

The Power of the Temple:

Examining the Role of the Jerusalem Temple
in the Seleukid Empire (200-167 BCE)

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Declaration

I, Penelope Carpentier, certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university.

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Abstract

This paper will investigate the Jerusalem temple as a power structure in the Seleukid era prior to the Maccabean revolt (200-167 BCE), both in its own region of Judea as well as within the Seleukid empire itself. To build up a fuller picture of the city and temple during this time, it is necessary to analyse both historical and archaeological sources together, a methodology that is also necessary due to the scarcity of material. These will include not only sources from and relating to the Hellenistic era, but also from the Persian and Hasmonean periods, as continuation of administrative principles was a common trend. Further insight can also be gained by examining Hellenistic and Persian material relating to the region of Samaria, including the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, which shares many commonalities with the one in Jerusalem.

Within the complex and multifaceted administrative matrix of the Seleukid empire, the Jerusalem temple was an important part of local governance, serving as the point of contact between the local populace and the Seleukid authorities, and the high priest holding the key city financial administrative role. From its own perspective, the temple and high priest were pre-eminent authorities over the city's administration and governance, possessing a level of autonomy that was not only a stabilising factor for the Judeans but also for the Seleukids, enabling them to achieve their goal of maximised revenue for their vast empire.

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List of Abbreviations

AASOR	<i>The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
AC	<i>L'antiquité classique</i>
Aeg.	<i>Aegyptus</i>
BA	<i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BE	<i>Bulletin épigraphique in Revue des Études Grecques</i>
CAH	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> , 2 nd edition, edited by F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen and R.M. Ogilvie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CIJ	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum: recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du III^e siècle avant Jésus-Christ au VII^e siècle de notre ère</i> , edited by Jean Baptiste Frey. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1936.
CPJ	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> , volume 1, edited by Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957.
CQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JHS	<i>The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JPOS	<i>The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

<i>JTS</i>	<i>The Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae: Supplementum Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , volume 1, edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger. Leipzig: Apud S. Hirzel, 1903.
<i>Pal.</i>	<i>Palynology</i>
<i>P. Cair. Zen.</i>	<i>Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Zenon Papyri</i> , edited by C.C. Edgar. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1925 (volume 1), 1928 (volume 3) and 1940 (volume 5).
<i>P. Col. Zen.</i>	<i>Zenon Papyri: Business Papers of the Third Century B.C. Dealing with Palestine and Egypt</i> , volume 2, edited by William Linn Westermann, Clinton Walker Keyes and Herbert Liebesny. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940.
<i>PEFQS</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>Pho.</i>	<i>Phoenix</i>
<i>P. Lond.</i>	<i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum: The Zenon Papyri</i> , volume 7, edited by T.C. Skeat. London: The British Library Publishing Division, 1974.
<i>P. Tebt.</i>	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri</i> , volume 1, edited by Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt and J. Gilbert Smyly. London: Oxford University Press, 1902; volume 3, edited by Arthur S. Hunt and J. Gilbert Smyly. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studi Ellenistici</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> , edited by A. Chaniotis, T. Corsten, N. Papazarkadas and R.A. Tybout. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/supplementum-epigraphicum-graecum
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament: An International Journal of Nordic Theology</i>

<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>Syll.</i> ³	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> ³ , edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger. Leipzig: Apud S. Hirzel, 1920.
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TAD</i>	<i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i> , volume 1, edited by Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1986.
<i>Trans.</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
<i>UPZ</i>	<i>Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit</i> , volume 2, edited by Ulrich Wilcken. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1957.
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Following its construction in the sixth century BCE, the Jewish temple provided a focal point for the city of Jerusalem, not only as a religious fixture, but also as a locus for the political power of Jerusalem and the region at large. It was the one place Jews could exercise a considerable amount of local power, as well as providing the nexus of interaction with overshadowing successive foreign rulers. This investigation is focused on the temple's place as a part of the wider political and administrative structure of the Seleukid empire (between 200 and 167 BCE) and in its own region of Koile-Syria, and the exercise of the Jerusalem temple's own power in the context of direct rule by the empire.

It will be seen that the Jerusalem temple, already important from a Jewish perspective, grew in prominence as part of the Seleukid administrative framework. The Seleukids, like the regimes before them, were consistently seeking to maximise their income, and in this context Jerusalem provided an urban marketplace as a focus for revenue collection through taxation and tribute, a task undertaken by the priesthood as the pre-eminent power in the city. But more importantly it was a stabilising factor in this newly-won province, which in itself helped the region to prosper as it recovered from war and resulted in more income for the state. However, once the stability of the high priesthood was compromised, Seleukid power in Jerusalem was lost.

To create a solid basis for understanding the place of the Jerusalem temple within the Seleukid framework, it is important to first of all look at that framework itself. Chapter 2 delves into the structure of Seleukid administration in the light of information from Judea itself as well as from that relating to the Ptolemaic hierarchy. This will be taken further in chapter 3, where this structure is brought to bear in the context of Koile-Syria, as Seleukid

rulers interact with the local elite. Chapter 4 examines taxation in more detail. As already noted, the Seleukid administration was geared towards maximising the revenue obtained from regions under their control, and this was principally done through taxation. Taxation collection was also a sphere in which local entrepreneurs and members of the elite became more politically involved and influential, particularly those from the Jerusalem priesthood. This is explored in chapter 5, as well as the way in which urbanisation increased the role and importance of the city itself.

Chapter 6 sees a slight change in tack, as the Jerusalem temple comes under investigation from the point of view of the local inhabitants. Here, the hierarchy of the Jerusalem temple is considered, in particular the authority and independence wielded by the high priest as head of the city. This is further bolstered by the consideration, in chapter 7, of the various uses of the Neo-Hebrew script in both Judean and Samaritan/Samaritan archaeological contexts, which show a consistent underlying national consciousness that is wrapped up in the centrality of the temple and the authority of the high priest within it.

The natural starting point for this investigation is the victory of Antiochos III at the Battle of Panion in 200 BCE, when the Seleukids finally wrested control of Koile-Syria from the Ptolemies after a series of five wars. At this point in time, the Jewish people had been living under foreign rule for around four hundred years; since they were invaded by the Babylonians in the sixth century. After subsequent domination by the Persians from 539 BCE, they came under the control of Alexander in 332 BCE during his conquest of the East. Following his death in 323 BCE, Alexander's empire was divided among his generals, with Judea falling to Ptolemy, whose own empire centred on Alexandria in Egypt.

This investigation's *terminus ad quem* of 167 BCE falls at the outset of the Maccabean revolt, which itself was the result of the Seleukid administration impinging on the autonomy of the Jerusalem temple and the subsequent destabilisation of the city's authority structure. At this time, Koile-Syria falls into a time of contested rule, and the ensuing Hasmonean period marks a significant change both historically and archaeologically, thus providing this investigation with a logical stopping point.

A Synthesised Methodology

When it comes to examining Seleukid Koile-Syria, several issues arise. There are few available resources: archaeology is slim, and texts can be unreliable and cursory. There is also a similarity of material between the Persian and Hellenistic periods – a continuity of usage of artefacts from one age to another – which can complicate attempts to line up changes in archaeology with changes in history. This time period and place are very specific, and the disparate and somewhat sparse nature of the evidence requires an approach that encompasses both history and archaeology in order to obtain a complete picture.

Moreover, it requires an inclusion of material from further afield, both geographically (from nearby locations such as Ramat Raḥel, to Samaria and even Egypt) and temporally (from both previous and subsequent administrations). This is not only necessary due to the relative paucity of available material, but it is also viable since there is a good deal of administrative overlap from one regime to the next, between Persian, Hellenistic (Ptolemaic and Seleukid) and Hasmonean periods, reflected across a range of media.¹

¹ For example, the Persian name for the province, Yehud, is found on jar handle stamp impressions and coins into the Hellenistic era (Oded Lipschits and David S. Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 256; Ya'akov Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins: From the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi

Jerusalem and the Seleukid empire have, of course, been investigated by scholars for many years and from many different angles, some focussing on specific pieces of literature, or specific archaeological data, as well as more broad examinations of the early Hellenistic era. Others have examined economic or political systems of the time, or expounded the social and ideological issues that resulted from the interaction between Greek and Jewish cultures. However, there has also been a trend towards compartmentalisation of history and archaeology to the exclusion of each other.²

Consideration of these opinions and investigations naturally informs part of my own study, as they provide much more additional useful information and viewpoints. However, I have opted for an integrated approach, like that taken by scholars such as Grabbe, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, and to a lesser extent Hengel.³ I am of the view that in order to gain a more complete understanding of Seleukid Jerusalem, it is necessary to create a synthesis of sources, utilising a range of analytical methods of both historical and archaeological sources. Here, this will concern material not only related to the Jerusalem temple but also that

Press, 2001), 4-5), and Ptolemaic coins are known to have circulated freely under the Seleukids (G. G. Aperghis, *The Seleukid Royal Economy: The Finances and Financial Administration of the Seleukid Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 233-34).

² As demonstrated by Hillel Geva, who focuses on archaeology to the exclusion of “vague textual sources” (“Jerusalem’s Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View” in *Tel Aviv* 41 (2014): 154).

³ The investigations of Grabbe, and Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, benefitted from the discoveries of stelae, as well as focussed studies on coins and jar handle stamp impressions, to inform their investigations (Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, volume 2: The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE)* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 2, 23; Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, *From Samarkand to Sardis: A new approach to the Seleukid empire* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd, 1993), 4). Hengel, however, created simply a documentary synthesis between the works of Josephus, Ben Sira and the Zenon papyri (Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, volume 1, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), 4-5, 310).

concerning the Samaritan⁴ temple on Mount Gerizim, which shares many commonalities with the temple in Jerusalem.

Documentary Analysis, Comparison and Issues

An ancient document may be analysed as to what relevant information it might contain based on its own merits as an individual piece of writing. The principal written sources for this period are Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and *Against Apion*, both written in the first century CE. In this latter work and that of Diodorus Siculus appear the now lost writings of Hecataeus of Abdera that explored Jewish politics. Added to this are the deuterocanonical works of Ben Sira, and 1 and 2 Maccabees, as well as documents acquired from archaeological excavations: two stelae from Koile-Syria itself (the Hefzibah and Maresha stelae) and a variety of papyri from Egypt.

As well as individually adding to a composite picture of administration and power structures, these groups of documents can also be considered against each other, as different documents give different perspectives on the same situations, and as similar documents appear in different media. For example, the official Seleukid documents quoted by Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* can be compared against the two stelae; and the Tobiad Romance, which appears in the same work, can be considered alongside the information we have on the Tobiad family from the Zenon papyri.

⁴ Throughout I will be using the word "Samaritan" to refer to both people and objects from the region of Samaria up until the conversion of the capital, Samaria, into a Macedonian outpost under Alexander, which caused the migration of many to Shechem and Mount Gerizim (see chapter 7 below). After this, "Samaritan" will be used in reference to the region and the old (now pagan) capital, while "Samaritan" will refer to local people and objects from the Yahwist Shechem/Mount Gerizim area.

Naturally, however, ancient documents have issues that must be taken into account when reading and analysing them. In relation to Josephus, for many years he came under considerable criticism for both theological and historical reasons.⁵ Ignorance in relation to Persian kings,⁶ and confusion surrounding the succession of Samaritan governors,⁷ as well as his tendency to adapt sources for his own apologetic purposes,⁸ has led some scholars, such as Cowley in the 1920s and Rowley in the 1950s, to reject Josephus outright⁹ or at least seriously doubt the authenticity of the documents he cites.¹⁰ Many others, however, have sought a solution.¹¹

While at the same time acknowledging the shortcomings in Josephus, such as his modernisation of language and style for his audience, Bickerman argues on linguistic

⁵ For example, sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians came into conflict with antiquarians regarding the value of *Antiquities* as it glosses over significant historical events that appear in the gospels (Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, part 2* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 26).

⁶ Menachem Mor, "The Samaritans in Transition from the Persian to the Greek Period" in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 177.

⁷ See the discussion in Frank Moore Cross Jr., "Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times" in *HTR* 59, no. 3 (1966): 201-205.

⁸ Jörg-Dieter Gauger, *Bieträge zur jüdischen Apologetik: Untersuchungen zur Authentizität von Urkunden bei Flavius Josephus und im 1. Makkabäerbuch* (Köln: P Hanstein, 1977), 24. Josephus himself points this out in the foreword to his *Antiquities* (1.Proem.2).

⁹ A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC* (cited in Cross, "Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times", 203) and H. H. Rowley "Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple" (cited in G. Ernest Wright, "The Samaritans at Shechem" in *HTR* 55, no. 4 (1962): 366 n. 22).

¹⁰ Bickerman, *Studies*, 24.

¹¹ Pucci Ben Zeev gives an excellent summary of the arguments relating to the reliability of Josephus' quoting of both Hecataeus and Manetho, and concludes that, "Apart from two voices of dissent which appeared in the seventies, the general orientation of research in the last fifteen years opts for a thesis of authenticity," though she also notes there are still issues (for example, intermediate sources or adaptation) (Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, "The Reliability of Josephus Flavius: The Case of Hecataeus' and Manetho's Accounts of Jews and Judaism: Fifteen Years of Contemporary Research (1974-1990)" in *JSJ* 24, no. 2 (1993): 223).

grounds for his fundamental reliability, particularly in relation to his reports of royal correspondence from Seleukid rulers.¹² He is followed in this regard particularly by Grabbe, who contends for reliability in Josephus by noting close comparisons between the Seleukid correspondence in Josephus and extant stelae and papyri. However, Grabbe also notes that while valuable material can be found in Josephus' writings, caution must still be exercised, noting with approval Gera's assessment of the Tobiad Romance (*Ant.* 12.4.1-5) as an account of true, though significantly embellished, events.¹³

Bias and function must also be taken into account with Ben Sira, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Ben Sira's bias becomes apparent in his gushing praise of contemporary high priest Simon son of Onias in chapter 50, which portrays him as the culmination of all power in the land, while any other leaders are hidden behind uncertain and possibly interchangeable terms.¹⁴ Complications also arise due to the fact that it is a piece of wisdom literature rather than a historical or political description: information regarding administrative processes must be gleaned from inferences rather than read from the text. The books of Maccabees likewise display a very significant bias, necessarily so as they are pieces of Hasmonean propaganda, portraying the Maccabean revolt as a pious victory against Hellenists who threatened the stability of the nation.¹⁵

These apocryphal books were likewise not favourably viewed in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, primarily due to their place within Catholic scriptures, bringing them under fire

¹² Bickerman, *Studies*, 35-37.

¹³ Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000), 40, 47-48.

¹⁴ Horsley and Tiller, 79, 81-84.

¹⁵ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt note "the highly emotive, biased and even, at times, fictitious character" of the events portrayed in the Maccabees accounts (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 226).

from Protestant scholars.¹⁶ But more recently these books have been deemed useful in understanding the social and political situation in Hellenistic-era Jerusalem. For example, Aitken underlines the benefits of the ability to date Ben Sira, due to its references to Simon son of Onias as high priest, and uses it to examine shifting economic and political conditions impacting on Jewish nationalism.¹⁷ They also speak into the related question of Hellenisation, the principal focus of Hengel's landmark work *Judaism and Hellenism*.¹⁸ For example, according to Hengel, Ben Sira is a "protest against the arrogance of the liberal aristocracy" set within a theological framework.¹⁹ In this context, however, Horsley and Tiller disagree and are quite critical of what they see as an overly eisegetic reading by Hengel.²⁰

Different issues arise in relation to the stelae and papyri. While both the Hefzibah and the Maresha stelae are fragmentary (although the Maresha is less so since the discovery of additional pieces in 2005 and 2006),²¹ leading of course to an incomplete understanding of

¹⁶ For example, *Censura librorum apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti adversum pontificos* is a posthumous collection of lectures by John Rainolds, published in 1611, relating to apocryphal literature more generally (specifically *Tobias*, *Judith*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *1 and 2 Maccabees* and *Sirach*). Wernsdorf, in 1747, specifically focuses on 1 and 2 Maccabees, as is clear from the title of his work, *Commentatio historica-critica de fide librorum Maccabaicorum* (Bickerman, *Studies*, 24-26).

¹⁷ James K. Aitken, "Judaic National Identity" in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 40, 42-43.

¹⁸ Its significance was acknowledged by Momigliano shortly after the initial publication of Hengel's work (Arnaldo Momigliano, review of *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh. v. Chr.*, by Martin Hengel, in *JTS* 21, no. 1 (1970): 150-51). However, Momigliano does criticise what he sees as blind following of Bickerman's interpretations of events over other scholars, and Hengel's lack of precision regarding the nature of Judaism in the second century BCE. *Judentum und Hellenismus* has since been significantly critiqued and further built upon by other scholars.

¹⁹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 134.

²⁰ Richard A. Horsley and Patrick Tiller, "Ben Sira and the Sociology of the Second Temple" in *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture*, ed. Philip R. Davies and John M. Halligan (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 74-75.

²¹ Dov Gera, "Olympiodoros, Heliodoros and the Temples of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē" in *ZPE* 169 (2009): 127.

their contents, this is fairly minimal due to the large amount that is intact. Moreover, as these stelae were discovered in contexts outside Jerusalem, they concern Seleukid politics in Koile-Syria on a more regional level rather than particular interests relating to the capital.

The papyri used here come from time periods prior to and contemporaneous with Seleukid Jerusalem, however they relate to a very different geographic location, and a society functioning under a different government, as they were produced in Egypt under the Ptolemies. Therefore, care must be taken as the situation described in that context may not necessarily be so elsewhere.²² Their importance lies in their portrayal of the lives of Jews and native inhabitants of the land under a Hellenistic government, as well as references to events and personalities in Koile-Syria.

Palaeography and Language

Analysis of pieces of archaeological evidence will be conducted through examination of the language or script used, both in relation to their progression and their spread across different media. Principally under investigation will be jar handle stamp impressions. Discovered at various sites around the region, these jar handles are concentrated primarily in Jerusalem and Ramat Raḥel,²³ an impressive administrative complex just south of Jerusalem that was used continuously from the seventh to fourth centuries BCE.²⁴ First

²² Lester L. Grabbe, "Hyparchs, *Oikonomoi* and Mafiosi: The Governance of Judah in the Ptolemaic Period" in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 86.

²³ Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 15.

²⁴ Dafna Langgut et al, "Fossil pollen reveals the secrets of the Royal Persian Garden at Ramat Raḥel, Jerusalem" in *Pal.* 37, no. 1 (2013): 115, 122.

discovered and published in 1898,²⁵ the stamp impressions quickly became the subject of much academic discussion, in large part due to their unknown meaning.

In the 1920s, S. A. Cook discussed and rejected the theory that the impressions contained numbers indicating capacity, and seemed to agree with Duncan's hypothesis that the three letters present in many of them were an abbreviated form of the divine name.²⁶ However, the 1930s saw Sukenik's proposal of the now accepted reading of *yhd*, referring to the Persian name of the province.²⁷ There was also a significant lack of consensus as to chronology and typology,²⁸ problems Geva, and Vanderhooft and Lipschits have respectively attempted to rectify at least in relation to Persian and Hellenistic *yhd* stamp impressions.²⁹ Even more recently Lipschits and Vanderhooft have sought to consolidate this long history of debate and findings in their presentation of a corpus of the *yhd* impressions.³⁰

²⁵ Oded Lipschits and David Vanderhooft, "Yehud Stamp Impressions: History of Discovery and Newly-Published Impressions" in *TA* 34, no. 1 (2007): 3.

²⁶ Following Duncan, who conjectured that the jars contained dedications to Yahweh or taxes paid to the state (S. A. Cook, "Inscribed Hebrew Objects from Ophel" in *PEFQS* 56, no. 4 (1924): 181). The fact that the name Yahweh would be so freely (and crudely) written was, however, questioned by Macalister (S. A. Cook, "Inscribed Jar-Handles" in *PEFQS* 57, no. 2 (1925): 91).

²⁷ Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 259. Consequently, Sukenik also proposed a reading of *h'yr* (the city) of what are now called the *yhd-ṭ* impressions, approaching the issue from numismatic perspective (E. L. Sukenik, "The 'Jerusalem' and 'the City' Stamps on Jar Handles" in *JPOS* 13 (1933): 226-231, which also contains a short summary of the then current hypotheses regarding the interpretation of both these and what he correctly identified to be *yrslm* (Jerusalem) stamp impressions). Debate still continued, but by 1960 most scholars, including Sukenik, had changed their position. Avigad outlines various opinions and himself argues the case for the reading of *yhd-ṭ* (Nahman Avigad, "Yehûd or Ha'îr?" in *BASOR* 158 (1960): 23-27).

²⁸ Paul W. Lapp, "Ptolemaic Stamped Handles from Judah" in *BASOR* 172 (1963): 22 n.2.

