malaria? poison?—and died in 323 at Babylon at the age of thirty-three. In an astute quest for legitimacy as his successor, Ptolemy took Alexander's body from Damascus ca. 322/1 to Memphis in Egypt (Diodorus 18.28.3-6).

First Maccabees, looking back on Alexander's deeds from the perspective of those under power, summarizes some of the means by which he imposed his power and subjugated native peoples.

He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him. After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. (1 Macc. 1:2-5)

Military power, victory over opponents, execution of kings, acquisition of much territory, plunder of the lands and the inhabitants of defeated territory, the extraction of tribute, the establishment of unchallengeable power, and much pride in his enormous accomplishments of domination constitute Alexander's profile as king according to 1 Maccabees. What is not made explicit is the enormous cost to human lives and communities.

Despite his numerous wives, Alexander left no adult heir. Power struggles broke out among his generals who strove to be his successor, continue his legacy, gain his spoils, and establish their own kingship and economic gain on the basis of military power.²³ The *Diadochi* (successors) battled each other for some forty or so years through a series of

23. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 455-57.

military campaigns and varying fortunes.²⁴ By around 280 BCE a three-fold division of ruling spheres emerged. Antigonos Gonatas established the Antigonid dynasty of kings in Macedonia that lasted until its defeat by Rome in 168 BCE. Seleucus established the Seleucid dynasty based in Syria and stretching across western Turkey to Afghanistan. Over the next few centuries it gradually lost territory and was conquered by the Roman, Pompey Magnus, in 64 BCE. The third area was based in Egypt under Ptolemy Soter I who established the Ptolemaic dynasty which lasted until Cleopatra's death in 31 BCE, when it was defeated by the Roman Octavian, the future emperor Augustus, at the battle of Actium.

Alexander's Metanarrative

What was Alexander trying to accomplish through his extraordinary activity and accomplishments? Historians have wrestled with this question and offered explanations emphasizing variously cultural, economic, religious, and political metanarratives. Older analyses emphasized motives of cultural evangelism, of civilizing 'barbarians' with superior Greek culture, and establishing a cosmopolitan world with a 'fusion' of Western and Eastern cultures, the unity of humankind, and the common fatherhood of Zeus.²⁵ Others have seen political motives, in which as a pragmatist he sought to use the expertise and skills of local people to enhance his own (Macedonian) interests and rule.²⁶ Others have posited economic interests derived from control of the land and wealth of the Persian Empire first through booty and plunder, then by taxes and levies, and subsequently through new economic interactions from settlements, trade, and access to resources.²⁷ Others have suggested that he was, as leader of all the Greek states, set on military revenge against Persia for age-old violations against Greek states inheriting an anti-Persian mission from his father Philip whom he sought to exceed.²⁸

Alexander, clearly, was a complex character, the sources are diverse, and simple explanations fail in the face of personal and circumstantial complexities. Some of these options, though, are immediately less compelling than others. The proposals that center on grand all-embracing

24. Fox, *Classical World*, 233-44.

25. Tarn, 'Alexander the Great', 123-66; rejected by Badian, 'Alexander the Great', 425-44; Bosworth, 'Alexander and the Iranians'; Todd, 'W. W. Tarn and the Alexander Ideal'; for a modified reassertion, see Thomas, 'Alexander the Great'.

26. Bosworth, 'Alexander and the Iranians'.

27. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings'. See further below.

28. Brunt, 'The Aims of Alexander'; Fredrickmeyer, 'On the Final Aims of Philip II'.

motivations such as civilizing barbarians, fusing cultures, creating economic order, and imposing political visions seem less convincing. Better explanations run along the various lines of Alexander's performance as a king and warrior in securing power and wealth, the satisfactions of contest and conquest, getting access to riches and resources from territory, taxes, tribute, and trade, and attending to the pragmatic necessities of dealing with unfolding circumstances and negotiating competing and complex demands. Among these various and complex factors, I highlight three important aspects of his metanarrative.

One central dimension concerns an ideology of kingship articulated 'by political and philosophical speculation on kingship' in the fourth century, a tradition that included the work of Isocrates, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle among others. This ideology was embodied to a significant extent in the reign of Alexander's father, Philip II, and was embraced by Alexander's successors over the following centuries.²⁹ In this ideal formulation, the king was 'supreme commander, dispenser of justice [and] god's representative on earth'.³⁰ The role of warrior was crucial and shaped by several realities. One was the tradition of the Homeric cult of heroic personality embodied by the successful warrior-king, particularly by Alexander's ancestor Achilles, as well as by his father Philip.³¹ A second influence shaping the warrior-king role was the pragmatic realities of political power. Hellenistic kings had to create an 'aura of military success and strength' to exercise their power.³² Military victory meant not only the display of the warrior-king's bravery and courage, but also the acquiring of territory—what Diodorus called 'spear-won territory' (18.43.1, *δορίκτητον*)—'a demonstrable proof of merit and an uncontrovertible claim on the loyalty of troops and subjects'.³³ Conquest or victory allowed the king to be known as protector of the people, their savior and benefactor. The latter role involved the dispensing of great benefactions or sums of wealth to troops, cities, and 'friends'. Kings were expected to be wealthy but they were to use their wealth in generous benefactions.³⁴ Doing so of course required further victory and

29. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 75-84; see also Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings'; Murray, 'Philosophy and Monarchy'.

30. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 79.

31. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander and Philip', 304-6.

32. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 459.

33. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 66, 82.

34. See Bringmann, 'The King as Benefactor', who identifies public benefactions comprising various buildings including temples, festivals especially for gods, daily supplies and food for cities, and relief after disasters (war, famine, earthquakes), all of which secured the indebtedness of gratitude and loyalty.

much loot and booty from war in order to ensure gratitude and maintain loyalty, secure mercenary troops, and augment one's aura of military success and strength.³⁵ An ideology that understood kingship to be performative, both to gain and to maintain power, provides a helpful context in which to understand Alexander's activity as warrior-king and that of his successors over the next two or so centuries.

Military might was, then, fundamental to Alexander's empire-building, as with the empires of his successors. He battled and sieged his way to domination over the land, resources, and inhabitants of his empire. His military skill, strategy, demand for loyalty from his officers, courage, physical power, and magnanimous rewards were legendary. So too was his black stallion Bucephalas, who died either of wounds in the battle of Hydaspes or of old age (Plutarch, *Alexander* 6, 61; Arrian, *Anab.* 5.19.4-6) after whom he named a city Bucephala.³⁶ Alexander's sieges of Tyre and Gaza on his way south to Egypt in 332 BCE cannot but have left a terrifying impression on territories such as Judea/Israel, an intimidating display of Macedonian superiority in the tactics and execution of war.

Further, armies cannot exist without extracting supplies of food, equipment, and men from local communities. Alexander's actions also expressed dominance as they inflicted material hardship on local communities by these means. Military victories, though, not only subdue territory, people, and resources; they are coded with messages of the victor's cultural superiority, political and economic opportunity, and religious privilege and favoritism, while the defeated are consigned to inferiority, socio-economic exploitation, and divine abandonment and disfavor.

A second aspect of Alexander's metanarrative emerges from the ideology of warrior-kingship. While some have seen his military mission fuelled at least in part by a desire for revenge on Persia for previous humiliations (Diodorus 16.89.1-2; 17.4.9),³⁷ Austin argues that from Alexander on through his successors the connection between Hellenistic kings and the acquisition of wealth through conquest is an important factor that has been much neglected in scholarship.³⁸ The two motivations of course are not mutually exclusive; the latter in fact is closely

35. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 68-74, 81-84; Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 459.

36. Anderson, 'Bucephalas and his Legend', 10-12.

37. Fredricksmeier, 'Alexander's Religion and Divinity', 260-61.

38. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 454-55.

linked to the former. Acquiring land was often foundational for wealth and ‘possession by force of arms was the surest and best’ (Polybius 28.1.4). Land brought booty and loot, agricultural production for tax, people for labor and tribute, resources and opportunities for trade, and territory to reward allies. Plutarch indicates that Alexander set out with very limited funds, ‘no more than seventy talents’ (*Alexander* 15.1-2; *Mor.* 327d-e, 342d), yet he gains huge wealth in his conquests. Austin styles Alexander’s move across the Hellespont into Asia and subsequently to Persia as a quest for wealth, both expressing power and funding increases in power.³⁹

The Macedonian conquest under Alexander can be described as two things rolled into one, a booty raid on an epic scale and the permanent conquest of vast tracts of territory together with the dependent, tributary peoples. On both counts the expedition surpasses or at least equals any other single war in the whole of ancient history. The sources quote fabulous figures for the captured Persian treasures, 50000 talents of silver from Susa, 120000 from Persepolis... And that of course was what the expedition was all about... If the Macedonian invasion of Asia was possibly the largest plundering and conquering expedition of its kind in ancient history, then the Age of the Successors can also be seen as another record, as the most bitter and prolonged dispute over sharing out the spoils of victory between the conquerors, a struggle that went on for a generation or more and affected virtually the entire Greek and Asiatic world of the time... Individual leaders fought wars, made and unmade treaties with and against each other, over who was going to get what.

Austin’s contribution is to show the interconnections among notions of kingship, conquest, and the valency and necessity of wealth in gaining, maintaining, and enhancing imperial power not only in Alexander’s rule but in those of the Hellenistic kings that succeed him. The kingly ideal of a generous king-patron could only exist on the foundation of a successful warrior-king: ‘a king was expected to deliver the goods, above all to his followers. Hence the economic rapacity of the kings, consumers of wealth on an unending scale.’⁴⁰

In addition to a performative and conquering vision of military kingship, and the key role of the procurement of wealth necessary for that vision’s enactment, a third factor in the metanarrative of Alexander and his successors comprises his religious identity and aspirations, especially the much-debated issue of his quest for deification. Scholars regularly rehearse a predictable progression of Alexander’s growing

39. Austin, ‘Hellenistic Kings’, 454-55.

40. Austin, ‘Hellenistic Kings’, 463; Plutarch, *Alexander* 15.2-3.

determination to be recognized as more than 'like a god' and to be recognized as a god. It starts with Alexander's typical kingly claim to have divine patronage and protection for his rule, thereby setting himself in a cosmic context and aligning himself with the purposes of the gods, especially Zeus.⁴¹ His father Philip does not seem to have been deified but gained some elevated status in cultic honoring.⁴² Bosworth notes that Alexander was not content with being a 'distant descendant of Zeus through his heroic ancestors' (maternal: Aecus and Achilles; paternal: Heracles with Perseus descended from Zeus) but comes to claim that 'he was the direct son of the god', Zeus-Ammon (Arrian, *Anab.* 3.3.2-3; Plutarch, *Alexander* 27.5-6). His visit to the shrine at Sewah Oasis where he was hailed as son of Zeus-Ammon seems to have been very significant. His subsequent promotion of the paternity of Zeus-Ammon (often at the expense of the paternity of Philip) and insistence on *proskynesis*, an act of homage practiced in the Persian court toward his enemy king Darius, caused considerable disquiet, since the former was dishonoring and Greeks associated the latter action with honoring the gods. The act was ambiguous in that it established a unified court procedure, elevated Alexander with Darius, yet also, for some including Alexander himself, rendered Alexander not just the son of a god but a god manifested among humans.⁴³

Many cities in Asia Minor established cults to honor Alexander. They associated him with the predictable epithets of God, savior and benefactor, pointing to the emergence of the cults in acts of gratitude for specific benefits of power such as deliverance from and/or victory over an enemy or for preserving or granting freedom or for gifts and acts that alleviated some hardship. Usually gratitude was directed to the gods for such powerful and beneficial actions, but when Alexander the powerful king performed them, he was deemed to act like a god and gratitude was directed to him. 'The honors go to the king because he does what the god is expected to do—and often does it more effectively' (cf. Plutarch, *Alexander* 64.4).⁴⁴ Bosworth comments that after his death 'the fiction soon developed that he had been translated to heaven like Heracles' (cf. Diodorus 18.56.2).⁴⁵

41. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander's Religion and Divinity', 260-62, 270-78.

42. Badian, 'Alexander the Great', 13-15.

43. Bosworth, 'Alexander the Great Part 2'.

44. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 94.

45. Bosworth, 'Alexander the Great Part 2', 875.

How might we account for this drive for deification and of what significance is it? Fredricksmeyer argues that this drive derived from Alexander's troubled relationship with his father.⁴⁶ Alexander's initial admiration for Philip as brilliant military leader and kingly ruler gave way to rivalry, dislike, and resentment. Fearing that Philip would 'leave no great or brilliant achievements to be displayed to the world' for Alexander to accomplish (so Plutarch, *Alexander* 5.1-3), Alexander pursues three ambitions that he in fact inherited from Philip, but he did so in order to surpass him: to conquer Persia, to gain absolute monarchy, and to be deified.⁴⁷ Ian Worthington argues similarly that Alexander's 'attempts to be recognized as a god', along with his megalomania, 'are the key to so many of' Alexander's actions, as he spends his life trying to outdo his father.⁴⁸ On this reading, Alexander's drive for deification forms part of the metanarrative expressed in and making sense of his incessant godlike—powerful, ruling, benevolent—activity.

While Alexander pursued his goal of deification, he was not, it should be noted, a religious evangelist intolerant of other religious expressions. Alexander sought to adapt to and utilize local cultural and religious expressions. This posture is one that a postcolonial optic recognizes as a reciprocal relationship between colonizer and colonized. In Persia he introduced Persians into his command structure despite the opposition of some of his Macedonian officers. He embraced some ambivalence and hybridity in adopting Persian clothing, marrying Persian women, and encouraging often resistant Macedonian officers to do the same. As noted, he adopted the custom of *proskynēsis* whereby inferiors bow to superiors, a custom some of his Macedonian officers also resisted. He did not seek to wipe out local religious observances. Rather, he found in local religious expressions the opportunity to further his own religious sanction, identity, and goals. Thus he sought to sacrifice in the temple of Hercules/Melqart in Tyre. In 331 BCE, he traveled to the shrine of Ammon at the Siwah oasis where, so it is claimed, he was identified as the son of Zeus-Ammon (Plutarch, *Alexander* 27.5-6). He allied this claim to be descended from Zeus with the Egyptian notion that the Pharaoh was a son of Re, the sun god. This link established him as divine, and an agent or representative of the gods, and doing their work.

46. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander and Philip'.

47. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander and Philip', 308-9.

48. Worthington, 'Alexander, Philip', 94.

Spreading Hellenistic Economic and Cultural Influence

Alexander was not, then, a cultural evangelist promoting a vision of a unified Hellenistic world. But that does not mean his actions did not have profound consequences in creating cultural instabilities in the intersections of imperial and local power. One such effect concerns the cultural forces that Alexander's military conquests stimulated in the ancient world, forces that reverberated across thousands of miles and hundreds of years. Military conquest is never just about military victory and defeat; it is also about cultural influence and interaction. Whatever his intentions—and the evidence suggests that neither he nor his Ptolemaic and Seleucid successors set out solely with cultural imperialist intentions to Hellenize local peoples and spread Greek language, architecture, religion, etc.—nevertheless it happened to varying degrees across the territories they conquered and ruled. Alexander's campaigns and armies, with their large supporting entourage, stimulated the spread of Hellenistic culture throughout the territory he claimed, setting up cultural reciprocities, ambivalences, and hybridities. He, of course, was not the first to do so. Greek traders and travellers had preceded him but his activities and personnel provided much momentum.

As an expression of these hybridities and ambivalences, Alexander and his successors made alliances with local peoples. He educated young men in Greek ways. He incorporated Persian elites in administering parts of his empire, utilizing their local knowledge and skills while also bringing them within the sphere of Greek culture. He included Persians and other local people in his army. He encouraged intermarriage.

Whatever the intention, establishing cities was a further important means of cultural and economic impact.⁴⁹ Alexander established numerous cities, some as military outposts, some as Greek colonies, some settled by veterans. Cities opened up areas that were relatively undeveloped, for economic activity through trade and the exploitation of resources and local populations. The military outposts were means of signifying Greek power and maintaining control through terror and intimidation by their very presence, as well as invitational spaces for cultural reciprocity. Cities included Greek institutions like the agora, theater, and gymnasium, all means of spreading Greek language, moral and philosophical ideas, literature, and providing training for elite males in rhetoric. Urban centers encouraged economic and commercial activity, including collection of taxes and spread of technologies.⁵⁰

49. Fox, *Classical World*, 245-55.

50. Fox, *Classical World*, 256-65.

Contesting interpretations that consider only the cultural impact ‘of Alexander on native peoples’, a postcolonial optic emphasizes that the spread of cultural and economic influence by a conqueror and imperialist is never one way. Local religions, languages, and institutions were not instantly exterminated. Instead such interactions created hybrid cultural spaces in areas of conquest that were both appreciative and disruptive and that required assimilation and accommodation as well as contest and rejection.

Alexander and Judea/Israel

How did Judea/Israel and Jerusalem fare in these intrusions of Macedonian power? Judea/Israel was a ‘small province’ with Jerusalem its only sizeable settlement with a population of ‘between 1,000 and 1,250 people’.⁵¹ How does it negotiate this new victor and these dynamics of colonizing power?

Alexander, it seems, had little to do with the territory of Judea/Israel. After his victory at Issus in 333 BCE, he headed south down the Mediterranean coast through Phoenicia to Egypt. He took Damascus and thereby acquired Darius’ war-chest. Tyre refused to surrender or allow him to sacrifice in the temple of Hercules/Melqart and after a seven-month siege was overrun. Gaza suffered a similar fate involving a two-month siege. Egypt, not surprisingly, thereafter surrendered without a fight. Alexander showed no interest in the areas away from the coast.

We have little evidence for any contemporary Judean/Israelite meta-narrative concerning Alexander. Tcherikover states the common scholarly view that the silence of Diodorus, Arrian, and Curtius on any activity by Alexander in Judea/Israel ‘reflects historical reality...and it is doubtful whether the king even remembered the country’. Nevertheless, ‘legend filled the vacuum’.⁵²

Josephus narrates one such legendary incident in which Alexander visits Jerusalem, and in an act of reciprocity prostrates himself before the high priest, and submits to Judea/Israel’s God (*Ant.* 11.304-45). In Josephus’ scene, Alexander, in the act of besieging Tyre, requested the Jewish high priest Jaddus to send provisions for his army as well as the tribute money normally paid to Darius. Such a ‘request’ for supplies meant ‘choosing the friendship of the Macedonians’ (*Ant.* 11.317). The language of ‘friendship’ masks and mystifies the reality of submission to Macedonian power that included the coerced gathering of supplies from

51. Lipschits, ‘Jerusalem’, 163, 174.

52. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 41-42.

the minimal surplus of peasant farmers. Jaddus refuses, choosing loyalty to the Persian Darius. For such defiance, Alexander vows revenge on Jerusalem and subsequently approaches the city presumably to destroy it. In a vision from God, the anxious Jaddus is reassured to welcome Alexander. Surprisingly, Alexander prostrates himself before the high priest and God declaring that he had previously received encouragement in a vision from this God in his quest to become 'master of Asia' and victor over 'the empire of Perisa' (*Ant.* 11.333-34). He enters the temple and, instructed by the priests, sacrifices to God, learns that the book of Daniel 8:21 indicated his victory over the Persians, grants continued observance of the law in Jerusalem, suspends tribute every seventh year, permits Jews in Babylon to observe the law, and invites anyone to join his army (*Ant.* 11.336-39).

Most scholars find the account to be fictional and apologetic, even while it exhibits some dynamics typical of the imposition of imperial control on a province. Scholarly consensus is that the incident has no historical value.⁵³ The silence of the Greek historians is telling. Alexander visited other holy places as the accounts recognize. He wants to sacrifice in the temple of Hercules/Melqart in Tyre. He travels to the shrine of Ammon at the Siwah oasis where, so it is claimed, he is identified as the son of Zeus-Amun and increasingly considers himself divine thereby claiming sanction for his actions. The omission of a similar trip to the Jerusalem temple is unusual if it in fact had happened.

Likewise the scene's evident linking of Jerusalem and Alexander by means of important themes, including the (likely anachronistic) citing of Daniel 8, points to a legend rather than an historical account. Literarily, the scene comprises an *adventus* story (the highly prescribed welcome ceremony for a powerful male in a city that acknowledges and submits to his power) and an epiphany story in which the Jerusalem's deity manifests himself to protect the city/temple from the conqueror's power.⁵⁴ The scene has in a postcolonial optic the qualities of a fantasy *topos* in which the overwhelming power of a victorious general is negotiated by imagining him paying tribute to the deities of the territory and people he has conquered and by respecting their worship practices.

In this respect, the episode is resonant with Josephus' themes, desired strategies, and ambivalent location under empire. His Alexander scene

53. For a discussion, see Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 42-50; Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*, 36-37; Grabbe, *A History of the Jews*, 274-78. For an assertion of its historical accuracy (though with 'some legendary motifs' [142]), see Kaiser, 'Further Revised Thoughts'.

54. Cohen, 'Alexander the Great', 44-55.

can be read as reflecting his own hybrid status and ambivalence as a captured Jewish client of Rome's ruling Flavians, writing an account of Judea/Israel's history in the decades after the 66–70 CE war. Josephus' preferences seem to be expressed in the Alexander story thus:

- Jews are protected in their specialness by their God;
- the powerful imperial ruler recognizes Judah/Israel's God, and
- tolerates the distinctive worship practices of both the temple in Jerusalem, and of Jews in the diaspora;
- the scriptures reveal the divine will for the nations in the form of a sanctioning oracle for Alexander's power;
- imperial power is benign to which the Jews readily submit.

In Josephus' vision, reflective of his liminal position, metropolises and provinces exist in happy and mutually beneficial interaction—despite the fact that Judea/Israel had a long history and recent experience of submission to various imperial powers. For Josephus, imperial powers like Rome are God's agents. Yet his vision exists in the context of the realities of Rome's power, a recognition that identifies some hidden and disguised criticism. Titus did not behave as (the fictional) Alexander had done in entering Jerusalem. Far from acknowledging Judea/Israel's God and granting continued worship practices in the temple, he had devastated Jerusalem, burned its temple, and ended worship there.

In reality, we have no evidence for the scene Josephus constructs of Alexander the loyal servant of Israel's God and benign patron of Judea/Israel. Judea/Israel's ready submission was the most likely historical scenario, perhaps signified by an embassy to the conquering king, but so expected and insignificant that silence is its only remaining witness. Arrian hints at as much: 'the rest of Syrian-Palestine (as it is called) had already come over to him', except for the city of Gaza (Arrian, *Anab.* 2.25.4). If Jerusalem had allied with Tyre and/or Gaza against Alexander, its resistance—and subsequent subjugation—would have most likely been noted.

II.

