

RLST 124I: Varieties of Ancient Judaism

Spring 2009

Handout #4 (April 9, 2009)

"Independence: From Hasmoneans to Herodians"

SOURCES

I Maccabees: Written *circa* 100 BCE, probably originally in Hebrew; only a Greek version survives. Recounts the history of *Ioudaia* from the death of Alexander the Great (323 BCE) to the official recognition of the Hasmonean king/high priest John Hyrcanus (134 BCE) by the Syrian kings; at the center of the narrative is the uprising of Judas Maccabeus (Judah the Maccabee) and his brothers against the Hellenizing Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes (168-164 BCE). A generally reliable (although certainly biased) source for the second-century BCE.

Josephus: Writing in the 80s-90s CE from the city of Rome, Josephus Flavius produced two major historical works that include narratives of the Hasmonean and Herodian Dynasties: *The Jewish War* and *The Antiquities of the Jews*. Writing after the massive defeat of the Judeans in the First Jewish War (66-73 CE), Josephus is constantly concerned to demonstrate: the civilized and superior character of Jews; and the moral lesson that a few upstarts and rash zealots have managed to bring ruin on the rest of Judaea.

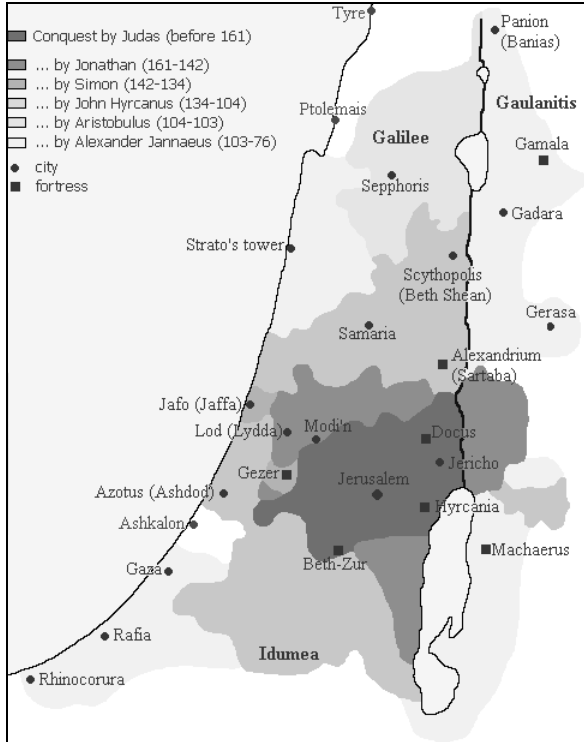
THE MARCH OF EMPIRES: THE END OF THE HELLENISTIC KINGDOMS

- 323 BCE: Death of *Alexander the Great*: establishment of *Ptolemaic* and *Seleucid* Kingdoms
- 171-138 BCE: **Mithridates I** of Parthia establishes the *Parthian Empire* in Mesopotamia, severely weakening Seleucid power in the Near East
- 200-133 BCE: Italian Republic of **Rome** slowly conquers Greece, southern Gaul (France), Iberia (Spain), Carthage (N. Africa), parts of Asia Minor (Turkey), and the Near East
- 190s BCE: **Antiochus III** launches an unsuccessful campaign into *Asia Minor* and is pushed back by the Roman Army
- 168 BCE: Rome intervenes to protect **Ptolemaic Egypt** from the incursions of **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, the Seleucid King
- 168-164 BCE: *Maccabean Revolt*
- 60s BCE: Ptolemy the Great (Roman general) marches through the Near East, and claims Syria; effective **end of the Seleucid Empire**
- 40s BCE: Gaius Julius Caesar (Roman general) appoints Cleopatra VII (with her brother Ptolemy XIV) Queen of Egypt, and makes her his mistress
- 40s-30s BCE: After Caesar's assassination (44 BCE), war between his successors (Octavian and Antony) leads to the death of Cleopatra and the annexation of Egypt by Octavian; effective **end of the Ptolemaic Empire**

Judaeian independence

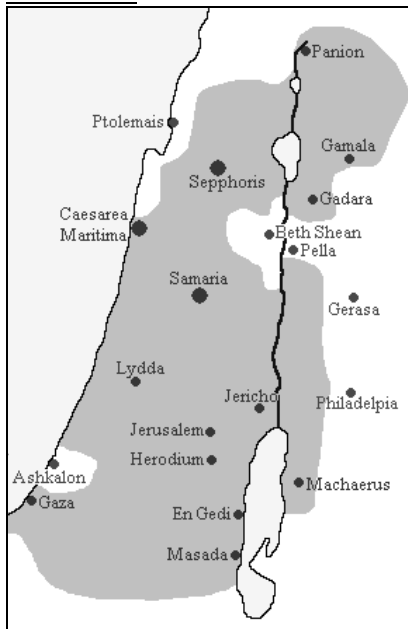
- 168-164 BCE: *Maccabean Revolt*
- 161 BCE: At the death of Judas, his brother Jonathan takes control of Judaea
- 152 BCE: Jonathan appointed high priest
- 141-134 BCE: At the death of Jonathan, his brother Simon appointed high priest, de facto ruler of Judaea
- 134-104 BCE: John Hyrcanus I (son of Simon) rules as high priest (conquers Idumea and Samaria)
- 104-103 BCE: Aristobulus I (son of John Hyrcanus) briefly rules
- 103-76 BCE: Aristobulus's brother Alexander Jannaeus rules as both high priest and king of Judaea
- 76-67 BCE: Alexander's widow Salome Alexandra rules as regent after his death
- 67-63 BCE: Alexander's son Aristobulus II rules; civil war between brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus
- 63-40 BCE: Roman general Pompey places Hyrcanus II on the throne, weakening Hasmonean rule
- 37 BCE: Antigonus, Aristobulus II's son, deposed by Herod, an Idumean with Roman support
- 4 BCE: At Herod's death, kingdom divided among his sons into tetrarchies
- 6 CE: Romans depose Archelaus and install a procurator in Jerusalem

Hasmoneans

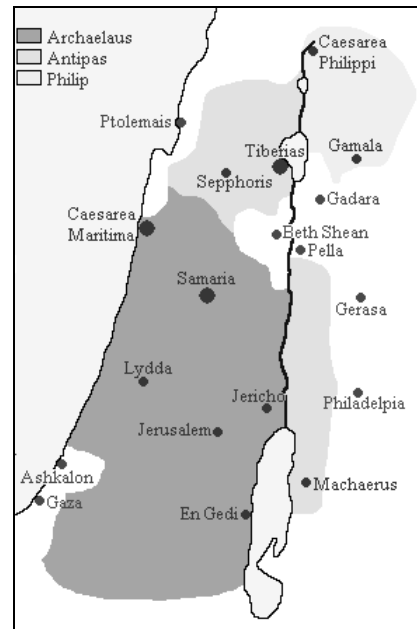


(Conquests of the Hasmoneans: Map from http://www.livius.org/ha-hd/hasmonaeans/israel2_map.gif)

Herodians



Kingdom of Herod the Great (http://www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/israel4_map.gif)



Tetrarchies of Herod's sons (http://www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/israel4a_map.gif)