²⁹ Hillel Geva, "A Chronological Reevaluation of Yehud Stamp Impressions in Paleo-Hebrew Script, Based on Finds from Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem" in *TA* 34, no. 1 (2007), 92-103; David Vanderhooft and Oded Lipschits, "A New Typology of the Yehud Stamp Impressions" in *TA* 34, no. 1 (2007): 12-37.

³⁰ Unusual types such as the lion stamp impressions, *yrslm* impressions and those bearing only a *ṭeth* are not included in the study (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 10-11).

A palaeographic transition can be observed in what is written in the impressions themselves, a continuation of abbreviation from the names of the province and governor, to the name of the province alone, to a shortened form of the province name. Further, there is also a linguistic progression from Aramaic, to Aramaic with elements of Neo-Hebrew, to entirely Neo-Hebrew.³¹ These are helpful in investigating changes in administrative practices, which can also be observed through a shift in percentages of discovered jar handle stamp impressions towards Jerusalem and away from Ramat Raḥel.³² In this regard too a statistical analysis of the density and spread of finds will shed light on the administrative requirements of Jerusalem itself, including estimates of population size and extent of settlement.³³

The same sorts of shift in language that occurred in the jar handle stamp impressions have also been noted in other artefacts from the same period, particularly coins.³⁴ Indeed, the use of Neo-Hebrew rather than Aramaic was for both Jeselsohn and Mendels indicative of a level of independence in Judea.³⁵ However, there have also been arguments, for example from Grabbe, and Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, that coin production instead indicated a level of status granted by the Hellenistic regimes.³⁶

Unfortunately, Seleukid rule of Jerusalem falls between two periods of minting. There are extant coins from the Persian era, as well as some coins bearing the toponym *yhdh* from the

³¹ Vanderhooft and Lipschits, 12-37.

³² Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 14-15.

³³ Geva, 142-143

³⁴ Meshorer, 4-5.

³⁵ D. Jeselsohn "A New Coin Type with Hebrew Inscription" in *IEJ* 24, no. 2 (1974): 78; Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 17, 29 n. 16 (contra T. R. Martin, who argues against any link between coinage and sovereignty).

³⁶ Grabbe suggests it may have been a reward by the Ptolemies to encourage cooperation (Grabbe, "Hyparchs", 85-86), and Sherwin-White and Kuhrt illustrate from 1 Macc. 15.2-9 that, during the Hasmonean era, Jerusalem's ability to mint coinage was a matter of conferred privilege (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 63).

rule of Ptolemy I, but there appears to have been no further coin production until the time of the Hasmoneans, when Jerusalem was again allowed the privilege of minting.³⁷

Apherghis' extensive and very useful study into the economics of the Seleukid empire notes the fact only one new mint was founded under the Seleukids in Koile-Syria, suggesting it was only a marginal region for coin production.³⁸

Mount Gerizim

In order to better understand the place of the Jerusalem temple in its context, I have expanded my investigation to include the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim as a comparable site to the temple in Jerusalem. It is a comparable site for many reasons: its geographic proximity, approximately 50 kilometres north of Jerusalem; its worship of the same God, though there are certain differences; its status as a centre for a diaspora, and its affiliation with a population centre (here Shechem, at the foot of the mountain, and a settlement at the top of the mountain itself); and their use of the same scripts in their epigraphy, particularly Aramaic and Neo-Hebrew.³⁹

In this regard, an examination of the palaeography will prove particularly useful, especially the exclusive use of Neo-Hebrew by the priesthood exemplified by the Hellenistic votive inscriptions on Mount Gerizim. But further regard will also to be had to archaeology from

³⁷ A. Kindler, "Silver Coins Bearing the Name of Judea from the Early Hellenistic Period" in *IEJ* 24, no. 2 (1974): 76. See also note 34 above.

³⁸ Apherghis, 234, 245.

³⁹ Throughout I will be following Magen, Misgav and Tsfania's preference of using "Neo-Hebrew" rather than "paleo-Hebrew", a term which implies it is the older Hebrew script rather than the newer (Yitzhak Magen, Haggai Misgav and Levana Tsfania, *Mount Gerizim Investigations, volume 1: The Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan Inscriptions* (Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology, Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria, Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004), 30).

the late Persian period, in particular the epigraphy and design of bullae discovered at Wadi ed-Daliyeh,⁴⁰ and the malleable use of scripts on coins produced under Samarian governors. Like Judea, Samaria was also quite prolific in minting its own coins under the Persians,⁴¹ however following a revolt this practice was barred under the Ptolemies, along with the removal of other rights and freedoms, and never reinstated under the Seleukids.⁴²

Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, it was assumed that the picture presented, for example, in John 4 of the discord between Jews and Samaritans under the Romans had been the case since the return of the exiles from Babylon in the sixth century BCE.⁴³ However, subsequent investigations have demonstrated a more complicated relationship that included a certain amount of closeness. Indeed, the complaints by the Samaritans to Antiochos IV that they were receiving the same punishment as the Jews shows that even the local Seleukid authorities had trouble differentiating between them (Jos. *Ant.* 12.257-61). In practice, it was also evident in the intermarriage between aristocratic families of both groups during the Persian era (Neh. 13.8; Jos. *Ant.* 11.322),⁴⁴ and the fact that

⁴⁰ N. Avigad, *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1976): 30-31.

⁴¹ Ya'akov Meshorer and Shraga Qedar, *Samaritan Coinage* (Jerusalem: Israel Numismatics Society, 1999), 13.

⁴² Meshorer, 3.

⁴³ Gary N. Knoppers, "Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Zion: A Study in the early history of the Samaritans and Jews" in *SR* 34, no. 3-4 (2005): 310.

⁴⁴ At some point, one of the daughters of a Samarian named Sanballat married one of the sons of the Jerusalem high priest, however Josephus places this Sanballat as a contemporary of Alexander rather than Nehemiah. This has led to many attempts to reconcile these accounts, with Cross famously reconstructing a hereditary line of governors including three Sanballats, the first in the time of Nehemiah and the third at the time of Alexander (Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "Papyri from the Fourth Century BC from Dâliyeh: A Preliminary Report on their Discovery and Significance" in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Jonas C. Greenfield (New York: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1969), 55-7).

leaders of both Samaria and Jerusalem were addressed by the Jewish community at Elephantine, Egypt, as leading civil authorities in the region (*TAD* A4.7.19, 29).

This has led some to talk of there being a schismatic sect of Judaism based at Mount Gerizim,⁴⁵ that the separation between the two was political rather than religious, and that many travelled from Samaria to Jerusalem to worship. However, as Tsedaka notes, it is probably more correct to think of the Israelite faith as having developed into two different traditions – the Jewish tradition and the Samaritan tradition – rather than one being the offshoot of the other.⁴⁶ From a Samaritan point of view, despite commonalities in worship such as the use of Torah, they were fundamentally distinct from Jerusalem, a fact that they clearly emphasised by the use of “in this place”, a unique phrase, in inscriptions on Mount Gerizim. Their worship there was a defining feature of not only their religion but also their identity,⁴⁷ extending to diaspora communities such as that on the Greek island of Delos.⁴⁸

Their ideological separation, however, does not negate the comparatives outlined above, nor their links of common traditions and beliefs, and common influences from their neighbours and from each other through trade and people movement. Probably a more accurate assessment of the relationship between Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim during the

⁴⁵ For example, Andrea M. Berlin, “Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Between Large Forces: Palestine in the Hellenistic Period” in *BA* 60, no. 1 (1997): 10; cf. Knoppers, 311-12.

⁴⁶ Cited in Hjelm, 26. Indeed, both name themselves Israelites, as indicated in the work of Ben Sira in relation to Jerusalem (Sir. 50.20) and an inscription from the Samaritan diaspora community in Delos (Οἱ ἐν Δῆλῳ Ἰσραελεῖται; “The Israelites in Delos”) (Philippe Bruneau and Pierre Bordreuil, “Les Israélites de Délos et la juiverie délienne” in *BCH* 106, no. 1 (1982): 469, 478).

⁴⁷ Magnar Kartveit, “Samaritan Self-Consciousness in the First Half of the Second Century BCE in Light of the Inscriptions from Mount Gerizim and Delos” in *JSJ* 45 (2014): 465-66.

⁴⁸ Bruneau and Bordreuil, 480.

Hellenistic era is that they were doctrinally separate but with varying degrees of closeness over time, and depending on individuals.⁴⁹

There has been a variety of dates and incidents proposed by scholars for the eventual split between Jews and Samaritans, ranging from early post-exilic times and the reconstruction of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 4),⁵⁰ to the end of the fourth century BCE and the construction of the Mount Gerizim temple under Alexander (Jos. Ant. 11.322-34),⁵¹ to the first century BCE or the first century CE.⁵² Eventually, though, it was a variety of political and religious circumstances – for example, the refusal of Samaria to join in the Tennes Rebellion in the fourth century BCE,⁵³ and the destruction of Shechem and the Mount Gerizim temple by John Hyrcanus in the second century⁵⁴ – and a tendency of both parties toward independence that culminated in the final separation of Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem.

⁴⁹ Hjelm, 24.

⁵⁰ Stefan Schorch, “The Construction of Samari(t)an Identity from the Inside and from the Outside” in *Between Cooperation and Hostility: Multiple Identities in Ancient Judaism and the Interaction with Foreign Powers*, ed. Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wörrle (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 136.

⁵¹ Cross, “Preliminary Report”, 57

⁵² Knoppers, 310; cf. McLean, 6-7. Coggins suggests a natural evolution, however a better view seems to be that it was an ongoing development that was progressed and punctuated by schismatic historical events. Thus to put any particular date on a final separation will prove problematic. For a variety of literary reasons, Schorch opts for a date in the late second century, which is not unreasonable (Schorch, 136-138).

⁵³ The extent to which the Judeans were involved with the Tennes Rebellion, however, is unclear. (Mary Joan Winn Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I: The Wadi Daliyeh Seal Impressions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 185).

⁵⁴ Schorch, 139.

Chapter 2 – A General View of Hellenistic Rule

The Seleukid province of Koile-Syria, of which Judea was a part, was a complicated administrative unit in the years following its conquest by Antiochus III in 200 BCE, due in large part to its history of occupation. Both the Seleukids and Ptolemies exercised a policy of administrative continuity with the preceding Achaemenid dynasty of Persia, in the interests of not disturbing the existing revenue base.¹ Indeed, all these empires were required to deal with the same issues in governing such large expanses of land, and it was therefore prudent to perpetuate tried and true institutions that were already in place. However, both the Seleukids and Ptolemies had differing interpretations of how those policies were actualised within their own Macedonian understandings of state governance. Moreover, the Achaemenid administrative practices that were drawn upon and, to a large extent, maintained by both Hellenistic kingdoms were themselves impacted by already existing political structures, as they allowed local administrative frameworks to continue under overarching Persian authority.²

Ptolemaic Syria and Phoenicia³

A brief overview of Ptolemaic Egypt by way of background is warranted here. From the plethora of documents from this period that have survived, a picture of a robust hierarchy

¹ Lester L. Grabbe, *Introduction to Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 20-21.

² Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (38-39) also note the ease with which the Ptolemies could use the traditional Egyptian antipathy towards the Persians for their own propaganda against the Seleukids.

³ Throughout I will use “Syria and Phoenicia” when discussing the region under the Ptolemies, “Koile-Syria” to refer to the same area under the Seleukids, and “Yehud” for when it was under Persian rule.

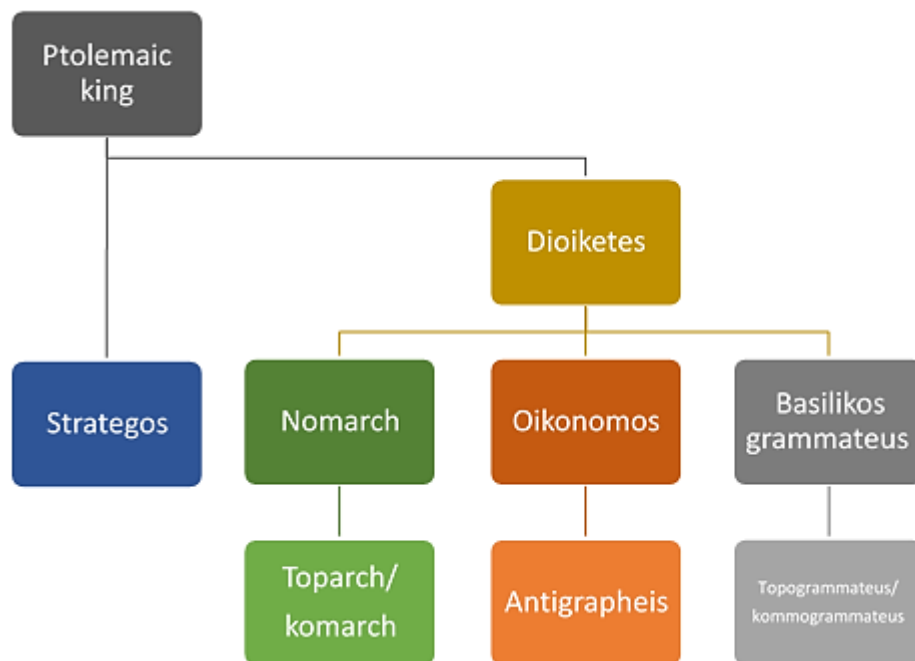


Figure 1 – Ptolemaic administrative hierarchy in Egypt

administering in various departments emerges (see Figure 1).⁴ Generally, governance was based on the nome as the predominant administrative unit, with the nomarch overseeing the agricultural production that was vital to the maintenance of the state. Similarly, for economic purposes the empire was divided into hyparchies, each headed by an *oikonomos* to oversee financial management of the district.⁵ The final branch of government was headed by the *basilikos grammateus* and covered governmental record-keeping.

⁴ This outline of administration is of course overly simplified. As Grabbe notes, at any given time and for any given location circumstances were different: for example, a nome could be governed by a nomarch, a toparch or even an *oikonomos*, and at the end of the third century there may have been more than one *dioikētes* in Egypt (Grabbe, *History*, 168).

⁵ This is certainly true of Syria and Phoenicia, as shown by the first line (left column) of a decree of Ptolemy II Philadelphos from approximately 260 BCE, which now forms part of the Rainer Papyri (*PER Inv.* 25,522), published by Herbert Liebesny ("Ein Erlass des Königs Ptolemaios II Philadelphos über die Deklaration von Vieh und Sklaven in Syrien und Phönikien", *Aeg.* 16, no. 3/4 (1936): 257-288). There is a further reference to a *dioikountos* (right column, line 18), though whether or not this is an equivalent term for *dioikētes* is unknown (Lester L. Grabbe, "Hyparchs, *Oikonomoi* and Mafiosi: The Governance of Judah in the Ptolemaic Period", in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 80-81).

These officials all, in turn, reported to the *dioikētes* in Alexandria as chief finance and interior minister, and had their own subordinates governing smaller units of land in relation to their department: the toparch or komarch under the nomarch; the *antigrapheis* under the *oikonomos*; the *topogrammateus* or *komogrammateus* under the *basilikos grammateus*.⁶ Moreover, these departments were by no means autonomous, and their interdependence created a series of checks and balances to limit the others' power.⁷ For example, the taxation system overseen by the *oikonomos* relied heavily on agricultural produce, surpluses of which were used to pay the taxes that funded military campaigns as well as the administration itself (see chapter 4 below).

Outside this network, but intimately linked to it, was the *strategos*, a royal appointee with primary authority over the landed soldiery (clereuchies). Although this position was essentially that of a military commander, as time progressed the *strategos* took on pre-eminent civil administrative role, rather than purely military, including the ability (along with the nomarch) to hear complaints and petitions to the king. Indeed, the transition of the role of *strategos* and his sole administrative power over the clereuchies separated him from the *dioikētes*-dominated administrative network, causing issues of its own. This separation tended to divert authority from the network and enhance the power of the *strategos*, such that he came to take on responsibility of the entirety of agricultural production, not only that of the clereuchies, and supplant the nomarch. Thus the *strategos* came under the

⁶ Roger S. Bagnall, *The Administrations of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 3-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

purview of the *dioikētes*, but a complicated relationship unfolded as the *strategos* was still directly appointed by the king.⁸

Such was the situation in Egypt proper, in general terms, although there were changes as time progressed, and administration varied from nome to nome depending on the local situation. But the Ptolemaic empire comprised far more territory than Egypt alone, encompassing lands with quite different political backgrounds. This was the case in the Ptolemaic district of Syria and Phoenicia.⁹ Despite centuries of close contact through trade between the Levant and Egypt,¹⁰ the differences in their native politics were such that, when the Ptolemies came to power, a different administrative approach was required: here, the district instead had its own *dioikētes*, still with subordinate *oikonomoi*, reporting to the central administration in Alexandria.¹¹

⁸ There are instances of a *strategos* exercising his independence from the *dioikētes* such as Ptolemy, a *strategos* in Syria, conducting his region's finances without the input of the "royal finance officials" (Polyb. 27.13.1-3). It may be supposed that this is a reference either to the various *dioikētai* he dealt with from Alexandria, but a question remains as to whether this was an isolated incident, and *dioikētes* control was very direct (so Préaux), or whether the *strategos* still enjoyed some amount of independence while mostly following the direction of the *dioikētes* (so Bengtson; see Bagnall, 4-8, 224-225).

⁹ Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, volume 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 5 n. 13. The division of Syria and Phoenicia into hyparchies, which may or may not have been the case in Egypt itself, has already been noted above in note 4.

¹⁰ For example, Egyptian scarab-style seals have been discovered at Tell Balatah (site of the ancient Samaritan city of Shechem), dating from the Middle Bronze Age, (Lawrence E. Toombs et al., "The Third Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)", *BASOR* 161 (1961): 38); at Nebi Samwil, 12 kilometres north-west of Jerusalem, dating from the seventh century BCE (Yitzhak Magen and Benny Har-Even, "Persian Period Stamp Impressions from Nebi Samwil", *TA* 34 (2007): 40); and in the lower strata of Gezer, on the Via Maris (R.A. Stewart Macalister, "Fourth Quarterly Report of the Excavation of Gezer (1 March–15 May, 1903)", *PEQ* 35, no. 3 (1903): 204, 211.

¹¹ Bagnall, 225.

Seleukid Koile-Syria

When the Seleukids conquered Koile-Syria in 200 BCE, an extra layer of complexity was added: the transition was not simply from Achaemenid to Seleukid rule, but the intermediate Ptolemaic stage presented to the Seleukids a somewhat different existing political framework. But rather than forcefully imposing their own administrative model *tout court*, the Seleukids opted for a more indirect approach. Like the Ptolemies, they understood that different regions required different governance, and transitions from one regime to another could be eased by having regard to previous administrative structures. An obvious example here is currency.

Instead of perpetuating the Attic standard weight of coinage imposed by Alexander following his conquest of the Persian empire and beyond, the Ptolemies instead imposed a closed monetary system, producing, and enforcing the use of, coins of their particular standard weight within their borders, including Syria and Phoenicia. Again, the process was gradual in order to minimise any impact to the economy, and local and some foreign issues continued to circulate,¹² but the policy direction was clear. The underlying principle was to create a royal monopoly on currency in order to generate important income for the state, particularly as outside traders would require money-changing in Ptolemaic cities, a service that in the Hellenistic era was contracted out to private individuals.¹³

Thus, when Antiochus III took control of the region, the Seleukids inherited a monetary system in wide use that was quite different from their own. But rather than disturb the

¹² Ibid. 210.

¹³ I.L. Merker, "A Greek Tariff Inscription in Jerusalem", *IEJ* 25, no. 4 (1975): 242; cf. Uriel Rappaport, "Numismatics" in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, volume 1: Introduction; The Persian Period*, ed. W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 30.

productive economic processes that were already in place, at the risk of losing revenue for themselves, the Seleukids allowed the Ptolemaic currency to continue in circulation and, in the newly-captured Phoenician mints, produced their own coins but in the same Ptolemaic weight the local populace was accustomed to using.¹⁴ In the marketplace and in taxation, preference was naturally given to the Seleukid issues, which were also used to pay the military and administrative staff, so Ptolemaic coinage simply fell out of circulation organically.¹⁵ Disruption to the economy was minimal, and state revenue could still be obtained from money-changing.

It may well be that the Seleukid administrative network was as complex as the Ptolemaic hierarchy briefly outlined above. It is difficult to ascertain its extent simply because there is far more information regarding Ptolemaic administration than Seleukid; the conditions for preservation of documentation was superior in Egypt and more documents survived.¹⁶ The information we do have as to the nature of Seleukid governance can be discerned from a variety of sources, and in fact most come from Judea. For example, in documentary sources meridarchs appear as civil administrators in various regions in Koile-Syria: under Antiochos IV the Samaritans request the king's intervention in dealing with their meridarch,

¹⁴ G.G. Aperghis, *The Seleukid Royal Economy: The Finances and Financial Administration of the Seleukid Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 234. This was at least initially the case, although Seyrig points out that Demetrios I kept to the Attic standard in Koile-Syria during his reign. However, as Aperghis notes (*Royal Economy*, 234 n. 54), no matter what standard weight was chosen, it was done so to facilitate economic efficiency, which was the prime concern for the Seleukid kings.