Ptolemaic Rule and Judea/Israel

After Alexander's death in 323 BCE and through the third century, the Egyptian-based Ptolemaic dynasty ruled Judea/Israel. In 301 BCE, after the battle of Ipsus, the council of victors assigned Judea/Israel to Seleucus but Ptolemy refused to concede it. Seleucus, in Ptolemy's debt

for assistance in helping Seleucus retake Babylon from Antigonus in 312 BCE, did not force the issue (Diodorus 21.5; Polybius 5.67). Accordingly, Judea/Israel remained in Ptolemaic hands until 200 BCE when Antiochus III gained control of it after winning the battle at Paneas near Mt. Hermon in Galilee. The Ptolemaic dynasty (until 180 BCE) comprised Ptolemy I Soter (323–282 BCE), Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–246 BCE), Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246–221 BCE), and Ptolemy IV Philopater (221–204 BCE) whom Polybius (14.11–12) considered to live a life of dissipation. Ptolemy V Theos Epiphanes ruled from 204 until 180 BCE but the six-year old king lost control of southern Syria and Judea/Israel in 200 BCE in the Fifth Syrian War to Antiochus III.⁵⁵

The Ptolemaic rule through the third century was marked by five so-called Syrian wars (274–271 BCE; 260–253; 246–241; 219–217; 202–199) as the Ptolemies and Seleucids struggled against each other for control of various territories, including that of disputed Judea/Israel.⁵⁶ Seleucus' successors considered Judea/Israel theirs and a useful buffer zone. They did not hesitate to press for it, finally gaining control in 200 BCE. Certainly much of the fighting in the five Syrian Wars was not in Judea/Israel though armies regularly marched through the land. As outlined above, control of territory meant, among other things, not only a display of the king's prowess in battle but also the gaining of a source of income which ensured payment of troops, their gratitude and loyalty to the king, and revenue for kingly patronal benevolence.⁵⁷

A postcolonial optic highlights the pervasive ambivalence of the challenges and vulnerabilities facing Ptolemy I and his successors in securing their new power in Egypt.⁵⁸ In the language of Jane Rowlandson, the Ptolemies were 'upstarts' who relied fundamentally on military strength for their power both externally in maintaining control and internally in suppressing rebellions. Deterrence from the presence of military garrisons (including local Egyptians) and from the threat of military intervention as well as from actual force itself effected at least the appearance of submission.⁵⁹ Without ever abandoning the military power that provided some deterrent against jealous rivals who had been displaced, the Ptolemaic kings also moved to provide a broader rationale

55. For discussion, see Hölbl, *History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 20–159; Green, *Alexander to Actium*; Turner, 'Ptolemaic Egypt'.

56. Heinen, 'The Syrian-Egyptian Wars'.

57. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings'; Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas'; Gera, *Judaea*, 4–9.

58. Rowlandson, 'The Character of Ptolemaic Aristocracy'.

59. Bagnall, 'Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt', 235–36.

and framework for their rule. These moves comprised a 'symbolic association with Alexander the Great, projection of their own divinity, and implanting themselves into the indigenous monarchic traditions of their new power'.⁶⁰

One means of displaying (and requiring) royal power and wealth—combining strategies of awe and terror—involved public festivals and processions such as the one Ptolemy II Philadelphus held in Alexandria in 279/8 BCE in honor of his parents Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice: gold and silver, military might, exotic animals, entertainments, and feasting expressed Ptolemaic power over people, material resources, and animals in terms of military power and wealthy ostentation.⁶¹ The audience comprised not only native Egyptians, new Greek residents, and guests from the inhabited world, but the Ptolemies themselves. James Scott locates such spectacles in the context of the performance of imperial domination and subordination. Spectacles not only intimidate and impress subordinates into some sort of public compliance; they also have self-legitimizing power for the performers themselves. As Scott describes, 'Elites are also consumers of their own performance'. They construct a public and 'collective theater' that 'becomes part of their self-definition'; such spectacles are 'a kind of self-hypnosis within ruling groups to buck up their courage, improve their cohesion, display their power, and convince themselves anew of their high moral purpose'.⁶²

Moreover, Rowlandson continues, the Ptolemies faced the challenge of securing the loyalties and services of aristocratic families, both native and imported, by honoring traditional sources of power such as priest-hoods as well as including them in the new power through material benefactions, access, or gifts of office. She argues that Greco-Macedonian elites, often lacking roots in land and intermarriage, found themselves in difficult ambivalent circumstances with their loyalties to the king tested by personal interests and orientations elsewhere. Another hybridity involved the ongoing challenge of the interactions between Graeco-Macedonian and Egyptian elites with struggles between attempts at fusion and a natural tendency to favor Graeco-Macedonian personnel and structures.⁶³

60. Rowlandson, 'Character of Ptolemaic Aristocracy', 29.

61. Thompson, 'The Infrastructure of Splendour', 242; Rice, *The Grand Procession* discussing the account of Kallixeinos.

62. Scott, *Domination*, 49-50, 66-69.

63. Samuel ('The Ptolemies', 169) identifies three accomplishments of Ptolemy II: creating a Greek-speaking bureaucracy, regulating economic life, and accommodating Egyptian religious and legal life.

The Ptolemies and Judea/Israel

Ptolemaic power in Judea/Israel was marked by the ambivalence of an imperial–colonized situation. It was centralized and exercised from the top down, yet it existed in relationship to cooperative–submissive local power structures. It left local leadership in place while also employing its own local officials especially for the collection of taxes. Taxes expressed the reciprocity of the imperializer–colonized situation. They asserted imperializing power over the colonized even as they rendered the imperializer dependent on the colonized. The Ptolemies also relied on some military presence but the assertion of power was not militarily aggressive.

Grabbe argues that the Ptolemies continued some form of the Pharaonic system of top-down governance in Egypt, which enabled considerable control of populations at local levels.⁶⁴ In simplified form, it comprised four levels, with the first two consisting of the king and key ministers or administrators such as the finance minister (διοικητής), administrator of the countryside (ἐπιστρατηγος), recorder (ὑπομνηματογράφος), and registrar (ἐπιστολογράφος). Beyond this centralized structure, the third level comprised the forty or so nomes into which the territory was divided, each ruled by a nomarch, and a financial officer and royal scribe. The fourth level comprised villages with a village leader and scribe. Taxes on various entities—people, land, salt, animals— injected power into local contexts and effected local oversight through records and extraction of wealth.⁶⁵ Taxes were collected by tax-farming, some in kind (land) and some with money (salt-tax), with contracted amounts to be raised from each district.

Whether this simplified description tells us anything about the initial Ptolemaic administration of Judea/Israel is not clear. Basic information is lacking and what is available suggests no standard form of rule throughout Ptolemaic-controlled territory. Did Judea/Israel exist as an Egyptian nome or, as part of ‘Coele-Syria’ or ‘Syria and Phoenicia’ without distinction? Did it have a governor or *strategos* with civil and military powers including a garrison,⁶⁶ or was administration left largely in the hands of the local elite headed by the chief priest based in the Jerusalem temple with Egyptian or Greek officials especially charged with tax collection and local oversight? Josephus identifies the ‘chief priest’

64. Grabbe, ‘Hyparchs’, 71.

65. Thompson, ‘Infrastructure of Splendour’.

66. So Heinen (‘Syrian-Egyptian Wars’, 440–41) who makes no mention of the priestly elite but sees local elites responsible for collecting taxes.

Onias as having the ‘rulership, leadership, supreme command, governorship’ (προστασία) of the people, though other than affirming that the province was a hierocracy, exactly what this designation involves he does not elaborate (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.160-61). Imposition of Egyptian will, in whatever form, had to recognize the dynamic of accommodative and disruptive negotiation of power that required efforts to gain cooperation and not to provoke open and violent opposition to exertions of power. Several sources provide some information about life under the Ptolemies in the third century BCE but a larger coherent picture is not clear.

Some evidence exists for distressed circumstances in Judea/Israel under Alexander’s successor Ptolemy I. During the struggles of the *Diadochi* after Alexander’s death in 323–ca. 280 BCE, socio-economic conditions probably deteriorated significantly. The cause was not cultural influence but military power and its attendant socio-economic disruption and exploitation. Hengel observes that during this period, Judea/Israel ‘was crossed or occupied seven or eight times by armies’.⁶⁷ Grabbe argues that ‘Palestine was fought in and over many times’; he catalogues nine instances.⁶⁸ In the absence of any records, a postcolonial optic alerts us to the probable disruption of trade and barter, the material damage for poor peasant farmers and their households in the looting of crops and animals that caused hunger and lack, physical attacks on persons (including rape) as native peoples sought to defend property and persons, the likely practice of enslavement, and the humiliating indignities of being treated as a subordinate unworthy of any respect. Even as the imperializer asserts power, it must depend on the production and labor of the subjugated. From such indignities often emerge ambivalent expressions of consent and conflict, counter-practices and counter-narratives that contest and negate the dominant version of reality, fantasize about revenge on the oppressor, and imagine different worlds.⁶⁹

Moreover, according to Josephus, citing the second-century historian Agatharchides of Cnidus, Ptolemy I (d. 283 BCE) took advantage of Jewish customs to attack Jerusalem on a Sabbath, perhaps around 312 BCE, when its inhabitants ‘neither bear arms nor take any agricultural operations in hand nor engage in any other form of public service’ and so ‘the country was thus given over to a cruel master’ (*C.Ap.* 1.209-11; a ‘hard master’, *Ant.* 12.6). The account stops at this point in *Contra Apion* with contrasting reflections on observance of the law: ‘ridiculous’

67. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 14.

68. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 278-81, 286-87.

69. Scott, *Domination*, 7, *passim*.

as far as Agatharchides is concerned but ‘grand and highly meritorious’ for Josephus since it placed faithfulness to God before all else.

In the version in *Antiquities*, however, Josephus goes on to narrate the consequences of this defeat. Ptolemy takes captives (read slaves) from Jerusalem and the surrounding area to Egypt and because he thinks highly of their loyalty (!), he settles them in garrisons and in Alexandria gives them ‘equal civic rights with the Macedonians’ (*Ant.* 12.8). Ptolemy’s ‘liberality’ (φιλοτιμίας) attracted other Jews to Egypt though they conflicted there with Samaritans over which temple to honor. Ptolemy’s defeat of Jerusalem receives a very brief reference in Appian (*Syr.* 8.50) and a longer reference in the *Letter of Aristeeas* (12-14) that says nothing about an attack on the Sabbath but does mention the taking of captive Jews to Egypt (an exaggerated ‘more than one hundred thousand’) and Ptolemy’s arming and settling of some of these in garrisons (‘thirty thousand’!).

These scenes possibly suggest something of Judea/Israel’s metanarrative through the time of Alexander and the *Diadochi*. If Josephus, quoting Agatharchides, is to be believed, his account indicates that despite submitting to Alexander, through the time of Alexander and the *Diadochi*, the temple had an important role in Jerusalem along with the law, including Sabbath observance. Ptolemy creates an ambivalent situation of exercising political-economic domination while allowing religious observance. In fact, his own embracing of Pharonic political and Egyptian religious-cultural traditions suggests that any such intolerance would have been most unlikely. That is, in these initial decades of the assertion of Macedonian and Ptolemaic military and political power, Jerusalem’s worship is not disrupted and the Judean/Israelite metanarrative of covenant identity and Israel’s God as God of the nations remains in place, at least some Jerusalemites. Throughout the rest of the land, a growing and diverse range of ethnic groups and religious observances is to be found.⁷⁰ Andrea Berlin lists twenty known religious expressions in ‘Hellenistic Palestine’ involving Phoenician, Egyptian, Greek, ‘local’, Jewish, Samaritan, and Ituraean deities and cult sites.

The longstanding focus on and independence of the temple in the midst of the imperial–colonized ambivalence is confirmed by Hecataeus of Abdera’s writings on the Jews (Diodorus 40.3.1-7). Hecataeus attests Judea/Israel’s administrative autonomy based on the temple and its priests and expressed in the law.⁷¹ Hecataeus declares that the inhabitants of Judea/Israel were driven out of Egypt and were led by a man called

70. Berlin, ‘Between Large Forces’, 42.

71. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 283-86; Grabbe, ‘Hyparchs’, 75-77.

Moses who founded several cities including Jerusalem. More important, Hecataeus emphasizes that Moses founded the temple as a central institution and established its aniconic worship and ritual, along with instituting the law and political institutions. Hecataeus attests the absence of a king and identifies the priests as leaders of the nation who not only oversee temple worship, but are leaders in other aspects of society including warfare, dividing land for settlers, raising children, judging disputes, and as keepers of the laws and customs. The chief priest has supreme authority as messenger of God's commandments, making a king obsolete. Moses was also a military leader, defeating surrounding tribes, taking land, and reallocating it to citizens and to priests. The Jews have a written law and practice circumcision (Diodorus 1.55.5).

The implication of the record of Agatharchides and Hecataeus' idealized account is that the assertion of Macedonian and Ptolemaic power and military presence in the fifty or so year window of ca. 330–280 BCE had not overturned native religious, cultural, and political structures in Judea/Israel, though Hecataeus does indicate, realistically in a post-colonial optic, that when Judea/Israel became 'subject to foreign rule', namely the Persians and the Macedonians, 'many of their traditional practices were disturbed' (Diodorus 40.3.8). Diodorus alludes to the likely Ptolemaic creation of an ambivalent third space that left local structures in place, used them for their own advantage, and introduced their own system.

Two decrees from Ptolemy II dating to around 260 BCE and addressed to 'Syria and Phoenicia' provide some insight into these evolving administrative structures, tax collection, slaves, and war-wives in Judea/Israel.⁷²

The papyri identify administrative structures somewhat similar to those of Egypt. The papyri attest districts identifying them not as nomes but hyparchies—perhaps based on the Persian districts—as the basic administrative structure. There was a chief finance officer (διοικητής); each hyparchy had an *oikonomos* as the chief financial officer responsible for the pervasive imperial strategy of taxation. Taxation involved 'taxable and tax-free' livestock. Failure to declare livestock for tax purposes to the *oikonomos* meant loss of livestock and other penalties. There was also a 'pasture tax and crown tax'. Villages were important not only for the registration of livestock but also for the collection of taxes. 'Those holding the tax contracts for the villages and the komarchs (leaders?) shall register...livestock in the villages'. Registration of livestock was annual and with penalties for failure to pay the associated

72. Text from Bagnall and Derow, *The Hellenistic Period*, 111–13.

taxes. Informers on non-payment were welcome and rewarded. That is, the papyri exhibit the reciprocity of the imperializer–colonized situation, attesting the intrusive reach of Ptolemaic taxing power into the villages and daily lives of peasant farmers, as well as its dependence on local labor and production.

Slaves seem to play a significant part in the economy. Free persons were not to be enslaved and slaves were to be registered. Slaves were procured through royal auction or from those awaiting execution. Failure to register slaves meant a fine and further punishment. Informers were again rewarded.

Soldiers also had a significant presence, both those on active duty and those who had settled land. Both groups expressed Greek presence and were symbols of superior Greek military power and of the subjugated identity of the locals. The decree recognized a particular form of interaction between soldiers and natives in which women were not only captured (and raped?) in war but forced to marry their captors.⁷³ ‘Soldiers on active duty and the other military settlers...living with native wives whom they have captured need not declare them’. That is, while registration of slaves at least provided some monitoring of enslavement (for whatever reason), marriage to local women, either captured in battle or living in occupied areas, was apparently of no concern. As Scott notes, in addition to economic domination, personal indignities and humiliations exist in many forms in the interactions of colonizer and colonized.⁷⁴

From about the same time (ca. 260 BCE) come letters from the Zenon papyri discovered during the First World War in Egypt.⁷⁵ Zenon was a representative of the finance minister (*dioikotes*) Apollonius of Ptolemy II (282–246 BCE). Zenon travelled in Judea/Israel and southern Syria in ca. 259–258 BCE. In relation to his travels, his archive records various letters and accounts of supplies.

The papyri indicate significant trade activities and the importance of Greek language for those in power. Greek signifies the superiority of the ruling group and highlights the desirability of a Greek education for any who wanted to participate in the exercise of power. The learning and use of the Greek language, an act of mimicry, creates Bhabha’s ‘third space’ of similarity that is not quite the same.⁷⁶ Hybridity marks the experience of local elite Egyptian and Jewish figures wherein this foreign language

73. The classic discussion is Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, 31–113.

74. Scott, *Domination*, 198.

75. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 283–86; Grabbe, ‘Hyparchs’, 52–53.

76. Bhabha, *The Location*, 86. See Perdue’s discussion of Bhabha’s notion of mimicry and the role of language in it in Chapter 1 above.

distances them from their native language and traditions even while it intertwines them in Greek language and culture. Other references in the papyri to figures called Tobias and Jeddous identify them as Jews exercising some power, whether on behalf of the provincial administration in Jerusalem or the centralized Ptolemaic administration. Tobias seems quite at home in the Ptolemaic-Hellenistic world. In addition to being fluent in the Greek language, he seems quite tolerant of Greek culture. In a letter from Tobias to Apollonius, Tobias addresses him with a polytheistic greeting: 'If you and all your affairs are flourishing and everything else is as you wish it, many thanks to the gods' (πολλὴ χάρις τοῖς θεοῖς).⁷⁷ Jews, at least at this more elite provincial level, thus appear to occupy the hybrid location typical of other ethnic groups under imperial power, comparatively neither privileged nor disadvantaged, at home in the Ptolemaic-administered world yet members of a distinctive tradition and practices.

Josephus offers an account of two males from two elite Palestinian families, the Tobiads and the Oniads, that provides some confirmation of this hybridity (*Ant.* 12.154-236). The genre, date, provenance, and agenda of the story have been extensively debated; we will return to some of these questions shortly but understand the story to concern the third century BCE.⁷⁸

Hybridity is immediately evident as the story begins with the high priest Onias refusing to pay tribute to King Ptolemy thereby siding with the Seleucids against Ptolemy. Ptolemy replies with threats of taking land from Judea/Israel and settling soldiers there. Joseph Tobias (son of the Tobias named in the Zenon papyri), and nephew of Onias (his mother was Onias' sister) rebukes Onias for endangering Judea/Israel's cooperative/submissive relationship with the Ptolemies. Joseph then travels to Egypt to plead for the nation to King Ptolemy. Ptolemy welcomes him. Simultaneously, 'the chief men and magistrates of the cities' appeared before Ptolemy to buy the rights to collect taxes from their cities. Joseph outbids them promising Ptolemy a higher return from Judea/Israel. Employing his two thousand soldiers, Ptolemy makes an example of Ascalon with aggressive and violent collection including

77. Tcherikover and Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 1.4.

78. For example, Gideon Fuks affirms the conventional position of the 'second half of the third century BCE' as its historical context; so 'Josephus' Tobiads Again'. Schwartz argued against this more conventional position proposing that the story's historical context comprises the early second century; so 'Josephus' Tobiads: Back'. Gera, *Judaea*, 36-58, also dates 'this piece of propaganda...in the second or first century' (58); Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 75-78, 185-92, 222-23, 293-97.

executing twenty of the principal men, an act that intimidates other cities. He continues in this tax-collection role for twenty-two years gaining much power and wealth and building connections with Ptolemy.

With the daughter of his brother, Joseph fathered a son Hyrcanus who had exceptional ability. Hyrcanus, though, becomes entangled in a dispute with his father's steward in Alexandria but manages to gain honor before Ptolemy. His jealous brothers attack him, he defends himself, withdraws to the Transjordan, but after the death of his father Joseph, engages in continuing war with his brothers and ongoing collection of taxes until—surprisingly—he commits suicide when Antiochus IV Epiphanes comes to the throne.

Josephus' story cannot be taken at historical face-value. The story is set at the beginning of the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180) but a fundamental problem with the chronology rules out this possibility. The Ptolemies lost control of Judea/Israel in 200 BCE to the Seleucids, making the scenario of Joseph collecting taxes for the Ptolemies in his Seleucid-controlled territory for some twenty years or so simply implausible. That his son Hyrcanus continues his father's tax-collecting activity thereafter renders such a setting even more implausible.

One solution is to redate the story to the time of Ptolemy III during the third Syrian War (246–241 BCE), in which Onias sides with the Seleucids against Ptolemy. A comparable option is Grabbe's solution which, recognizing the lack of markers linking the scene to a specific king, posits a general setting in the third century.⁷⁹ If this latter setting is adopted along with a recognition of romance elements in the story (as well as biblical intertextualities with another Joseph story concerning Egypt and jealous brothers), the story perhaps offers some possible historical data, or more likely, at least considerable verisimilitude for the ambivalence that marks imperial-colonial, metropole-province negotiations of power.

One such datum concerns the existence of some local Jewish elites—in this case the Tobiad and Oniad families linked by marriage—who make their way successfully and powerfully in Ptolemaic Judea/Israel by cooperation and minimal or no confrontation with the ruling power. A second concerns the contestive relationship with occupying power illustrated by the chief priest Onias' refusal to pay the tribute. The local chief priest, as a political, societal, and religious leader and representative of his peoples' traditions and practices, yet sanctioned by Ptolemaic power, occupies a hybrid identity and location. He challenges Ptolemaic power, perhaps strengthened by traditions concerning divine sovereignty,

79. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 77.

covenant, and land. Third, the story also illustrates agonistic and conflictual relationships among local elites under pressure from the dominant power and in fractured disagreement about how the rival imperial powers (Ptolemaic; Seleucid) should be engaged. Onias' actions that contest Ptolemaic power arouse considerable concern from other citizens for the country's safety, including Joseph Tobiad. That is, Ptolemaic power was not negotiated in a monolithic manner among elites; diversity exists on the periphery of the empire's power. Fourth, Joseph and his son Hyrcanus demonstrate a different expression of hybridity in the aggressive self-benefitting collusion with the ruling power at the expense of their own people. In the story, Joseph doubles the tax amount collected from his own people. He uses violence against the predominantly Gentile Ascalon/Ashkelon, including killing some of its elites. In so doing, he clearly sides with the Ptolemies in mimicking common means of asserting power in the form of violence and tax-collection, but does so for his own self-enriching and empowering ends. His use of violence against other subjects of the Ptolemies—Fanon's horizontal violence—attests the downward imperial pressure exerted in the dynamic of gaining and maintaining imperial favor and in supplying tax revenues.⁸⁰ These means of course benefit the ruling Ptolemies and reflect the reciprocity and ambivalence of the imperializer–colonized situation. Fifth, Josephus accurately depicts the 'principal men' from various Palestinian cities competing against one another for the favor of their colonial Ptolemaic overlords in being granted tax-farming rights in the province. Sixth, collection of taxes expresses the ambivalence of the imperializer–colonized relationship. They denote subjugation but they also exhibit dependence, especially the dependency of local elites on imperial favor for promoting their own self-benefitting yet derived power and interests, as well as the dependency of the Ptolemies on Judean/Israelite production. And seventh, Josephus' account attests the ambivalence and hybridity of local elites not only fluent in their own traditions and language but also evidencing facility with Greek, considerable ease with Greek culture, and the ready acceptance of provincials in the king's court even while the Tobiads and Oniads maintained the role and traditions of the chief priest and temple. The cultures of the colonizer and the colonized coexist in an often reciprocal and hybrid space.

