

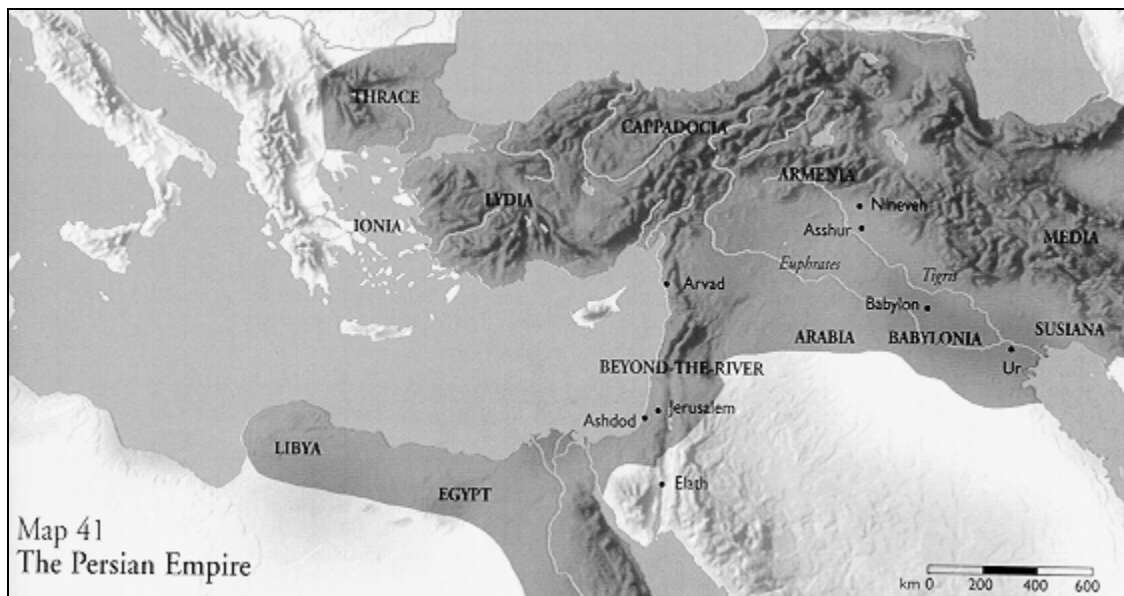
### Timeline of the Persian and Hellenistic Empires

559: Cyrus (*Kuruš*) becomes the king of a coalition of tribes in Persian territory called Anšan

550: Cyrus defeats the King of the Medes to become King of Kings throughout Eastern Mesopotamia; establishes the *Achaemenid Empire* (named after an ancestor, Achaemenes)

539: Cyrus conquers Babylonia (allows exiled leaders of subject nations to return home)

530: Cyrus dies; is succeeded by his son Cambyses (*Kambujiya*)



Greatest Extent of Persian Empire (Map from <http://www.ot-studies.com/images/Persmap.jpg>)

486: Xerxes I succeeds his father Darius; ill-fated campaigns east into Greece (in the 480s) and revolts in Persia weaken the Achaemenid Empire (cf. 300)

until-330: Reign of Achaemenids (mostly named Ataxerxes, Xerxes, and Darius)

359: Alexander the Great born to Philip II of Macedon (who conquered Greece in 338); tutored by Aristotle

336: ATG becomes King of Macedon at Philip's death

332: ATG conquers Egypt; crowned “Pharaoh”

331: ATG founds Alexandria

330: ATG conquers Babylon, routs Persian armies

326: ATG's army reaches the Indus River, but turns back

323: ATG dies of an illness in Babylon; empire split between Antigonus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy



Map of “The Hellenistic World: 240 BCE” from <http://www.uoregon.edu/~atlas/europe/static/map09.html>

RLST 124I: Varieties of Ancient Judaism

Spring 2009

Handout #3 (April 7, 2009)

“Empires: From Persian *Yehud* to Hellenistic *Ioudaia*” – 2

### The Reconstruction of Judah (*Yehud/Yahud/Ioudaia*)

538: Cyrus returns the Judahite leaders from Exile in Babylon

530s-520s: Descendants of David (*Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel*) appointed sd governor; descendants of High Priest Zadok begin performing sacrifices on Temple Mount

520s: Rebuilding of the Temple

450s-430s: Ezra and Nehemiah establish religious law (*Torah*) in *Yehud*; Jerusalem walls rebuilt

*circa* 301: Ptolemies (TAHL-uh-meez) rule over the Land (*Ioudaia*)

*circa* 200: Seleucids (suh-LOO-sidz) rule over the Land

168: Revolt against the Seleucids begins in Jerusalem

### Worship of the God of Israel outside of *Yehud*

5??: Jews in Egypt build a Temple to YHWH in Elephantine (island near Aswan) (*unclear whether it existed before or after Persian conquest of Egypt*)

450s? 400s?: Story of *Esther* set at court of Ataxerxes I or II [?]

410: Elephantine Temple destroyed

402: Elephantine Temple rebuilt (without animal sacrifice [?])

3??: Samaritan Temple on Mt Gerizim built (*unclear whether it existed before or after Alexander's conquest of the Near East*)

### Efforts at centralization of Jewish worship of YHWH

- » Uniqueness of the Temple worship in Jerusalem
- » Authority of the Torah (*Scriptures*)
- » Strict monotheism [*Prophets*]
- » Ethnic distinction
- » Continuity of monarchy and priesthood
- » Historical consciousness (past, present, future)

### “Hellenism” in *Ioudaia*

What does *Hellenism* mean?

*Hellas* = Greece (Greeks have never referred to themselves as “Greek”)

*hellenizein* = 1. to speak Greek 2. to act Greek 3. to become Greek

Two competing definitions of *hellenization*:

1. cultural imperialism: Forcing subject populations to speak, dress, act, and think like the Empire and give up their own “native” ways of speaking, dress, acting, and thinking
2. cultural translation: Providing an “international” medium of cultural exchange that allows for adaptation and retention of “native” traditions and cultures