¹⁵ Le Rider's assessment of the numismatic hoard data states that Ptolemaic coinage was not further circulated into other Seleukid provinces, meaning Koile-Syria was somewhat of a closed monetary zone (Georges Le Rider, "La politique monétaire des Séleucides en Coelé Syrie et en Phénicie après 200: Réflexions sur les monnaies d'argent lagides et sur les monnaies d'argent Seleukides à l'aigle", in *BCH* 119, no. 1 (1995): 401-403). However, it was not unusual for native-minted coins to circulate in addition to the royal currency, and other foreign coins also found their way into circulation through trade (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 64).

¹⁶ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 48.

Apollonios (Jos. *Ant.* 12.261); sometime during his short reign, Alexander Balas is said to have honoured Hasmonean leader Jonathan by granting him the positions of *strategos* and meridarch (1 Macc. 10.65).¹⁷

The Hefzibah Stele

Most notable, however, is the dossier of documents contained in the Hefzibah stele (SEG 41-1574) unearthed in 1960, approximately seven kilometres from Beit She'an (ancient Skythopolis).¹⁸ It contains correspondence from king Antiochos III responding to requests from his *strategos* and high priest, Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, relating to jurisdiction and activity in villages belonging to Ptolemaios.¹⁹ One particular complaint is that billeted soldiers were wreaking havoc, commandeering villagers' possessions without authorisation (lines 25-26). Billeting put significant pressure on the local populace, as soldiers were required to forage for their provisions, and the lush farmland of the Skythopolis region

¹⁷ It can also be inferred from the Maresha stele (further discussed in chapter 8) that one of the addressees, Diophanes, also held the position of meridarch, probably of Idumaia, where the stele was uncovered. He is portrayed as a civil administrator at a significant level of authority but still below that of the *strategos* (Dov Gera, *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics: 219 to 161 BCE* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 138-139; 145).

¹⁸ Y.H. Landau, "A Greek Inscription Found Near Hefzibah", *IEJ* 16, no. 1 (1966): 54. The stele was initially published by Landau, with a subsequent translation and comment by Thomas Fischer ("Zur Seleukideninschrift von Hefzibah", *ZPE* 33 (1979): 131-38) and J.M. Bertrand ("Sur l'inscription d'Hefzibah", *ZPE* 46 (1982): 167-174), which were then later revisited by Francis Piejko ("Antiochos III and Ptolemy son of Thraseas: the Inscription of Hefzibah Reconsidered", *AC* 60 (1991): 245-259). I have used Fischer's reconstruction (with Bertrand's additions) for reference here; the line numbering is slightly different to that in Landau.

¹⁹ Antiochos, son of Antiochos III, was co-regent with his father at this time and was involved in the decision-making here, where the complaint does not use the term "the Great", the appropriate epithet for Antiochos III following his victory over the Parthians. Although Antiochos III would have issued the final decision (Landau, 67), it does show that the junior Antiochos possessed some authority in the region following the Battle of Panion, in which he played a key role (Polyb. 16.18.5-10).

would have been a tempting target for those whom Smith terms “friendly swarms of locusts”.²⁰

Moreover, Ptolemaios feels the need to assert his rights over his villages to the exclusion of other administrators who wished to make use his lands (lines 23-27). However, he was not in a position to deal with them directly: he had to appeal to the king since his authority, it seems, did not extend that far.²¹ In response to Ptolemaios’ request, Antiochos addresses a number of individuals in charge of areas of administration separate to that controlled by the *strategos*, informing our understanding of the Seleukid network. Kleon and Heliodoros are clearly addressed as *dioikētai* (line 4), with authority over *oikonomoi* (lines 12-14), and separate to them are the *phrourarchoi* (garrison commanders) “and those in charge of the *topoi*” ([καὶ τοὺς ἐ]πι τῶν τόπων; lines 15-17).

There is some debate as to whether *topos* here is a technical administrative term or whether it is simply a useful word in the context, denoting a general geographic area, and therefore whether “those in charge of the *topoi*” refers to an official title or more broadly to “whoever is in charge of the areas in question, and they know who they are”. Bertrand takes issue with Bengtson’s statement that *topos* holds a “technical meaning” and points to similar

²⁰ Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1987), 48; cf. Piejko, 257-58. Billeting was also an ongoing issue for the Ptolemies. Aside from the problem of foraging, there could be further, perhaps unforeseen, consequences. *P. Berlin* 11306, 11307 and 11309, from the second century BCE, reveal a family conflict wherein the mother of a certain Esoroeris leaves her husband for the Greek soldier billeted with her son. Esoroeris complains to the *strategos*, Santobithys, that this soldier, Neoptolemos, picked a fight with him, and damaged him and his house; his mother counter-sues.

²¹ Landau, 66-7; cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 279. Piejko suggest that “*strategos* and high priest” may have been a more ceremonial role, hence he was required to petition the king on these matters (Piejko, 255), but it seems more likely that a Ptolemaic model, which saw a separation of financial and civil administrative departments, would have endured in Koile-Syria and necessitated Ptolemaios’ petitioning the king to compel the *dioikētai* and others to act.

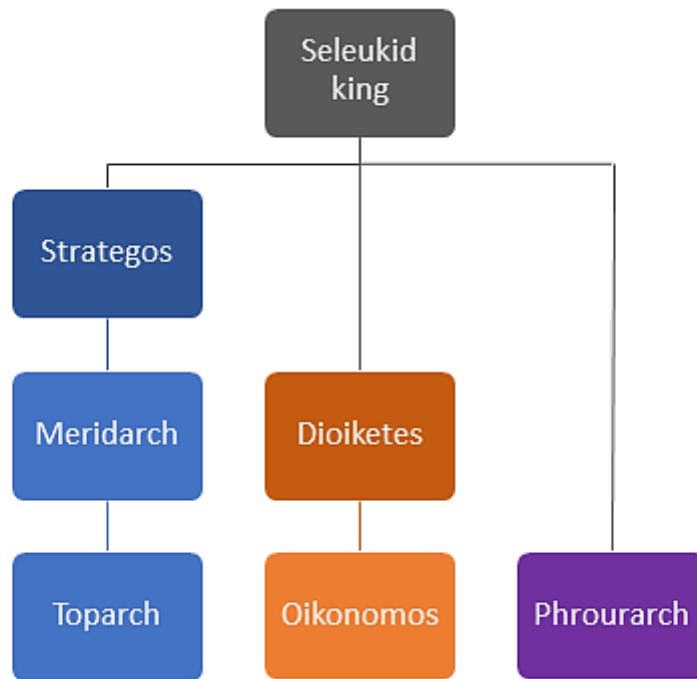


Figure 2 – Seleukid administrative hierarchy in Koile-Syria

references to *topoi* in various documents where he says this term cannot logically denote an administrative unit: Ptolemaios clearly had his own administrators in charge of his estates (line 13), and that is who is referred to here.²²

However, Aperghis notes the officials here appear to be separate from both the *oikonomos* (line 14) and the *phrourarchoi* (line 16), and there is no hint of “my” in relation to either the officials or the land they oversee;²³ indeed, there appears to be a dichotomy drawn between Ptolemaios’ land and “the other villages” ([τῶν] ἄλλων κωμῶ[ν]; line 14). No matter what the case, the fact remains that *topos* is a flexible word and, as administration differed from one region to the next, so too the specificity of language could be stronger or weaker.

From all this information a general understanding of the administrative structure of Seleukid Koile-Syria can be established (see Figure 2). Unlike the Ptolemies, for whom the nome was

²² Bertrand, 170-71.

²³ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 270 n. 14. Landau agrees that the documents appear to be referring to district commanders or governors (Landau, 69-70).

the basic unit of administration, the Seleukids followed more closely the Achaemenid satrapal model and also divided their land into satrapies, though they were governed by a *strategos*, a military role that developed into a civil administrative role as the region stabilised.²⁴ In the early years of Seleukid Koile-Syria, this post was filled by Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, who had been a military commander under the Ptolemies before his defection during the Fifth Syrian War.²⁵ He is referred to (and refers to himself) as *strategos* and high priest over Syria and Phoenicia in both the Hefzibah stele and a dedicatory inscription unearthed in Soloi, in the district of Kilikia (*OGIS* 230).²⁶ But it must be understood that these two roles are separate; subsequent *strategoi* do not seem to have held the double title, and the district high priesthood is only later rejuvenated under Seleukos IV (see chapter 8 below).

Beneath the *strategos* in civil authority appears to be the meridarch, as discussed above. Bickerman posits the division of Koile-Syria into *merides* such as Samaria (including Judea),

²⁴ This was likewise true of early Ptolemaic rule in Egypt (Bagnall, 215, 251; cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt).

²⁵ Ptolemaios is briefly mentioned as one of the men in charge of the Ptolemaic phalanx in the lead-up to the Battle of Raphia in 219 BCE (Polyb. 5.65.3). His absence from the account of the battle itself has led to conjecture that Ptolemaios defected in the interim, however he may simply have been omitted from Polybius' account for brevity's sake (Gera, 30-31).

²⁶ Thraseas, Ptolemaios' father, himself appears in two inscriptions. The first, from Arsinoe, also in Kilikia, names him *strategos* there following the tenure of that position by his father, Aetos (*SEG* 39-1426; C.P. Jones and C. Habicht, "A Hellenistic Inscription from Arsinoe in Cilicia" *Pho.* 43, no. 4 (1989): 319-320; lines 19-20, 24-25). This familial association goes to explaining Ptolemaios' own interest in the area. Secondly, a statue dedication from Tyre describes Thraseas as *strategos* of Syria and Phoenicia under Ptolemy IV Philopator (*SEG* 56-1881; Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, "Inscriptions et toponymes hellénistique de Phénicie", *SE* 19 (2006): 101-105). From this data, it therefore it seems likely that Ptolemaios would have likewise followed in his father's footsteps. He may well have already been *strategos* and/or high priest in Syria and Phoenicia under the Ptolemies and was allowed by Antiochos III to retain these positions as rewards for his loyalty (cf. Gera, 33-34). The estates mentioned in the Hefzibah stele also appear to be a gift from the king, assigned to Ptolemaios from royal land (line 24), whether or not he previously held land in this area under the Ptolemies (Landau, 66 n. 14). The king, of course, still retained authority over this land, as the petition makes clear.

and then further subdivision into toparchies.²⁷ However, there is no clear information as to the precise nature of this intermediate administrative division. A possible resolution is suggested by Aperghis, who suggests that the Ptolemaic hyparchy of Syria and Phoenicia, on its capture by Antiochos III, was too large a unit for the Seleukid model and may have required further division for effective administration. Thus the meridarchy was introduced, containing smaller divisions named *topoi* (as a technical term), rather than hyparchies, to avoid confusion.²⁸

At least early on in the history of Seleukid Koile-Syria, the royal financial department continued many aspects of the previous Ptolemaic system. Still running parallel to but not answerable to the civil administration, it consisted of a plurality of *dioikētai*,²⁹ each heading their own financial administrative region, with subordinate *oikonomoi* overseeing the finances of smaller divisions.³⁰ Again there is an overlap between departments: the *oikonomoi* seem to be on the same hierarchical level as the toparchs, as they are seen to be collaborating in line 14 of the Hefzibah stele. The same could be said of the phrourarchs, who with the toparchs are requested to work together to ensure the safety of Ptolemaios' estates (line 16). There does not appear to be a hierarchy in the garrison department as such. As with the Ptolemaic system, this division of power helped to check the influence of any one department: if a *strategos* were to revolt, he would be limited in access to both finance and military manpower, and therefore could only do limited damage.³¹

²⁷ Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 123.

²⁸ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 271.

²⁹ The evidence for this in the Hefzibah stele is noted above (cf. Piejko, 249).

³⁰ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 272.

³¹ Bagnall, 249-50.

There is some debate as to the precise role of the *oikonomos* and the extent of their powers, and whether the role is later superseded by the *epi tōn prosodōn* (“in charge of the revenues”) or whether *epi tōn prosodōn* is another name for the *dioikētes*.³² But it must be borne in mind that Hellenistic administrative structures, and even individual administrative roles, were adapted and modified to suit the changing needs of the district or as internal and external circumstances altered over time.³³ One clear example is that the Ptolemaic province name “Syria and Phoenicia” continued into the early years of Seleukid rule but changed as Seleukid dominance became established: Ptolemaios’ title changes from “*strategos* in Syria and Phoenicia” in the Hefzibah stele (τὸν ἐν Σ[υρ]ίαι καὶ Φ[ο]ινίκῃ [σ]τρατηγόν; lines 15-16) to “*strategos* and high priest of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia” in the Soloi inscription (στραταγὸς καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς Συρίας Κοίλας καὶ Φοινίκας).³⁴

The administrative model conjectured here would not have remained so for the duration of Seleukid rule in Koile-Syria, nor would it have necessarily been the system used in other areas of the empire. Indeed, customised administrative approaches sometimes led to increased independence and pretenders carving out their own autonomous kingdoms, such

³² Aperghis gives a summary of the variety of positions on this issue, and posits the idea that the titles of *dioikētes* and *epi tōn prosodōn* were interchangeable (*Royal Economy*, 280, 280 n. 41; so also Bengston (Bagnall, 248); cf. Piejko, 255).

³³ A prime example of this is the *strategos*. Indeed, the Achaemenid satrap had wide-ranging powers from levying troops to collecting taxes, demonstrating the kind of administrative role the *strategos* would later fill (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 46-47).

³⁴ Landau suggests there is further significance to the language used in these contexts: that while military activity continued in the region in order to establish Seleukid dominance, Ptolemaios was “*strategos* in”, but became “*strategos* of” once his role became more straightforwardly administrative (Landau, 66). This may be a possibility since Ptolemaios’ role certainly would have changed during this time, but whether the language change is a function of this fact or simply different uses for different occasions cannot be ascertained.

as Achaeus in the western Taurus region (Polyb. 4.48).³⁵ But whatever the model, civil and financial leaderships in all regions were motivated by the underlying policy of maximising income and a desire not to disrupt already existing revenue streams. This of course depended very much on their interaction with the local inhabitants and leadership systems.

Summary

The Seleukids exercised a policy of continuation with previous administrations as they had to deal with issues of empire. They were also committed to maintaining regional stability in order to maximise their income. In the case of Koile-Syria, early coins demonstrate continuity in weight and circulation of Ptolemaic coins, and the old Ptolemaic name of the region persisted in the early years of Seleukid rule. The Seleukids followed the Ptolemies in governing via a departmentalised hierarchical administrative system that separated financial from other civil departments, however they also closely mirrored the Persian Achaemenid dynasty through their division of land into satrapies governed by a strategos. However, administrative structures could differ depending on the changing needs of time and place.

³⁵ The satrap subsequently re-emerged as a more overarching and powerful role, leading to more independent satrapies and an even more decentralised administration (Bagnall, 247-251). Hengel opines that this “federal” form of government was always a model of Seleukid government, even throughout Antiochos III’s administrative reforms (Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1980), 44). Thus the unity or otherwise of territories within the Seleukid empire seems to have fluctuated between the territories at various points in time and depending on the nature of royal leadership.

A View from the Top

Seleukid kings were eager to appear as legitimate successors to the previous Persian and Ptolemaic administrations in order to encourage support from their subjects and ensure a smooth transition free from uprisings. It was important that right dealings with the local populace and also with the gods were not only done but also seen to be done, hence the value of stelae such as that from Hefzibah mentioned above in chapter 2. Here, there was a twofold function of displaying the chain of official correspondence. Firstly, it served as a permanent record of the orders given by the king for future reference. Secondly, it was propaganda. Aside from underlining Ptolemaios' zeal for the people and land under his authority, the stele was a physical manifestation of the king's desire, and moreover ability, to exercise justice in Seleukid territory through his effective administration.

Another prime example of this dual information/propaganda function can be seen in the Maresha stele.¹ Following some preliminary letters indicating directions proceeding through the administrative chain of command, the *prostagma* from king Seleukos IV goes to great length regarding the qualifications of Olympiodoros, the man he has selected to preside over all temples in the regions of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia: his good character, loyalty to the

¹ Probably since the stele was at that time of unknown provenance, it was initially named the Heliodoros stele, after the principal party referred to in the documents, when the majority section was first published (Hannah M. Cotton and Michael Wörrle, "Seleukos IV and Heliodoros: a New Dossier of Royal Correspondence from Israel", *ZPE* 159 (2007): 205). Further pieces were discovered by amateur archaeologists a few years later (Ian Stern, "Maresha Inscriptions Provide Context for a Royal Stele in the Israel Museum", *NEA* 72, no. 1 (2009), 60), and the entirety of the letter from Seleukos IV contained in the stele was then published along with a commentary (Gera, "Olympiodoros", 125-155; see also the further comments by Christopher P. Jones, "The Inscription from Tel Maresha for Olympiodoros", *ZPE* 171 (2009): 100-104).

Crown and general aptitude (lines 27-39). But this emphasis on Olympiodoros' ability to perform his duties is not only for the information of Heliodoros, Dorymenes or Diophanes (the other recipients listed); it is for the reassurance of the wider public. Seleukos IV closely links the concepts of national security and piety (lines 14-20), portraying himself as a king who has these dual concerns uppermost in his considerations when dealing with Koile-Syria, and fosters this sentiment in his subordinates.² They can be trusted to ensure the safety of the community, and they are worth supporting over any factions from either inside or outside the empire's borders.

Piety was a particularly important character trait for a ruler. His participation in and support of the various cults throughout his land marked him out as a good and legitimate king, concepts that were very important for the Seleukids as they took control of land that had not previously been theirs. For example, Antiochus I's rebuilding of temples in Borsippa and Babylon was a demonstration not only of his upright character, but was in effect a statement of continuity with the previous Achaemenid government to further cement his claims to the throne.³ Honigman suggests that this royal ideology even seeps into the thought world of the writer of 2 Maccabees, where the relative spiritual wellbeing, and therefore stability, of the nation has a direct correlation with whether the foreign king and the local priesthood together fulfil their obligations; the former by allowing the Jews to continue to practice Torah, and the latter by committing wholeheartedly to Torah observance.⁴

² Cotton and Wörrle, 196.

³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 38-39. Bickerman further notes that Persian kings often engaged in the cults of other people-groups within their borders to ensure the good favour of all the gods (Bickerman, *Studies*, 69).

⁴ Sylvie Honigman, "King and Temple in 2 Maccabees: The Case for Continuity" in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 117-118. A symptom of the perceived national sickness in Jerusalem was the priests' neglecting their duties so they had more time at the gymnasium (2 Macc. 4.13-17).

Seleukid Rulers and the Priesthood

In this regard, from a Jewish perspective, Antiochos III provided a good example of a more ideal king-temple relationship in his edicts concerning Jerusalem following his victory at Panion, as described by Josephus (*Ant.* 12.132-153).⁵ In his items of correspondence with Ptolemaios and Zeuxis, his *strategoi*, Antiochos states clearly his intention that the Jews are to live according to their own laws (ss 142, 151). However, in these documents is the underlying impetus behind the king's extensions of beneficence: a desire for a mutual recognition of piety and loyalty (ss 138-140, 150). Even as he praises the Jews because he appreciates these character traits in them, he portrays himself as likewise pious and loyal, rebuilding temples and remaining consistent when dealing with his people.

There was no separation between religion and politics; the two were inexorably linked, the more so as priesthoods of the ancient Near East constituted part of the local elite.⁶ This was especially true of Jerusalem. Through his letter to Ptolemaios cited in Josephus, it is clear that Antiochos is courting the support of the Jerusalem priesthood by extending to them the benefits not only of repairs to their temple, but also tax breaks for “the *gerousia*, the priests, the scribes of the temple and the temple singers” (ἡ γερουσία καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἱ ἱεροψαλταί; ss 142-3). These concessions are as much as one would expect in similar situations,⁷ but there is also a separate official letter, outlining

⁵ Although there was significant mistrust placed on the reliability of Josephus (both in general and in these sections in particular), Bickerman argues for their acceptance along comparative linguistic lines with other sources (*Studies*, 24-28, 35-37). Gera (“Olympiodoros”, 147) and Grabbe agree, Grabbe noting there may have been some alteration for stylistic purposes, but the edict remains essentially authentic (“Hyparchs”, 83).

⁶ Bickerman, *Studies*, 59.