Finally, several traditions attest a visit of Ptolemy IV Philopater to Jerusalem (221–204 BCE).⁸¹ Third Maccabees 1:6–13 sets the scene after the fourth Syrian war (219–217 BCE) in which Ptolemy gains a

80. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 52–54; see Introduction and nn. 13–17 above.

81. On 3 Maccabees, see Gera, *Judaea*, 12–20; Croy, *3 Maccabees*, 37–57.

temporary victory over the Seleucid Antiochus III in the battle of Raphia (Polybius 5.79-87; 3 Macc. 1:1-7).⁸² After the victory, Ptolemy, like Alexander before him,⁸³ visited various towns and temples in his newly acquired territory of Syria.⁸⁴ According to 3 Maccabees 1:6-13, the Jews sent representatives from 'their council⁸⁵ and elders' to Ptolemy with gifts and congratulations. In response, he visited Jerusalem, 'offered sacrifices to the supreme God', and inspected the temple.

Up to this point all is well from a Jewish perspective and similarities with Josephus' account of Alexander's fictional visit are evident. But then things go wrong. Ptolemy IV Philopater insists on moving beyond the temple precinct to enter the sanctuary despite being informed that only the high priest could enter there once a year (1:11-12; cf. Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:2-34; Josephus, *J.W.* 1.152; Philo, *Leg. Ad Gaium* 306-307).⁸⁶ A popular outcry follows (3 Macc. 1:16-29), and the high priest Simon prays for divine protection from this 'audacious and profane man' (2:1-20). The narrative continues by claiming that Ptolemy is punished by God with temporary paralysis for his 'insolence and audacity' (3 Macc. 2:21-24). He subsequently takes revenge on the Jews in Alexandria before experiencing a change of heart (3 Macc. 6:22-41).

Much of this narrative is historically unsubstantiated and unlikely. Polybius, however, confirms Ptolemy's three-month visit to towns in Syria and Phoenicia (5.86.8-11; 87.5-7) but does not mention Jerusalem. The action against the Jerusalem temple in 3 Maccabees is quite contrary to Ptolemaic respectful policy and actions concerning local temples. Polybius also makes the observation that the people of Coele-Syria 'have always been more attached to that house (the Ptolemies) than to the Seleucids' though he goes on to attribute this loyalty to the expediency of supporting the victorious king rather than seeming to be resistant or hostile (Polybius 5.86.8-10). Yet the scene is significant in reflecting an awareness by some of misunderstandings of and threat to Jerusalem's distinctive commitments and identity in the face of foreign rulers. It imagines an almost 'worst-case' scenario and its tragic circumstances,

82. Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, 128-41.

83. As noted above, Alexander visited the oasis of Siwa and the temple of Zeus-Ammon in 331, and Josephus has him visiting Jerusalem.

84. Confirmed by the Pithom stele; see Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 148.

85. Josephus (*Ant.* 12.138) notes this 'council' or *genousia* offering support to Antiochus III.

86. Compare threats to the temple from Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 169 BCE (1 Macc. 1:20-24; 2 Macc. 5:5, 11-21; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.246); Pompey Magnus, 63 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.67-72; *J.W.* 1.145-51); Gaius Caligula, 40 CE (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.257-309; Philo, *Leg. Ad Gaium* 207-21, *passim*).

yet also fantasizes about the revenge of Israel's powerful and protective God on such violations of Jewish identity and practice. That is, as much as 3 Maccabees is written in Greek, it imagines boundaries on divinely sanctioned hybrid identity and practice in the Hellenistic world. There is a literal line, constituted by liturgical practice and centered on the holy place of the temple, which cannot be crossed.

From these various sources, some tentative generalizations about Judea/Israel's interaction with Ptolemaic rule can be drawn. One conclusion is that Ptolemaic power did not interfere with, let alone overturn, native Judean/Israelite religious, cultural, and political structures. Priests associated with the Jerusalem temple and local elite families like the Tobiads know the hybridity of gaining Ptolemaic favor even while they represent Judean/Israelite traditions and identity. From this hybrid place, they represent alien and native interests in exercising societal leadership. Second, Ptolemaic rule imposed officials as administrators at local village levels throughout Judea/Israel, thereby exercising grassroots control. Third, a primary role of these administrative structures and personnel involved collection of taxation. They were the means of the extraction and acquisition of wealth that the Hellenistic ideology of kingship, practiced by Alexander and his successors, foregrounded and on which the Ptolemies depended in the reciprocal imperializing–colonized dynamic. Extracted wealth was foundational for paying troops, exercising benefactions, securing gratitude, and rewarding loyalty, displaying the power and status of victory.⁸⁷

Exploitative Economy in Judea/Israel

The Judean/Israelite economy was based in agriculture before the arrival of the Greeks and it continued to be long after power passed into Roman hands.⁸⁸ Throughout it remained a source of income for the imperial power claiming control of the territory. Under the Ptolemies, Andrea Berlin observes heavy taxation on commerce, tax farming, and royal ownership of land especially in the north in Galilee, the Jezreel and Beth-Shean valleys, and the Golan.⁸⁹ She also observes from archaeological remains thriving economic activity in urban places in coastal Judea/Israel

87. Grabbe, 'Hyparchs'. See also Section I above.

88. Manning, *Land and Power*; Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 208-24; van der Steen, 'Empires and Farmers'.

89. Berlin, 'Between Large Forces', 4, 12-14; that land in the vicinity of Beth-Shean was royal land is confirmed by the Zenon papyri (P.Cairo Zen. 59004) and the Hefzibah inscription. On the latter, see Section III below.

(Ashkelon, Ashdod) and in the south. Mareshah, for example, had two major industries—olive oil and breeding doves. If Qohelet/Ecclesiastes originates in third-century Jerusalem (and there is debate), it attests an elite with some prosperity from large estates worked by slaves (Eccl. 2:4-8). On the other hand, the excavated site of a village such as Tel Anafa in the north near the Panion sanctuary shows a ‘small poor community... unsophisticated, insular, and self-sufficient’, dependent on agriculture, especially cattle and goats, and producing its own cloth.⁹⁰

The decrees from Ptolemy II, the Zenon papyri, and Josephus’ account of the Tobiad family indicate the importance of the extractive practice of the collection of tribute and taxes for the wealth and power of the Ptolemaic kings. Josephus attests payment of an annual ‘tribute of twenty talents of silver’ collected by the high priest of the Jerusalem temple (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.158). The decrees identify regions (hyparchies), tax officials (*oikonomoi*), and focus on villages, suggesting extensive intrusion into local life and serve as a reminder at the local level of the identity of these people as, in part, a subjugated people. Annual registration of livestock and of slaves for taxation is required. The decrees provide rewards for those who inform on tax evaders, and name a range of taxes, as noted above. We might imagine similar taxation on crop production such as grain, vines, and olives. Josephus’ narrative about the Tobiads, whatever the proportion of historical and imaginative elements, indicates a tax-collection system of competitive bidding that no doubt increased returns for both the ruling Ptolemies and their provincial allies. This reciprocal interaction created an ambivalent identity for local elites by allying them with Ptolemaic power even as it sanctioned their self-enriching and empowering practice at the expense of fellow citizens.

Josephus attests a (later or stereotypical?) perception of harsh levels of taxation and cynical elite attitudes towards the exploitative practice in his inclusion of a scene involving Hyrcanus at a feast with the Ptolemaic king. In the scene, Ptolemy’s jester Tryphon mocks Hyrcanus. Pointing to the bones from the meat Hyrcanus has eaten, Tryphon declares, ‘My lord, do you see the bones lying before Hyrcanus? From this you may guess that his father has stripped all Syria in the same way as Hyrcanus has left these bones bare of meat’ (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.212). Berlin offers some confirmation for harsh levies on commercial activity. She points to the building of customs houses and to one of the Zenon papyri (P.Cairo Zen. 59.012) that records taxes on goods imported into Egypt from the

90. Berlin, ‘Between Large Forces’, 5-9, 14. Berlin notes that Tel Anafa undergoes significant resettlement in the 140s–120s BCE by some wealthy inhabitants from Phoenicia (26-27).

wider area of Syria.⁹¹ Items taxed at fifty percent include grape syrup, filtered and ordinary wine, and white oil; at 33 1/3 percent wine and figs; at 25 percent cheese, fish, and wild-boar and goat meat, Samian earth, nuts, pomegranate seeds, sponges, and honey.

Trade in olive oil and wine, and less so in grain due to transportation challenges, was significant. More than 500 imported (Rhodian) stamped handles of amphorae have been found in Jerusalem, most of which date to 260–150 BCE.⁹² Their use is uncertain but numerous possibilities point to significant trading activities in Jerusalem whether in the form of importing food supplies or exporting products. It is also possible they were used to ship taxes paid in kind (oil, wine, wheat). Another export, according to the Zenon papyri, comprised the export of slaves, notably young boys and girls for the household service of their owners.⁹³ The colonizer's power meant disruption of households as well as sexual exploitation and submission. It also meant, for some, active participation in the imperial economy and economic prosperity.

Grabbe in fact notes increase in prosperity for some throughout the third century. Figures for tribute payment reflect considerable growth. For the earlier third century, Josephus says that 20 talents of tribute were paid annually. When Antiochus IV becomes king in 175 BCE, Jason offers a total of 440 talents (2 Macc. 4:8). If the figures are accurate and realistic reflections of economic capacity more than of individual ambition and competition for favor among provincial leaders (compare Joseph Tobiad's brazen doubling of the amount of tax to be collected—Josephus, *Ant.* 12.175–76), some economic growth has occurred. Grabbe attributes this growth to several factors. One involves Jewish participation in the Ptolemaic military (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.339; 12.8; *C.Ap.* 1.192–93, 200–204). This involvement may have reduced the need for further subdivision of family land, provided fresh landholdings to veterans in Egypt, and perhaps increased some cash flow, with money sent back to Judea/Israel. And second, Josephus' account of the Tobiads, if it contains any valid historical data that can be generalized to other elite households, indicates that some local elites accumulated considerable amounts of wealth. Such families required goods and services, benefitted clients, and presumably conducted some euergetistic activities, all with economic benefits to others. And third, the increase may reflect a greater role for Jerusalem in trade activity.

91. Berlin, 'Between Large Forces', 4–5. The text is in Austin, *The Hellenistic World*, 531–34.

92. Ariel, 'Imported Stamped Amphora Handles'.

93. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 216–17.

Ptolemaic Metanarrative

Viewed in a postcolonial optic, Ptolemaic kingship embraces the hybridity of interactions between Greek and Egyptian traditions. One influential tradition comprised the ideology of kingship exhibited by Alexander,⁹⁴ in which the king was 'supreme commander, dispenser of justice [and] god's representative on earth'.⁹⁵ Kingly power was performative in that military success demonstrated the king's personal bravery and courage. Repeated demonstrations in battle renewed and augmented kingly power. The first four Ptolemaic kings led their troops in battle and accomplished the glory of victory.⁹⁶ Victory was the means of acquiring territory. Territory was not only the badge of success but also the source of wealth that rewarded troops, financed further military action, and provided benefactions for friends, subjects, and allies. The Ptolemies advertised their roles and accomplishments with appellations such as Soter (savior), Euergetes (benefactor), and Theos Epiphanes (god manifest).

Austin offers an example of the wealth gained by Ptolemy III in the third Syrian war (246–245 BCE) to the tune of 40,000 talents of booty.⁹⁷ As a context, he notes that Ptolemy II took 15,000 talents as annual revenue from Egypt (minus the corn dues). In a small episode during the same war, Ptolemy III gains a Seleucid war chest from a city amounting to 1500 talents. In addition to this wealth, he took many as captives, thereby adding bodies to his workforce and military resources. Military power also had a deterrent effect as the Ptolemies sought to secure their position against possible rivals. Appeals to the legacy of Alexander along with alignment with native monarchic traditions bolstered power and marked Ptolemaic hybridity.

Also crucial for the Ptolemaic metanarrative was the use of multiple religious traditions to assert their divinity and place in the cosmos. Again hybridity is to the fore. Ptolemy I and his successors employed claims of divine sanction, both Egyptian and Greek, for their rule. Samuel cites Theocritus' seventeenth idyll, which praises Ptolemy II in terms of longstanding Greek traditions embraced by Alexander. This ideology of monarchy embraced 'divine descent, warrior prowess, reverence toward

94. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 75-84; see also Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings'; Murray, 'Philosophy and Monarchy'.

95. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 79.

96. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 458.

97. Austin, 'Hellenistic Kings', 465.

the gods and generosity toward men from his great wealth'. The divinity of the king was recognized through oaths and observances of the Ptolemaic dynastic cult, often initiated by locals.⁹⁸

Günther Hölbl attends to further dimensions of their hybrid existence, a particular challenge facing the Ptolemies as they negotiated the interaction between Greeks and Macedonians on one hand and native Egyptian elites on the other (priests, warriors, landowners). Concerning the latter, the Ptolemies needed to secure the sanction of 'the ancient Egyptian ideology of the king...as the earthly manifestation of Horus and as "the son of Re"' along with the support of the powerful Egyptian priestly establishment.⁹⁹ They sought to accomplish the latter by synthesizing Greek kingship with the role of the Egyptian Pharaoh. The former had developed, as noted, an understanding of 'charismatic invincibility, which was upheld by the gods' but needed ongoing performance in war to establish an identity as 'savior, liberator (especially of Greek cities), protector and begetter and guarantor of fertility and affluence' and to gain the subjects' recognition.¹⁰⁰ The Pharaoh's invincibility was grounded in 'his role as the victorious Horus', the leading god associated variously with the sky, with war, and with hunting. The king was thus defined primarily in religious terms as the one who by means of his cultic activities maintained the world order and by associating with the gods mediated between humans and gods.¹⁰¹ Hölbl argues that kingship provided 'the only element of unity in all areas of culture and religion', which elevated the kingship, a status sustained by both Egyptian and Greek (Dionysos; Aphrodite) cults of the gods connected to kingship.¹⁰²

The options secured by this hybridity meant that Ptolemy did not seek to impose his Greek tradition and eliminate Egyptian culture, language, or judicial systems. Rather, he combined the two traditions, not only thereby linking Greek and Egyptian traditions, but also using the hybrid traditions to assert strongly the multiple claims of divine sanction for Ptolemaic rule. The dynasty was deified, as was the deceased Alexander, and a priesthood was established to honor him.¹⁰³ Further sanction was gained by giving prominence to honoring particular divinities such as

98. Samuel, 'The Ptolemies', 180-83.

99. Hölbl, *History*, 1-5, 77-123, esp. 78. He identifies another challenge, namely distancing themselves from Persian rule by presenting themselves as liberators.

100. Hölbl, *History*, 91.

101. Hölbl, *History*, 1-2.

102. Hölbl, *History*, 111-12.

103. Walbank, 'Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas', 97-98.

Zeus-Ammon, who had sanctuaries in Egypt and Macedonia, as well as Serapis, connected to both Isis and Osiris, the mother and father of Horus. Hölbl comments that Isis and Serapis were seen as both Hellenistic and Egyptian deities.¹⁰⁴ Beyond honoring, Walbank notes the Ptolemaic convention of ‘assimilating kings to particular gods’ such as Dionysus, Aollo-Helios, Eros, Heracles, Hermes, Poseidon and Zeus.¹⁰⁵ Further, the Ptolemies instituted an annual gathering of Egyptian priests to express loyalty to the king and to engage cultic and economic matters, the latter being important to fund the succession of wars throughout the third century.

The Ptolemies’ explicit positioning of themselves in Egypt in terms of these cultural hybridities contrasts with their self-presentation in Judea/Israel. In the early third century, in the decade or so after 301 BCE, the mint in Jerusalem issued silver coins with the head of Ptolemy 1 wearing a diadem on the obverse.¹⁰⁶ The coins signify on the reverse Zeus’ divine sanction for Ptolemy’s rule as the power behind the throne by means of an eagle with wings spread and standing on a *fulmen* or lightning bolt. These coins, the last ones issued by the mint before being closed ca. 270 BCE, have a legend in paleo-Hebrew (not Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian rule) that reads *Yhdh* and signifies not only the coins’ local character but locates Judea/Israel as a part of Zeus-sanctioned Ptolemaic rule. There are similarities between the features of these coins and those issued by the Persians, namely the head of the Persian ruler, the falcon with wings spread, and the inscription of *Yhdh*. The differences, however—the head of Ptolemy I, Zeus’ eagle and lightning, the inscription *Yhdh*—indicate a new empire under a new and victorious god. It should also be noted that while in Egypt Ptolemy’s hybrid location comprised combining Hellenistic and Egyptian divine sanction, these Judean/Israelite coins utilize only Hellenistic traditions.

Dan Barag identifies other coin types, notably the ‘divine’ (ΘΕΩΝ) ‘brother-and-sister’ (ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ) series presenting Ptolemy I, his wife and half-sister Berenice I, and possibly the co-regency with Ptolemy II and his sister and wife Arsinoe II, introduced most probably from the mid-280s to the mid-260s BCE.¹⁰⁷ The coins represented the trans-generational Ptolemaic rulers to their Judean/Israelite subjects even as they provided coinage for some financial transactions. Barag argues that the presence of such coins from the Jerusalem mint that operated

104. Hölbl, *History*, 100-101.

105. Walbank, ‘Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas’, 86.

106. I am following Kindler, ‘Silver Coins’.

107. Barag, ‘The Coinage’, 30.

between 300 and 274/269 BCE ‘certainly displays direct control from the centre of government’, Alexandria, but with the closing of the Jerusalem mint, ‘Judea was integrated in the current monetary system’.¹⁰⁸ Barag recognizes, though, that the presence of Paleo-Hebrew on the coins and the existence of a mint in Jerusalem during this quarter century or so raise unanswerable questions about the status of Judea/Israel.

We should note, though, that this hybrid metanarrative that announced the divine sanction of Hellenistic and Egyptian deities for Ptolemaic kingship did not garner universal support in the Ptolemaic world, or at least not everyone was happy all the time. As postcolonial studies have shown, whenever power is asserted, dissent is inevitable albeit expressed in various forms and often coexisting with accommodation and apparent (public) compliance. One form of protest comprised outbreaks of revolt and violence in the 250s–240s BCE in Egypt under Philadelphus (282–246 BCE) and Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246–221 BCE), spurred by poor harvests, economic disruption, and increasing demands for war supplies and manpower.¹⁰⁹

Another form of protest is expressed sometime around the mid-third century or so, in the ‘Demotic Chronicle’. This collection of oracles sought to decolonize subjugated minds and bodies by announcing that only compliance with the divine will, especially Isis and Harsaphes, brings harmony and successful long reigns for kings. It opposes foreign rule, notably the invasions of the Persians (IV.22–23; V.15–18) and also of the Greeks (VI.19–21), who are called ‘the dogs’ with Alexander probably referred to as the ‘great Dog’.¹¹⁰ Employing a classic strategy of fantasizing a different future based on reclaiming and redefining the past, it creates a third space that looks for a day of military rebellion. This rebellion comprises the expulsion of the Greek monarchy, the restoration of a native Egyptian ruler ‘after the Greeks’, the establishment of an idealized Egyptian state and monarchy based on past Pharaonic ideals

108. Barag, ‘The Coinage’, 37.

109. Turner, ‘Ptolemaic Egypt’, 157–59.

110. Johnson (‘Is the Demotic Chronicle?’, 123) argues that this reference draws on the image of the dog of Horus, and may present Alexander as a hunting hound driving out the Persians, and the Greeks ‘in a positive light’. Lloyd (‘Nationalist Propaganda’, 45 n. 38) reads it negatively and cites a stele of the Regnal Year of Amasis in support. The immediate context of this image in the document (VI.21) refers to young men in a gesture of mourning, suggesting the image seems to point to a negative reception of the Greeks. The other explicit reference to Greeks (II.25; III.1) expressly names a time ‘after the Greeks’ and exhorts rejoicing (twice) at the coming of a new ruler in Herakleopolis. It is difficult to follow Johnson’s attempt to claim this as a neutral reference (Johnson, ‘Is the Demotic Chronicle?’, 122).

and centered on Herakleopolis (II.25; III.1), and the implementation of the divine will or 'law' (III.15-16; IV.1, 6, 7, 10, 12).¹¹¹ Societal analysis, a turning to the past and to the future, and an idealized fantasy combine to present a different vision. Johnson's argument that the text is not anti-Greek because elite Egyptian priests, its supposed source of origins, were often loyal to the Ptolemies, fails to convince.¹¹² Johnson does not recognize the complexities of the ambivalent imperializer–colonized situation that interpret the present through the interaction of a glorified past and ideal future, and that involve hybridities and ambivalences, public and anonymous/private, compliant, and resistant interactions between natives and foreign ruling powers.

The Judea/Israel Metanarratives

The above analyses of administrative and economic structures, partial as they are, indicate diverse responses to or multivalent elite negotiations of Ptolemaic power. Whether it has any historical validity or not, Josephus' scene concerning Onias and Joseph Tobiad is full of the ambivalences of the imperializer–colonized situation. Josephus can imagine the Jerusalem chief priest Onias in a hybridized location of dependence yet autonomy refusing to pay the tribute which he owes. The scene of course assumes the reciprocal relationship of imperializer and colonized in that Onias benefits from Ptolemaic favor and the Ptolemies benefit from Judea/Israelite submission signified by tax payment. Likewise, Josephus can imagine other elites becoming very worried by Onias' act of defiance towards Hellenistic power, whether they be active pro-Ptolemaic supporters or readily accommodated inhabitants who know cooperation with whoever is in power is the best means of survival. Moreover, Josephus can imagine a member of the chief priest's own family rebuking the priest for his refusal to pay. Fanon recognizes that the relationships among colonials fracture under the pressure of colonial power, becoming contestive and even violently (verbally and/or physically) competitive.¹¹³ The 'native under colonial power', Joseph Tobiad, travels to Alexandria

111. I follow Lloyd, 'Nationalist Propaganda', 41-45. Johnson ('The Demotic Chronicle as a Statement', 65-66; and Johnson, 'Is the Demotic Chronicle?') argues that the work is certainly anti-Persian but 'not so clearly anti-Greek'. She argues that the text presents a vision of legitimate kingship by presenting good and bad kings. Lloyd had argued similarly in explaining the text's translation into Greek, that it made the Macedonian rulers aware of Egyptian ideals of a good king ('Nationalist Propaganda', 48 n. 48).