⁷ For example, Teos, on the Ionian coast, received even better concessions from Antiochos III in relation to their rebuilding (Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 43; cf. Dov Gera, citing Bickerman, “The Seleukid Road towards the Religious Persecution of the Jews” in *La Mémoire des Persécutions: Autour des livres des Maccabées*, ed. Marie-Françoise Baslez and Olivier Munnich (Paris: Peeters, 2014), 25).

prohibitions on certain goods and restrictions in temple and city access (ss 145-6) that seem likely to be the result of negotiations between the priesthood and the royal administration.⁸

From a political standpoint, it was very important for Antiochos III, and subsequent Seleukid rulers, to maintain the loyalty and cooperation initially received from the Judean people during the conflict over Koile-Syria with Ptolemy V, and in particular the Jerusalem priesthood. As part of the local aristocracy, they were a political unit that held the potential for defection to the Ptolemies, or even independent revolution, and thereby the loss of an important agricultural and strategic location, not to mention a loss of prestige.⁹ Even as the Jews had rejected government by the Ptolemies in support of the Seleukids, so there was still a danger they may defect again.¹⁰ Therefore maintenance of local traditions and privileges, and retaining the priesthood in its central position, was an ideal method of ensuring regional support and stability.¹¹

⁸ This is suggested by such phrases as “in accordance with the laws of the country” (ἐθιμον κατὰ τὸν πάτριον νόμον) and “sacrificial animals known to their ancestors” (τοῖς προγονικοῖς θύμασιν; s 146), which imply a partially informed knowledge of the traditions involved. Similar phrases are used in the letter to Ptolemaios (ss 140, 142), however involvement by the priesthood is more evident in the separate letter: not only is there emphasis on the sanctity of the temple and (in lesser part) the city, but in particular the constraints regarding certain animals in the city would have significantly restricted trade, a policy that is unlikely to have come from a Seleukid administration that was focussed on maximised revenue (Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 43).

⁹ M. M. Austin, “Hellenistic Kings, War and the Economy”, *CQ* 36, no. 2 (1986): 461; cf. Honigman, 122.

¹⁰ It seems that the Judeans’ decision to shift their loyalties came when it became clear that Antiochos III would conquer the whole of Koile-Syria, based on his victories over the Ptolemies elsewhere in the region (Jos. *Ant.* 12.132-3). Evidently, it was considered more prudent and advantageous to be found on the side of the ultimate victors (cf. Grabbe, “Hyparchs”, 83).

¹¹ Eveline van der Steen, “Empires and Farmers” in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 217; cf. Gera. “Seleukid Road”, 25-26. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt further state that maintenance of the status quo in newly conquered territories was common practice even before Antiochos III (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 226).

This was not an unusual method of managing interparty relationships, as decrees between kings and native populations from all over the Hellenistic empires – and even preceding regimes – attest. Treaties and edicts were negotiated and established on conquest, and were reviewed on a new king's accession, although there was likely to be little change as consistency with a pre-existing status was preferred.¹² There is a correlation here with the relationship a Hellenistic king was supposed to have with the members of his court (named his Friends). The ideal king was generous, a source of wealth and privilege for his trusted supporters, which in turn ensured the Friends' loyalty. But there was also an implicit uncertainty: the Friends had to maintain the goodwill of the king lest they lose their privileges, and the king had to placate the Friends lest they defect.¹³ For both court and regional politics, there was a tentative balance between generosity and economics, loyalty and exploitation. On the one hand support was very important, but on the other the needs of the empire still had to be prioritised, whether over a Friend's influence and ability or a region's revenue production.

Seleukid Rulers and the Locals

But there was a further need for good relations with the local elite: they were an important locus of interaction between the Hellenistic government and the lower echelons of the population, since the commingling of these two groups was fairly minimal. Separation was initially because of the Greeks' identity as conquering foreigners, but it was maintained as they formed themselves into a political elite. Under the Seleukids, as under the

¹² See, for example, chapter 3 note 9 above; cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 41-42, 51-52.

¹³ As Austin points out, this took its toll economically, as more and more wealth was needed to disseminate to loyal Friends (and to reward one over another), and also to appear prosperous to reassure Friends of the stability of their privileges and source of wealth (Austin, 462-63).

Achaemenids, division was thus primarily along socio-economic lines, as Sherwin-White and Kuhrt explain,¹⁴ but ethnicity was still a contributing element.

In Ptolemaic Egypt, there were certainly instances of (primarily Greek-speaking) locals in the upper echelons of administration.¹⁵ But in this sphere too separation along hierarchical lines often involved ethnic differences simply because of the king's political tactics. As seen above in chapter 2, in relation to Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, higher administrative ranks were often granted as rewards to loyal individuals, in particular military commanders, and these were almost invariably other Greeks. Moreover, administrative ranks could become hereditary offices, even if this involved relocation to a different region,¹⁶ again perpetuating Greek dominance of the upper echelons.

As previously mentioned, there are far more extant sources for the Ptolemies than for the Seleukids, so the extent to which Koile-Syria conformed to this pattern is unknown, although there would be some similarities with the situation Egypt due to their common Ptolemaic history and the fact that both Seleukids and Ptolemies drew to a large extent from the existing Achaemenid policies. Certainly knowledge of the Greek language was an important part of Seleukid administration simply because administrative procedures between senior levels of departments was smoother without the need for interpretation. Greek was also a

¹⁴ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 186.

¹⁵ Lester L. Grabbe, *History*, 169.

¹⁶ See chapter 2 note 27 above; cf. Tcherikover and Fuks, 19. Ptolemaios became *strategos* in Koile-Syria rather than Kilikia since the Ptolemies lost that region to Antiochos II in the Second Syrian War (H. Heinen, "The Syrian-Egyptian Wars and the New Kingdoms of Asia Minor" in *CAH* 7/1, 418-419). Also during this period, Athenians Chremonides and Glaukon are said to have continued high-ranking careers in the Egyptian court following an unsuccessful anti-Macedonian coup that was backed by Ptolemy II (F.W. Walbank, "Macedonia and Greece" in *CAH* 7/1, 240).

common denominator that could draw them together but, at the same time, could set them apart from the local population.¹⁷

The Greeks and the Greek-Speakers

However, when there was a need for interpretation, for example when interacting with local officials, problems could arise if members of the higher echelons of Greek government remained in cultural isolation and monolingualism. Even though there are no recorded complaints about language differences in administrative procedures, it remained an obstacle to smooth governance.¹⁸ This was certainly an issue in some areas of the Hellenistic empires, particularly Asia Minor and the Ptolemaic capital of Alexandria, and probably also existed for individuals.¹⁹ But there was always a solution to be found by the enterprising administrator. For example, a document from second century BCE Thebes illustrates how a bilingual *topogrammateus* named Pchorchônsis acted as intermediary and interpreter between two monolingual officials: Ismouthes, a *komogrammateus* with no knowledge of Greek; and Dionysios, a vice-thebarch with no knowledge of demotic (UPZ 2.218). Aside from personal arrangements such as this, communication between monolingual parties could also be facilitated by interpreters.²⁰

¹⁷ Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 53, 55-56; cf. Lester L. Grabbe, "The Jews and Hellenisation: Hengel and His Critics" in *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture*, ed. Philip R. Davies and John M. Halligan (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 62-63.

¹⁸ Willy Peremans, "Le Bilinguisme dans les Relations Gréco-égyptienne sous les Lagides" in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 24-26 May 1982*, ed. E. van 't Dack, P. van Dessel and W. van Gucht (Leuven: Orientaliste, 1983), 272, 280.

¹⁹ Due to a lack of evidence, it is impossible to determine with any certainty the extent of monolingualism or otherwise in the Seleukid administration, and it may well be the case that there were many Greek officials who also spoke Aramaic (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 148).

²⁰ Peremans, 268-9; cf. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 76.

Bilingualism was evidently advantageous for the Greek official, particularly since other languages – such as Aramaic in Seleukid lands – were still widely used.²¹ Likewise, members of the local Judean administration also found that bilingualism could be a very useful asset in furthering their own careers. Their understanding of both Judean language and culture, and Greek language and culture, even if it were only on a superficial working level, meant they were in an ideal position to provide a useful administrative nexus between the two. Thus knowledge of Greek, and even a Greek education, became important for any family who wished to advance politically.

There is not space here to examine the complicated and long-debated issue of Hellenisation in Judea, starting with Bickerman's work and built upon most famously by Hengel, as noted in chapter 1. The relationship between these two cultures is quite complex, and the amount of appropriation by Judeans of Greek ways – from language use and personal names, to education and entertainment (e.g. theatres and gymnasia) – varied from place to place and even from person to person, resulting in very much a *sui generis* mix.²² For example, both native and foreign scholars learned the other's language in order to better engage with a different worldview, and Greek names were freely used and appear in the camps of Seleukid supporters and Maccabean revolutionaries alike.²³ Judeans were not afraid to engage with Hellenism and did not see it as compromising their own culture and beliefs.²⁴ Rather, it was a useful tool to further their own personal, philosophical or political ends.

²¹ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 50, 144-145.

²² Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 55; cf. Honigman, 105.

²³ Peremans, 254, 263; Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 62, 115.

²⁴ Grabbe, "Hellenisation", 56-7 (following Hengel). Phoenicia provides an excellent example of a region that felt free to embrace Hellenism yet still retained their own vibrant native culture (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 147; cf. Grabbe, "Hellenisation", 61). That the Jews felt that they too could positively engage Hellenism without the risk of losing their cultural identity would be unsurprising, however it does reveal the motives behind the

This ability to have a foot in both cultural camps was very useful for the Seleukid officials, who employed bilingual agents (individually and as members of pre-existing local administrative structures) to ensure political and economic stability in the region. Moreover, for those at the top of local politics – for example, in Jerusalem – it was important to be able to interact with, and remain on good terms with, their Seleukid administrative superiors. But it also opened up many possibilities for the aspirationally-minded individual: knowledge of Greek could be the key to upward mobility on the rungs of local leadership, opening the door to greater wealth and prestige. One of the most obvious administrative roles for a local with knowledge of both Aramaic and Greek would be as a translator,²⁵ but the largest returns could be gained through involvement in the taxation system.

Summary

To effectively control Koile-Syria, the relationship of the Seleukid rulers with the people of Jerusalem depended on their interaction with the local aristocracy, in particular the priesthood. As the region's political elite, they had the potential to defect or revolt, and so had to be placated and encouraged in their loyalty with concessions such as tax breaks and retention of prestigious positions and local traditions. As an integral part of local politics, the priesthood also provided a useful link between the local people and the upper echelons of Hellenistic administration, which provided mutual benefits: for the Seleukids, smooth administration and increased revenue; for the priesthood, increased wealth and prestige.

Maccabean rebellion to be more complex than the simple binary of “pro-Greeks versus anti-Greeks” that appears to underlie 1 and 2 Maccabees.

²⁵ Smith follows Bickerman in suggesting that all levels of society would have had access to someone familiar enough with Greek to be able to draft official documents and requests (Smith, 52). Greek was often used in these cases (see, for example, the will of *P. Berlin* 13501 and the official complaint of *P. Berlin* 11307), however a large percentage of local administration (including documentation) was still carried out in Aramaic and administered by local authorities (van der Steen, 215).

Chapter 4 – Taxation

Maximised revenue was required from every region of the Seleukid empire in order to fund the continuing expansion and maintenance of the empire. Conquest obtained land for exploitation in order to fund further conquest in an endless cycle. Judea's significance was in its strategic value and, economically, in its agricultural output.¹ Trade in this region was minimal and restricted mainly to the local area, as it was too far inland to benefit from the large commercial trading ports in the coastal regions of Phoenicia and Palestine, where the majority of trade was concentrated (and, consequently, the majority of coin production).² Therefore, state income for Judea was obtained principally through the imposition of a large variety of taxes focusing on agriculture, such as sales taxes and tolls, and taxes on ingoings and outgoings, but also from per capita taxes such as poll taxes and salt taxes.³

This large variety ensured all possible opportunities for revenue generation were covered, but it also had further benefits. In the first place, spreading a wide net could ensure that state income was more or less assured despite tangible losses, such as the failure of a certain

¹ G.G. Aperghis, "Jewish Subjects and Seleukid Kings: A Case Study of Economic Interaction" in *The Economies of Hellenistic Societies: Third to First Century BC*, ed. Zosia H. Archibald et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21.

² Berlin, 4; cf. Rappaport, 31. Although trade to and from Jerusalem would have been greatly limited by its distance from trade routes and the high cost of transporting goods overland, there still would have been scope for trade in specialised products and more lightweight luxury items, as the sale price of such goods would compensate for the cost in transportation (Aperghis, 74).

³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 68. The Ptolemaic government imposed a vast amount of taxes including, apart from those already mentioned, pasture tax, police tax, medical tax, and more (Bagnall, 6). Further papyri mention a ferry tax (*CPJ* I 55-60), a fishing tax (*CPJ* I 61-63), and taxes on crafts such as dyeing (*CPJ* I 65) and shoemaking (*CPJ* I 66-68). It is unlikely that the Seleukids would have differed greatly from this tendency to tax everything they possibly could, though there would have been differences from region to region. For example, the limited pasturage in Judea (which was mostly given over to agricultural production of grain and fruit) would have meant a pasture tax would not have been a useful imposition.

crop or the loss of territory containing a valuable asset (for example, the loss of the silver mines in Asia Minor following the Peace of Apamea in 188 BCE),⁴ or in the case of inefficient administration in tax collection.

Secondly, Hellenistic kings were prone to extending tax exemptions, among other benefits, to ensure and reward a people's loyalty, and to be seen to be generous. But the large number of taxes in place meant that the absence of a handful would not negatively impact the region's income. Further, exemptions could also bolster the economy of newly-acquired territory, as the temporary relief would aid the locals in rebuilding their infrastructure. For example, although Antiochos III's decree regarding Jerusalem (*Jos. Ant.* 12.138-144) extends tax exemptions over several items, they do not include taxes on agricultural produce or sales taxes at market, which provided the bulk of Judea's revenue. Moreover, Antiochos also provides for reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple's stoas (commercial porticoes) in order to have the city producing revenue earlier (s 141).⁵

The Seleukid taxation system was based on the exchange of silver, moving away from taxation in kind, which persisted from the period of Achaemenid rule through to the

⁴ Appian, *Syr.* 38-39; cf. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 46.

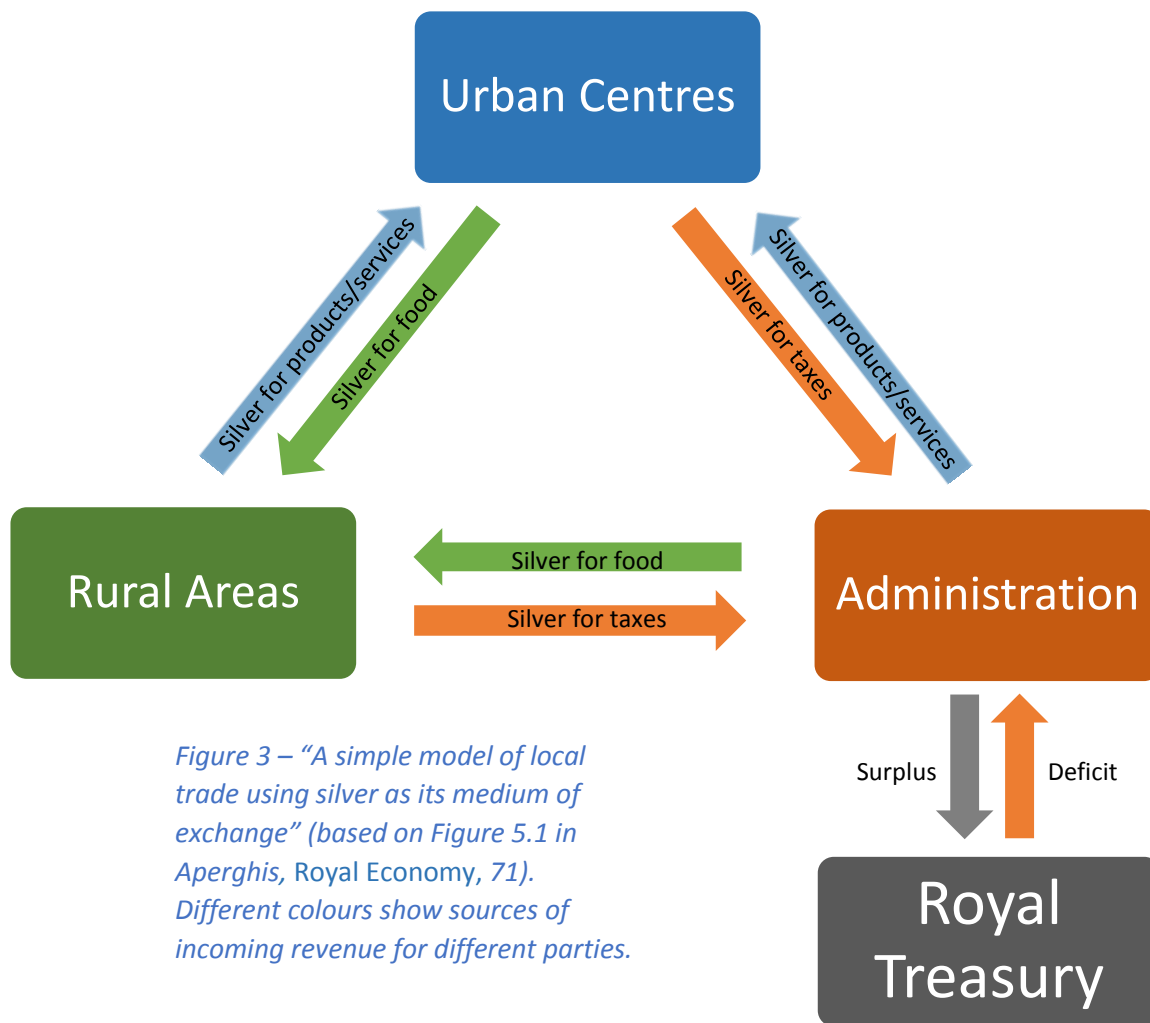
⁵ Tax exemptions by Hellenistic rulers were often only for a certain amount of years, such as three in the case of Jerusalem (*Jos. Ant.* 12.143), or four and ten years (for different taxes) in the case of Teos ca. 300 BCE (cited in M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic world from Alexander to the Roman conquest: A selection of ancient sources in translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 176-77, no. 99). However, these privileges could over time come to be understood as perpetual rights for the city, as they did for Jerusalem (1 Macc. 10.29; 11.35), and already were for the ancient Babylonian towns of Babylon, Nippur and Sippar, which enjoyed a tradition of taxation exemptions granted to them by the king (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 52; cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 168). See chapter 5 below for a deeper investigation into city revenue and the role of the temple in city administration, including taxation.

Ptolemies.⁶ Silver was the means by which payments were made for rural commodities by cities and the Seleukid administration, for certain goods and services produced by the urban centres to the administration and rural workers, and the means by which taxes were paid. Any downturn in revenue could be supplemented by the royal treasury, and by that same token the treasury was also the beneficiary of any surpluses, the accumulation of which was of course the principal aim of the local administration (see Figure 3).

Silver was seen to be a great facilitator of economic streamlining, particularly in light of the great variety of taxes that could be imposed. The decree of Antiochos III cited in Josephus (*Ant.* 12.132-153), mentioned above in chapter 3, refers to several tax exemptions granted to members of the temple elite and for the reconstruction of the temple, giving some insight into the types of payments required under the Seleukids. Specifically mentioned here are tolls on material required for reconstruction of the temple, in particular timber (ss 141-142); poll taxes, a crown tax and salt tax (s 143). Here payment in kind would have been infeasible, particularly in terms of collection and warehousing of construction material; silver was a far more practical and widely reusable solution.⁷

⁶ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 177; Roger S. Bagnall and Peter Derow, eds., "Appendix I: Ptolemaic Administration" in *The Hellenistic Period: Historical Sources in Translation* (Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 287.

⁷ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 177.



Indeed, the crown tax became monetised quite early in its development as a source of state revenue, probably due to its already long standing. Like many Hellenistic administrative practices, the crown tax was adapted from a pre-existing Achaemenid model and was a concept in widespread use throughout the Mediterranean world. Initially taking the form of a golden wreath that was donated by a city to their royal benefactor, over time it instead became a comparable cash amount, and rather than being a voluntary gift, it transitioned to an expected source of revenue administered by Seleukid financial representatives.⁸

⁸ For example, from a letter among the documents in the Zenon archive we are told that the inhabitants of Halikarnassos donated the sum of 3000 drachmas as a “crown” to the Ptolemaic king (ὁ στέφανος τῷ βασιλεῖ; *P. Cair. Zen.* I 59036, line 27), which demonstrates that at least here monetisation of the “crown” pre-dates its enforcement as a regular payment. In the Antiochos III decree, it is described as a form of tribute (φόρου), but in 1 Macc. 10.29 these terms are separated (τῶν φόρων... καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν στεφάνων), likewise in *Jos. Ant.* 13.49

Monopolies: the Head Tax and Salt Tax

Calculated through census information of adults in the region, taxes applied on a per capita basis – particularly poll taxes and taxes on monopolised goods – also provided a steady stream of income for the state, as they derived revenue from two constants: people's continued existence and their perpetual need for certain staple supplies. A poll tax was simply a tax per adult member of the population, but in Jerusalem there appears to have been multiple different levels or different kinds indicated by the use of the plural in the Josephus passage (τῆς κεφαλῆς τελοῦσι; s 143).⁹ However, whether it depended on someone's gender, their socio-economic status, their profession, agreements under previous administrations, or a mixture of these is unknown.