112. Johnson, 'Is the Demotic Chronicle?', 114-24.

113. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 52-54; see the Introduction and nn. 13-17 above.

not only to ensure peaceful relations in the face of Ptolemy's threats of retaliation, but also to compete with other elites for self-benefiting tax-collection rights, outbidding them and thereby doubling the tax return from his own people while enhancing his own wealth and favor with the king. Tobiad's expansion of his own power and wealth at the expense of his own people provokes their opposition—which he overcomes with the imperially imitative means of military violence, death, and general intimidation. The Tobiad narrative, of dubious historical worth, nevertheless captures a range of well-attested imperializer–colonized dynamics comprising hybridity and ambivalence.

Josephus' account recognizes the central place of the chief priest and of the temple. This emphasis coheres with that of Agatharchides of Cnidus (cited by Josephus, *C.Ap.* 1.209–11; *Ant.* 12.1–9) and of Hecataeus of Abdera (cited by Diodorus 40.3) discussed above. Jerusalem, priests, temple, and Mosaic law feature in their accounts. We might tentatively conclude from this cluster of emphases that they comprised the metanarrative for at least Onias and his circle. That metanarrative would embrace traditions about Moses as deliverer of the people from Egyptian slavery, traditions that surely troubled ready accommodation with Ptolemaic power exerted from Egypt. Moses was also the maker of a covenant and revealer of the law in which God blesses the obedient and punishes the disobedient. These same traditions affirmed the importance of the land as God's gift, and the significance of the Jerusalem temple, its priests, and worship of God.¹¹⁴ Such a metanarrative, as long as it was left untouched by the Ptolemies, could sustain compliant and accommodating relationships with Ptolemaic power, just as it could fuel acts of dissent, such as Onias' threatened refusal to pay tribute.

But there is perhaps some evidence that it is not the only metanarrative in town.¹¹⁵ If so, again fractures under imperial power and diversities on the periphery are evident. Some have read *I Enoch* 1–36, the Book of the Watchers, as expressing, in the view of Wes Howard-Brooks, 'a sustained protest, in the Name of YHWH, against Judea/Israel's priestly,

114. The diasporan text *Letter of Aristeas* sets its action in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BCE), though it was perhaps written in the second century (ca. 150 BCE). The document includes an extensive section about the temple, worship, priests, and Jerusalem (83–120). The significance is that the writer of the *Letter* has no problem recognizing the centrality of the temple and the law in the reign of Ptolemy II.

115. *I Enoch* 72–82, the earliest section of the Enoch collection to be written and dating perhaps from the fourth or third century, commonly called the Astronomical Book, advocates, as did some other texts, a solar calendar rather than the temple's lunar calendar.

royal, and scribal elites for their collaboration with foreign empires'.¹¹⁶ Richard Horsley argues that *1 Enoch* 1–36 addresses 'the imperial political situation of Judea/Israelite under the Hellenistic empires, and looks for the "removal" of imperial rule'.¹¹⁷ George Nickelsburg sees the book struggling with a human situation marked by 'violence, lies, disappointment, and lack of meaning...pulled in opposite directions by hope and despair'.¹¹⁸ In this approach, if it is persuasive, chapters 1–36 provide for a contrapuntal reading strategy in explaining the origins of the violence and destruction that the Hellenistic imperial rulers create, and in providing assurance that God, the King of kings, has contained them and rules the cosmos. *1 Enoch* 1–36 provides a site for decolonizing the colonized mind.

The book of *1 Enoch* opens with a description of God's appearance to judge the world and divide the elect from the 'hardhearted' wicked who have 'transgressed and spoken slanderously grave and harsh words... against his greatness' (*1 En.* 5:4–5). Elaborating Gen. 6:1–4's account of the giants or 'sons of God', chapters 6–16 narrate the evil activities of fallen watchers led by Shemyaz and Azazel. Among other things, the watchers impregnate women who give birth to giants—figures of overwhelming power perhaps like the Ptolemies—who consume the people's food and become detested by them (7:3). Azazel teaches people how to make weapons of war and skills of beautification (8:1) along with sources of knowledge involving incantations and astrology (8:2–3). They shed 'much blood upon the earth' and bring about 'all the oppression' (9:1; also 9:6, 9–10).

What are we to make of this scenario? Choosing to read it in and against the historical context of the *Diadochi*, Nickelsburg interprets this description as referring to the *Diadochi* and their continual 'war, bloodshed, and assassination'. Claims of the *Diadochi*'s divine origins are parodied with the verdict that 'they were not gods but demons—angels who rebelled against the authority of God'.¹¹⁹ Horsley chooses a much wider referent for the material in stating that it refers 'generally to the effects of Hellenistic rule on the people of Judea' including, through the third century, 'these recurrent imperial wars for the control of subject peoples'.¹²⁰ People cry out to God in terms that mimic but excel the kings in relation to power and rule (similar but not quite the same); God is 'the

116. Howard-Brooks, 'Come out My People!' 302.

117. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 51.

118. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 1.

119. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 170.

120. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 56.

Lord of the potentates... Lord of lords... God of gods... King of kings' (9:4) who has authority over everything. God imitates the rulers but out-powers them. God orders the binding of Azazel and declares imminent judgment.

Subsequently, in chapters 12–16, Enoch, charged with announcing judgment on Azazel and the watchers, has a vision of the divine throne room in which he is given a message for the watchers. Their bodies are destroyed but as disembodied 'evil spirits' they roam the earth and 'oppress...and cause sorrow...against the people' (15:11–12). Horsley sees this section as providing an explanation for Judean/Israelite sufferings under Ptolemaic rule. Through 'repeatedly fought wars..., economic exploitation...seducing Judean aristocracy to compromise the traditional Judean way of life...[and the] debilitating effects on Judean socio-economic and personal life, the evil spirits of the giants were causing destructive violence and exploitation' by means of the Hellenistic imperial kings just as in Enoch's time.¹²¹ The section explains the Ptolemaic rule as evil because it is expressive of the evil spirits of the giants who had rebelled against God's order. This explanation that accounts for oppressive Hellenistic rule in terms of controlling evil spirits counters and rejects another possible explanation for this rule derived from the Mosaic covenant traditions, namely the Deuteronomic scheme that the people are being punished by God for their own sins. There is diversity and contest among the provincials on the periphery of Ptolemaic rule.

In *1 Enoch* 17–36, Enoch experiences two visionary journeys. In the first (17–19), he sees, for example, a 'pit' beyond the heavens and the earth where the spirits of the watchers are confined (18:11–19:3). The section provides reassurance that the watchers who sought to impose their own rule are subject to God's cosmic rule. That is, in resisting the 'evil spirits' of the watchers, the section offers a fantasy¹²² of their submission and the submission of the Ptolemaic kings to God's rule, a vision that ironically mimics the imperial domination that 1 Enoch simultaneously resists.

In the second journey (*1 Enoch* 21–36), Enoch sees the same pit again where the evil spirits 'are detained here forever' (21:10). He learns that the souls of the dead are separated according to the wicked and the righteous (22:12). He sees the mountain that is 'the throne of God...the Eternal King' (25:3, 5), the place 'for the righteous people' (25:7).

121. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 58–59.

122. The term 'fantasy' is used here to describe the imaginative content of the material, not to evaluate its content nor to comment on claims of its possible origin.

Outside Jerusalem, there is the ‘accursed valley for those accursed... those who speak... unbecoming words against the Lord’ (27:2), perhaps a reference to those in Jerusalem who sided with the imperial powers and, in the eyes of the author/s, betrayed God with their words.

If the Book of the Watchers is read in relation to post-Alexandrian Hellenistic rule such as that of the Ptolemies, such assertions of the continuing power of the evil spirits of the watchers at work in imperial powers, and the scenes of reward and punishment that take place beyond death and outside history, provide an alternative to the dominant Mosaic Deuteronomistic schema. In this Deuteronomistic schema, God’s working is seen in history through blessing and curse, the former accompanying faithful obedience to Mosaic Torah and the latter accompanying disobedience. For *1 Enoch*, the current disordered state of the world does not originate in the people’s faithlessness and result from divine punishment. Rather, it originates in the actions of imperial rulers inspired by evil spirits and will have cosmic consequences of punishment for those rulers and a new world for the righteous.

Howard-Brooks argues that Qohelet—perhaps originating from Jerusalem scribal circles around 250 BCE or so—offers a third perspective. It challenges both patriarchal and covenant traditions, contesting the latter’s Torah piety as well as the perspective of the Book of the Watchers.¹²³ It does not engage them directly nor any vision of salvation. It rejects dreams and revelations such as the heavenly tours of *1 Enoch* 21–36. ‘For dreams come with many cares, and a fool’s voice with many words’ (Eccl. 5:3). The writer also rejects the notion of post-mortem judgment.

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth? So I saw that there is nothing better than that all should enjoy their work, for that is their lot; who can bring them to see what will be after them? (Eccl. 3:19-22 NRSV)

The writer counsels a pragmatic approach to kingly power. He refuses to correlate imperial order with God’s order just as he refuses to acknowledge it as an instrument of God’s punitive purposes nor condemn it as demonic. Rather, he observes the unaccountability and self-serving nature of royal power and the need to obey, not because it means doing God’s will, but because it ensures survival:

123. Following Howard-Brooks, ‘Come Out My People!’, 309-12.

Keep the king's command because of your sacred oath. Do not be terrified; go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases. For the word of the king is powerful, and who can say to him, 'What are you doing?' Whoever obeys a command will meet no harm, and the wise mind will know the time and way. (Eccl. 8:2-5 NRSV)

Consistently he urges caution and discretion:

Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts, or curse the rich, even in your bedroom; for a bird of the air may carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter. (Eccl. 10:20 NRSV)

The writer also rejects the dualism of the Deuteronomic reward and punishment system as well as the Book of Watchers' post-mortem division of the righteous and wicked. Instead he advocates a third way between righteousness and wickedness:

In my vain life I have seen everything; there are righteous people who perish in their righteousness, and there are wicked people who prolong their life in their evildoing. Do not be too righteous, and do not act too wise; why should you destroy yourself? Do not be too wicked, and do not be a fool; why should you die before your time? It is good that you should take hold of the one, without letting go of the other; for the one who fears God shall succeed with both. Wisdom gives strength to the wise more than ten rulers that are in a city. Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning. (Eccl. 7:15-20 NRSV)

Howard-Brooks locates such sentiments among some Jewish elites who observed 'injustice and poverty around [them] but neither involve [themselves] nor offer a vision of a solution'.¹²⁴ The writer of Qohelet urges enjoyment of life but seems to be oblivious to those such as over-taxed peasant farmers who are struggling to survive. Such elites are accommodative and protective of their own interests.

These various texts indicate fractures and diversities among the native Judean/Israelite population under the pressures of Ptolemaic power.¹²⁵ The experience of Ptolemaic power is evaluated in quite different ways as punitive, demonic, and accommodative. 1 Enoch negates Ptolemaic rule with a revelation of its demonic nature, a catalogue of its violent and destructive ways, and a mimicking fantasy of its judgment by the more powerful and victorious God who also secures victory for God's faithful—a classic instance of Bhabha's mimicry that is similar but not quite the same. The Deuteronomic option majors on ambivalence, framing the people as complicit in their own suffering and domination,

124. Howard-Brooks, 'Come Out My People!', 311.

125. So Fanon, *The Wretched*; see Introduction above.

sanctioned by God, in appointing Ptolemaic power as the agent of God's punitive purposes. But along with complicity and consent, repentance would mean the end of Ptolemaic punitive power. Qohelet affirms the hybridity of the status quo that requires accommodative and pragmatic practices as the way of surviving in the imperial world.

III. Seleucid Rule of Judea/Israel 200–175 BCE

The Seleucid claim to rule Judea/Israel—asserted since the 301 BCE council of victors assigned Syro-Judea/Israel to Seleucus though Ptolemy refused to concede it—finally became a reality in 200 BCE. In the Fifth Syrian War (202–199 BCE), Antiochus III realized his ambition, regaining control of southern Syria and Judea/Israel from the very young (6 years old) Ptolemy V Theos Epiphanes and his intrigue-ridden and discordant regents.¹²⁶ Although details are sketchy largely because Polybius' account is fragmentary, Antiochus invaded Syro-Judea/Israel in 202 BCE, most of which readily submitted. One major exception was Gaza which remained loyal to the Ptolemies and was besieged before it submitted (Polybius 16.22a). The Ptolemies led by the general Scopas counter-attacked and reclaimed much of the territory conquered by Antiochus. The decisive battle was fought in the vicinity of the shrine at Paneas near Mt. Hermon in the Galilee. Scopas was defeated and pursued before being captured in 199 BCE.¹²⁷ The remaining action of the war concerned the defeat of Ptolemaic garrisons stationed throughout the reclaimed territory, including one in Jerusalem.

The Seleucid Metanarrative

The Seleucid kings exemplify and develop an ideology of kingship similar to that of Alexander, the *Diadochi*, and the Ptolemies.¹²⁸ Like them, the Seleucid king was also 'supreme commander, dispenser of

126. Gera, *Judaea*, 18-35. On Antiochus III, see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 201-2.

127. I am following Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 321-22, who quotes Porphyry; also Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, 146-57.

128. Gruen, 'Seleucid Royal Ideology'; Gruen identifies such means of sanction as links with Alexander, coins, honoring Apollo, ruler cults, generosity in benefactions, sensitivity to local customs, and colonization.

justice [and] god's representative on earth'.¹²⁹ Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt underscore the military force that lies at the heart of this ideology of imperial power and kingship and of the task of extracting wealth from conquered land and peoples. The Seleucid empire, they argue, originates in and is maintained 'by military constraint (armies, colonies, military expeditions, garrisons) which permits the levy of tribute and service from the subjugated peoples'.¹³⁰ The Seleucids promoted this royal ideology through the standard means used by empires: titles (Seleucus I was called 'Nikator' or Victor because of his victories [Appian, *Syr.* 9.57]); appeals to predecessors (Alexander), establishing a local civic ruler cult in cities through coins, architecture, statues, and texts; and of course the practices of war, enlistment, acquisition of booty, tribute, and patronage wherein kingly power was renewed by exertion and performance and maintained in gratitude and loyalty, thereby creating a reciprocal interaction between imperializer and colonized.¹³¹

After his death, Seleucus Nikator was deified as an incarnation of Zeus with cities establishing a ruler cult for him that not only lauded the image of the victorious warrior-king but expressed divine contextualization for the Seleucid line. Not surprisingly, Seleucus' coinage emphasized these qualities of power and successful military conqueror. He chose, for example, appropriate divine figures that sanctioned his military power: the divinized Alexander (prototype and patron), winged or wreathed Nike (goddess of victory), Athena goddess of war, Apollo the oracle who prophesied his kingship, and Zeus the most powerful.¹³² Jan Zahle observes that such presentations were 'political and ideological and everything served to convey a message to the subjects. The names of the kings, their portraits and their Greek gods on the coins of the state all advertise the firm control or claim of the king in question.'¹³³ Hadley sketches a wider significance in arguing that not only were such displays of divine sanction necessary for Seleucus I as he sought to legitimize his power, they were also significant for 'the longevity of the dynasty... transcending the life-span of the individual upon whom they were originally conferred'.¹³⁴ Later, Antiochus III initiated a 'centralised

129. Walbank, 'Monarchy and Monarchic Ideas', 79.

130. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 40, 53-59.

131. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 114-40.

132. Hadley, 'The Royal Propaganda'.

133. Zahle, 'Religious Motifs', 127.

134. Hadley, 'Royal Propaganda', 64.

“state” cult of himself and his *progonoi*, and a “state” cult of his queen and wife, Laodice’.¹³⁵

Another example of Seleucid activity expresses propaganda claims that include both military domination and a societal vision. Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White discuss the Borsippa Cylinder that evidences the temple-patronage of Antiochus I. He (re-)builds the temple of the Babylonian god Nabu (Ezida) at Borsippa, the foundation of which was laid in 268 BCE.¹³⁶ Among other thing, this interesting cylinder shows Antiochus not only concerned with Babylonian matters but also with cultural continuities as he manipulates traditional Babylonian forms to identify himself as

Antiochus, the great king, the mighty/legitimate king, king of the world, king of Babylon, king of lands, caretaker of Esagila and Ezida, first son of Seleucus, the king the Macedonian, king of Babylon, am I.

Antiochus goes on to pray that Nabu, son of Marduk, would accomplish for him as a gift

[t]he overthrow of the countries of my enemies, the achievement of my battle-wishes against my enemies, permanent victories, just kingship, a happy reign, years of joy, children in satiety...

This prayer sets out ‘the ideal picture of the king’s socio-political functions: the conquest of enemies and enduring superiority, and the establishment of justice, peace, a long reign, and a stable succession’.¹³⁷ Kuhrt and Sherwin-White observe, though, that this patronage is not one-way traffic; it reflects the reciprocity and ambivalence of the imperializer–colonized situation. His prayer offers ‘a set of expectations of how a good king should rule’ and in so doing it provides for his subjects, or at least the more powerful ones, ‘a basis for the exercise of pressures on the king’.¹³⁸ While the vision attempts to frame Seleucid power in terms that highlight its societal benefits, the emphasis on the king (his well-being, great power, many children) and his military might cannot be disguised.

135. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 202-10.

136. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, ‘Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology’.

137. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, ‘Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology’, 76-78. Further prayer requests long days and years, ‘my throne firm’, long reign, victory in battle, and tribute to be offered to Nabu.

138. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, ‘Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology’, 85-86.

Antiochus III and Judea/Israel

The Fifth Syrian War (202–199 BCE), by which Antiochus III gained control of Judea, had significant impact on the people and land. Josephus notes that during the reign of Antiochus III

it was the lot of the Jews to undergo great hardships through the devastation of their land, as did also the inhabitants of Coele-Syria...whether he (Antiochus) was victorious or defeated they experienced the same fate; so that they were in no way different from a storm-tossed ship which is beset on either side...crushed between the success of Antiochus and the adverse turn of his fortunes. (*Ant.* 12.129-30)

We are left to elaborate Josephus' gaps in terms of socio-economic hardship with the taking of crops and animals to supply and billet troops moving across the land, resultant hunger and poor nutrition, disruption of trade, damage to property and buildings, the personal indignities suffered at the hands of the colonizer, divisions among Jews over (self-protective) loyalties to contesting super-powers, and the inevitable departure of local young men who joined the armies.

Porphry attests the divisions among the local population: 'Judea... was rent into contrary factions, the one group favoring Antiochus and the other favoring Ptolemy'.¹³⁹ This fracturing, leading to horizontal violence involving colonized against colonized, occurs, as noted in the Introduction above,¹⁴⁰ in situations where vertical pressure and violence are exerted. The colonized are unable to retaliate directly whether because of the power imbalance or, more likely in this context, because of uncertainty as to which superpower would prevail. Accordingly, they substitute other natives for the colonizer in expressions of violent desire to conquer a conqueror.

Evidence that pro-Seleucid support was stronger than the pro-Ptolemaic forces emerges from Porphyry's comment that 'the aristocrats of Ptolemy's party [went] back to Egypt',¹⁴¹ and from Josephus' claim that Jews assisted Antiochus, and his unnuanced statement that 'the Jews went over to' Antiochus (*Ant.* 12.131-32, 138).

Josephus provides some glimpse into the economic cost for Judean/Israelites of allying with Antiochus in the experience of the ambivalence of favor and subordination. Josephus says that 'the Jews went over to him (Antiochus) and admitted him to their city (Jerusalem) and made

139. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 323 quoting Porphyry; Gera, *Judean and Mediterranean Politics*, 25-28.

140. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*; Freire, *Pedagogy*.

141. Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 321 quoting Porphyry.

abundant provision for his entire army and his elephants; and they readily joined his forces in besieging the garrison which had been left by Scopas in the citadel of Jerusalem' (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.132-33, 138). Again we have to make explicit what Josephus conceals, namely the human desperation and deprivation for peasant farmers that lie beneath Josephus' smooth assertion that Jews made 'abundant provision for this entire army and elephants'.

For instance, Antiochus' elephants numbered one hundred and fifty (Polybius 11.34.10-11). According to Portier-Young, one elephant eats five per cent of its body weight on a daily basis which translates to between 330 to 550 pounds of vegetation daily per elephant, a huge demand on local food provisions normally destined for people and local livestock.¹⁴² Such provision came from peasant surplus and necessity levied (not donated) for the conquering military force, consigning numerous peasant households to food insecurity.

Hengel points to letters published around 200-195 BCE on the Hefzibah stele between the *strategos*, the military governor and chief priest of Syria and Phoenicia, and King Antiochus III. These letters concern the protection of the rights of villagers, forbidding the billeting of troops and forbidding troops and officials to force locals from their homes (Letter IV), as well as a request that civilian officials and personnel be stopped from doing (unspecified) 'violence' and 'injustice' as they travel through villages (Letter V). The exchange of letters thereby functions as a means of 'countering the acts of violence which had been perpetrated by his troops' and officials.¹⁴³

Further provisions were demanded when Antiochus sealed an alliance with Ptolemy by marrying his daughter, Cleopatra, to Ptolemy (Arrian, *Syr.* 1.5). Josephus claims that her dowry comprised tribute collected by 'the prominent men' from the provinces of 'Coele-Syria, Samaria, Judea, and Phoenicia', though the exact details of the collection (amount? regularity?) are not clear (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.154). Accompanying the hardships caused by material extraction is the toll exacted by the loss of dignity in being coerced and disrespected.

Further, there was significant material damage to Jerusalem in the fighting, though it is unclear whether or how much it resulted from horizontal Jew-on-Jew violence in the city and/or from the alliance of

142. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire*, 65-66, who cites Caniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World*, 121-29, 140-41; Thorne, 'Warfare and Agriculture'.

143. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 9; on the Hefzibah stele, see Landau, 'A Greek inscription Found Near Hefzibah', esp. Letter IV; Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 326-27.