State monopolies were also an excellent source of assured income, and under the Ptolemies there is evidence for state control over staples such as linen, beer and other commodities, particularly oil.¹⁰ *P. Revenue Laws* demonstrates a closely integrated supervision of multiple levels of Ptolemaic financial officials as well as tax farmers (who will be examined more closely below) over the oil production process. To ensure sole control by the state, administrators were involved in every step, from distribution of seed (col. 43), sowing (col. 41) and preparations for harvest (col. 42), to oil production (cols. 44-51), and sale and trade (cols. 47-48, 51-54). Imports were restricted and monitored (col. 54), and any importer

(τοὺς φόρους... καὶ τῶν στεφάνων). This could denote a change of policy from one payment to two, or may simply be a different use of terminology (cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 164; Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 126).

⁹ Wider Judea is not taken into consideration in Antiochos III's decree here, apart from references in relation to the Jews' ability to rule themselves under Torah, as a whole *ethnos*, and where Jerusalem serves as the representative city for the region in terms of the crown tax (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 164, 167).

¹⁰ Bagnall, 6-7. Like salt, oil was particularly important for its wide variety of uses: in lighting, cosmetics and in food (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 61), and the Ptolemaic monopoly over its production included all kinds of oil-producing plants in the region, such as sesame, flax and the castor oil plant (*P. Revenue Laws*, cols 39-40).

was required to obtain special permission and pay further duties (col. 52). Here tax farmers also functioned as a sort of bailiff, collecting fines if an oil producer or official contravened their duties, and executing searches for illegal oil producers or contraband oil (cols. 55-56).

Another prime target for state monopolisation was salt, as it was one of the most important staples of the Near Eastern diet for both flavouring and food preservation, and was a substance for which there was no substitute.¹¹ As with the poll tax, different amounts were payable depending on gender and social position, as well as the economic policy of the individual Ptolemaic ruler. For example, tax receipts from Thebes during the reign of Ptolemy II show the salt tax was calculated at 1½ drachmas for a man and 1 drachma for a woman,¹² while under Ptolemy III Euergetes, it was 1 drachma or 4 obols for men and 3 obols for women and slaves.¹³

Exploitation of salt continued under the Seleukids in Koile-Syria (as is evident from the decree of Antiochos III mentioned above), even into the Hasmonean period, where exemption from the salt tax and crown tax is extended to all Jews and for perpetuity under Demetrios I (1 Macc. 10.29), a status maintained by his son Demetrios II (1 Macc. 11.35).¹⁴ Again, the precise nature of the salt tax is never stated, probably since it was widely known at the time, but several theories have been put forward. Bickerman has suggested it may

¹¹ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 67-8.

¹² Brian P. Muhs, *Tax Receipts, Taxpayers, and Taxes in Early Ptolemaic Thebes: Demotic and Greek Ostraca from the Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2005), 10.

¹³ Sometimes a precise amount is difficult to ascertain as the salt tax was collected with other taxes, and only the total amount is mentioned. Exemptions of certain people from the salt tax create further complications (John Shelton, "Notes on the Ptolemaic Salt Tax under Ptolemy III" in *ZPE* 71 (1988): 135).

¹⁴ The reigns of Demetrios I (161-150 BCE) and Demetrios II (147-139 and 130-125 BCE) are interposed by that of Alexander Balas (150-146 BCE). It is unlikely that Balas would have revoked the former charter laid down by Demetrios I, so it is more likely the decree under Demetrios II is simply a re-stating of the agreed terms of interaction between the Jews and Seleukids on the occasion of his accession to the throne.

have simply been another head tax, or perhaps “an obligation upon individuals to purchase a certain amount of salt at a fixed price from the state”.¹⁵ Aperghis agrees with this latter supposition but posits an additional sales tax, and it was this sales tax to which the exemptions attached.¹⁶ Whatever the case, the salt tax proved both a good source of stable revenue but also a prime candidate for exemptions from the Crown.

Tax Farming for Maximised Revenue

Rural lands provided by far the most revenue for the region of Judea through agricultural production of such commodities as grain, wine, fruit, dates and oil-producing plants.¹⁷ Indeed, the Hellenistic work of pseudo-Aristotle, *Oikonomika*, opines that revenue from agriculture was of primary importance for satrapal administration, over and above income from precious metals and markets, land and sales taxes, the poll taxes already mentioned, and taxes from industry (ps.-Ar. *Oec.* 2.1.4).¹⁸ Therefore farmers came under significant pressure by the state to maximise their yield, not only for the benefit of the empire but also for their own continued survival. Under the Ptolemies, crops produced by tenant farmers on royal land could be taxed by a third or even up to half their value, and vine growers could face taxes of a third or a half of their produce.¹⁹ So farmers had to produce and sell large

¹⁵ Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 126. Sale at a fixed price was employed in the Ptolemaic oil monopoly (*P. Revenue Laws*, col. 40), so that this might also apply in the case of salt seems likely.

¹⁶ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 155-56.

¹⁷ Ibid., 61, 151.

¹⁸ Agricultural commodities were principally grain (e.g. wheat, barley) and fruit crops (e.g. dates, wine). Since most available arable land was devoted to agriculture, animal husbandry was less significant and was limited to nomadic or semi-nomadic flocks, draft animals (probably shared by several farmers) and a few sheep or goats to provide a source of milk and wool (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 63-64).

¹⁹ The τρίτη (one-third) or the ἡμίσευμα (one-half) could be taken out as taxes from grape production. Further taxes also applied if they were grown on sacred land or clereuchies (Claire Préaux, *L'économie royale des Lagides* (Brussels: La fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1939), 134, 182).

quantities of commodities in order to pay taxes (these and others) and pay for their own daily requirements, as well as retaining enough for their own use.²⁰

Agriculture also provided further benefits to the administration and economy aside from simply taxation. For example, crown land supplied food for administrative personnel and the army, and provided income via sale of surplus, as well as revenue from the annual rent imposed on its tenant farmers.²¹ More generally, agricultural output from the countryside was necessary in order to feed the urban population, which in turn stimulated trade in the city marketplaces (see Figure 3). However, despite the fact that agriculture was this vital cog in the wheel of Judean economics, for the average person living in the countryside there was fairly minimal exposure to the Hellenistic government. Contact was limited essentially to tax collection by tax farmers, overseen by an *oikonomos* or an *epistatēs* (a city financial official) in larger population centres.²² Indeed, as long as the rate of taxation remained fairly consistent, there would have been little discernible difference from one regime to the next, particularly if tax collection was carried out by local agents.²³

²⁰ Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 73.

²¹ Although all territory technically belonged to the king as “spear-won land”, it was only over royal land that he exercised direct supervision. Other land was given over by the king to cities, temples, clereuchies, or as gifts to individuals, as in the case of Ptolemaios (see chapter 3 above). However, the king always retained the right to reclaim the land if he so wished (Bagnall, 5-6; cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 72, 88, 99-104).

²² Since it was conducted on a regional basis, supervision of the tax farming process fell to the *oikonomos* (G.M. Harper Jr., “Tax Contractors and their Relation to Tax Collection in Ptolemaic Egypt” in *Aeg.* 14, no. 1 (1934): 51; cf. Bagnall, 23-24). This is certainly true under the Ptolemies, but given the similarities of administrative hierarchies, it is probable this was also the case under the Seleukids. However, in the case of tax collection carried out by the Jerusalem temple (discussed in chapter 5), Seleukid supervision may have been effected by the *epistatēs*, whose financial role in the city included supervision of temple finances (Aperghis, 287, 295).

²³ Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 54; cf. van der Steen, 215.

In order to facilitate the tax collection process, Hellenistic governments made use of the tax farming system, wherein individuals or consortiums would bid at an annual auction for the rights to oversee the collection of taxes in certain regions. The benefit of this system to the upper administration lay in the assurance of receiving income: the tax farmers would underwrite the year's taxation with their own wealth and so bear the burden of any shortfall in tax collection, and at the same time receive some (though not all) of the benefits of any additional revenue.²⁴ The tax farmers would thus be eager ensure by any means necessary that the revenue was collected to meet the amount they had underwritten. The annual auction system also further limited any losses, as a contract could be passed on to a more competent subcontractor should the current one perform less than satisfactorily.

The precise method of tax collection in Koile-Syria is unfortunately unknown, as methods of tax collection varied from region to region. For example, in mainland Greece the tax farmers collected the taxes themselves,²⁵ while in Egypt proper, tax collectors were employed by the state but supervised closely by tax farmers, assisted by an *antigraphheus*.²⁶ The situation was somewhat different in Ptolemaic Syria and Phoenicia, however, and this system may have remained under the Seleukids. A report from the Zenon papyri illustrates tax farmers in

²⁴ Bagnall, 6; Harper, 49, 62. In the case of a consortium, a document from Elephantine during the reign of Ptolemy III (*P. Berlin* 13535 and 23677) shows the various members were further encouraged to meet their target through the additional incentive of having to pay a certain sum to the other members if they broke the agreement. These farmers – Horpaese son of Paoupet, Espemet son of Thotieu and Paret son of Pahor – were awarded the contract for collecting the salt tax and a tax on weavers.

²⁵ Grabbe, "Hyparchs", 78-9

²⁶ Harper, 54; Gera, *Judaea*, 54. However, this is not particularly clear-cut, as papyri from Egypt itself shows a blurring of distinctions between tax farmer and tax collector. Although certain individuals functioned as tax collectors, collecting taxes and delivering them to the royal banks, they are also referred to using the technical term for tax farmers (ἐξεληφώς) (*CPJ* I 90, 107), have partners like tax farmers (τῶν μετόχων; *CPJ* I 48), and are even addressed in letters with the formula used for tax farmers (*CPJ* I 107, 109-10) (Tcherikover and Fuks, 18).

Syria dealing directly with taxpayers (*P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59093; 5 59804), and the Tobiad Romance has Joseph personally collecting taxes from the cities of Askalon and Skythopolis (*Jos. Ant.* 12.181-4). It may in fact be the case that in certain places, even within the same region, tax farmers collected tax directly, and in others there was an intermediary tax collector. Whatever the case, tax farmers certainly sought to be intimately involved so they could guarantee their promised revenue.

Local Movers and Shakers

For the ambitious local Judean, tax farming thus provided them with the opportunity of lining their own pockets. Moreover, even though the position of tax farmer was not a particularly pleasant or popular one, they could still gain additional political power, both locally and among the Greek administrators.²⁷ As mentioned above, understanding both Aramaic and Greek languages and cultures, to a greater or lesser extent, was a great benefit to the Seleukid rulers to aid smooth administration. In relation to taxation, though, having a more intimate knowledge of their homeland compared to their Greek superiors also meant these local agents were in a better position to be able to accurately estimate the amount of tax that could be garnered from a region, and to estimate possible shortfalls and surpluses.²⁸ Thus they were able to obtain and retain a tax contract. Moreover, their local familiarity could enable them to make deals with local authorities and village heads,²⁹ and thereby gain an advantage over their competitors and further profit for themselves.

²⁷ Tcherikover and Fuks, 18-19.

²⁸ Harper, 61. This was of course also beneficial to the state, who could thereby ensure greater revenue (*Jos. Ant.* 12.177).

²⁹ van der Steen, 216.

In Jerusalem there were many who benefited from the taxation system, as it was the centre of trade and commerce, and they will be discussed further in the next chapter. But the clearest picture of how local authority figures interacted with Greek government can be seen in the Tobiads. Indeed, most information regarding tax farming in Judea comes from documents relating to them: the Tobiad Romance in Josephus (*Ant.* 12.160-236) and excerpts from the Zenon papyri. Although it must be noted that they were particularly active during the Ptolemaic regime,³⁰ it may well be the case that the situation under the Seleukids was much the same. Despite the issues of reliability in the Josephus narrative,³¹ the picture that emerges from both these sources is that of businessmen who, by embracing Greek language and culture, were able to advance their careers within the Ptolemaic administration of Syria and Phoenicia, and increase their wealth and prestige.³²

³⁰ Josephus's assertion that the activities of Joseph son of Tobias took place just after the Battle of Panion, after which there was an odd treaty/dowry arrangement (*Ant.* 12.155-54) seems to be misguided (Gera, "Olympiodoros", 126 n. 6). The appearance of Tobias himself in the Zenon papyri indicates he was active during the reign of Ptolemy II, so it would be unlikely for his son to be engaging in business under Ptolemy V.

³¹ Gera sees the Tobiad Romance as entirely fictional, a piece of propaganda encouraging fellow Jews to emulate his example and support the Ptolemaic government. He compares it to the Letter of Aristee, where, "In both, fictional events are placed in a concrete historical setting" (Gera, *Judaea*, 56-58). Grabbe does not go this far, but rather suggests there are still elements of historical truth hidden beneath layers of exaggeration and distortion (Grabbe, "Hyparchs", 77-8). The Zenon papyri go some way to supporting the Josephus account: it presents the Tobiad family as prosperous landholders that have a good relationship with the Ptolemaic government, the relatively independent nature of local leaders (cf. *P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59018), and probably the broad brushstrokes of the tax collection system under the Ptolemies.

³² The Tobiads are seen to have been responsible for the increase in Hellenisation in Judea. Tcherikover and Fuks (26) believe this is what Josephus is referring to when he states that Joseph "brought the Jewish people from poverty and a state of weakness to more splendid opportunities of life" (τὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων λαὸν ἐκ πτωχείας καὶ πραγμάτων ἀσθενῶν εἰς λαμπροτέρας ἀφορμὰς τοῦ βίου καταστήσας; *Jos. Ant.* 12.224) (cf. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 113). It is impossible to quantify how much he deserves this much credit (or blame), as Greek influences emerged from many sources even before the conquest of Alexander: trade; settlement, garrisoning and billeting of Greek soldiers; and Jews outside of Judea importing Greek elements while visiting the region (Smith, 45-48; cf. Aperghis, "Jewish Subjects", 21).

From the Zenon papyri it is clear that the Tobiads were already landowners of significant local standing and on good terms with the Ptolemaic administration, particularly financial administrator/businessman Zenon: he and his entourage make their way through “the land of Tobias” (ἐν τῇ Τουβίου; *P. Lond.* 7 1930, line 176) on their tour of Syria and Phoenicia in 259 BCE, and Tobias supplies them with fodder and pack animals (*P. Cair. Zen.* 5 59802). Tobias further sought to cultivate positive links with the Greek government by sending a gift of slaves to Zenon’s superior, Apollonios (*P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59076),³³ and sending through Apollonios a gift of exotic animals to the king himself (*P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59075). Additionally, the fact that Tobias has a group of clereuchs under his command (τῶν Τουβίου κληροῦχος; *P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59003, lines 6, 17 and 19),³⁴ and that he employs a Greek secretary to write his correspondence³⁵ clearly show his familiarity with the Greek language. For such a family as the Tobiads, it would have also been important for his children to follow in their patriarch’s footsteps in this regard in order to maintain their status and income.³⁶

³³ It is difficult to draw a distinction between Zenon’s work for Apollonios as a government official or as a business agent, and it seems that these two interests often commingled (Bagnall, 18).

³⁴ Bagnall, 17; Gera, *Judaea*, 41, 46. In the texts of lines 6 and 17 of this slave trade agreement, to which the clereuchs are witnesses, the phrase τῶν Τουβίου ἱππέων κληροῦχος has been corrected by the author to τῶν Τουβίου κληροῦχος. Similarly, in line 17 the phrase Τουβίου ἱππέων κληροῦχος has been corrected to περὶ Τουβίαν, however line 19 retains the complete phrase. The reason for these changes is unclear, whether the author was mistaken about these witnesses’ positions and had to be corrected (perhaps it was assumed all were members of the cavalry when it was only some who were) or some other reason.

³⁵ Tcherikover and Fuks, 125. The use of a Greek polytheistic greeting “many thanks to the gods” ([πο]λλὴ χάρις τοῖς θεοῖς; *P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59076) in Tobias’ letter to Apollonios could be an indication that he is a liberal Jew (so Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 112), but more likely is that his Greek secretary, whether on instruction from Tobias or not, has simply inserted a courteous proforma introduction.

³⁶ Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 40; cf. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 39. Indeed, this would appear to be the case in the Tobiad Romance, where Joseph son of Tobias is seen interacting with Ptolemaic officials and the royal court in Alexandria with ease (*Jos. Ant.* 12.165-66, 177-79).

Making Use of Local Resources

Local institutions as well as local individuals were also retained by the Seleukids, since the many benefits to be gained far outweighed any potential negatives. Keeping them in place saved money, as it required no additional state administrators to be employed, no new buildings to be erected and so on. It ensured the goodwill of influential locals if they were able to retain prominent positions (to a greater or lesser degree), and they were therefore less likely to defect or revolt. Local governance was smoother, as there were no teething problems while instituting new administrative procedures, and less need for intervention by Seleukid authorities on minor matters. This was at least the theoretical expectation.

But making use of local administrative structures also had some inherent dangers. One of these initially was due to the change of regime under Antiochos III: those who were close allies of the Ptolemies may no longer be preferred so have to be replaced in whatever positions they held. But at the same time this had to be weighed against the financial interests of the empire. According to Josephus, there was little to no local opposition to Antiochos' progress through Koile-Syria (Jos. *Ant.* 12.133), and it seems there were many in the region who were keen for a chance to improve their lot under different leadership, including many prominent locals. Meanwhile, Joseph's son Hyrcanus was allowed to continue his activities without state interference, despite his continuing loyalty to the Ptolemies, until the accession of Antiochos IV.³⁷ But there would be many who could take

³⁷ According to Josephus, Hyrcanus was the only one of Joseph son of Tobias' sons to support the Ptolemies and enjoy a prestigious position in the Alexandrian court. The others, along with the high priest Simon, decided that backing the Seleukids would be their best political move. Under Seleukos IV, Hyrcanus was still allowed to do business in Koile-Syria, however when Antiochos IV took the throne, it seems Hyrcanus felt he had reason to fear for his life as a Ptolemy sympathiser and committed suicide (Jos. *Ant.* 12.228-236; cf. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 44).

his place; indeed, access to a tax farming contract could be an apt reward for a loyal rural landowner.³⁸

Most notably, however, problems arose due to the level of independence retained by these institutions, as there was a latent possibility that violent confrontations could result if either party contravened the agreed status quo. A Ptolemaic official in Palestine by the name of Alexandros discovered this when he sent a servant and a certain Straton to attempt to reclaim payment from a Jewish man in the region, Jeddous (*P. Cair. Zen.* 1 59018). The fact that Jeddous felt that he could ignore the official's demands, assault his representatives and eject them from the village (and did precisely that) indicates not only that Jeddous was probably a landowner of some importance in the region,³⁹ but also that he possessed what could be construed as a dangerous level of autonomy.⁴⁰ A further example of this tension between Greek and local administrations will be examined below in chapter 8 in relation to the Jerusalem temple and the Seleukid high priesthood.

Summary

Maximisation of revenue was the key focus of Seleukid administration. The importance of regional stability and a positive relationship with the local elite (chapters 2 and 3) both fed

³⁸ Even if the narrative in the Tobiad Romance detailing Joseph's success in obtaining the tax farming rights of Syria and Phoenicia is embellished (*Jos. Ant.* 12.177-79), the ultimate decision of the recipient of the tax farming contract still lay with the king, though in practice it may have been undertaken by financial officials.

³⁹ Tcherikover and Fuks, 129; cf. Grabbe, "Hyparchs", 74.

⁴⁰ In fact, Alexandros seems to have been quick to be rid of the matter and may have even initially avoided the confrontation altogether (his claim that, "I happened to be sick as a result of taking some medicine" (ἐγὼ μὲν [οἰ]ϋν [ἄρρωστ]ος ἐτυγχانون ἐκ φαρμακείας ὧν; lines 4-5) is suspiciously convenient), perhaps indicating this was an ongoing aggravation of which Alexandros was well aware but was unable or unwilling to resolve himself, instead passing responsibility back ultimately to Zenon. From a Ptolemaic point of view, this situation exhibits a less than ideal balance of power between Greek rulers and local inhabitants.

into and mitigated this need for revenue, as tax relief was a useful way to appeal to the aristocracy and so ensure regional stability. Income was principally generated through taxation, and ensured by developing multiple streams of taxation and imposing state monopolies on staple goods. Further administrative streamlining was developed through the introduction of a silver-based system rather than taxation in kind. The use of the tax farming system further increased state revenue by making use of local entrepreneurs and their specialised local knowledge. Like the priesthood, these tax farmers could also increase their own wealth and prestige by their involvement in Seleukid administration.