Antiochus and local Jews against the Ptolemaic garrison in Jerusalem. Josephus records a decree from Antiochus, generally regarded as authentic,¹⁴⁴ addressed to Ptolemy the governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, in which Antiochus expresses appreciation for the Jewish welcome to Jerusalem, for supplies for his army, and for assistance in expelling the Ptolemaic garrison (*Ant.* 12.138-44). Reflecting and reinforcing his alliance with the Jerusalem temple-based leaders, he goes on to commit supplies for sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple and for rebuilding the temple that would not be subject to a toll in entering the city (*Ant.* 12.141). He allows the Jews to govern themselves 'in accordance with the laws of their country', provides some tax relief for three years for the Jerusalem temple-based governing elite (poll, crown, and salt taxes; *Ant.* 12.142-43), and reduces tribute by one third. He stimulates resettlement with this temporary and localized tax and tribute relief, and declares that 'those who were carried off from the city and are slaves' are free and their property restored (*Ant.* 12.144). He does not specify in what circumstances slaves were taken (by Scopas? by Antiochus?) but the reference to them attests further damaging impact on the people of Judea. In addition to bolstering the loyalty and appreciation of the Jerusalem leadership who were the main beneficiaries of the decree, G. Aperghis notes the ambivalent economic impact of these measures whereby tax relief and speedy repairs to the temple, central to the province's economy, stimulated some local economic recovery even while it expanded the contribution of Judea to the Seleucid rulers as part of the tax base.¹⁴⁵ But there is no relief from taxes and tribute for towns and villages outside Jerusalem on which Antiochus was dependent, and certainly nothing for peasant farmers in relation to their animals and land production. There is also some evidence for increased settlement in the central hill country during this time, perhaps by ex-Seleucid military figures.¹⁴⁶

Generally these provisions for local temples and some tax relief especially for elites are consistent with Seleucid policy that served their revenue-raising interests and do not suggest Jewish exceptionalism in treatment. These factors point to the historical reliability of Josephus' material. A reference in 2 Macc. 4:11 ('the existing royal concessions to the Jews') confirms the granting of concessions, and Sirach 50:1-4

144. Marcus, 'Appendix D', 481-91; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 10, 271; Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 324-26; Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2.24-43, 315-56, 357-75.

145. Aperghis, *The Seleukid Royal Economy*, 166-68.

146. Berlin, 'Between Large Forces', 15-16.

praises the chief priest, Simon II (the son of Onias II), who died in 198 BCE, for work in rebuilding the temple and guarding Jerusalem. In Sirach 50:1-4, Simon seems to function as the nation's leader in carrying out the work that Antiochus funds, repairing and fortifying the temple, building protective walls, providing a water cistern, and 'saving his people from ruin and fortify[ing] the city against siege'. The provisions indicate a willingness on Antiochus' part to form alliances with provincial elites, once submission was established, involving compensation for damage in the war and respect for local leadership, customs, and religious institutions.¹⁴⁷

Josephus follows Antiochus' letter or decree with a brief proclamation from Antiochus issued 'throughout the entire kingdom' upholding temple practices (*Ant.* 12.145-46). Its authenticity is disputed.¹⁴⁸ While its upholding of temple practice is consistent with Antiochus' decree to Ptolemy, the details of its concerns—forbidding foreigners in the temple precincts as well as certain animals—seem unusual. The forbidden animals were not sacrificial animals. And the prohibition on bringing the skins of various animals (horses, leopards, foxes, hares, etc.) into Jerusalem assumed a forbidden practice for which there is no evidence, and overlooked the transportation roles of several animals in the city. Portier-Young argues that these two latter provisions guard both the temple's and city's purity and prevent 'new' or 'foreign' worship practices being inaugurated which would exchange divine favor for disaster. She also suggests that the provisions may 'encode a subtle act of resistance in the face of Seleucid occupation' whereby Seleucid military presence (horses, other supply animals, and supplies) could not be resisted militarily but their presence in the city could be resisted on cultic grounds.¹⁴⁹

147. What financial return did Judea/Israel provide for the Seleucids? Under Antiochus IV, Onias the chief priest had the rights for tax collection but was outbid by Jason who committed to 360 talents plus 80 more (2 Macc. 4:8). In turn he is outbid by Menelaus (172 BCE) who almost doubled the amount by 300 talents (2 Macc. 4:24) but he does not pay (2 Macc. 4:27). Whether his nonpayment was an act of defiance and independence or because he had exceeded Judea/Israel's financial capacity is not clear.

148. Marcus, 'Appendix D', 491-94. Josephus also includes a letter attesting 'our piety and loyalty' sent to Zeuxis, the governor of Phrygia and Lydia. Antiochus outlines his plans to help subdue revolts in these areas by settling 'two thousand Jewish families there from Babylon as military colonists because they will be a compliant and loyal presence'. Given the settlement of Jews as military colonists in Egypt for example, the scenario is not unlikely. Marcus, 'Appendix D', 494-96.

149. For discussion, Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 57-62. Gera, *Judaea*, 34 n. 109, notes several studies establishing that the bans on these impure animals occur in Halachic Qumran texts (4QMMT). Sefer, 'The Priestly' (Hebrew).

Perhaps a genuine decree upholding temple sanctity and Jewish ancestral sacrifices was elaborated somewhere in the transmission process along these lines.

One further account should be considered. Two Maccabees 3 narrates the story of a high-ranking Seleucid official Heliodorus in Jerusalem. Heliodorus, sent from the court of Seleucus IV Philopator (187–75 BCE), is to rob the Jerusalem temple of some two hundred talents of gold and four hundred talents of silver (2 Macc. 3:7–40). The scene is set up with an apparently perfect situation of piety under the pious high priest Onias III that is disrupted by a falling out between Onias and an official of considerable standing, the captain (προστάτης)¹⁵⁰ of the temple, Simon, concerning administration of the market. Simon takes revenge by reporting the great wealth in the temple through the governor of Coele-Syria to the king who, in the rapacious ways sanctioned by Hellenistic kingship, sends Heliodorus to attain it. The high priest Onias resists, drawing a line against the reach of his imperial overlord. He is supported by the priests, crowds, women, and young girls who beseech God to intervene to protect the sanctity of the temple (2 Macc. 3:13–21). As Heliodorus goes to the treasury to take the money, he and ‘his great retinue and all his bodyguard’ are overcome by a vision or epiphany of a great horse and angelic beings who attack and beat them. These expressions of divine presence function to protect the temple funds (3:22–30). After sacrifices from Onias, Heliodorus returns to the king bearing witness to God’s great power and advising the king not to act against the temple again.

The incident seems to be significantly at odds with the practices of both Ptolemies and Seleucids to honor local religious practices and sites.¹⁵¹ Both Ptolemies (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.50, 58, Ptolemy Philadelphus) and Seleucids (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.138–44, Antiochus III) had made provisions for the Jerusalem temple and its sacrificial worship. Yet several observations suggest the account of 2 Maccabees 3 is not completely fictional but credibly reflects, at least, some features of exploitative colonial politics, particularly the reciprocal relationship between imperializer and colonized..

150. In 2 Chr. 24:11 this captain or administrator of the high priest collects taxes for temple repairs.

151. There are some exceptions. Antiochus III plunders gold and silver to the tune of 4,000 talents from the temple of Aine at Ekbatana (Polybius 10.27.10–13). He also attempted to plunder the temple of Zeus-Bel in Elam (Diodorus 28.3; 29.15) and Antiochus IV attempts to plunder the temple of Artemis in Elymas (Polybius 31.9.1–2). Aperghis, *Seleucid Royal Economy*, 173–74.

First, as Cotton and Wörrle note, an inscription attests that Heliodorus was a leading official in the court of Seleucus with some role akin to that described in this incident.¹⁵² The Heliodorus stele indicates that in 178 BCE Seleucus, under the guise of a well-intentioned euergetic act motivated by concern for his subjects, appointed Heliodorus to have oversight of sanctuaries in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia in the same way as sanctuaries in the other satrapies. Moreover, the Seleucids had economic reasons to benefit from the temple finances. The Seleucids were restricted by the terms of the treaty of Apamea (188 BCE) concluded after Rome had defeated Antiochus III at the battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE.¹⁵³ The treaty imposed limits on the Seleucid military, restricted its geographical reach, removed cities and territory to Roman control, and imposed harsh reparations. Dov Gera notes the intention of the reparations in creating a permanent shortage of money that curtailed Seleucid assertions of power.¹⁵⁴ They challenged Antiochus III, and his successors Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV, to find new sources of income from their empire.

Following Cotton and Wörrle, the stele's concern with 'taking care of these sanctuaries' seems to be a euphemism that masks the task of 'exercising close control, in the interests of the royal administration, over the assets, revenues and liabilities of the sanctuaries...' Scott notes that euphemisms are part of the imperial repertoire to conceal acts of aggressive power. They 'serve cosmetically to beautify aspects of power that cannot be denied'.¹⁵⁵ Exactly what was involved in this 'taking care' of temples to be exercised by the official Heliodorus is not explicit, though economic return is to the fore as Antiochus finds opportunity in dependence on the Jerusalem temple. But anything that interfered with Jerusalem temple practices and finances, including additional 'payments' from the temple treasury to the Seleucids, heightens a sense of local vulnerability and the emergence of an explosive and conflictual situation. The issue, of course, does not fall neatly along a religious-economic axis, but involves cultural and political power as Seleucid control over Jerusalem's central institution and basis for political power, the temple and its priesthood, is asserted. Given that the temple was the basis of power for the Jerusalem ruling elite, these actions placed them in a

152. Cotton and Wörrle, 'Seleukos IV to Heliodorus'.

153. On the battle, see Bar-Kochva, *Seleucid Army*, 163-73.

154. Gera, *Judaea*, 92-93.

155. Scott, *Domination*, 52.

position of considerable ambivalence as allies of Seleucid power yet as victims of its rapaciousness. Nor is it difficult to imagine a narrative such as that of 2 Maccabees 3 emerging that frames the actions as an affront to the temple that requires its God to demonstrate protective power.

Given these factors outlined above, and the recognition of postcolonial approaches that imperial-colonial situations of disparities of power are marked by ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity, and reciprocity, it seems unconvincing to claim that the years ca. 200–c. 170 BCE were ‘three decades of cordial collaboration between the Seleucid regime and the Jewish nation’, even a time of ‘serenity’.¹⁵⁶ Such an analysis needs considerable complexifying. The situation of non-elites facing the aftermath of war and considerable economic burdens was by no means cordial and collaboration seems too generous a euphemism for oppressive military interventions. And the Jerusalem elite itself was adjusting to political change, in a context of reciprocity in which imperial favor was to be returned with gratitude and loyalty, under some pressure in relation to the temple, and experiencing internal divisions.

Ambivalence rather than monolithic ‘cordial collaboration’ seems also to be evident in the writing of Ben Sirah. Noting the influence of Greek ideas and language in the work, Leo Perdue locates Ben Sirah among Jerusalem’s more elite and wealthy residents, teaching in a Jewish school (51:23; 33:16–19) ‘in a period in which Hellenistic culture permeated the urban sites of Eretz Israel’.¹⁵⁷ Perdue dates the work to between 200 and 175 BCE, particularly in the reign of Seleucus IV. He argues that Ben Sirah was a teacher who ‘educated leaders and scribes for various roles in Judea/Israel as a Seleucid colony’ in the arenas of the ‘government, temple, and private houses’ (38:24–39:11).¹⁵⁸ In the absence of any hostilities to Jewish life and religious practice in Judea, Ben Sirah affirms the Torah as authoritative for Jewish life (24:23; 41:8), ‘Israel’s sacred history, the theocratic character of postexilic Judaism most clearly expressed in the temple and its worship, and loyalty to the office of the high priest’.¹⁵⁹ Yet without surrendering his Jewish identity, Sirah is also open to Hellenistic culture such as Stoicism,¹⁶⁰ Greek language, literature, and philosophy. He does not share the reactionary response

156. Gruen, ‘Hellenism and Persecution’, 240.

157. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 257, 272–74.

158. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 259–60, 282.

159. Perdue, *The Sword and the Stylus*, 265.

160. Any direct influence from the Stoics is denied by Mattila, ‘Ben Sira and the Stoics’.

of withdrawal attested by Onias IV and the temple at Leontopolis in Egypt,¹⁶¹ and the Dead Sea community at Qumran opposed to the Zadokite priesthood.

Yet to describe Ben Sirah only as accommodationist is to miss the ambivalence that Bhabha identifies as constitutive of the identity of the hybridized native.¹⁶² Sirah holds together openness to Hellenistic culture with loyalties to Jewish traditions (Israel as God's possession, 17:17) to create an identity that is hybrid, purely neither Jew nor Hellenistic, a third face. Such ambivalence is also evident in Sirah's positioning of kings in the space between power and powerlessness. He recognizes that kings have great power for good (making a city 'fit to live in', 10:3b) as well as for ruin (10:3a). Rulers with princes and judges are to be honored (10:24a). But kings do not have absolute power whatever their delusions. They are subject to Israel's God, the 'King of kings' (51:12).¹⁶³ Israel's God raises them up (10:4b), destroys them along with nations (10:14-15; 48:6), overthrows their lands (10:16), uses them as God's agent to inflict retribution (48:8). In God's hands, not kingly hands, is 'the government of the earth' (10:4a). Kings who fail to recognize the kingly hand exhibit pride and arrogance (10:6-18). Kings exist between power and powerlessness.¹⁶⁴ Ben Sirah expresses here the hybridity of an elite native under power who represents local traditions in a context of imperial power.

161. Hayward ('The Jewish Temple at Lentopolis') argues that the temple rejected the Jerusalem temple and priests; Gruen ('The Origins and Objectives') argues the Onias IV withdrew as a rejection of Menelaus and the Seleucid empire, not of the temple itself, and his Egyptian temple is not a rival to Jerusalem but a reinforcement.

162. Bhabha, *The Location*.

163. Wright, 'Ben Sira', 84-85; Sira 9:17-10:18 'contains the essentials of Ben Sira's thoughts about kings and kingship'. Also, Wright, 'Put the Nations'.

164. Aitken ('Judaic National Identity', 40-41) points out that Sirah offers some insight into socio-economic conditions. Aitken recognizes, for example, the activity of merchants and tradesmen in gaining wealth though he emphasizes their common sinful activity (26:29-27:2). He is also aware of a significant societal divide between the rich and poor in which the rich have the upper hand and the poor (including orphans) have great need (4:1-10). The latter are consigned to constant toil to avoid need (31:4). He recognizes that the rich exploit the poor (13:4-7) and that there is considerable animosity and conflict between them (13:18-19). But he also knows the usefulness of an 'influential person' for a person of lower status as long as the superior is treated with appropriate deference (13:9-11). The rich person has social influence (13:21-23) though alms-giving is an expected and self-benefitting behavior (29:8-13). In this context, Sirah's scribal group emerges with considerable social influence and wealth, unlike peasants, laborers, or craftsmen (e.g. smiths; potters; 38:24-34; jeweler, 45:11).

How might these comments participate in a context of Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingship?¹⁶⁵ Such statements echo both Israel's traditions and Hellenistic ideologies of kingship. This consonance with familiar material could render the assertions commonplace, with a proverbial quality that suggests the familiar content is harmless. Yet the possibility exists that this same quality of the harmless familiar functions to deliver criticism in a way that protects Ben Sirah, masking it, while also enabling it, by articulating the criticism under the guise of the commonplace. For example, is 10:8—'Sovereignty passes from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and wealth'—a familiar generic observation? Or is it a commentary on the passing of the control of Judea/Israel from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids in 200 BCE veiled by a commonplace? If the latter, it announces divine judgment on Ptolemaic injustice, insolence, and wealth, while simultaneously offering a warning to the Seleucids that such could be their fate. The Ptolemies, then, would be the thrones overthrown by the Lord (10:14; cf. 48:6) while the Seleucids are those whom God raises up, perhaps anointed 'to inflict retribution' (10:4; cf. 48:8). But how is an audience to know whether it is proverbial or scathing criticism? Bhabha's attention to the role of ambivalence in the situations of colonized peoples suggests we have to recognize that it is both.¹⁶⁶

Yet there is a further dimension beyond ambivalence. Immediately following the section on kingship, chapter 10 introduces another section concerning persons deserving honor (10:19-24). The section ends: 'the prince and the judge and the ruler are honored, but none of them is greater than the one who fears the Lord' (10:24). The verse inscribes familiar ambivalence. Honor for rulers is upheld but that honoring coexists with and is contextualized by another and greater honor: 'the one who fears the Lord'. That fear of the Lord is embodied supremely in the scribe, the sage, one like Ben Sirah who has had 'the opportunity of leisure' to devote 'to the study of the law of the Most High (38:24a, 34b). As Bhabha noted, with ambivalence so often comes mimicry as the colonized sage Ben Sirah mimics the kingly obsession with honor, aspiring to a greater honor than the king who rules his country. He does so by asserting his own native wisdom tradition (the fear of the Lord) as the means by which a colonized provincial can be an adviser to and thus out-honor an empire's king (39:4). 'Many will praise his understand-

165. Wright ('Ben Sira') raises the question, suggests some possible contact (83), but ultimately decides that taking on the Ptolemaic and Seleucid monarchs was not Sirah's primary aim (88). Aitken ('Judaic National Identity', 40-43) sees a link with the beginning of the Seleucid monarchy (43).

166. Bhabha, *The Location, passim*.

ing...his memory will not disappear...his name will live through all generations, nations will speak of his wisdom...he will leave a name greater than a thousand...it is enough for him' (39:9-11). The mimicry is similar to imperial structures but not quite the same.¹⁶⁷

The material cited above from Josephus and Porphyry as well as Bhabha's emphasis on ambivalence troubles any analysis that claims the decades between ca. 200 and ca. 170 BCE were serene and marked by 'cordial collaboration'.¹⁶⁸ More likely in a colonized context is a situation marked by ambiguity, considerable imperial pressure, horizontal violence, and hardship. John Ma, for example, notes that the effect of Antiochus' so-called benefactions/commands to the Jerusalem elite was to *permit* local Judean/Israelite customs centered on the temple but now by placing them on a different basis. No longer is the existence and customs of the colonized sufficient. The Seleucid decrees have performative power in substituting royal Seleucid 'efficacy for theirs', thereby ensuring 'the supremacy and ubiquity of royal form and authority over local sources of legitimacy. This maneuver is typical of the way "empires of domination" function: tolerating local autonomy by redefining it in terms of central authority, through administrative speech-acts.'¹⁶⁹ The effect is, in other words, to render local autonomy and 'cordial collaboration' an illusion and delusion as past and established traditions intersect with new and present assertions of imperial power to create a third space of hybridity.

Anathea Portier-Young more accurately describes this hybridity and ambivalence in terms of major stressors and 'multiple sites of internal division' in these decades, noting a 'lack of political autonomy, imperial exploitation, military occupation, rapid political change, the ravages of war, personal and economic hardship, internal division, and unequal distribution of privilege'.¹⁷⁰

IV.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE)

At the death of Seleucus IV in 175 BCE, murdered by the aforementioned official Heliodorus (Appian, *Syr.* 45), his brother Antiochus seized power ahead of Seleucus' son.¹⁷¹ The rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

167. Bhabha, *The Location*, 86.

168. Gruen, 'Hellenism and Persecution', 240.

169. Ma, 'Seleukids and Speech-Acts', 87, 89.

170. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 73.

171. Habricht, 'The Seleucids and their Rivals', 338-53.

marks a profoundly significant period in the interaction between Israel and the empires involving, among other things, an ending of the policy of tolerance for local religious observance practiced by father Antiochus III, open military revolt, and eventually the establishing of Judea/Israel's independence. Simplistically (mis)understood, this violent revolt has been generalized as a paradigm of Israel's perpetually contestive cultural and/or religious interaction with empires. The above discussion, as well as that which follows, reveals the lie of such a claim. More accurately understood, the events exhibit multiple and complex ways in which Jews simultaneously negotiated assertions of imperial power.

Reconstructions of and motivations for the events are difficult to establish as a long line of distinguished scholarship attests. The events are complex, the timeline of events is not agreed, the literary sources—primarily 1 and 2 Maccabees—are somewhat at odds with one another, with some different perspectives, and are clearly not neutral in attributing blame and adulating heroes.¹⁷² Here our discussion largely pursues an outline based on 2 Maccabees, but we are less interested in establishing exactly what happened (an impossible quest) and more concerned with identifying some of the main dynamics of the imperializer–colonized situation, particularly how Jews negotiated this assertion of imperial power and terror.

Chief Priestly Competition

One starting point for the crisis involves not an overtly aggressive act by Antiochus IV, though he has a significant role in the whole situation, but the ongoing agonistic interactions between local Jerusalem factions led by the chief priest Onias III and Simon according to 2 Maccabees 4:1-6. Since, somehow, Onias had prevented Heliodorus' attempted robbery of the temple, Simon stirred up accusations against Onias that he, Onias, had been behind Heliodorus' actions. Onias appealed to King Seleucus, but the king died and Antiochus IV became king (175 BCE). Fractures in local interactions are common, as we have noted, in contexts of significant vertical imperial pressure.

Onias' brother Jason took advantage of the situation to secure the priesthood for himself (ca. 174 BCE), while also introducing a new and divisive factor into the mix, a move to adopt 'the Greek way of life'

172. Weitzman, 'Plotting Antiochus's Persecution'; Doran, 'Independent or Co-Existence'. In addition to the literature cited here, there are numerous discussions including Hayes and Mandell, *The Jewish People*, 47-100; Gera, *Judaea*, 109-254.

(2 Macc. 4:10). In the ambivalent location of an elite under power yet needing the king's favor, Jason seeks the king's favor, offering Antiochus 440 silver talents for the priesthood and, for an additional 150 talents, permission to establish Jerusalem as a Greek city with a gymnasium, training for young men (an *ephebate*), and enrolling Jerusalemites as citizens of Antioch ('Antiochenes of Jerusalem'; 2 Macc. 4:7-10). With permission granted, Jason and his supporters set about establishing these privileges, actions that brought both support and opposition.¹⁷³ He also introduced the Greek hat associated with the god Hermes who was especially identified with contests and the gymnasium, allowed the priests to neglect somewhat the duty of offering sacrifices, and welcomed Antiochus to Jerusalem (so 2 Macc. 4:11-17, 22). This initiative to promote 'the Greek way of life' comes not from Antiochus but from the new chief priest Jason and his supporters. Both 1 Maccabees 1:11-15 and 2 Maccabees 4:10 attest this initiative, an attribution of responsibility that has likely historical accuracy since it runs counter to both sources' vilification of Antiochus.

After Jason has been chief priest for three years, Simon's brother, Menelaus, outbids him for the chief priesthood by three hundred silver talents. The author of 2 Maccabees describes Menelaus as having 'no qualification for the priesthood, but having the hot temper of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a savage wild beast' (2 Macc. 4:25). In addition to being a man who cannot master himself, he is impious in stealing and selling gold vessels from the temple. Onias (whose piety was praised in 3:1-2) exposes Menelaus but Menelaus resorts to violence and has him murdered (2 Macc. 4:33-34). Menelaus' brother, Lysimachus, the deputy chief priest, is complicit in the thefts. Violence breaks out as crowds gather against him, Lysimachus attacks them with 'three thousand men', the crowd counter-attacks, and Lysimachus is killed (2 Macc. 4:39-42). What Bickerman calls civil war among these factions is the horizontal violence typical of imperial-colonial situations where vertical pressure is exerted.¹⁷⁴ Three men from the Jerusalem *gerousia* appear before Antiochus with charges against the chief priest, Menelaus. Menelaus, however, bribes the king, has the three men killed, and remains in office (4:43-50).¹⁷⁵

173. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2:1072-76.

174. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2:1125.

175. For a different and confused account, Josephus, *J.W.* 1.33, including Onias' flight to Egypt and establishment of a temple at Leontopolis.

This conflict over the chief priesthood exposes several dynamics of the complex and multivalent colonizer–colonized interactions. First, it confirms Seleucid tolerance of local customs and religious practices. There is no Seleucid attempt as a matter of regular policy to close down local practices. But given the ambivalences of colonial situations, the Seleucids do not leave the local practices alone. Instead, in selling the chief priesthood, they replace traditional sanctions with their own sanction and control over them as Ma has noted.

Second, Seleucid patronage and benefaction are clearly on display in the purchasings of the chief priesthood and in the granting of the privileges concerning the gymnasium, *ephebate*, and citizenship. Jerusalem’s priestly leadership knows a very ambivalent location as leaders of Jerusalem’s temple and sacred traditions and practices, yet as deeply embedded in and dependent on this patronage and benefaction.

Third, the competition among Jerusalem figures expressed in the bidding wars for the position indicates the desire among Jerusalem elites for Seleucid favor and their imitation of Seleucid power, even while they represent and have oversight of temple practices and the worship of Israel’s God. The situation exhibits, as Fanon has observed, the ambivalence of the native’s lust for the power and prestige gained by cooperation with the occupying power, the very things that he both rejects yet desires.¹⁷⁶ Bhabha has similarly highlighted the role of mimicry in the negotiation of power between colonizer and colonized. Jason’s increased investment in Greek education and culture, and downplaying of traditional Jerusalem custom and practice, heightens the hybridity of the colonial situation with two quite disparate traditions and identities in play, especially among Jerusalem elites, training in Greek culture and in the Torah.

Fourth, the violence among the competing Jerusalem parties attests the phenomenon of horizontal violence in this colonial situation. According to Fanon, horizontal violence among locals erupts in situations where considerable vertical pressure is exerted by the colonizing/ruling power. Violent resistance to the agents of the colonizing power is deemed to be futile because of the overwhelming power dynamic, so the violence is deflected, redirected toward competing groups who are seen to take on characteristics of the governing power. Horizontal violence thus attests not just a situation of individual ambition or desire for power, but the experience or perception of considerable pressures being exerted by the occupying force whose favor is desired/needed. Such recognitions

176. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 52–54; see Introduction and notes 13–17 above.

indicate that attempts to understand these interactions and the following crisis in terms only of cultural entities ('Hellenism' versus 'Judaism'), while ignoring the colonizer–colonized power dynamics, are misdirected.¹⁷⁷

And fifth, the Seleucids' economic dependence on their colonized territory is evident in the sale of the chief priesthood. The imperializer–colonized dynamic does not only comprise 'power over' but also the reciprocity of the imperializer's dependence on the colonized.

First Maccabees tells a story similar in broad outline to that of 2 Maccabees but different in detail. It identifies Antiochus as a 'sinful root' and locates him in a line from Alexander. It narrates that 'certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many' (1 Macc. 1:11) though it does not locate the center of their actions in the contenders for the chief priesthood nor name Jason, Menelaus, or Lysimachus specifically. At the heart of the action of the so-called renegades, though, are actions akin to Jason's in 2 Maccabees: 'joining with the Gentiles' by building a gymnasium, reversing circumcision, and abandoning 'the holy covenant', though no specifics are given (1 Macc. 1:11-15). Reversing circumcision—the procedure is described by Celsus (7.25.1)—could signify a renouncing of the covenant and a means of removing a mark that distinguished Jewish males from Gentiles.¹⁷⁸

Antiochus Attacks Jerusalem

The next major development is Antiochus' attack on Jerusalem. Both First and Second Maccabees have Antiochus waging war in Egypt as the context for his military action against Jerusalem, though they differ on the number of wars he waged in Egypt (one, 1 Macc. 1:16-22; two, 2 Macc. 5:1¹⁷⁹). Second Maccabees continues to develop the dispute over the chief priesthood. Jason, displaced and outbid by Menelaus, attacks Jerusalem to regain power, slaughters many, but is driven off. Antiochus IV hears of the battle and, thinking Jerusalem is in revolt, attacks the city, killing many and enslaving others (2 Macc. 5:11-21). Verse 14 notes that 'within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed'.

177. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 52-54.

178. Hall, 'Epispasm'. Grabbe (*Judaism from Cyrus*, 276-77) argues against the claim that exercise in the gymnasium was done in the nude and that this provided the reason for the reversal of circumcision.

179. So also Polybius, *History* 28.18-23; 29.26-27.

Even allowing for significant exaggeration in the figures, such ethnic cleansing is a brutally effective tactic of colonizing control. It reduces the population physically, it psychologically humiliates survivors as members of a people hardly worthy of existence, it allows for resettlement of one's own (superior) people, and it sends a frightening message of intimidation and submission to survivors and other peoples. Antiochus then enters the temple with Menelaus, loots its 'holy vessels' and 'eighteen hundred talents', leaves Menelaus as chief priest, and appoints two governors. Subsequently (the time span is unspecified, perhaps 168–167 BCE), he sends Apollonius with 'twenty-two thousand' troops on a subsequent ethnic-cleansing and terrorizing attack to deplete and humiliate the population further and to enslave others (2 Macc. 5:11–26; cf. 1 Macc. 1:20–40; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.248).¹⁸⁰ Victory was secured with the building of a citadel (Akra) in Jerusalem in which were stationed Seleucid troops along with one of the city's faction, some Jews (the 'Antiochenes' enrolled by Jason as citizens of the *polis*), as well as some foreign settlers (Dan. 11:39). The occupied citadel would remain there for the next quarter of a century or so.

Antiochus Bans Jewish Religious Practice (167 BCE)

First and Second Maccabees offer different scenarios for the subsequent banning of Jewish religious practices. In 2 Maccabees 6:1, 'not long after' the second attack from Apollonius, Antiochus sends Geron, an Athenian senator, with orders to dismantle Jewish religion. He forbids observance of the law, renames the temple the temple of Olympian Zeus, and introduces prostitutes and 'things unfit for sacrifice' into the temple where intercourse takes place. Forbidden offerings cover the altar, sabbath and festival observances are forbidden, as is claiming Jewish

180. First Maccabees lacks both an account of the disputes over the chief priesthood and an explicit alternative explanation for Antiochus' action against Jerusalem, beyond labeling him 'arrogant' (1 Macc. 1:21, 24). It stipulates a time period of two years between Antiochus' attack and the second one, and attributes the second attack not to Apollonius but to an unnamed collector of tribute who not only destroys and enslaves, but also establishes a citadel or *akra* in Jerusalem involving both Greek and Jewish ('sinful people...renegades') troops (1 Macc. 1:29–40). Josephus similarly offers no reason for Antiochus' initial attack on Jerusalem after his Egyptian campaign, but notes he was welcomed by 'those who were of his party' but opposed by any others (*Ant.* 12.246–47). Like First Maccabees he identifies a two-year gap before the second attack which he attributes specifically to Antiochus. The greedy Antiochus (*Ant.* 12.249) in person plunders the temple and bans Jewish religious observance (*Ant.* 12.251–56).

identity. Jews are forced to participate in sacrifices for the king's birthday and in the festival of Dionysus. The penalty for refusing to participate is death (2 Macc. 6:1-11), exemplified in several martyrdom stories (2 Macc. 6:12-7:42).

First Maccabees' version of this dismantling of Jewish religion ends in the same place but by a different means. After the second attack by the collector of tribute, Antiochus issues (unlikely) general decrees requiring his whole kingdom to abandon local customs and to adopt his religion.¹⁸¹ For Israel this meant the end of observance of the law including offerings and sacrifices, Sabbath and festival observances, and circumcision. It also meant defilement of the sanctuary and priests, the presence of altars and idols, sacrifices of swine and other unclean animals, and the erection of 'a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering' in the temple. Antiochus sent officials to enforce the non-observance of Torah and the observance of the king's practices. Refusal to comply resulted in death (1 Macc. 1:41-64). Ma comments that Antiochus' performative decree 'clashed with another set of performatives: the Mosaic law, and its definitions of the licit and the illicit. The conflict [was] between two authorized discourses'.¹⁸²

As is clear, the sources are not in agreement on the number of attacks on Jerusalem and/or the temple, the personnel involved, the motivations, and the circumstances in which Jewish religious observance was banned. Given the numbers for those supposedly killed or enslaved in these various attacks and acts of ethnic cleansing—especially in 2 Macc. 5:12-14, 26—it is somewhat surprising there was anyone left to observe anything! Nevertheless the accounts have some degree of consonance, at least in their broad sweep, centered on Antiochus' vigorous ending of Jewish religious practice centered on the temple and law.

Antiochus IV's Metanarrative?

What was the metanarrative informing Antiochus' action, both his attack on Jerusalem and his deconstruction of Jewish religion? Predictably the second question has received most attention though it must be recognized that in the ancient world religious and political matters are tightly intertwined and so the two questions are interrelated. Any answer runs into problems of sources—their scarcity, patchiness, and pro-Hasmonean bias—as well as the very nature of Antiochus' act. As Lester Grabbe remarks, 'The real puzzle is why a short time later Antiochus sent Geron

181. Gruen ('Hellenism and Persecution') argues such a decree is very unlikely.

182. Ma, 'Seleukids and Speech-Acts', 91.

to crush the Jewish religion... This religious suppression was unique in antiquity. Religious intolerance has historically been a practice of monotheistic religions...polytheism is tolerant by its very nature.'¹⁸³ The Seleucids were certainly tolerant and even promoters of local religious traditions.¹⁸⁴ Given these realities, any claims about Antiochus' meta-narrative can be tentative at best; the following discussion will emphasize the humiliating and terrifying nature of the assertions of power by Antiochus in the colonizer-colonized context.¹⁸⁵

In accounting for Antiochus' action, some ancient sources locate the metanarrative in Antiochus' character. The emphases on Antiochus' deformed character include Polybius' *epimanes*, 'the mad man' (26.1),¹⁸⁶ and 1 Maccabees' 'a sinful root' and the adverb 'arrogantly' (1 Macc. 1:10, 21, 24). While character descriptors offer some insight into how these writers evaluated him, much larger circumstances must be taken into account. We will return to First Maccabees below.

Tacitus offers a possible metanarrative and one that has been developed in some modern analyses. Tacitus sees Antiochus as a cultural evangelist seeking in relation to Judeans/Israelites 'the meanest of their subjects', to 'abolish Jewish superstition and to introduce Greek civilization' (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.8). Parts of First Maccabees 1 can be read along similar lines. After two military attacks on Jerusalem and the temple (1:20-28, 29-40), Antiochus issues a decree 'that all should be one people', banning any local or 'particular customs', and adopting the king's religion (1 Macc. 1:41-50).

What, then, is the king's religion that Antiochus imposes (1 Macc. 1:43)? Antiochus' reputation 'as a devotee of Zeus Olympius' is well-attested.¹⁸⁷ Second Maccabees 6:2 says the Jerusalem temple is dedicated

183. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, 1:284. For a collection of similar sentiments, see Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 176-77, citing Collins, Bickerman, and Gruen.

184. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, 'Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology'.

185. Influential in the discussion that follows is the classic contribution of Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 175-203. He evaluates as unacceptable four explanations that foreground Antiochus' character: his Hellenizing zeal, his attempts to unify his kingdom, attempts to assert his political power, and Bickermann's argument that Menelaus and his supporters, not Antiochus, were responsible for the abolition of Jewish 'particular' religious practices in favor of more acceptable 'universalism'. Tcherikover advocates an explanation based on 2 Maccabees 5 whereby Antiochus understood the civil war in Jerusalem to be a dangerous revolt against Syrian rule and in support of Egypt (188).

186. In 28:18 Polybius describes him as 'energetic, daring...and worthy of royal dignity...'

187. Rigsby, 'Seleucid Notes', 233-38.

to Olympian Zeus. He ‘resumed construction of the temple of Zeus Olympios’ at Athens (Polybius 26.1.11; Pausanias 5.12.4),¹⁸⁸ and he renamed, in a parallel action that changed cult practice for the Samaritans, the temple in Gerizim as ‘Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers’ (2 Macc. 6:2). Zahle notes Antiochus replaced images of the seated Apollo with an enthroned Zeus Nikeohorus.¹⁸⁹ And Antiochus did, as Mørkholm argues, take ‘a special interest in the cult of Zeus, according him a place of preference on his coinage, donating freely to his sanctuaries, and promoting his cult within his kingdom’.¹⁹⁰ Mørkholm, though, insists that he had no missionary zeal,¹⁹¹ a verdict with which Rigsby agrees.¹⁹² Rigsby presses the question as to why, then, Zeus Olympios was so special to Antiochus. He argues that Zeus Antiochus was ‘the god of his fathers...the patron of his native place and first city of his dynasty...an emblem of Seleucidness’.¹⁹³

In contrast to seeing Antiochus’ religious practices as centered on the Greek God Zeus, Bickerman argued for a polytheistic cult practice involving Syrian deities.¹⁹⁴ Common practice was to give Greek names to local deities, and the high Syrian god Baal Shamen (‘Lord of Heaven’) was often called ‘Zeus’.¹⁹⁵ The phrase ‘abomination of desolation’ (Dan. 11:31; 12:11) points to some cultural hybridity in that it is a play in Aramaic on Baal Shamen (‘the lord of heaven’). It seems that a similar phenomenon occurs with the reference to Dionysus worship (2 Macc. 6:7) whereby the Greek name refers to a Syro-Canaanite deity, perhaps Dusares. In this view, the king’s religion, then, was not Greek but centers on a native Syrian cult with its various deities known by Greek names.

Deciding between the two options is difficult given the limited information. Helpful is Doran’s observation that 2 Maccabees 4–6 is devoid of Syrian soldiers.¹⁹⁶ In 4:29 Cypriot soldiers are in Jerusalem. In 5:24 Mysian soldiers garrison the city. In 6:1 Geron, an Athenian, carries out Antiochus’ will. Perhaps supporting this conclusion is Dan Barag’s argument that Antiochus established a mint in the citadel (*akra*) in

188. Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 134.

189. Zahle, ‘Religious Motifs’, 130.

190. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria*, 131.

191. Mørkholm, *Antiochus*, 133.

192. Rigsby, ‘Seleucid Notes’, 235.

193. Rigsby, ‘Seleucid Notes’, 237–38.

194. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 2:1107–9.

195. For links between Ba‘al Samem, Oden cites Hiram of Tyre building a temple for Zeus Olympios, behind whom stands Ba‘al Samem; Josephus, *C.Ap.* 1.113, 118; *Ant.* 8.145, 147; Oden, ‘Ba‘al Šāmēm and ‘El’, 460, 463–64, 466.

196. Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 135–36.

Jerusalem between 167 and 164 BCE intended to assist in payment of taxes and tribute as well promote Seleucid propaganda.¹⁹⁷ The coins present a portrait of Antiochus with a radiate head reflecting the Greek sun-god Helios and serving Antiochus' claim to be *theos epiphanes* ('god-manifest'). The reverse includes a seated female character who holds a statue of the Greek goddess of victory, *Nike*, holding a victory wreath. These observations, along with a longstanding Seleucid tradition of honoring Zeus' (above) and Antiochus' own commitment to Zeus, point to a cult practice perhaps centered on Zeus rather than on a particularly Syrian expression.

Yet given the multi-cultural nature of a colonizer-colonized situation, some hybridity is to be expected since Greek and Syrian traditions are clearly not mutually exclusive options. And however the issue of the identity of the deity/deities is adjudicated, pertinent to the discussion here is the observation that identifying Antiochus as a devotee of either Zeus or Baal Shamen does not, in and of itself, establish the motivation and identity as a cultural or religious evangelist, intolerant of Jerusalem's God or as a persecutor of Jewish religious practices as an impassioned advocate of Greek culture and religion. As Erich Gruen demonstrates, Antiochus 'did not inherit any ideology of Seleucid rule that propagated the spread of Hellenism'.¹⁹⁸

If religious and cultural zeal does not provide Antiochus' meta-narrative, perhaps it is to be found in his assertions of imperial power and his pragmatic and astute political ability for keeping or recreating power (for a price) and reordering provincial alliances. One dimension of his pragmatic approach lies in his use of local alliances in exercising his power. His willingness to sell the chief priesthood to the highest bidder can be seen not only as an expression of political dependence and economic pragmatism in the quest for further sources of funds, or as an expression of greed (the verdict of 2 Macc. 4:50), but as a means of allying with the wealthiest and most powerful in the province in order to secure local loyalties and gratitude.

In this context of reciprocity with and dependence on local elites, Antiochus' decree against the Torah might result from local Jerusalem pressure on him to effect such a measure. In making this argument that some local Jerusalemite elites were responsible for Antiochus' action, Bickerman points to several texts that explicitly identify Menelaus as 'the man to blame for all the trouble' (Dan. 11:30-31; 2 Macc. 13:4;

197. Barag, 'The Mint of Antiochus IV'.

198. Gruen, 'Seleucid Royal Ideology', 44.

Josephus, *Ant.* 12.384).¹⁹⁹ Bickerman goes on to wrestle with ‘the paradox of the high priestly shepherd who wants to lead his own herd to apostasy’, arguing that its explanation lies in Jason and Menelaus’ reforming rejection of Jewish traditions of particularism (Torah, temple, festivals) and a return to a tolerant primal age not marked by separation from the nations.²⁰⁰ Bickerman attends astutely to forces of intellectual assimilation fuelled by a line of Greek thinkers, but his explanation is too monolithic, failing to take account, amongst other things, of the complexities, the ambivalences, and the hybridities, noted in postcolonial studies of imperial–colonial situations, wherein the Jerusalem leaders are *both* representatives of a sacred tradition yet dependent on the favor of their imperial master.

Jonathan Goldstein has identified another factor that contributes toward a pragmatic scenario for Antiochus’ attack. Goldstein noted that while Antiochus was a hostage in Rome, he witnessed in circumstances of civic disorder Rome’s suppression and expulsion of various cults such as that of Dionysus/Bacchus and attacks on various philosophers, including Pythagoreans and Epicureans.²⁰¹ That is, Antiochus observed that religious and philosophical movements could be subversive and, from the various parallels between Roman actions and Antiochus’ actions against Jewish practice, Goldstein argues that Antiochus also learned various methods by which to constrain such movements.

Goldstein’s argument is that this experience in Rome may well have provided a framework for Antiochus’ action in Jerusalem. He knew that religion was a key factor in the provincial unrest and struggles in Jerusalem since he had twice sold the priesthood for varying rates, so now with apparent revolt, he concluded, the problematic religion needed to be suppressed and replaced. Whether Second Maccabees provides an accurate account in every detail or not (1 Maccabees does not offer a reason for Antiochus’ action), its narrative establishes ongoing unrest around the chief priesthood comprising actions of supporters and opponents, even while it shows the king enriching himself through these struggles for power.²⁰²

199. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, ‘The God of the Maccabees’, 2:1117.

200. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, ‘The God of the Maccabees’, 2:1118–22.

201. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, 104–60.

202. So, for example, Second Maccabees first introduces Antiochus in 4:7a. Immediately in 4:7b–8 it has Jason outbidding his brother Onias for the chief priesthood to the tune of 440 silver talents plus 150 silver talents more for Antiochus’

Such a scenario, though, does not account for all the dynamics of the imperial situation in the acknowledge. A crucial piece, underrated in both Bickermann's and Tcherikover's scenarios, concerns the valences, indeed the ambivalences, of revolt in an imperialized-colonized situation. On one hand, it represented the efforts of the colonized to gain independence, On the other, 'revolt' presented an important opportunity for kings in the context of the ideology of Hellenistic kingship. F. W. Walbank underlines the importance of control of territory for a king's 'status and renown'. He cites Polybius' comment that Antiochus IV regarded that 'possession by force of arms was the surest and best' (Polybius 28.1.4).²⁰³ Extending this insight, Vincent Gabrielsen argues that conquest meant for Hellenistic kings the creation of an empire.²⁰⁴ Empires could therefore be re-created and power asserted afresh by reconquest of a land and people. Revolt offered an excellent opportunity to reassert power and re-establish subjugation of the local population, thereby increasing local dependency and augmenting the gains of power, wealth, and prestige.

Portier-Young helpfully places Antiochus' actions against Jerusalem in this context of revolt, opportunity, and re-creation of empire. She argues that Antiochus shatters 'the people's sense of autonomy and will to resist' so that any future freedoms would derive only from his

support in introducing a gymnasium into Jerusalem and enrolling residents as citizens of Antioch. Second Maccabees indicates dis-ease by some over Jason's administration of the temple (2 Macc. 4:13-15). Three years later Menelaus outbids Jason with payment of even more money though subsequently he fails to hand over revenue that was due and is summoned to appear before Antiochus (2 Macc. 4:23-25, 27-29). Thereafter he has Onias murdered and Jews appeal to Antiochus for justice (2 Macc. 4:36). After further violence in Jerusalem involving Menelaus' brother Lysimachus and his pillaging from the temple, three men from Jerusalem charge Menelaus before Antiochus but again money talks more loudly and Menelaus bribes his way out of trouble. His alliance with Antiochus seems truth-proof. Second Maccabees 4:50 comments, employing the *topos* of the greedy ruler, 'But Menelaus, because of the greed of those in power, remained in office...' Then considerable violence breaks out between the deposed Jason and Menelaus (2 Macc. 5:5-10). Antiochus, so Second Maccabees claims, 'took it to mean that Judea was in revolt' and attacked Jerusalem to establish order and secure the position of his ally Menelaus while he helped himself to temple funds as a source of ever-needed income (2 Macc. 5:11b). Having (re-)established order by subduing and ethnically cleansing Jerusalem (2 Macc. 5:11-27), he then removed the cause of this provincial unrest, the observance of the law and temple worship, replacing it with worship of Zeus/Baal Shamen (2 Macc. 6:1-11).

203. Walbank, 'Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas', VII.1.66.

204. Gabrielsen, 'Provincial Challenges', 23-28.

person.²⁰⁵ She goes on to argue that Antiochus relied not just on ‘simple force but state terror’ to dismantle the order and security of Judea/Israel. State terror, she argues, impacts both individuals and communities, destroying the world of the subjugated, overwhelming local sources of power, crushing any will to resist, and imposing another order. She identifies Antiochus’ tactics of state terror, of reconquest, from 2 Maccabees 5:11-26 (noted above), as massacre, murder in the home, abduction (for slaves), plundering the temple, shaming Jerusalem, Apollonius’ further conquering mission and parade of killing power, and the unmaking and remaking of Jerusalem’s religious world and identity through Antiochus’ edict banning Judaism.²⁰⁶ In this context, Antiochus’ actions make sense as an act of reimposing order on a territory he thinks is in revolt by dis-ordering it through (re)conquest, terror, dismantling its important socio-political-religious world, and the imposition of his own order.