Urbanisation

Part of Seleukid fiscal policy involved increased urbanisation. By building new cities and improving existing ones, such as Jerusalem, they increased the importance and capacity of the urban marketplace as a locus of silver exchange, and so increased their available revenue.¹ Jerusalem was not a large city by any means. Archaeological excavations in the city proper have yielded few findings for the Persian period and into the early Hellenistic era,² and from this it seems clear that throughout this time settlement was limited to the eastern side of the Jerusalem hill, though there is still some uncertainty as to its precise location.³ It was only in the second half of the second century, during the Hasmonean period, that the city gradually expanded in size to include the southwest.⁴

¹ Kenneth Hoglund, "The Material Culture of the Seleukid Period in Palestine: Social and Economic Observations" in *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture*, ed. Philip R. Davies and John M. Halligan, 67-73 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 72; cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 297.

² There are several issues surrounding archaeological evidence from Jerusalem. Firstly, it is impossible to obtain a complete picture of the settlement as it is still a working city and an entire site survey cannot be undertaken (Hillel Geva, "Jerusalem's Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View", in *TA* 41 (2014): 132, 135). Secondly, construction in Jerusalem involved removal of previous strata to place foundations on bedrock; further, some evidence may have been lost to erosion (Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch and Oded Lipschits, "The Mound on the Mount: A Possible Solution to the 'Problem with Jerusalem'", in *JHS* 11 (2011): 8).

³ Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits challenge the traditional concept that settlement in Jerusalem in this period was limited to the City of David near the Gihon Spring. Certainly there is evidence of occupation in this area, but these authors instead suggest that settlement was primarily on the Temple Mount and expanded from there. Of course, this hypothesis is impossible to substantiate (Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, 3, 8). Lipschits argues for settlement focussed on the Ophel region of Jerusalem as it is a flat and easily defensible piece of land, and archaeological material seems to have ended up in fills further down the slope ("Jerusalem Between Two Periods of Greatness", in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 174).

⁴ Geva, 141; Lipschits, "Two Periods", 173.

Concomitantly, the city's population was also small and remained relatively unchanged under both the Persians and Greeks.⁵ Estimates have varied throughout the history of Jerusalem studies,⁶ but more recent estimates based on archaeological data range from 400-500 people⁷ to a probably more reasonable 1000-1500; though there would have naturally been some growth with increased political stability.⁸ Despite its size, Jerusalem was the largest population centre in Judea, and thus it became the focus of Seleukid administration for the region. As noted in chapter 3, Antiochos III's concessions to Jerusalem included restoration works to the temple in order to revive the city as a commercial centre. He comments on the undersized nature of Jerusalem and his determination to restore it through rebuilding, and repopulate it by encouraging displaced people to return and ordering the release of slaves (Jos. *Ant.* 12.139-40, 143-4).

Aside from economic revitalisation, Hoglund suggests that one of the goals of this increased urbanisation was to create "a core of citizens committed to Hellenism", people attracted to Greek ways by the possibility of obtaining some of the wealth created in the marketplace.⁹ However, this seems to approach the issue from the wrong angle. The primary activity of

⁵ James K. Aitken, "Judaic National Identity", in *Judah Between East and West: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 36, 43.

⁶ In early 20th century, population estimates for Jerusalem were high, numbering several thousand, but gradually lessened as investigations continued and more archaeological data came to light. See the summary in Oded Lipschits, "Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations", in *JHS* 9 (2009): 2-3. Aperghis notes, however, "Any estimate of ancient populations is likely to be a hazardous one" (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 51).

⁷ Israel Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah", in *JSOT* 32, no. 4 (2008): 507.

⁸ Lipschits argues for 1250-1500, taking issue with "ultra-minimalistic views" such as that of Finkelstein (Lipschits, "Persian Period", 20; cf. Lipschits, "Two Periods", 174). Geva suggests the population of Jerusalem was "no more than 1000" during the Persian era but rose to around 2500-3000 at the beginning of the Hasmonean period (Geva, 143).

⁹ Hoglund, 73.

the Seleukid empire, as discussed earlier, was an ever-expanding cycle of creating revenue in order to conquer more territory, while still maintaining the whole. This was the key goal of urbanisation. In seeking to achieve maximised income, smooth administration was naturally of central importance, and if the Seleukids could utilise existing locals to effect this, as outlined earlier, then all the better.

Those who were keen to advance their political standing and wealth went out of their way to better understand the Greek language and culture, and put themselves in a position where they could be of use to the Greek government. Indeed, I would argue that it was to these Hellenised locals that documents such as the Hefzibah and Maresha stelae appealed. But to simply Hellenise was not enough. This was still to a large extent a newly-won frontier province, and the danger of recapture by or defection to the Ptolemies was very much a live issue. Hellenised locals, such as the Tobiads, were equally likely to be supporters of the Ptolemies (as indeed was the case for Joseph's son, Hyrcanus), and this could create dangerous, subversive factions within the empire. The Seleukids needed supporters of the Seleukids, not supporters of Hellenism.

The City Marketplace

As explored above, the mode of exchange in the Seleukid economy was silver, but this was too large a denomination for most transactions. For example, a soldier or administrative official paid in silver¹⁰ would need it changed for smaller copper coins in order to pay for food in the marketplace. The agricultural producer, needing to pay their various taxes in silver, would then need to change the copper coins they received for silver. Therefore not only was the marketplace the centre for a thriving money-changing industry, but it was also

¹⁰ Le Rider, 403.

the centre of silver circulation, and the circulation of goods and services to those who needed them (see Figure 3).

Although many agricultural producers would have retained some of their goods for their own consumption, and may have bartered or sold some locally, the centrality of the urban marketplace encouraged them to sell their commodities there in order to maximise their income through the opportunity to sell to a maximum number of people.¹¹ Moreover, the marketplace gave people from rural areas access to goods from other areas: not only agricultural produce, but wares made available by craftspeople and merchants, who themselves also provided particularly urban goods and services.¹² It was in this buying, selling, and transport of goods into the city that the Seleukid government could make more money through tolls and taxation, and key to this process was the *agoranomos*.

In the Ptolemaic administrative network, the functions of *agoranomoi* seem to have been restricted to that of a notary public, signing off on legal settlements and loan agreements.¹³ Elsewhere, however, their powers focussed on administration of the urban marketplace, with particular involvement in collection of taxes and fees for the state.¹⁴ A letter from

¹¹ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 72.

¹² Many crafts, such as masonry and carpentry, were of particular use in the city itself, but a large percentage were support industries for agriculture, such as producing amphorae for wine and oil, and ploughs and harnesses for work animals (Aperghis, 69). Trade would have been mostly local aside from more lightweight luxury items, but the demand for these would have grown as the political situation in Koile-Syria stabilised and wealth increased primarily in urban centres (see chapter 4 note 2).

¹³ The agreement *P. Berlin* 11309 explicitly states that it was negotiated before the *agoranomos* in question, Aristodemos (κεχ[ρημάτισται δι' Ἀριστοδήμου ἀγορανόμου; line 13), whereas others such as *CPI* I 23 and 26 simply have the form of such a contract. Although the parties in the latter two all appear to be Jews, they still use this typical Hellenistic form of documentation and sign it in the office of a Hellenistic government functionary (Tcherikover and Fuks, 33, 162, 169).

¹⁴ Cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 285.

Antigonos to the city of Teos in Asia Minor, ca. 303 BCE, describes the *agoranomos* collecting taxes on corn exports (*SEG* 15-717); later on in Delos, ca. 250-200 BCE, *agoranomoi* are shown to be regulating wood and charcoal prices, and collecting fees from importers if they failed to sell for the promised price (*Syll.*³ 975); still later, a suggestion regarding a common Greek exchange rate for silver, emanating from the Delphic Amphictyony, ca. 124-100 BCE, again designates *agoranomoi* as fee collectors (*Syll.*³ 729).

In Koile-Syria, the position of the *agoranomos* seems to have had more in common with the Greek system than the Egyptian, though similarities with the Egyptian model existed on other levels. In 2 Macc. 3.4, a certain Simon wished to expand his sphere of influence from official charge of the temple (προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ) to include the post of *agoranomos*, which at that time was held by the high priest, Onias. The post of *prostatēs* is itself somewhat nebulous. Here, Simon does not appear to have authority over Onias (but whether this was because of the nature of his position or the high priest's independent and/or stubborn nature is unclear), nor did Simon have direct charge of the finances; this was a position held by the high priest and about which Simon complained to the *strategos* (2 Macc. 3.5).

Aperghis sees the *prostatēs* as a temple version of the *epistatēs* often placed by the Seleukids in a city, the “superintendent (or prefect) placed by the central power over the organs of autonomous administration”,¹⁵ and this would seem to be a reasonable assumption considering the level of independence of Jerusalem (which will be explored further below in chapters 7 and 8) as well as evidence from Ptolemaic documents. There, the *epistatēs* appear as officials set up in the temples alongside the high priest and, aside

¹⁵ This useful description is by Domenico Musti, “Syria and the East” in *CAH* 7/1: 205. For Aperghis’ suggestion, see *Royal Economy*, 287, 298.

from ancillary roles such as the erection of stelae (*OGIS* 56, line 73), are primarily involved in receiving taxation payments (*P. Tebt.* I.5, lines 63-65).

Further, certain priests from the temple of Khnum in Elephantine were appointed to the administrative role of *lesonis*, which included the responsibility of collecting the harvest tax (for example on emmer; *P. Berlin* 15522). This was a position of long standing, dating back to the Persian period, and government control over this role was ensured as all *lesonis* nominees were required to be ratified by a member of the ruling administration,¹⁶ and their actions were further monitored by an *epistatēs* in the temple, who could report to higher authorities on their conduct.¹⁷ This seems in general terms to align with what is outlined in 2 Macc. 3.4. Indeed, if Simon already had some professional interest in the financial workings of the Jerusalem temple, expanding his influence to include the *agoranomos* role would be logical for such an ambitious man.

But issues remain, particularly due to the usage of the term *prostatēs* by various sources. For example, Diodorus Siculus, drawing on Hecataeus of Abdera, uses it as a general term to denote the leadership exercised by the priests over the Jewish nation (Diod. 40.2.1; 40.3.4). Likewise, Ben Sira speaks of Phinehas son of Aaron being covenanted “to lead the sanctuary and his people” (προστατεῖν ἁγίων καὶ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ; Sir. 45.24). During the reign of Ptolemy VIII, a dedicatory inscription to the Ptolemaic king and queens was erected in the synagogue in Xenephyris, close to Alexandria, “when Theodoros and Achillionos were in office”

¹⁶ Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 279-80. Good character and reliability were necessary requirements for a potential *lesonis* (*P. Berlin* 13540), though bribery could occur to ensure a candidate’s acceptance (*P. Berlin* 13543).

¹⁷ Complaint to the *epistatēs* seems to be threatened in *P. Berlin* 15521.

(προσάτων Θεοδώρου καὶ Ἀχιλλίωνος; *CIJ* 2 1441).¹⁸ From their names, these two appear to be Jewish leaders of the Jewish community there.¹⁹

Elsewhere a *prostatēs* over the temple of Ammon at Moeris, in the Fayyum region of Egypt, makes a report to the *strategos* and chief of the bodyguard regarding an attack on the temple by the troops of Antiochos IV, ca. 164 BCE (*P. Tebt.* III.781), which might seem to indicate the *prostatēs* here was a Seleukid official. However, it must be noted that all administrators would at some stage report back to their Hellenistic superiors, particularly if they were seeking support for rebuilding, as appears to be the case here. Thus it is unclear whether the *prostatēs* was a Seleukid official (so Bickerman) or a member of the temple staff (so Tcherikover),²⁰ or indeed whether this was a general or specific title.²¹

In addition to the role of *agoranomos*, it seems from the writings of Josephus that the high priest was also involved in collection of tribute (*Jos. Ant.* 12.158-9), another important fiscal

¹⁸ Such dedicatory inscriptions to kings and queens were widespread, and were a visible demonstration of the loyalty and support of the Jewish community to the Ptolemaic government. This one dates from some time between 143 and 116 BCE (Aldo Neppi Modona, “La vita pubblica e privata degli Ebrei in Egitto nell’età ellenistica e romana” in *Aeg.* 2, no. 3/4 (1921): 270.

¹⁹ The name Theodoros in particular was a popular Jewish name. The name Achillionos and variants also appear in much later sources from Egyptian Jewish communities (William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 41-42). As Tcherikover and Fuks point out, caution must be exercised with theophoric names such as Theodoros: although popular in the Jewish community, they were also used by non-Jews (Tcherikover and Fuks, xix. The only exception seems to be Dositheos, which was almost exclusively used by Jews). Since the Xenephyris inscription comes from a distinctly Jewish context, these names probably belong to Jews.

²⁰ Gera, “Olympiodoros”, 141 n. 82. The name Simon is not a useful indicator as to his ethnicity as it is both a Greek and Hebrew name (Tcherikover and Fuks, 29), and there is no name present in the Moeris document to give any further clues in this regard.

²¹ Grabbe, “Hyparchs”, 79.

output of a Seleukid city.²² In this context, temples were treated by the Seleukid administration in the same manner as cities: they could be recipients of grants of royal land, the income from which was also subject to taxation; levels of tribute and taxation, or whether they were imposed or waived, were dictated by the king based on political circumstances (e.g. *Jos. Ant.* 12.144).²³ In the case of Jerusalem, the temple and the city were so intrinsically linked that any delineation between the two for administrative purposes would have been essentially meaningless.

Unfortunately, interaction between the temple and the Seleukid hierarchy was often strained, and economic administration became complicated as the politics and ideologies of both parties conflicted. Indeed, since the temple was the nexus of economics and leadership in Judea, it was here tensions were more likely to be felt. So far this exploration into the political power of the Jerusalem temple has been conducted from a Hellenistic perspective – how it fit into the overall schema of Seleukid (and Ptolemaic) administration. But it is also necessary to examine the temple as an institution, and in particular the priesthood that governed it, from the perspective of its own context.

²² Although it is clear from *Jos. Ant.* 12.144 that there is a differentiation between taxes and tribute, there are difficulties with terminology. By the Hellenistic era, φόρος had ceased to be a technical term for “tribute” and could refer to revenue obtained from a city more broadly (e.g. *P. Tebt.* I.8; Préaux, 416-7); moreover, the word in itself had connotations of subjugation (Bickerman, *Studies*, 58) that Josephus may have engaged for literary purposes. Therefore it is unclear whether the 20 talents mentioned in this passage as being withheld by Onias was from tribute alone, or all income collected through the temple required to be passed on to the Seleukid administration (cf. Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 148-9). See chapter 4 note 8 for further discussion on the head tax as tribute.

²³ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 151-53.

Summary

Jerusalem was a small city, but its centrality in the area of Judea made it the focus of the Seleukid urbanisation project of growth and economic revitalisation. Revenue growth was particularly encouraged through this, as centralisation of the marketplace in turn promoted income through taxation and moneychanging to accommodate the silver-based trade system (chapter 3). Stability and smooth administration were also positively affected (chapters 1 and 2), as the high priest benefitted by filling city taxation administration roles, acting as agoranomos and collecting tribute.

Chapter 6 – The Temple

Scribes and the *Gerosia*

Just as the temple was inextricably linked with Jerusalem, so the high priest was at the centre of the temple. This fact is particularly visible in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, in fact written during the period under discussion here, the early 2nd century BCE. For Ben Sira, Jerusalem is the seat of Wisdom, which is the book's key element in style as well as theme, and plant imagery surrounds both the description of Jerusalem (24.10-12) and that of the high priest officiating in the temple, surrounded by "a garland of brothers" (50.8-12).¹ These subordinate priests and temple functionaries were essential to the temple and, consequently, city administration.² Indeed, it is precisely these groups who received the tax exemptions from Antiochos III previously mentioned (Jos. *Ant.* 12.142).

Among these were the scribes, who were an integral part of the Jerusalem bureaucracy – as they were in any bureaucracy – simply by virtue of their literacy, allowing them to keep records and set down official notices.³ Most information on the nature of the Jerusalem scribes under the Seleukids comes again from Ben Sira, himself a scribe. It appears from his writings that, because of their indispensable nature in administration and intellectual bent, scribes in Jerusalem had become valued as judges and advisers to those in authority (Sir. 38.32-33; 39.1-4). This naturally brought a certain amount of prestige and authority,

¹ Robert Hayward, "The New Jerusalem in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*" in *SJOT* 6, no. 1 (1992): 126-7; cf. Aitken, 44.

² Josephus quotes Hecataeus of Abdera's estimate of around 1500 priests who were "receiving a tenth of the revenues and administering public affairs" (Jos. *Ap.* 1.188-89).

³ Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 57; cf. Nahman Avigad, *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive* (Jerusalem: The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1976), 8. For example, the various inscriptions from Mount Gerizim appear to be the work of temple scribes, due to their consistent formulae and low number of errors (Magen, Misgav and Tsania, 14).

and scribes became free from everyday work to be able to devote themselves to full-time study of Torah and other writings (38.24). They even travelled to foreign lands to explore different philosophies (39.4), enhancing their abilities – and standing – as men of wisdom.⁴

There also appears to have been a *gerousia* as a governing authority, although how it was constituted and what its precise role was is unclear. Bickerman, for one, is content with agnosticism in this regard,⁵ however others have sought to reconstruct it to some degree. Hengel, for example, sees the *gerousia* as a mixed aristocratic body “representative of the principal priests, the rich lay nobility, the great landowners and heads of clans”, whose function was to limit the power of the high priest.⁶ Horsley and Tiller take this further, seeing the *gerousia* as being comprised of members of aristocratic priestly – not lay – families, the “chiefs”, “rulers” and “judges” of Ben Sira.⁷ Mantel argues for two organisations, a lay *gerousia* and a priestly *gerousia*. Goodblatt wonders whether a *gerousia* existed at all.⁸ Grabbe follows Hengel to some extent, surmising it was a mixture of both lay and priestly aristocracy, but suggests it acted as an advisory body to the high priest, further observing that its function and status may have changed from time to time.⁹

⁴ Through this process, the scribes’ dominance over literary production and interest in Torah also extended to preservation and interpretation of the national literature, and the instruction of others, as set out in the work of Ben Sira, in the Israelite sapiential tradition (Benjamin Wright, “Ben Sira on Kings and Kingship” in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, ed. Tessa Rajak et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 78, 90.

⁵ Bickerman, *Studies*, 48-9.

⁶ Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, vol. 1, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), 26. Hengel further suggests Greek (specifically Spartan) roots for the Jerusalem *gerousia*. However, as Feldman notes, even if the name was a Greek loan word, whether there was any further similarities is still yet to be proven (Louis H. Feldman, “Hengel’s *Judaism and Hellenism* in Retrospect” in *JBL* 96, no. 3 (1977): 376).

⁷ Horsley and Tiller, 94.

⁸ See Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 145.

⁹ Grabbe, “Introduction”, 21; *Judaic Religion*, 52, 146-47.

Certainly the *gerousia* had a leadership function, and it appears to have been somehow related to the temple,¹⁰ as they are mentioned along with the priests, scribes and temple singers in Antiochos III's edict on Jerusalem mentioned above in chapter 3. They further appear in 2 Maccabees, where they act as leaders of the people alongside Judas Maccabeus (1.10), as complainants against high priest Menelaus (4.44), and as recipients of a letter addressed to the Jews from Antiochos IV (11.27); and in the book of Judith, where they appear as leaders of the Jewish people alongside the high priest Joakim (4.8; 15.8).

Indeed, the same word is used in the LXX to describe "the elders" mentioned in Torah, again as representative leaders of the people (e.g. Exo. 3.16-18; Deut. 4.23), including some legal responsibilities (e.g. Deut. 21.3-8, which has a quasi-cultic element). Further, in a pleading letter from Elephantine requesting assistance in rebuilding the Jewish temple there, among the group of authorities appealed to, along with the governors of Yehud and Samaria, and the high priest in Jerusalem, are "the nobles of the Jews" (וֹחֲרֵי יְהוּדִיָּא; TAD A4.7.19).

However, it cannot be determined whether this latter group equates to the *gerousia*, or to what extent the Second Temple *gerousia* could be equated with "the elders" of Torah.¹¹

The High Priesthood

¹⁰ However, as previously mentioned, the division between religious and political is often non-existent, and the *gerousia* may be mentioned in the same breath as temple officials simply because they all held some level of national authority.

¹¹ Grabbe also notes a multiplicity of terminology that may or may not relate to the same institution (*gerousia*, *boulē*, Sanhedrin), and the related issue of some scholars extrapolating backwards later ideas of a perhaps idealised Sanhedrin, which has led some to hypothesise two councils, one religious and one political (Grabbe, *Judaic Religion*, 145; cf. Bickerman, *Studies*, 48; Tcherikover and Fuks, 9). Note, however, my statement in note 10 regarding religion and politics.