Such a scenario does not require Second Maccabees to be historically accurate or comprehensive in every detail. It does, though, require it to offer a persuasive scenario of (re-) imperializing action. And it is evident that Second Maccabees’ scenario provides a classic experience of imperial-colonial dynamics.

First are the agonistic relationships among leading provincials for the favor of the imperial overlord. Onias, Jason, Menelaus, and Lysimachus compete for Antiochus’ favor and sanction to occupy Jerusalem’s most powerful provincial post, that of chief priest. Such competition is a given in imperial contexts as provincial elites seek to benefit from the colonial situation but can only do so by gaining imperial favor. At heart is the dynamic of mimicry in which provincial elites mimic the quest and rewards of power that their overlord exemplifies. In Fanon’s terms, they want to be like him—as much as he permits, or more accurately in this situation, as much as they can afford to spend and to exercise power over rivals.

Another key dynamic emerges, that of horizontal violence. As top-down pressure is exerted—in terms of the costs and benefits of pleasing the colonizer—so violence among provincial competitors for those rewards and favor increases. Mimicry and horizontal violence do not mean that provincial leaders do not care about local traditions and practices. Colonial pressure places them in a liminal space of ambivalence in between the colonizers’ favor and local customs, traditions, and institutions that they represent.

205. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 136-39.

206. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 140-216.

Third, not only do provincials benefit and lose in these agonistic and conflictual trials. The imperial overlord also benefits through dependency. Antiochus, cash-strapped by the treaty of Apamea with Rome, benefits financially from a regular stream of bids and bribes for favor, as well as politically from the indebtedness of gratitude and loyalty. Jason's bid of some 600 silver talents is exceeded by the skilled opportunist Menelaus by 300 talents (2 Macc. 4:8-10, 24). Reciprocity marks the interactions of imperializer and colonized. Antiochus also wins in terms of displays of loyalty and gratitude for favors granted. Given such competition, displays of disloyalty are calculated risks and can be severely punished. Menelaus makes a mistake in not paying the revenue he promised the king, and Jerusalem subsequently pays a harsh price. Moreover, the horizontal violence hands Antiochus the gift of construing it as revolt and the opportunity to employ state terror to re-conquer Judea, dismantle its order, and recreate the territory by imposing his own order.

Fourth, the imposition of new religious practices as fundamental aspects of the recreated order, those of the conqueror, makes sense not only in a context of revolt, but also where there is a struggle for control and where religion is understood to be a significant factor in the social-political unrest. Such a move may well be fuelled by the in-between space in which local leaders are located, whereby the holders of the chief priestly office have not shown themselves to be sufficiently passionate defenders of their own traditions and practices. Jason is regarded by some as slack in his oversight of priestly duties, while Menelaus loots the temple for personal gain. Antiochus' act of re-conquest and re-creation of order makes sense as an act of political expediency. He treads the well-worn path, noted above, of Seleucid civic ruler cults, including a 'state' cult instigated by Antiochus III, for worship of the king.²⁰⁷ In something of a local vacuum, Antiochus seeks to secure social order and provincial compliance.

Fifth, 2 Maccabees 5:24-26 narrates the terrorizing and subjugating actions of Apollonius whom Antiochus sent to Jerusalem. Apollonius feigns peaceable intent, orders his troops to 'parade under arms' on the Sabbath, then attacks those who 'came out to see him', and killed many in the city. In considering Ptolemaic power above, I noted Scott's attention to the self-dramatizing and self-hypnotizing use of parades by dominating elites to display the permanence of their ruling power and to awe and intimidate the dominated into compliance.²⁰⁸ Scott also notes

207. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 202-10.

208. Scott, *Domination*, 58-69.

that rulers fear the unauthorized gatherings of the ruled because such gatherings can be, by force of numbers and anonymity, an ‘incitement to boldness by subordinates’. Holidays or no-working days, such as a Sabbath, especially hold fear because they provide the opportunity for unsanctioned gatherings.²⁰⁹ A parade, however, authorizes a gathering of spectators but seeks to manage the risk of incitement by a display of powerful deterrence that promotes compliance. Apollonius’ action both employs and breaks these conventions. He seeks to manage a Sabbath and its risks of unsanctioned gatherings with a parade. Yet he not only parades power but actively exerts it. He turns the spectators into the attacked and the viewing of awe-full power into the actual experience of its terror. This act is a cynical display of intimidating power that terrorizes the local population into compliance.

Violent Resistance and the Hasmoneans

When power is asserted in imperial–colonial contexts to effect material appropriation, status and ideological subordination, and personal humiliations through public injury to dignity,²¹⁰ various dynamics follow in the ambivalent and hybridized situation that results, as the above discussion indicates, in: agonistic conflict; willing cooperation and accommodation; horizontal violence; defiance; and non-violent resistance. Violence also emerges in the intersection of imperial and local power, mimicking the forcible assertions of the imperializer’s terror and order in a struggle to defend, reassert, or reestablish native order, dignity, and world view.²¹¹

The accounts are agreed that out of Antiochus’ assertion of Seleucid power over Jerusalem and its religious practices comes violent revolt (1 Maccabees 2–9; 2 Maccabees 8–15; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.265–434; *J.W.* 1.36–47). This revolt is centered, at least in First Maccabees, in the Hasmonean family, the father Mattathias a priest, and his five sons, who lived at Modein, some seventeen miles northwest of Jerusalem. In 1 Maccabees 2, it is Mattathias who leads the initial action, refusing to offer sacrifice as Antiochus had commanded, killing a Jew willing to sacrifice as well as the king’s enforcement officer, and withdrawing to the hill country. There he allies with the Hasideans, refusing Antiochus’ orders, attacking ‘renegades’ who comply with Antiochus, and observing

209. Scott, *Domination*, 64–65.

210. The categories are from Scott, *Domination*, 111–12, 191.

211. Scott, *Domination*, 109, uses reactance theory which ‘begins with the premise that there is a human desire for freedom and autonomy that, when threatened by the use of force, leads to a reaction of opposition’.

the law as much as possible until Mattathias' death, when he appoints Judas Maccabeus as commander of the army to defeat Antiochus, and eventually, to achieve independence (1 Macc. 2:1-70).

Second Maccabees passes over any role for Mattathias and moves immediately to Judas Maccabeus' command of military action. According to 1 Maccabees, Judas wins initial victories over Apollonius and then Seron (1 Macc. 3:10-26). He gains a more decisive victory over a Syrian army led by Nicanor and Gorgias at Emmaus, gaining weapons and considerable money (1 Macc. 3:27-4:25; 2 Macc. 8:8-36). Lysias, who had been entrusted by Antiochus IV with the task of subduing Judas, launches an attack and is forced to withdraw (1 Macc. 4:26-35). Building on this victory, along with the death of Antiochus IV (2 Maccabees 9), Judas enters Jerusalem and restores and rededicates the temple in 164 BCE, while keeping guard over the Syrian troops in the citadel (1 Macc. 4:36-61; 2 Macc. 10:1-9). Second Maccabees 11 seems to deal with this same situation, though it relocates Lysias' military action to after the rededication of the temple. It also narrates that Lysias (now governor of Coele-Syria, 2 Macc. 10:11) and Judas (and other representatives?) agreed to a settlement in which Antiochus' religious demands were revoked and Jewish religious observance permitted (2 Macc. 11:13-38).

Judean/Israelite Metanarratives

While violent revolt played a key role in effecting the rededication of the temple, Judeans/Israelites negotiated Antiochus in other ways, including through the formation of multiple metanarratives.

As is evident in the above discussion, hybridity marks the engagement of some Jerusalem elites such as Jason, Menelaus, and their supporters, who adopted Greek institutions and ways of living even while some at least also continued to observe temple practices. Unfortunately we do not have records from those who negotiated Antiochus in this way that elaborate their position. While 1 Maccabees 1:11 condemns them as 'wicked men' (KJV) or 'traitorous Jews who had no regard for the law' (TEV) or 'renegades' (NRSV; JB), or 'breakers of the law' (NAB; παράνομοι) who 'abandoned the holy covenant' (1 Macc. 1:15), it is more likely that their adopting of Greek customs expresses the ambivalence of negotiating both local and imperial traditions.

First Maccabees attests a quite different response, the terrible suffering and deaths of those who 'stood firm' and refused to comply with Antiochus' edict (1:41-63). The account presents these deaths as resulting from a refusal to 'profane the holy covenant' (1:63). Herein lies a metanarrative—at least according to First Maccabees—of loyalty even

to death to a covenant identity as God's people expressed in faithfulness to the Torah (1:57) and in practices such as circumcision, festival and Sabbath observance, the refusal to worship another God, and temple sacrifice.

While some died rather than comply, First Maccabees notes a further response, that of those who fled but were hunted down and killed (1 Macc. 2:29-38). This group so valued obedience to the law that they refused to fight on the Sabbath (2:34, 38). Consequently they are attacked on the Sabbath, refuse to fight, and die. By contrast, Mattathias and his sons, especially Judas Maccabeus, led a military response—to which we will return below in consideration of First and Second Maccabees.

Other metanarratives emerge from the midst of the crisis particularly concerned with decolonizing minds. Rejecting claims that apocalyptic writings are apolitical and signify retreat, Portier-Young argues that three apocalyptic writings, written during Antiochus IV's reign and drawing on various scriptural traditions, express resistance to his strategy of terror, conquest, and re-creation. Each offers a 'counter-discourse' that centers on YHWH's sovereignty and demand for exclusive allegiance, while 'each text calls its audience to take up resistance—effective action—against the empire and its ordering of the world'.²¹²

This work of negation, as Scott calls it, is a social product not just in its address but in its origin. It typically requires physical locations that are autonomous, unauthorized by and protected from power, 'locations in which the unspoken riposte, stifled anger, and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression'.²¹³ It also requires particular agents, typically the socially marginal who are leaders of subordinated groups and carriers of traditions. From these locations and agents emerge hidden transcripts that are 'the privileged site for...contrapuntal, dissident, subversive, discourse'.²¹⁴

Daniel

The first of three such works that Portier-Young discusses is the book of Daniel. It negotiates Antiochus' terror by urging faithfulness through the example of Daniel and his associates, and waiting for God to act in

212. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 217-18; also Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 33-104.

213. Scott, *Domination*, 108-35, esp. 108.

214. Scott, *Domination*, 25. I omit Scott's adjective 'nonhegemonic' because such discourse frequently mimics the hegemonic quality of dominant discourse in asserting an alternative power over the imperializing power.

bringing about a yet-future overcoming of Antiochus. It emerges between 167 and 164 BCE from, and is addressed to, a circle of wise teachers or scribal class (*maskilim*, Dan. 11:32-35; 12:3, 10), who in turn teach and make righteous a much wider secondary audience comprising the people of Judea/Israel.²¹⁵ Its various non-violent strategies include:²¹⁶

- The use of both Hebrew and Aramaic that functions to move the audience from accommodation and collaboration to complete rejection of Seleucid domination and defiance of Antiochus' decrees.²¹⁷
- Teaching and making wise the people so that they receive the revealed knowledge about God's sovereignty and covenant commitments that enables the learner to be strong in resistance to Antiochus' edict and persistent in obedience to the Torah (11:32);
- Prayer, fasting, and penitence as expressed in the prayer of Dan. 9:4-19 that employs the Deuteronomistic theological recognition that the 'calamity...against Jerusalem' was punishment for sin for which it seeks forgiveness. Liturgical prayer was communal and expressive of community commitments, history, and future;
- Stories and examples of faithfulness against coercive royal power even to death. Daniel and his friends Shadrak, Meshak, and Abednego display such faithfulness in maintaining a distinctive Jewish identity in a context that threatens it. They insist on food purity (Daniel 1), refuse to bow down to the golden image (Daniel 3), and refuse to pray to the king (Daniel 6). Such faithfulness in the midst of persecution required a willingness to die that in turn provided an example to strengthen others and a means of purification for Israel's sin;
- Waiting for the end revealed in Daniel's visions in which in God's timing God will demonstrate God's power and justice against and over Antiochus;
- Reading scripture and, as Antiochus' soldiers burned Israel's scriptures and sought to destroy Israelite memory, writing it afresh. So Daniel reinterprets the prophecy of seventy years in Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10 (Dan. 9:20-27), a historical review that not

215. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 227-34, 254-58.

216. I follow Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 235-79; Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 33-45, 81-104.

217. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 227.

only assures with an assertion of God's control of history but destroys the new cultic time that Antiochus' edict imposed. A reinterpreted Isaiah's suffering servant (Isaiah 52–53) constructs the identity of the *maskilim* as suffering servants. This writing concerning the past and the future and involving prayer, story, vision, and revelations places Antiochus' actions within God's plan for history. It negates Antiochus' power and creates an alternative reality that is both counter-discourse and active nonviolent resistance.

- The narrative commissions the reader to continue Daniel's work in trusting God for salvation, teaching God's plan and practices of nonviolent resistance, and making righteous.²¹⁸

While Portier-Young's discussion is insightful and its emphasis on Daniel as literature resisting Antiochus' edict is well placed, the analysis suffers from a significant flaw in failing to recognize that Daniel's meta-narrative is not monolithic in an oppositional stance vis-a-vis Antiochus' terror. Evident in these strategies of resistance are unnoticed elements of imitation or mimicry of Antiochus' imperializing work and the imposed practices that they simultaneously resist. Daniel mimics Antiochus in making total demands—similar but not quite the same, to echo Bhabha.²¹⁹ The scribal teaching for the people is as much about control of their identity—mind and body, thought and action, loyalty and commitments, past and future—as is Antiochus' program. The religious practices that Daniel asserts are as much about communal solidarity and identity as are Antiochus' imposed practices that allow for no exception. Daniel's evoking and reinterpreting of liturgical and scriptural traditions likewise resist and imitate Antiochus' manipulation of traditions and liturgy. A vision of the completion of God's purposes and eternal, cosmic, victorious, and coercive empire (Daniel 7) mimics the overpowering nature of Antiochus' empire and edicts but out-empires Antiochus in asserting the over-riding dominance of God's reign and sovereignty. It is similar but not quite the same. This vision is what Scott calls a daring 'world-upside-down' fantasy that reverses the status quo and fantasizes

218. Flusser ('Apocalyptic Elements in the War Scroll') argues that the opening column of the War Scroll takes the unfulfilled prophecy of Dan. 11:40 and following as its point of departure, prophesying war against 'the Kittim of Assyria' (1:2) which Flusser concedes could refer to Rome but more probably, given the prediction of the Kittim's defeat in 1:6, it refers to the Syrian Greeks and a Seleucid ruler (pre-83 BCE).

219. Bhabha, *The Location*, 86.

God's victory over the oppressor.²²⁰ Such fantasies are ambivalent in function, providing a means of venting frustrating and thereby assisting compliance, even while they dream of a different domination. This recognition of the co-existence of mimicry and difference in the intersection of imperial, local, and cosmic powers highlights both the complexity of Daniel's metanarrative as well as the discursive strategies it shares with, even as it contests, Antiochus' program. Portier-Young's discussion misses these dynamics highlighted by postcolonial approaches.

The Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93:1-10; 91:11-17)

This short, seventeen-verse vision in the Enoch tradition offers another metanarrative to resist Antiochus' efforts and decolonize colonized minds.²²¹ Portier-Young dates it to 167 BCE, after Antiochus' edict but just before the Maccabean revolt breaks out. She locates its author among a community, the righteous, planning armed resistance against the wicked Antiochus, his forces, and supporters.

The work 'reveals' two opposing forces active in history through contrasting ethical behaviors and human communities. Enoch addresses 'the children of righteousness', also described as 'the elect' (93:2) and 'the plant of the righteous judgment' (93:5), who are contrasted with and opposed to the wicked who are subsequently identified with oppression, violence, and sin (91:11). Enoch's revelation for the righteous derives from his seeing a heavenly vision, hearing the holy angels, and reading the heavenly tablets (1 En. 93:2). Such multiple heavenly and divine authorizations for his revelation, the identity it constitutes, and the practices it authorizes, exceed anything Antiochus' edict could muster, and provide the basis for a revelation that will shape the resistant just or righteous practice of its human audience.

The revelation or apocalypse divides history into ten numbered weeks and some unnumbered weeks. Using the technique of *vaticinia ex eventu* (presenting past events as prophesied future events), the first six weeks turn to the past to identify and interpret monumental identity-forming events from Israel's scriptures such as Enoch's birth, Noah, the call of Abraham, Sinai and the giving of the law, Solomon's temple, and the destruction of the temple and exile (93:3-8). Week seven addresses the present audience with an interpretation and strategies for resistance

220. Scott, *Domination*, 166-72.

221. I follow Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 313-45, and assume her discussion of 'Enochic Authority', 280-312; see also Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 33-67; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*; Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 73-76.

(93:9-10; 91:11), and the remaining weeks envision a future of judgment, righteousness on earth, and a new heaven (91:11-17).

Within this framework, the righteous have three roles in their current situation. The description of the seventh week elaborates the difficult circumstances in which they live and which they must resist by witnessing, cutting off or uprooting, and effecting justice (93:10; 91:11).²²² Having been given 'sevenfold wisdom and knowledge', they witness to truth and righteousness concerning God's ordering of earthly events (93:2, 10). They have an active commitment to lived justice or righteousness which derives from their faithfulness to YHWH. They uproot or cut off the roots of oppression or 'the foundations of violence and structure of deceit' (93:5; 91:11) that mark the present under Antiochus' edict. And, third, they will exercise YHWH's righteous judgment on earth in an eschatological role mimicking but exceeding the judgment that Antiochus has effected in his actions (93:5; 91:11). In the eighth week God gives the righteous the sword to execute judgment on the oppressors and sinners, suggesting military action against the oppressors (91:12). Once this is accomplished, the righteous acquire possessions and build a temple, the foundations of 'a new economy of justice and right social relations'.

The mapping of history, the fantasy of victory, and the vision of a different future function to decolonize subjugated minds, shape a different identity, and craft a third space.

The Book of Dreams (1 Enoch 83–90)

This third text, originating during the Maccabean revolt in the years 165–160 BCE and, like the Apocalypse of Weeks, drawing on the Enoch tradition, presents another metanarrative operative in the midst of Antiochus' actions of terror and re-creation.²²³ It presents its metanarrative in two visions, both of which also employ the past as visions of the future. The first vision (*1 Enoch* 83–84) comprises the destruction of the world (83:5, 9) with the images of the trees being thrown down, evoking the downfall of the Egyptian and Assyrian Empires, and by extension Antiochus' empire, all subject to the sovereignty of God whose will determines 'all the things upon the earth' (83:9). Enoch's response is

222. There are significant variants among translations of 93:10 and 91:11. I follow Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 329: 'The chosen will be chosen as witnesses of righteousness from the eternal plant of righteousness, to whom will be given sevenfold wisdom and knowledge. And they will uproot the foundations of violence and the structure of deceit in it, in order to effect justice.'

223. I continue to follow Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 346-81; Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes*, 65-73.

to lament (83:6) this vision of the ‘sins of the whole world’ (83:7) and to pray to the ‘Lord of judgment’ (83:11). Enoch’s prayer (84:2-6) sets out an alternative yet in numerous ways an imitative cosmology, blessing God in expansive terms of authority that identify God’s sovereign, creating (‘you have created all’), ruling (‘O Great King’; ‘King of kings’), and all-knowing (‘Everything you know, you see, you hear’) roles that embrace the heavens and the earth (‘Lord of all the creation of heaven’; ‘God of the whole world’), the political order (‘all things you rule’), and the past and future (‘your authority and kingdom abide forever and ever and your dominion throughout all the generations of generations’). Enoch recognizes that ‘the angels of your heavens’ are sinning and that God’s wrath is provoked, and he prays that God will destroy the sinners but save and sustain a righteous and upright generation (84:5-6). The petitioning prayer functions to recontextualize and thereby diminish the power of Antiochus’ edict in God’s sovereign purposes and power, to recall traditions of divine creation and sovereignty, to reassure with the recognition of God’s all-knowing gaze, and to strengthen resistance to Antiochus’ edict.

The second vision, the so-called Animal Apocalypse of *1 Enoch* 85–90, adds to the resistance practice of prayer two further strategies, prophetic witness and armed revolt. The vision uses allegory and animal symbolism to re-present Israel’s history from Adam (85:3) through to the Hellenistic period, Maccabean revolt, and its aftermath (90:6-39). Using a familiar symbol from the tradition, it portrays Israel as sheep under attack from wild animals and birds with the sheep blinded and their eyes pecked out, a symbol of Israel gone astray (89:35, 54). The Deuteronomistic sequence of sin, oppression as punishment, crying out to God, and deliverance is evident. The use of animal symbolism functions as a form of disguise for this subversive discourse, protecting its audience from retaliation, while simultaneously employing a symbol of the sheep that had deep resonance in native Judea/Israelite traditions asserting covenant identity and divine protection (e.g. Psalm 23).²²⁴

In this context, Antiochus’ persecution has blinded the sheep (90:2). But a new group of lambs—the group the writing particularly addresses—is able to see. With proper insight they cry out to the rest of the sheep, prophetically calling them to the right action of lived faithfulness (90:2-6). In so doing they emulate Moses who spoke against Egyptian power (89:17-18) and Elijah who similarly ‘cried out’ to the sheep in calling them from accommodating false worship and in urging obedience to the

224. Scott, *Domination*, 136-56.

covenant (89:51-53). Enoch's vision is thus to function as a means of recognizing the true nature of the imperial attack and to call the audience to resist accommodation and to embrace faithful resistance.

After one of the lambs, perhaps the chief priest Onias III, is killed (90:8), a great horn grows on one of the sheep (Judas Maccabeus) who opens the eyes of the sheep, helping them see the true nature of the situation and a faithful way of living, and 'cries aloud' to the sheep (90:9b-10). He fights the wild birds (90:9-17) until God ensures military victory and exercises judgment (90:18-27). Thereafter follows a vision of a transformed world with a new house/temple, all the nations submitting to the Jews, resurrection, pervasive gentleness and the abandoning of the sword, and all have open eyes.