At the top of the local hierarchy of Jerusalem was of course the high priest. As the head of the temple-city, he was not only at the forefront of religious matters but also the civil administration, and consequently in a role of considerable regional leadership; a position fortified by his level of independence. Indeed, Hecataeus of Abdera, cited in the works of Diodorus Siculus, was given to understand that, instead of a king, the Jewish people were ruled by the high priest (Diod. 40.3.5).¹²

Hints of a similar understanding can be seen in the work of Ben Sira. His praises of high priests of ages past and present – in particular his current high priest, Simon¹³ – employ imagery reminiscent of past secular rulers. Indeed, Simon is portrayed as the culmination and outgrowth of previous rulers of Jerusalem: he provides the city with water, like King Hezekiah (50.3; cf. 48.17), and he cares for the city and temple, like Zerubbabel, Jeshua and Nehemiah (50.2-4; cf. 49.11-13). Moreover, Ben Sira equates the Aaronic covenant of priesthood with the Davidic covenant of kingship (45.25), perhaps even to the point of

¹² Cf. 40.2.1, where a Jewish delegation approached Pompey seeking “to be free and autonomous, as they had as leader of the people not a king but a high priest” (ἐλευθέρων καὶ αὐτονόμων, οὐ βασιλέως ἀλλ’ ἀρχιερέως τοῦ προεστηκότος τοῦ ἔθνους). Interestingly, according to Hecataeus through Diodorus, the priests were selected for the role by Moses as they were “the most refined and able men among all the people” (τῶν ἀνδρῶν τοὺς χαριεστάτους καὶ μάλιστα δυνησομένους τοῦ σύμπαντος ἔθνους; 40.3.4), and they were given larger portions of land than private citizens (40.3.7). Since Torah dictates both that the priesthood is hereditary rather than merit-based (Exo. 40.15), and that the priests were in fact not to be allotted any land (Deut. 18.1), this may reflect the aristocratic status of the priesthood during the Ptolemaic era, during which time Hecataeus was writing. Sir. 45.22 notes Aaron had no inheritance of land, though it is unclear whether this was the case for the (high) priesthood under the Seleukids or an idealising of what it should have been like.

¹³ Aitken opines this was probably Simon II, following the assumption that the rebuilding of the city and temple referred to in Sir. 50.1-4 was necessitated due to damage incurred during the Fifth Syrian War (Aitken, 40).

suggesting the superiority of the former due to the failure of the latter, in light of the reality of Jerusalem's history.¹⁴

An example of this pre-eminence in city authority can further be seen in the numismatic record. During the fourth century BCE, at the end of the Persian era, an Athenian-type coin was issued bearing the words YWHNN HKWHN , or "Johanan the high priest".¹⁵ This appears to be the same Johanan referred to in the Elephantine letter *TAD A4.7*, mentioned above (יהוחנן כהנא רבא; line 18), and possibly also in Neh. 12.22.¹⁶ The coin is similar in style to other coins from the same period discovered at Tel Gamma and Beth-Zur, inscribed with [י]חזק[ן]י הפחה and [ה]פחה יחזקיהו respectively, both reading "Hezekiah the governor".¹⁷ However, some issues arise in considering these coins together.

Firstly, in relation to the Hezekiah coins, there is some uncertainty as to whether this is the same person as the Ezechias who appears Jos. *Ap.* 1.187. Questions arise regarding the reliability not only of Josephus¹⁸ but also that of Hecataeus of Abdera, whom Josephus

¹⁴ Horsley and Tiller, 79. This, of course, must be understood in the context of Ben Sira's overarching theme of God's pre-eminence as supreme ruler and the only ideal king: any other kingship, including that of the Israelite kings, would ultimately fail; any authority the high priest enjoyed was ultimately subservient to God's (Sir. 10.5; cf. Wright, 86, 88). However, there is also an expectation for future fuller restoration (Sir. 36).

¹⁵ The owl that appears on one of the sides is stereotypically Athenian but also appears on many Levant coins (L.S. Fried, "A Silver Coin of Yoḥanan Hakkôhên" in *Trans.* 26 (2003): 69-70); the head on the other is difficult to determine but appears similar to that on coins from Kilikia and Samaria (Meshorer, 14).

¹⁶ Porten, 142. Fried gives a summary of the various theories surrounding the identification of Johanan and the lineage of high priests in Jerusalem, and comes to the conclusion that there was probably only the one Johanan, presiding between 410 and 378-368 BCE (Fried, 85).

¹⁷ Rahmani publishes the Tel Gamma coins and revisits the Beth-Zur coins, originally published by D.R. Sellers, in L.Y. Rahmani, "Silver Coins from the Fourth Century BC from Tel Gamma" in *IEJ* 21, no. 2/3 (1971): 158-59.

¹⁸ The excerpts quoted in Diodorus Siculus are generally considered to be reliable, however those in Josephus are not. For example, Grabbe agrees with Bar-Kokhva's view that the excerpts in Josephus are "a later composition by a Jewish writer" (Grabbe, "Hyparchs", 75-76).

cites.¹⁹ For example, Rahmani and Barag decide that this evidence of Hezekiah as governor displayed in the coins speaks strongly against equating Hezekiah with Ezechias;²⁰ Kindler is more circumspect, suggesting that it should not be ruled out.²¹ If Hezekiah was simply a chief priest rather than the high priest,²² it would still place him within the Jerusalem aristocracy, which would in turn made him eligible for selection as governor by the Persians, as was the case with Sanballat in Samaria.²³

Further information regarding Johanan appears in Jos. *Ant.* 11.297-301. As in *TAD* A4.7, he appears as a contemporary of Bagavahya, the Persian governor of Judea,²⁴ but in the context of a violent leadership struggle between Johanan and his brother (a man endorsed by Bagavahya) over the high priesthood. In this context, it may be the case that Johanan took the opportunity in one of Bagavahya's absences to usurp authority for himself.²⁵ Perhaps there was no governor in Judea at the time, and Johanan was acting as interim leader. Whatever the case, at some point Johanan felt that, as high priest of Jerusalem, he had sufficient authority – the same level of authority as a governor – to be able to issue coinage.

¹⁹ Hecataeus' understanding of Judaism does seem to be somewhat confused, perhaps due to an inadequacy in his source material. Thus it may be that in Hecataeus' understanding any Jewish man at the top echelon of authority in Jerusalem (for example, a governor) must be a high priest (cf. Diod. 40.2.1, 40.3.5). It must also be borne in mind that Diodorus may have edited Hecataeus' material for his own literary purposes (Aitken, 43).

²⁰ Rahmani, 160; Dan P. Barag, "Guide to Artifacts: Some Notes on a Silver Coin of Johanan the High Priest" in *BA* 48, no. 3 (1985): 167.

²¹ Kindler, 76.

²² ἀρχιερεὺς in Jos. *Ap.* 1.157 may denote "high priest" or could simply refer to a "chief priest", one of many.

²³ Although Sanballat's governorship is not explicitly stated on his coins, as it is for Hezekiah, it is clear from other sources – for example, *TAD* A4.7 noted above – that he in fact held this position. Similarly, there are coins that contain Hezekiah's name only, with no title (Gordon J. Hamilton, "Paleo-Hebrew Texts and Scripts of the Persian Period" in *An Eye for Form: Epigraphic Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Jo Ann Hackett and Walter E. Aufrecht (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 274).

²⁴ In this passage from Josephus they appear under the Greek forms of their names, Joannes and Bagoses.

²⁵ Fried, 85.

Summary

The temple had its own hierarchy arrayed below the high priest, members of the governing aristocracy to whom preferential treatment had been extended by Antiochos III (chapter 3). The high priest wielded a considerable amount of independent authority in Jerusalem. The growth in power and prestige of the high priest due to his involvement in Seleukid administration (chapters 4 and 5), in addition to the power he already wielded as the head of the city and the independence he derived from governing Jerusalem and the wider Judean region through Torah, led to later tensions with the Seleukid rulers.

Judean Coinage and Stamp Impressions

But the information able to be gleaned from coinage does not stop at the simple fact of their minting. An important element also lies in the script with which many Judean coins – not only those mentioned above in chapter 6, but also those bearing the legend *yhd* or *yhdh*, the Persian name of the province, are inscribed, namely Neo-Hebrew. Commencing under the Persian regime, its use continued into the Hellenistic era and the first years of the reign of Ptolemy I,¹ again demonstrating the administrative continuity from one regime to the next, though with some changes. In particular, whereas Persian-era coins use the Neo-Hebrew script but maintain the Aramaic name *yhd*,² the Ptolemaic issues employ the Hebrew name *yhdh*.³ A similar transition is also reflected in the jar handle stamp impressions,⁴ as discussed below.

The use of Neo-Hebrew in general during this period is certainly unusual. As the principal language of communication in the Persian empire, Aramaic was most widely used. Indeed, Aramaic was so prevalent that Hebrew was in effect pushed to the sidelines and became

¹ Not long after the production of the Ptolemaic *yhdh* coins, the privilege of minting was removed from Judea, and coin production was instead primarily undertaken in Tyre, Sidon, Akko-Ptolemais and other centres, which continued under the Seleukids (Le Rider, 392-93; cf. Rappaport, 31). Grabbe suggests the right to mint was a reward or incentive to further loyalty extended to the Judeans by the Ptolemies (Grabbe, “Hyparchs”, 85-6).

² Further coins have been discovered bearing the inscription *yhd* entirely in Aramaic; i.e. both language and script. Although Naveh attributes it to the early fourth century – and, consequently, before the Tennes Rebellion, which he sees as the precipitating event to the use of Neo-Hebrew in coins (Joseph Naveh, “Hebrew Texts in Aramaic Script in the Persian Period?” in *BASOR* 203 (1971): 30) – Meshorer and Qedar opine that these coins and the Neo-Hebrew *yhd* coins are contemporaneous (Meshorer and Qedar, 15).

³ Rappaport, 30. The change in regime appears to be reflected in the transition from *yhd* to *yhdh* (Kindler, 74).

⁴ See chapter 1 for a brief discussion of the scholarship surrounding the jar handle stamp impressions.

what Hamilton and McLean term a “minority script”.⁵ Although some have suggested it fell out of use completely, only to be revived in the Hasmonean period, it appears that it was still employed in certain circles⁶ parallel to the use of Aramaic. Indeed, in some cases an Aramaic influence appears to have found its way into the scribe’s use of Neo-Hebrew.⁷

Thus the presence of Neo-Hebrew in the *yhd* coins appears to indicate that Yehud was a separate and, to some extent, autonomous Persian (then Hellenistic) province.⁸ Indeed, these Judean coins appear to have been primarily used for local circulation.⁹ However, this autonomy does not equal separation. It was still under overarching foreign authority (Persian or Hellenistic), and still part of the wider Near Eastern economic network, as demonstrated by the images used on the *yhd/yhdh* coins. The Persian-era coins employed Persian motifs such as the head of the Persian king on one side and a falcon on the other; the Ptolemaic coins are similar in imagery but instead bear the image of Ptolemy I and an eagle;¹⁰ and Greek elements are present in many coins, particularly the Athenian owl, indicating trade links with the Mediterranean, probably via Phoenicia.¹¹

⁵ Hamilton, 253; Mark David McLean, “The Use and Development of Palaeo-Hebrew in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1982), 106.

⁶ Aitken, 38. Indeed, the style on several *yhd* coins seems to imitate a scribal hand (Hamilton, 264).

⁷ For example, in bulla 22 from Wadi ed-Daliyeh and the Johanan coin (Hamilton, 270-71, 285).

⁸ Avigad, *Bullae*, 28; cf. Kindler, 75.

⁹ Stephen N. Gerson, “Fractional Coins of Judea and Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE” in *NEA* 64, no. 3 (2001): 116. This also appears to have been the case for Samaritan coins during this same time period (Lemaire, 419; cf. Rappaport, 29).

¹⁰ Kindler, 73-75.

¹¹ Sidonian and Kilikian elements are also present in the *yhd* coins, and predominate among coins from Samaria, suggesting they may have been used for the purposes of facilitating trade (Gerson, 109). The popularity of these images also spread to bullae in Samaria (Leith, 11, 17, 21).

Neo-Hebrew also featured prominently among jar handle stamp impressions unearthed in and around Jerusalem. The convention of stamping jar handles with an official seal commenced back in the eighth century BCE and continued under a variety of regimes before slowly phasing out of use under the Hasmoneans.¹² This was very much a local operation, with production and warehousing of the jars carried out in and around the Jerusalem area.¹³ The precise purpose of these stamp impressions¹⁴ and the goods they marked have been much debated (although they are almost certainly related to collection and warehousing of agricultural taxation in kind),¹⁵ but the Persian impressions themselves point to a very senior level of administrative oversight, that of the governor. Early Persian impressions bore his name and title in Aramaic,¹⁶ indicating the administrative process was carried out under his authority, although the notation was simplified as time went on to the province name.

¹² Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, xvi.

¹³ This even extends to the production of the jars themselves, which were made from local clay (*ibid.*, 60-1).

¹⁴ Naveh suggests the stamp impressions show a government certification of quantity and that the name inscribed on it is that of the potter, sometimes along with his job title, *pḥr'* (Naveh, "Hebrew Texts", 30). This translation was also concluded by Cross, however this seems to be a misreading of *pḥw'*, Aramaic for "governor" (Avigad, *Bullae*, 6-7). In relation to the *ṭeth* symbol on the *yhd+ṭ* impressions, Avigad makes some suggestions of its meaning – a capacity indication, a mark of authenticity (so also Cook, "Inscribed Jar Handles", 93) or a royal/solar symbol (preferred by Lidzbarski) – but simply leaves it as an official symbol of unknown meaning (Avigad, "Yehûd or Ha'îr?" 26-7).

¹⁵ In the 1920s, Cook (following Duncan) suggested they were for payment of taxes in kind to the state (or perhaps dedicated to the temple, based on his reading of the stamps as *yhu*, a rendering of the divine name; Cook, "Inscribed Hebrew Objects", 181). More recently, Lemaire likewise considered them to be used for payment of land taxes in kind and identified a similar situation in Idumea: Aramaic ostraca list grain quantities registered from certain fields and make reference to "the storeroom of Makkedah" (Lemaire, 422, 422 n. 86). Lipschits and Vanderhooft take this concept further: collection and warehousing of surplus wine and oil, collected as taxation in kind, was designated for regional distribution in order to satisfy the demands of administrators and/or the military (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 763).

¹⁶ For example, stamp impressions mentioning Yeho-ezer (*yhw'zr*) and Ahzai (*'hzy*), along with the word *pḥw'* ("governor"), have been found at Ramat Raḥel (Avigad, *Bullae*, 7; cf. Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 80).

Moreover, the use of jar handle stamp impressions seem to have formed an integral part of the processes of the administrative complex at Ramat Raḥel, as indicated by the large amount unearthed there.¹⁷ However, the passage of time saw a number of important – though gradual – transitions. Firstly, the shift in the percentage of stamped jar handle from a vast majority in Ramat Raḥel to an increased number in Jerusalem¹⁸ seems to indicate administration became more focussed on the city itself as time progressed. Further, there was the transition in the stamp impressions themselves from the language of the Persian empire, Aramaic, to the local language, Neo-Hebrew.¹⁹ Thus there appears to be a shift in the Persian period towards a heavier reliance on local authorities and administrative structures, demonstrated by local aristocrats acting as governor (as seen in the Hezekiah and, in some way, Johanan coins), an emphasis on the local capital of Jerusalem, and expanding use of the local script of Neo-Hebrew.

¹⁷ Located approximately five kilometres south of Jerusalem, the large administrative complex of Ramat Raḥel was founded under the Assyrians and was at its height during the rule of the Persians, under whom most of the impressed jar handles were produced. According to Lipschits, Gadot and Langgut, the extensions of the buildings and the presence of lavish gardens would seem to indicate that this was not only an administrative centre but also the residence of the governor (Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot and Dafna Langgut, “The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Edifice” in *Trans.* 41 (2012): 76). However, an earlier opinion of Lipschits and Vanderhooft was more cautious regarding whether or not Ramat Raḥel was also a governor’s palace, noting an apparent lack of domestic structures (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 80, 764).

¹⁸ For example, for the middle type stamp impressions (following the typology set out in Vanderhooft and Lipschits, 25-9), dating from the fourth to third centuries BCE, 60% were uncovered in Ramat Raḥel (a decrease of 11% from early types) and 18.9% in Jerusalem (an increase of 5.6%); in the final years of stamp impression use, 75% of type 16 stamp impressions (a late type dating to the second century BCE) were unearthed in Jerusalem, as opposed to 5% from Ramat Raḥel (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 253, 764; cf. Vanderhooft and Lipschits, 29).

¹⁹ Naturally, there is some overlap, as both these scripts were in current usage to a greater (Aramaic) or lesser (Neo-Hebrew) extent (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 63).

Mount Gerizim and Neo-Hebrew

Neo-Hebrew has been widely considered to be of nationalistic significance for Judeans in the Persian period and into the Hellenistic era,²⁰ not only because of the instances already mentioned but also due to its re-emergent popularity under the Hasmoneans, exemplified in coins and stamp impressions from that period.²¹ However, the same is also true for the Samaritans: their use of Neo-Hebrew held similar national and religious significance as in Jerusalem. This is not particularly surprising, given the relatively close relationship between Judeans and Samaritans at the time (see chapter 1). Indeed, the Samaritan use of the Neo-Hebrew script in the early Hellenistic age is particularly helpful, as it sheds further light on a time period in this region for which there is scant information.

One piece of relevant evidence comes from Wadi ed-Daliyeh, located approximately halfway between Samaria and Jericho. There, two official bullae dating from the end of the Persian period were found, bearing the Neo-Hebrew script.²² Indeed, one of these (WD 22) closely parallels both the early jar handle stamp impressions and the Yehud coins discussed above

²⁰ For example, "It would seem that the use of the paleo-Hebrew script for official purposes, at a time when the Aramaic script was employed in daily affairs, was politically motivated, with a definite nationalistic intent implied" (Avigad, *Bullae*, 36; cf. Aitken, 38, who adds a religious element to the nationalism).

²¹ In particular, the *yršlm* stamp impressions (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 10-11, 595, 764). Geva further opines that the Neo-Hebrew stamp impressions were a mode of propaganda that died out due to the Hasmonean preference for coins (Geva, "Chronological Re-evaluation", 100-101). This may be true, and/or perhaps there was a continuation of the Seleukid economic policy to replace taxation in kind. For a detailed palaeographic study of the Neo-Hebrew used in the Hasmonean coins, see McLean, 108-94.

²² Similarly, a bulla from a seal inscribed in Neo-Hebrew was unearthed at Tel Michal, dating to the fourth century BCE. Although no provenance is indicated on the bulla itself, Naveh surmises it belonged to a Samaritan, as Tel Michal is on the coast not far from Samaria (Joseph Naveh, "Scripts and Inscriptions in Ancient Samaria" in *IEJ* 48, no. 1/2 (1998): 93). The strong trade and cultural links between Phoenicia and Samaria (Leith, 11) may reinforce this suggestion, though it still far from proven.

by mentioning the title of governor: [...]*yhw bn [sn']blt pht šmr[n]* (“[...]yahu, son of [San]ballat, governor of Samaria”).²³

The interplay of languages between these bullae and the documents they seal, the former written in Neo-Hebrew and the latter written in Aramaic,²⁴ indicate a complicated relationship between the two scripts, which is further borne out in the Samaritan coins from this same era. As Yehud produced contemporary coins bearing the name of the province in both Aramaic and Neo-Hebrew, so too did the Samaritan governors. In particular, the governor BDYH produced coins in both scripts – sometimes both on the same coin – the difference probably depending on the personal inclination of the die cutter.²⁵

Moving into the Hellenistic era, the inscriptions discovered on Mount Gerizim indicate a definitive solidification of the roles of Aramaic and Neo-Hebrew in the Samaritan context. These dedicatory inscriptions, for the most part excavated within the cultic precinct, appear to have been carefully and almost uniformly written, with each appearing on a separate stone, seeming to indicate temple oversight of the process. Here the use of Neo-Hebrew appears to be for the sole use of the priesthood, as it is used by priests in both cultic and non-cultic contexts, whereas Aramaic (and Greek) was used by the wider population.²⁶

²³ Upon wider consideration of the papyri themselves, Cross suggests the name here is probably Yesayahu, and further infers the seals belonged to the governors themselves, following the Persian tradition that limited the use of such seals to officials (Cross, 18; cf. Leith, 10).

²⁴ These papers were legal or administrative documents, for the most part pertaining to the sale of slaves (Frank Moore Cross Jr, “The Papyri and Their Historical Significance” in *Discoveries in the Wādī ed-Dāliyah*, ed. Paul W. Lapp and Nancy L. Lapp (Cambridge, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1974), 18-20).

²⁵ Meshorer and Qedar, 15; contra Naveh, who asserts there were no Neo-Hebrew coins produced in Samaria during the Period (Naveh, “Scripts”, 92).

²⁶ Magen, Misgav and Tsfania, 14, 34-35.

But the historical events in Samaria between these two instances must be taken into account when examining the use of the Neo-Hebrew. During the conquest of Alexander, a governor by the name of Andromachus was installed in Samaria, the capital city of the region of the same name. However, according to Quintus Curtius Rufus, the Samaritans for some reason burned Andromachus alive, causing Alexander to return for the purpose of retribution (4.5.9, 4.8.10-11). As a result of this incident, it seems, many high-ranking Samaritans were forced to flee and met their end at Wadi ed-Daliyeh.²⁷ Samaria also subsequently became a Macedonian military town,²⁸ and much of the local population relocated to Shechem, at the foot of and closely linked to Mount Gerizim, and the settlement on the mountain itself.²⁹

Thus, with the loss of their capital, local Samaritan focus was instead placed on the two distinctive traits that set them apart from what Samaria had become: the cultic centre at Mount Gerizim and use of the Neo-Hebrew script. As Misgav states, “In this period, the Aramaic scripts and their descendants are the common script, and its victory is complete, so the ancient Hebrew script is in use only in unique sects or needs.”³⁰ Other languages were

²⁷ Cross, 17-18; Lemaire, 420.

²⁸ According to the later works of Eusebius (preserved in Jerome’s translation of the second volume of his *Chronicon*) and Syncellus, although they differ as to whether it was Alexander himself (so Eusebius) or his general Perdikkas (so Syncellus) who was personally responsible for this act. The presence of a Macedonian garrison seems to be further supported by the Hellenistic towers constructed in the city of Samaria (G. Ernest Wright, “The Samaritans at Shechem” in *HTR* 55, no. 4 (1962): 363-5).

²⁹ This is reflected in the archaeology of Shechem, which sees a surge in population in the latter part of the fourth century BCE (Mor, 190-91; G. Wright, 358-59, 365). The rebuilding of the temple itself on Mount Gerizim under Antiochos III prompted further expansion of the settlement in the early second century (Magen, Misgav and Tsania, 1, 3). Mor sees Shechem and Mount Gerizim as “an indivisible pair just as Mount Moriah and Jerusalem” (Mor, 184).

³⁰ Haggai Misgav, email message to author, 23 July 2015. Aside from the Samaritans, these “sects or needs” include the context for the writing of particular Dead Sea Scrolls. According to McLean’s palaeographic analysis, the earliest Neo-Hebrew texts among the scrolls date from the late third to mid-second century BCE (4Q46

still in use by the general community but, as the Samaritans' religious centre, the Mount Gerizim temple became the focus of national identity and a link with the traditional past, in particular their Yahwistic faith. This was expressed through the Neo-Hebrew script, with the priests as caretakers of that identity and faith.

Leith raises the possibility that the Wadi ed-Daliyeh bullae – and by extension Samaritan coins – employed deliberate archaising through the use of Neo-Hebrew, that it was a nationalistic statement that linked the governors' heritage back to earlier times.³¹

Considering the subsequent use of Neo-Hebrew on Mount Gerizim, this may be the case.

However, with the Mount Gerizim inscriptions we are presented with a *fait accompli*, and it is impossible to plot the transition from a nationalistic to a nationalistic/religious significance for Neo-Hebrew, nor can it be ascertained the extent to which the governorship of Samaria was linked with the Mount Gerizim temple during the Persian period.³² However, among the varied coins of BDYH mentioned above, Neo-Hebrew was selected to engrave only the Yahwistic elements of the governor's name. This seems to be an indication that the

paleoDeut⁵, with 4Q101 paleoJob^c dated not long after), indicating that Neo-Hebrew was still used under the Seleukid regime and thence into the Hasmonean period (Marilyn J. Lundberg, "Paleo-Hebrew Scrolls" in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 1017; cf. McLean, 47-57).

³¹ Leith, 25. Her alternative suggestion is that the governors were simply following a previous tradition that dictated Neo-Hebrew was to be used. This seems to me the weaker suggestion, not only because of the subsequent use of this script on Mount Gerizim but also due to the use of fashionable images in these and the other bullae discovered at Wadi ed-Daliyeh. Leith further notes that there are exceptions to the use of Greek and Persian imagery (for example, there are no Persian winged discs or worship scenes), and this conscious decision of what to employ on one's seal also seems to speak against using a certain script purely out of habit.

³² Naveh's opinion that Samaritan coins may have been minted by "either governors or high priests" probably draws too long a bow (Naveh, "Scripts", 92). One Ḥananiah was certainly a governor, according to the Wadi ed-Daliyeh papyri, and there is nothing to suggest the others mentioned on coins were not also governors.

development of Neo-Hebrew as a cultic script was in development even in the Persian period, and that there was some link with the secular leadership at that stage.³³

The Jerusalem Temple

This was not the case for Jerusalem, whose entire civil and religious administration was focussed – increasingly, as the Hellenistic era progressed – on the city itself. Although there were members of a lay aristocracy, the hieratic aristocracy appears (particularly from the *yhd* coins already mentioned) to have had primary authority in Jerusalem. That they took charge particularly of the financial aspects of administration, such as taxation in kind, as seen from the increase in jar handle stamp impressions in Jerusalem, would not be particularly surprising, given they traditionally administered religious offerings and tithes.³⁴ Moreover, if Jerusalem were the centre for taxation administration under the Persians, it would certainly fit into the Hellenistic model of maintaining local administrative structures if the priesthood also took on official financial administrative positions under the Seleukids.³⁵

³³ Hamilton, 265. This trend may also be reflected in Dead Sea Scrolls from the Herodian era; Neo-Hebrew was also used for the Tetragrammaton (for example, in 11Q5 Psalms^a), and the divines names *‘el* (for example, in 4Q183 Historical Work) and *‘elohim* (for example, in 4Q57 Isa^c) (Lundberg, 1018). It may, however, be a palaeographic decision that developed on its own as a result of the use of Neo-Hebrew in Jerusalem, or both may be an outgrowth of a common older tradition; it is impossible to tell.

³⁴ Num. 18.8-32 outlines the benefits the temple personnel were supposed to receive. Part of Nehemiah’s reforms also appear to be a reinstitution of payments to the temple personnel. Indeed, the Levites here appear to fill the role of tax collector as they go about collecting tithes from rural villages (Neh. 10.37). Tithing also continued under the Seleukids (Sir. 7.31, 35.1-4; cf. Horsley and Tiller, 84).

³⁵ Finkelstejn and Gibson note that administration of stamp-impressed jars would have to be undertaken by a city official, probably the *agoranomos* (Gerald Finkelstejn and Shimon Gibson, “The Retrograde-F-Shaped *Yh(d)* Monogram: Epigraphy and Dating” in *TA* 34 no. 1 (2007): 111). They are there discussing the *yršlm* stamp impressions, used solely under the Hasmoneans (see note 38 below), but the suggestion also holds true for the Hellenistic administration. As noted in chapter 5, this role was filled by the temple during the Seleukid era.

In this context, the use of Neo-Hebrew appears to be inextricably nationalistic/religious and linked to Jerusalem. This ideological tendency finds its culmination under the Hasmoneans, who exclusively employed Neo-Hebrew and the name of the city in their jar handle stamp impressions³⁶ and, later, coins and personal seals.³⁷ For them, Jerusalem was not only important as a seat of regional power generally, but also particularly as the location of the temple, the seat of religious power held by the high priest.³⁸ Indeed, for the writers of both 1 and 2 Maccabees, the recovery and purification of the temple holds central significance in their narratives, signals the final victory over Antiochos IV and the evils that emanated from his rule, and signifies that Jerusalem had at last been reclaimed (1 Macc. 4.36-58; 2 Macc. 10.1-9).³⁹ To hold the temple was to hold the power of the city.

Summary

The use of Neo-Hebrew during Seleukid rule of Koile-Syria, when Aramaic dominated the literary landscape, is unusual. In the Samaritan context of Hellenistic Mount Gerizim the use of Neo-Hebrew demonstrates the development of a purely priestly usage, however coinage and bullae from the Persian period show an apparently non-uniform nationalistic and

³⁶ The *yršlm* stamp impressions appear to indicate a concerted replacement of the previous *yhd* impressions at the beginning of Hasmonean rule (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 10-11) and “decisively signals the emergence of Jerusalem as the unfettered regional administrative centre” (ibid. 764).

³⁷ A prime example of this is Alexander Jannaeus (ca. 103-76 BCE), whose Neo-Hebrew seals read “Jonathan, high priest, Jerusalem” and “Jehonathan the king” (Jonathan being his Hebrew name) (Nahman Avigad, “A Bulla of Jonathan the High Priest” in *IEJ* 25, no. 1 (1975): 8; “A Bulla of King Jonathan” in *IEJ* 25, no. 4 (1975): 245-6).

³⁸ Lipschits and Vanderhooft suggest the purpose of the Hasmonean use of Neo-Hebrew on their coins was in fact to symbolically point to this dual centrality of Jerusalem (Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Corpus*, 764).

³⁹ The author of 1 Maccabees sees the Maccabean conquest of the Hellenistic military forces and fortifications on Mount Zion as so unimportant it is resigned to almost a footnote (1 Macc. 4.60-61). But the emphasis on the piety of the Hasmonean leadership in both books of Maccabees must be taken into account. See chapter 3 regarding the similar importance of piety held by the Hellenistic kings as a criterion for their legitimacy and ability to rule; this may be reflected in the propagandist nature of the books of Maccabees.

religious usage of this script. In Jerusalem, Neo-Hebrew in coins with Persian motifs from the Persian period appear to demonstrate a local consciousness which, when linked to the hierocratic dominance of the high priest (chapter 6), finds its culmination in the Hasmonean period. The development of palaeographic style and archaeological concentrations of jar handle stamp impressions likewise indicates a progressive combined administrative and cultic focus on the city of Jerusalem (chapter 5).

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

The Seleukid administration was a multi-tiered and multi-faceted organisation aimed at funding the ever-expanding needs of the empire. Income was garnered through tolls and tribute, and state monopolies imposed on staple goods. Principally, though, revenue came through wide-ranging taxes on a variety of produce, particularly agricultural. Control of the collection process was auctioned off annually to tax farmers, local entrepreneurs whose local knowledge assisted in better estimating times of surplus or shortfall, enabling more accurate budgeting by the state administration. The tax farmers themselves benefitted from the financial gain of some of the surplus collected (if any), as well as an increase in their political standing and prestige.

But in order to maximise revenue in this way, the Seleukids required political stability at a local level. Koile-Syria was a frontier province, newly acquired from the Ptolemies, thus there was a danger that the local leadership could defect or revolt. Therefore a significant amount of effort was expended to ensure stability, loyalty, and a continued flow of revenue into the royal treasury. Administratively, a smooth transition was facilitated under Antiochos III through a continuation of practices from previous regimes (both Ptolemaic and Achaemenid). This included use of a similar administrative network of separate financial and civil departments under an *oikonomos* and *strategos* respectively, and maintaining the Ptolemaic monetary weight until it was gradually phased out.

Further, regional stability depended on maintaining a positive relationship with the local ruling elite, and in the case of Jerusalem this was centred on the temple: the *gerousia*, the priesthood, scribes, and particularly the high priest. Thus, tax concessions for these members of the religious aristocracy, and allowing them to retain their privileged positions

of authority and rule through Torah, were seen to be effective means of encouraging their loyalty, though mitigating revenue obtained from Jerusalem (Jos. *Ant.* 12.132-153).

The Jerusalem temple hierarchy also benefitted from the Seleukid policy of urbanisation. Along with the conversion of the trade economy to the use of silver, building improvement and expansion works sought to emphasise the importance of the urban marketplace as the nexus of trade: here goods would be traded for silver, which in turn was used to pay taxes. Market taxes and city entrance tolls were also required to be paid,¹ and collection of these fell to the *agoranomos*, a position that was held by the high priest as chief Seleukid administrator in the city.² In this way, the priesthood provided a link between the local population and the Seleukid administration, ensuring smooth administration and thus increased revenue, and further wealth and prestige for the priesthood in the same vein as the tax farmers.

Jerusalem was thus at the heart of administrative life, and its importance developed over time, as shown by the increase in stamped jar handles from the city itself. However, the temple was not simply an administrative structure; it was also a place of national authority and national identity, a sentiment reaching its apex under the Hasmoneans. Their jar handle stamp impressions used the name of the city solely in the Neo-Hebrew script, underlining the administrative and cultic centrality of Jerusalem.³ However, the link between Neo-Hebrew and national consciousness can be found even in Jerusalem coins from the Persian era. Further, the Samaritan use of Neo-Hebrew likewise demonstrates a

¹ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 161.

² Horsley and Tiller, 92-3. Collection of tribute was also a function of the high priest's financial administrative duties (see chapter 5).

³ Lipschits and Vanderhooft, 764.

nationalistic usage of this script, but it is also linked very heavily to the sacred, particularly in its sole usage by the priests in inscriptions on Mount Gerizim. Both Judeans and Samaritans linked to their past through their Yahwistic faiths, expressed in their use of the minority script of Neo-Hebrew. Religion and national politics were thus thoroughly intertwined.

During the late Persian era, the high priest's self-understanding included a considerable level of regional authority. The fact that the high priest Johanan, holding office under the Persians, minted coins demonstrates that he felt he could exert the same level of power as a governor. But this self-understanding was not nullified under the Seleukids. Jerusalem possessed a level of autonomy that was to some extent encouraged by Antiochos III's concession that its inhabitants "have a form of government in accordance with the laws of their country" (πολιτευέσθωσαν δὲ πάντες οἱ ἐκ τοῦ ἔθνους κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους; *Jos. Ant.* 12.142), which was continued by subsequent rulers. As well as the power conferred on the high priest as a Seleukid administrator, he also held a considerable amount of authority by virtue of his religious headship, to the extent that authors such as Ben Sira and Hecataeus of Abdera saw him as the height of power in Jerusalem; in the case of Ben Sira, to the exclusion of any secular leadership, Jewish or Greek.

For the average Judean, since there was a great deal of continuity between one regime and the next, there would have been little observable change in their everyday life.⁴ In rural areas, taxation were still paid to local businessmen; in the city marketplace, tolls and fees were paid to the temple. Business was still conducted in Aramaic, as well as Greek, as a Hellenistic loan agreement from Khirbet el-Kôm shows,⁵ and a tariff inscription dating from the second century BCE demonstrates that local weights and measures were still widely

⁴ Aitken, 32; cf. van der Steen, 215.

⁵ Geraty, 59.

used.⁶ As Grabbe notes, for Judea “informal systems of governance might be as important as, or perhaps even more important than, the formal ones”.⁷ Thus, although Seleukid administrators were no doubt present within Judea and Jerusalem itself, their impact on the lives of Judeans appears to have been minimal. Leadership would instead be seen to come from the high priest, with the Hellenistic rulers for the most part an irrelevancy.

Result: The Heliodoros Incident

Although for a while these two mentalities of headship – the Seleukids’ “spear-won” rule through an administrative hierarchy and the high priest’s divinely appointed rule through Torah – seemed to happily coexist, they were fundamentally at odds, and conflict was bound to arise. It came to a head not long after 178 BCE,⁸ when Olympiodoros was put in charge of all sanctuaries in the regions of Koile-Syria and Phoinike by Seleukos IV, according to the Maresha stele (see chapter 3). The Maresha stele has many parallels with the stele recording Antiochos III’s appointment, in around 209 BCE, of Nikanor to the role of high priest over temples in the eastern Taurus region (ἀρχιερέα τῶν ἱερῶν πάντων; lines 31-32, *SEG* 37-1010). Among his responsibilities were that he would exercise authority “over the temples and their income” (ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ τὰς προσόδους τούτων (lines 38-9)), indicating that his role allowed for Seleukid involvement in the financial aspects of temple affairs.⁹

⁶ Merker, 241.

⁷ Grabbe, “Hyparchs”, 86.

⁸ The dates stated on the stele are the 22nd and possibly 20th of the month of Gorpaios in the year 134, which equates to summer of 178 BCE (Cotton and Wörrle, 193; cf. Gera, “Olympiodoros”, 131).

⁹ Philippe Gauthier, *BE* (1989), no. 276. Gauthier here also suggests that Nikanor was in charge only over the royal cult. Whether or not this was true of Nikanor, Cotton and Wörrle opine that Olympiodoros’ role extended to include all temples within the regions of Koile-Syria and Phoinike (Cotton and Wörrle, 197).

Olympiodoros' role of ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν was equivalent to the high priest role held by Nikanor – or, indeed, Ptolemaios son of Thraseas¹⁰ (see chapter 3) – indicating that Olympiodoros retained a supreme level of financial authority over the temples in Koile-Syria and Phoinike. This close financial supervision was likely an economic response to the harsh restrictions placed on the Seleukids by the Romans under the Treaty of Apamea. The empire was still large and required revenue to be maintained, and the loss of territory prescribed by the treaty meant any regions still held needed to be more stringently administered in order to minimise any further loss of income. Further, money that could be gained through accessing the tithes and dedications donated to temples, as well as from their administrative dealings, could be a useful one-off source of funds,¹¹ for example to pay off the debt to the Romans.¹²

In this context, 2 Maccabees 3 recounts an event during the rule of Seleukos IV when one of the king's ministers, Heliodoros,¹³ sought unsuccessfully to confiscate a large amount of unpaid revenue from the Jerusalem.¹⁴ From the Seleukid point of view, this was entirely within their rights. The traditional Greek understanding was that whoever controlled the

¹⁰ Cotton and Wörrle suggest that the role of ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν, as a specialised financial administrative role, had become detached from the role of Seleukid high priest (Cotton and Wörrle, 197-8). Gera, however (followed by Jones), had regard to the subsequent fragments of the stele in his investigation, and from it he observed further close parallels between the careers of Olympiodoros and Nikanor, that led him to infer that Olympiodoros was also in fact appointed high priest (Gera, "Seleukid Road", 48-9; cf. Jones, 104).

¹¹ Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 173.

¹² Gera, "Seleukid Road", 50.

¹³ Landau summarily states the Heliodoros of the Hefzibah stele cannot be the same man as the Heliodoros in the Maccabees narrative (Landau, 67 n. 20). Due to the relative rarity of the name, however, Piejko surmises these two are same person, and the same person that appears in the Maresha stele (Piejko, 249). It would not be unreasonable for a senior member of administration to remain in a position of power under successive kings (see chapter 3).

¹⁴ Seleukos IV had been a supporter of the Jerusalem temple (2 Macc. 3.3), so it may be that Heliodoros was sent to collect due to concern over misappropriation of funds rather than simply as an act of greed (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 173). This concern would have been acute due to the pressing need to repay the Romans.

territory in which a temple was located had ownership of the temple, and should allow whatever worship traditionally took place there to continue.¹⁵ Hence the terms of the previous decree by Antiochos III allowed the population of Jerusalem to govern themselves under their own laws (see above). From the point of view of the Jerusalem temple, this intrusion of the Seleukid administration under Seleukos IV was at odds with Antiochos III's decree and with the Jerusalem temple's understood autonomy: the temple was the highest authority in the city, and thus the administrator of the funds in its possession.

However it concluded, the Heliodoros incident was not followed up, but neither was the tension between the Seleukids and the Jerusalem temple resolved. Indeed, it fundamentally undermined the stability of the high priesthood. With temple financial administration directly supervised by the Seleukid hierarchy, challengers to the high priesthood – both pro-Seleukid and pro-Ptolemaic, vying for political supremacy in the city – could become successful simply by offering more than the incumbent, who could hence be ousted by the Seleukid overseer.¹⁶ This is exemplified in the actions of the high priests that followed: Jason steps into the high priesthood under Antiochos IV by promising 140 talents of silver and 150 more at a later stage (along with a pledge to turn Jerusalem into a Greek *polis*) (2 Macc. 4.7-9); three years later, Menelaus outbid Jason by 300 talents of silver and was granted the high priesthood in his stead (2 Macc. 4.23-4).¹⁷

While the Hellenistic administration still gained income from Jerusalem under this succession of high priests, it was ultimately at the expense of the regional stability and

¹⁵ Honigman, 102 n. 27, quoting Sourvinou-Inwood.

¹⁶ Gera, "Seleukid Road", 52-4; cf. Cotton and Wörrle, 203.

¹⁷ Jason, however, was unable to fulfil his promises (2 Macc. 4.27), which Aperghis suggests indicates that the maximum available revenue from Judea had been reached (Aperghis, *Royal Economy*, 169).

socio-political order that was provided by the Jerusalem temple.¹⁸ So long as the Jerusalem temple retained a high level of regional political power, it was not only of benefit to the local inhabitants through its significant autonomy, but also provided a level of political and economic stability for the Seleukids' benefit. Once this autonomy was undermined, however, through squeezing of the temple for short-term gain, the Seleukids' hold on the region crumbled. The political/religious leadership of the high priesthood devolved into factionalism, and into this power vacuum stepped the Maccabean faction. The revolt which followed subsequently became a reference point for the many further interactions between the Jews and their foreign rulers, particularly the Romans, and indeed for Jewish national identity right up until the present today. But in all the conflicts with internal and external enemies, in all the ideologies that sought the revitalisation and freedom of the city, Jerusalem and the temple were always at their heart.

¹⁸ Honigman, 95.

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