Again Portier-Young's discussion is insightful in identifying the metanarrative of the Animal Apocalypse that asserts God's longstanding sovereign power and purposes in the midst of attacks on Israel's sheep. Similarly she helpfully identifies strategies of resistance: prayer, understanding, prophetic witness, and military violence. Yet as with the discussion of Daniel, the relationship to Antiochus' terror remains monolithic in terms of resistance. She fails to notice two dynamics highlighted by postcolonial discussions, namely the presence of horizontal violence in the context of imperial pressure with the attack on the sheep who see, and that the Apocalypse's vision of the establishment of God's reign includes not only an alternative vision of gentleness and peace but also mimicry of features of imperial scenarios. Thus Judas employs military violence just as Antiochus did, God exercises punitive and subjugating judgment similar to Antiochus' actions, and the nations are imagined to submit to the Jews just as Antiochus imposed Jewish submission. These mimicked features are similar to, but not quite the same as, Antiochus' strategies.

First and Second Maccabees

Though written later than the three apocalypses just discussed, and perhaps dating to around 100 BCE, First and Second Maccabees offer significant information about and perspectives on the crisis. On this basis, they may offer further instances of Judean/Israelite metanarratives.

First Maccabees' main emphasis falls on a response of military resistance funded by loyalty to covenant and Torah. Unlike the group that refuses to fight and dies, this resistance is pervaded by ambivalence. Pragmatically and ironically, it decides that defense of the law, including Sabbath observance, requires contravening Sabbath observance in order to ensure survival (1 Macc. 2:39-41). This military response is led by a priestly family of Mattathias and his five sons (2:1). Mattathias laments

the Gentile profanation of Jerusalem and its temple with language that resembles Lamentations 2:11 and 3:48. This intertextuality, again evoking the past to interpret the present, links Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and exiling of Judea's leaders in 587 BCE with Antiochus' actions against Jerusalem and religious observance. Mattathias refuses to sacrifice as Antiochus requires because of his faithfulness to the covenant and law (2:20-21). When he saw a Jew come forward to make the required sacrifice, Mattathias 'burned with zeal' and in a classic instance of horizontal violence exerted in a context of increased vertical colonizer pressure, he killed the Jew and the king's officer overseeing the sacrifice.

First Maccabees 2:26 interprets his 'zeal for the law' by again turning to the past to evoke the actions of Aaron's grandson: 'just as Phinehas did against Zimri, son of Salu'. The reference is to an incident in which Israelite men had sex with Midianite women and worshipped the god Baal of Peor (Num. 25:1-13) in violation of the prohibition of worshipping foreign gods (Exod. 34:12-16). God's judgment took the form of a plague that killed twenty-four thousand (Num. 25:9). The plague ended when the priest Phinehas killed an Israelite man named Zimri and a Midianite woman named Cozbi with his spear, piercing 'the two of them...through the belly' (Num. 25:8, 14-15). God commends Phinehas twice for exhibiting zeal on God's behalf (Num. 25:11, 13). God thus sanctions the use of violence and killing—contravening a provision of the law—in the cause of maintaining observance of the law. Mattathias urges the people to show 'zeal for the law' (2 Macc. 2:50) and cites Phinehas 'our ancestor' (1 Macc. 2:54), among others (Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, Hannaniah, Azariah, Mishaël, and Daniel) who trusted in God and did not lack for strength (1 Macc. 2:49-70).

This zeal is expressed in the Maccabean-led military revolt against Antiochus and, after the rededication of the temple, in the quest for Judean/Israelite independence accomplished under Simon (1 Macc. 13:41). The narrative focuses on military conflicts as the means of deliverance and exalts the military accomplishments of the Hasmonean brothers, Judas in 3:3-9; 9:19-21, and Simon in 14:4-15. The ambivalence of the imperial-colonial situation is again evident as the resistance mimics a fundamental strategy of the Hellenistic kingship that it resists, namely the use of military force. A further mimicry occurs in that this military resistance is divinely sanctioned. First Maccabees presents their military accomplishments as not existing apart from God's assistance. Judas announces that God 'will crush them before us' (3:22), a reference not to human passivity and miraculous divine intervention but to human military action in which, so it is understood, God is also active in helping

(3:53). Thus throughout there is a recognition of divine favor (often referenced as ‘Heaven’) in granting military success. This divine favor in crushing ‘this army before us today’ expresses God’s faithfulness in remembering ‘his covenant with our ancestors...to redeem and save Israel’ (4:10-11). In seeking and acknowledging this divine help, prayer, thanksgiving, scrupulous observance of the law, and sacrifices punctuate the narrative.²²⁵

Second Maccabees participates in the same mimicry of the strategies of Hellenistic kingship in narrating the Hasmonean military successes in restoring the temple and expelling the profaning Gentiles. The account clearly reverences the temple and the festival celebrating its cleansing and rededication after Antiochus IV’s defeat (2 Macc. 2:19-22; 3:12; 5:15-21; 10:1-8; 14:33–15:36). But in its midst, three important theological emphases emerge to form its metanarrative. One is the recognition of God’s miraculous and powerful intervention at crucial moments, whether to protect the temple from Heliodorus intent on looting it and ‘doing it injury’ (3:24-40), or to protect Jerusalem (5:2-3), or to ensure victory in battle through the appearance of five angelic beings (10:24-38, esp. 29-31) or a glorious horse and rider (11:8), or even of God himself (12:22; 15:27). against any further violation of the temple. Appropriate acts of piety also punctuate the narrative.

Second, the narrative is framed by Deuteronomic piety (also evident in the prayer of Daniel 9) in which God blesses the obedient, Torah-observant, covenant-keeping people and their leaders (notably the chief priest Onias, 2 Macc. 4:2) with protection and safety (3:1–4:6). Yet God also punishes the people for unfaithfulness. Antiochus Epiphanes’ attack on Jerusalem and the temple succeeds—unlike that of Heliodorus (2 Macc. 5:18)—because of ‘the sins of those who lived in the city’ (presumably the accommodating chief priests and their supporters, Jason, Menelaus, and Lysimachus, 4:19, 39); thus the Lord ‘was disregarding the holy place’ (5:17, 20a). Second Maccabees explains the calamitous events as a temporary punishment for these sins (6:12, 17; 7:32-33), disciplining the people though without ever forsaking them (6:16).

The narrative particularly attends to the specific displays of divine punishments and judgment on these leading figures—Andronicus where he had killed the righteous chief priest Onias (4:38), Antiochus with much suffering in his bowels just as he had tortured others (9:5-6), Menelaus in ashes just as he had violated the fire and ashes of the temple

225. See for example 1 Macc. 3:18-19, 44, 47 (fasting, sackcloth and ashes), 50-54; 4:10-11, 24 (thanksgiving for victory), 30-35 (prayer), 40, 55-56 (thanksgiving); 5:31, 54 (sacrifice); 7:36-38; 9:44-46; 12:15; 16:3.

altar (13:4-8), and Nicanor with the tongue and hand displayed that had blasphemed God (15:32-35). Yet, Second Maccabees emphasizes, the responsibility is not theirs alone. After the temple is cleansed and rededicated, the people 'implored the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by [God] with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations' (10:4). That is, this text that strongly resists Antiochus reflects ambivalence in colluding with him, seeing the people's suffering at his bloodied hands as justified and his actions as divinely sanctioned in order to carry out God's punitive will. The king's identity is constructed simultaneously as the one who is resisted and the one who is God's agent.

And what turns God's wrath to mercy, bringing the punishment to an end and ensuring Judas' military success (8:5)? Second Maccabees' third theological emphasis of its metanarrative concerns the critical role of martyrs. Chapters 6 and 7 narrate the martyrdoms of Eleazar (6:18-31) and of seven sons/brothers (7:1-42). Eleazar is presented as a model of faithfulness (6:19-20, 28, 31). The seven brothers declare variously that death is better than sin (7:2), that God will raise up the faithful righteous (7:9, 23), and that God will restore their broken bodies (7:9, 11, 14) and their familial relationships (7:29). Conversely, God will punish the tyrant Antiochus and his descendants (7:17, 19, 31, 34-35). Most of these arguments for voluntary death in the service of faithfulness to the ancestral laws (7:9, 23, 30) were well known among educated Greeks familiar with the notion of voluntary or noble death, another reflection of the ambivalence and mimicry involved in negotiating Antiochus' power. It is similar but not quite the same. A key distinctive here concerns the declaration of the youngest brother. He acknowledges that the people's suffering is 'because of our own sins' but that it is temporary (7:32-33). The deaths of himself and his six brothers, he argues, are an appeal to God to show mercy and to end God's wrath for the nation (7:38). That is, the martyrdoms do not have atoning efficacy (compare *4 Macc.* 6:28-30; 17:21-22) but seem to function to move God from wrath to mercy. That they have this effect is signaled by the fact that immediately after the martyrdoms, the account of the military actions led by Judas Maccabeus begins with a notice that 'the Gentiles could not withstand him, for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy' (8:5).

As the discussion of these five texts indicates, Judean/Israelite meta-narratives expressed under the assertion of Antiochus' tyranny, were not only diverse but reflected the ambivalences, instability, and mimicry that pervade imperial-colonial situations. Assertions of resistance are simultaneously assertions of (counter-)power in which the resistant

counter-narratives mimic the imperializing strategies—totalizing scenarios, liturgy, military force, violence, justified suffering, cosmic divine victory over the enemy—evidenced by Antiochus and his allies.

V. Post-164 BCE Rededication of the Temple and Independence

Following the reversal of Antiochus' edict and restoration of the temple, the Seleucids leave Judea/Israel in relative, though partial, peace (2 Macc. 12:1). The Hasmoneans turn their campaign against Antiochus' edict into a campaign for independence. But, as we would expect in an imperial-colonial context, Judea/Israel reinscribes and mimics the imperial ways against which it had struggled but from which it had also learned much.

In blatant mimicry of the imperial ways to which Judea/Israel has been subject and in which it has marinated for centuries, Judas Maccabeus pursues military action against neighbors in Idumea, Galilee, and Transjordan to secure and enlarge Judean/Israelite territory. He also sieges the citadel in Jerusalem provoking Antiochus V Eupator to order Lysias to attack Jerusalem again (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.362-66). Lysias has greater military strength and sieges Jerusalem, only to abandon the siege at news of a coup in Antioch and to make peace with the Jews agreeing 'to let them live by their laws as they did before' (1 Macc. 6:18-63; 2 Macc. 13:22-24; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.379-83). According to Josephus, as Lysias heads to Antioch, he executes the chief priest Menelaus, ending his ten years in power, because he was 'the cause of the mischief by persuading the king's father to compel the Jews to abandon their fathers' religion', and appoints Alcimus chief priest in his place (*Ant.* 12.384-85).

Further internal struggles for power developed in the Seleucid empire and play a significant factor in the subsequent course of events.²²⁶ Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 BCE), has Antiochus V and Lysias killed and seizes power (ca. 162-150 BCE). The Jerusalem chief priest Alcimus and his supporters approach the king wanting to maintain their position and favor. They report Judas Maccabeus' continued opposition despite the restoration of temple practice. Demetrius sends troops south under Bachides. A group of Hasidim seek peace but for reasons that are not clear. Bachides kills sixty of them and alienates would-be supporters (1 Macc. 7:12-18). He returns to Antioch,

226. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 217-29.

leaving Alcimus in power with both significant local support (1 Macc. 7:20-22) as well as opposition from Judas (7:23-24). That is, some (what percentage?) were willing to support Alcimus and accept Syrian rule in return for the freedom to observe traditional religious practices. Others, led by the Hasmoneans, sought a larger goal of independence from the Syrians. Ambivalence marks the colonized space as do fractures among colonized peoples.

Alcimus appealed again to King Demetrius for assistance against Judas (1 Macc. 7:25; 2 Macc. 14:3-15). The king sent troops under Nicanor, the governor of Judea/Israel (2 Macc. 14:12), who seems to have negotiated a truce with Judas (1 Macc. 7:26-38; 2 Macc. 12:18-25) but it did not last and Judas defeated Nicanor who dies in the battle (1 Macc. 7:39-50; 2 Macc. 14:26-15:37). In 161 BCE, King Demetrius sent troops under Bachides and they defeated Judas' army and killed Judas (1 Macc. 9:1-22). Bachides predictably installed pro-Syrian leaders ('wrongdoers' and 'the godless' according to 2 Macc. 9:23-27).

Jonathan followed his brother as leader (161-143 BCE). Bachides unsuccessfully sought Jonathan, but fortified cities in Judea and stationed troops throughout before returning to Antioch at the time of the death of Alcimus (ca. 160; 1 Macc. 9:32-57). Jonathan took advantage of the next two years or so to build support and he extended Judea's territory (as did Simon after him for example at Beth-Zur; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.156) by capturing Gentile sites, expelling their residents, and populating the sites with Jewish settlers.²²⁷ His power increased so much that allies of Bachides persuaded Bachides to return to fight Jonathan. Bachides lost, concluded a peace agreement with Jonathan including a return of captives, and withdrew to Antioch (ca. 157 BCE; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.28-33). The absence of Syrian military presence ('the sword ceased from Israel') left Jonathan largely in control. Again imitating the imperial practices in which he had marinated—ambivalently resisting and admiring—he employs violence to destroy his opponents ('destroy the godless out of Israel', 1 Macc. 9:57-73; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.34).

About five years later (ca. 153-152 BCE), a new crisis arises in Seleucid politics that creates an opportunity for the Hasmonean quest for independence. Alexander I Epiphanes (Alexander Balas) claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and challenged Demetrios I for the throne (Polybius 33.18; 1 Macc. 10:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.35-36). Demetrios sought the benefit of an alliance with Jonathan, permitting him to raise troops and release the Jewish hostages in the citadel. With

227. Berlin, 'Between Large Forces', 28.

this sanction, Jonathan established his headquarters in Jerusalem (to the alarm of some, 1 Macc. 10:8). He gained further sanction when Alexander sent a competing offer of friendship including appointing Jonathan chief priest, the first of a line of Hasmonean chief priests (1 Macc. 10:18-21). The struggle for loyalty ended in ca. 151–50 BCE when Alexander defeated and killed Demetrius in battle (1 Macc. 10:46-50). Alexander publically honored Jonathan in Ptolemais as a ‘friend’ and refused to listen to allegations from ‘renegades’ (1 Macc. 10:59-66). Jonathan’s authority is thus further secured and he seems to gain public standing and support from Seleucid patronage. But he remains, ambivalently, a chief priest appointed by and dependent on the Syrian king and Judea remains a province under administration from Antioch with Syrian troops still garrisoned in the citadel in Jerusalem.

Jonathan maintains his leadership position against the threat of another Seleucid claimant Demetrius II and his agent Apollonius, defeating them in battle and, imitating the way of imperial powers, gaining control of further territory (Joppa, Ascalon, Ekron: 1 Macc. 10:67-89). Further struggles resulted in Demetrius II defeating Alexander to become king (145–140 BCE). Jonathan took advantage of this unrest to lay siege to the citadel (*akra*) in Syrian hands in Jerusalem, building the city walls higher and erecting a barrier between the city and the citadel so as to prevent it from buying or selling (1 Macc. 12:35-36). In the now familiar pattern of fragmentation and agonistic interaction in which one faction of Jews (‘renegade’) seek the favor of a new Seleucid king (cf. 1:11; 6:21-27; 7:5-7; 10:61), opponents of Jonathan reported his action to king Demetrius. Jonathan had a successful meeting with the king, having his chief priesthood confirmed and gaining freedom for Judea from tribute, though gaining no concessions on the citadel (1 Macc. 11:20-37). Subsequently Demetrius promises to remove the troops in return for Jonathan’s help in putting down a revolt. Jonathan keeps his word but the king does not (1 Macc. 11:38-53).

Another coup sees Demetrius overthrown by Antiochus VI. In an act that both asserts power over and relies on Judea/Israel for support, Antiochus confirms Jonathan’s chief priesthood and extensive power as military commander of Coele-Syria (1 Macc. 11:60). Subsequent intrigue, however, sees Trypho, a key advisor to Antiochus, seek to overthrow the king and make himself king. Fearing Jonathan’s power, Trypho deceives Jonathan and takes him prisoner. He attempts to take Jerusalem but cannot succeed against Simon’s troops. He kills Jonathan and withdraws (ca. 143–142; 1 Macc. 12:39-53; 13:12-24). In an expression of the hybrid ‘third space’ and ambivalence that marks their struggle, 1 Maccabees describes the way that Simon imitates the emerging Hellenistic

practice of ‘ostentatious *exterior* funerary architecture’ in constructing an elaborate tomb at Modein for Jonathan and his family comprising pyramids, columns, suits of armor, and carved ships (13:27-29).²²⁸

A third Hasmonean brother, Simon, now leads the movement toward independence from Syrian rule as military commander and chief priest. Trypho killed Antiochus VI (ca. 142–139) and took the throne. Simon made alliance with Demetrios II who had aspirations to regain the throne and built up the defenses in Judea and stored up food. He gains significant concessions from Demetrius including tribute and tax relief. The writer of 1 Maccabees declares: ‘In the one hundred seventieth year, the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel’ (1 Macc. 13:41; cf Josephus, *Ant.* 13.213), though the declaration seems premature since the Syrian garrison remained in the citadel. Simon accomplishes its removal shortly thereafter (ca. 142 BCE) having starved them into submission, expelling the troops from the citadel and purifying it. Their military presence had been the last obvious sign of Seleucid control, lasting some twenty years after rededicating the temple (1 Macc. 13:49-53). Since Tiglath-pileser in the eighth century, Judea had been under the control of an empire. It was now an independent state with its own small but growing empire, well-schooled in imperial ways. It would remain so until Roman control was asserted in 63 BCE.

Judean/Israelite Metanarratives?

First Maccabees extravagantly lauds Simon’s rule as a time of peace, fertility, and faithful display of Jewish identity in adherence to the law and temple (1 Macc. 14:4-15). The reality was not quite so idyllic. He continues to extend Judea/Israel’s territory in an imperializing process called ‘Judaization’,²²⁹ in which he moved against Joppa and Gezer, driving out Gentile residents and settling it with Jews (1 Macc. 14:33-34). The archaeological evidence attests *miqvaot* in houses there indicating the residents’ religious observance, but it also reflects their economic independence. Pottery remains, for example, are locally produced and there are no signs of the fancy tableware known as Phoenician Eastern Sigillata A pottery or semi-fine vessels, nor of ‘Aegean wine amphoras, Hellenistic decorated wares such as West Slope-style plates and cups, Alexandrian white-painted pagynoi, nor southern Italian table wares and wine amphoras’ so common elsewhere.²³⁰

228. Berlin, ‘Between Large Forces’, 32.

229. For a description, Berlin, ‘Between Two Forces’, 28-29.

230. Berlin, ‘Between Two Forces’, 28-30.

Simon himself comes to a murderous end at the hands of his son-in-law Ptolemy. Mimicking decades of murderous Seleucid political strategies, Ptolemy attempts to gain power through a coup, murdering Simon and two of his sons (1 Macc. 16:11-17). And Syrian imperial ambition has not ended. Simon's successor, John Hyrcanus (135–104 BCE), has to fight off the further assertion of Syrian power in the form of an attack and siege of Jerusalem from Antiochus VII Sidetes (ca. 134–132 BCE). He manages to survive the siege and negotiate its end, agreeing to pay some tribute, refusing a garrison in Jerusalem, forming a friendly alliance, and joining in Antiochus VII's military action against the Parthians (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.236-49).²³¹ Thereafter continued dynastic infighting among Syrian rivals largely meant Hyrcanus and Judea/Israel were left alone (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.267-72). Josephus comments that Hyrcanus 'revolted from the Macedonians, and no longer furnished them any aid either as subject or as a friend' (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.273). He also renews the treaty with the Roman senate (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.259-66), and sets about constructing a large and ostentatious palace at Jericho, imitating the Hellenistic practice of extravagantly displaying wealth.²³²

The brief rule of Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) is significant for his 'transforming the government into a kingdom'. In further imitation of Greek practices, he makes himself king, the first Jewish king since 587 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.301). After Aristobulus' early death, his successor, Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), also a king and chief priest, continues the imitation of imperial ways by expanding his territory northeast of the Sea of Galilee and fighting with internal opponents, especially Pharisees. He has to fend off incursions from both Ptolemy Lathyrus of Egypt, the ruler of Cyprus, and attacks by the Seleucid Demetrius III (94–88; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.377-86)²³³ and Antiochus XII Dionysus who was killed (ca. 86–84 BCE; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.387-92). Alexandra Salome (76–67 BCE) maintains Judea's independence, though the same cannot be said for her successors who became enmeshed in in-fighting (just like the Seleucids).

231. Tessa Rajak ('Roman Intervention') suggests Roman assistance with material aid in compliance with a treaty made with Simon may also have been a significant factor.

232. Berlin, 'Between Two Forces', 34-35.

233. Berrin (*The Peshar Nahum Scroll*, 88-130) identifies the Demetrius in Pericope 2, Peshar Units 6-10, who comes to Jerusalem 'at the counsel of Seekers-after-Smooth-Things' as Demetrius III. According to Berrin, 'Antiochus' is Antiochus IV, the Seekers are the Pharisees, the 'Kittim' are the Romans, and 'the Young Lion of Wrath' is Alexander Jannaeus.

Hyrchanus succeeds her in 67 BCE but immediately his younger brother Aristobulus attacks him. A settlement is reached in which Aristobulus becomes king. Interference in this arrangement comes from Antipater, whose father Alexander Jannaeus had appointed governor of Idumaea. The younger Antipater stirred up opposition to Aristobulus and persuaded Hyrcanus to obtain help from the Arab king Aretas. Aretas and Hyrcanus led an army against Aristobulus and besieged him in Jerusalem. Aretas is forced by Scaurus, an envoy of the Roman general Pompey, to lift the siege and withdraw. Aristobulus attacked Aretas and Hyrcanus. Both Aristobulus and Hyrcanus sent envoys to Pompey at Damascus seeking his favor and patronage. Pompey bound both parties to peace and to wait for his arrival in Jerusalem. But further strife develops and Pompey advances on Jerusalem. The city was divided in support between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus because, according to Josephus, the people rejected kingly rule and wanted rule by priests (*Ant.* 14.41). Aristobulus's supporters withdrew to the temple while Hyrcanus' supporters welcomed Pompey into the city. A three-month siege of the temple followed with many Jews, including Aristobulus' supporters, killed by Hyrcanus' supporters. Pompey entered the temple but did not damage it. He established order with Hyrcanus as chief priest, took Aristobulus captive, executed others involved in the war, levied tribute, set free cities, and placed them under his own governor as part of the Roman province of Syria (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.74-76).²³⁴

Josephus declares:

For this misfortune which befell Jerusalem Hyrcanus and Aristobulus were responsible, because of their dissension. For we lost our freedom and became subject to the Romans, and the territory which we had gained by our arms and taken from the Syrians we were compelled to give back to them, and in addition the Romans exacted of us in a short space of time more than ten thousand talents; and the royal power which had formerly been bestowed on those who were high priests by birth became the privilege of commoners. (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.77-78)

234. Flusser, 'The Roman Empire'.