

1:3) of Judah. No two events in the civil life of a region are less likely to pass unnoticed than its erection into a new degree of independence, or the inauguration of a ruler with the highest title thus far granted. It seems inconceivable that such a great day would have passed unnoticed either in Nehemiah's personal memoirs, or in the Ezra books otherwise so fond of describing in detail just such solemnities.

We know even less about Ezra (Donner 1986: 431), but what at any rate is certain is that between the two of them something momentous was accomplished in the creation of a new Israelite identity. For further discussion see Galling TGI, and *CHJ* 1: 130–61.

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### PTOLEMAIC ADMINISTRATION

#### A. Chronology and Extent of Ptolemaic Control

After two brief periods of control (320–315 and 312 b.c.), Ptolemy I Soter gained permanent possession of Palestine in 301 b.c., when Antigonos the One-Eyed was defeated at the Battle of Ipsos. Ptolemy and his successors held "Phoenicia and Hollow Syria," as they called it, for a century until Antiochus III ("the Great") defeated the forces of Ptolemy V Epiphanes at Paneion in 200 b.c. During the intervening years, Ptolemaic and Seleucid forces fought several wars over control of Palestine, but with one exception we do not know of any significant and lasting gains by either side in these wars until the final Ptolemaic loss. Shortly before his death in 146 b.c., Ptolemy VI Philometor made an attempt to recover Palestine, but death cut short his early success (for the chronology and extent of Ptolemaic rule, see Bagnall 1976: 11–13).

The area under Ptolemaic control during the 3d century

was bounded on the S by Egypt, on the W by the Mediterranean, and on the N probably by the Eleutherus River (the modern Kebir), the northern boundary of modern Lebanon. It is clear that Arados and the territory to the N in general never came under lasting Ptolemaic control (Seyrig 1951: 206–20). Ptolemy III Euergetes did gain control of Seleucia-in-Pieria and of Laodiceia in the Third Syrian War (246–241 B.C.), but they were lost by his successor, Ptolemy IV Philopator, in 219 and not regained despite Philopator's victory at Raphia in 217 (for control of Laodicea, see Rey-Coquais 1978). The limits of Ptolemaic control to the E are less clear. Philadelphia (Rabbath-ammon, modern Amman) was certainly Ptolemaic, along with much of Transjordan, but we do not know how whether any of Moab was under Ptolemaic rule nor exactly how far N it extended E of the Jordan. Paneion (the site of the final loss in 200 B.C.) was probably part of the Ptolemaic domains; Damascus was in Ptolemaic hands at least from the 270s until the 250s, and perhaps throughout the period. It seems likely enough that Ptolemaic control extended to the E slopes of the Anti-lebanon Mountains throughout their extent.

### B. Military Occupation and Settlement

The Ptolemies certainly kept garrisons in the principal cities of the region, made up of mercenaries recruited from all over the E Mediterranean (Bagnall 1976: 17; Rey-Coquais 1978). In peacetime their numbers were no doubt modest, but in time of war field forces were imported in much greater quantity. Most of the military commanders mentioned in the ancient sources appear in accounts of the Ptolemaic-Seleucid wars, and we know little about the regular garrisons and their commanders. There is not even any evidence until the last two decades of Ptolemaic rule of any military governor of the region as a whole. It seems likely, however, that as in many other regions of their empire (at varying dates), the Ptolemies appointed in Palestine a *stratēgos*, or provincial governor, who had both military and civil functions. But such an appointment may not have come until the second half of the 3d century (Bagnall 1976: 219). The first absolutely certain *stratēgos* of the area, indeed, is first found after Antiochus III's conquest; the title is mentioned in an inscription dealing with the property of Ptolemaius son of Thrasesas, formerly a Ptolemaic general, who had gone over to the Selucid king at an unknown date and become a *stratēgos* and high-priest, evidently of Syria and Phoenicia (for this official and his landholdings, see Fischer 1979; Bertrand 1982).

The Ptolemies also settled troops on land in the region in much the same way they did in Egypt: a soldier was allocated land to support him and his family, but he held it on condition of continued military service, when needed, by him or his son. These soldiers evidently tried (as elsewhere) to take advantage of their superior economic positions to enslave natives, a practice firmly forbidden, with limited exceptions, by the Ptolemaic government (Liebesny 1936). Many of them married local women; and in the Ammanitis there was a group of them under the command of a local chieftain, Tobias (Edgar 1925: 1.59003). We have no idea of the numbers of these settlers, who provided substantial military reserves and helped ensure the loyalty to the Ptolemaic crown of the areas in

which they were settled. Ptolemy II founded or refounded and renamed (as Greek cities) several towns (Ptolemais, from Acco; Philadelphia, from Rabbath-ammon; Philoteria, on the Sea of Galilee), and all of these presumably had Greek soldiers among the settlers and citizens.

### C. Civil Administration in the Cities

The scarce inscriptions of the period give us almost no information at all about the administration of the cities of the interior in this period, and only some limited facts about the coastal cities, which were no doubt the focus of Ptolemaic interest. Though the Phoenician monarchy was preserved for a time at least in Sidon (as some of the Cypriot monarchies had survived briefly under Ptolemaic rule), it probably did not outlast Philokles son of Apollodoros, who served as a Ptolemaic admiral (Merker 1970; Seibert 1970). Signs of Greek civic institutions soon appear: Sidon is called a *polis*; members of its upper class compete in Greek athletics at Delos, Delphi, and Nemea; and the city has an official in charge of athletic contests whose title (*agonothētes*) is Greek. The Greek civic title *archon* is attested for Sidon and Marissa. Even with all these signs of Hellenization, however, the substance of local government may not have changed very much. The Phoenician term *sufet*, president of the people, and its Greek rendering *dikastes*, appear in Tyre and Sidon.

In all probability the cities of the coast, and at least some of those in the interior, had some land attached to them and under their administration. But our evidence for this land under Ptolemaic rule is nonexistent. Nor do we have any real indication of the relationship of the civic officials to royal ones, either those at the level of the whole province or those with more local control. Ptolemaic administration elsewhere kept local governments in check with supervision by the garrison commander (or city commandant) and financial officials, and the same was probably true in Palestine.

### D. Civil Administration in the Countryside

The countryside of the province of Phoenicia and Coele Syria was divided (at least by 261 B.C.) into administrative units called hyparchies (*hyparchiai*), of whose size and number we know nothing. At the head of the financial bureaucracy in each hyparchy, just as of each nome in Egypt, was an *oikonomos*, who was in charge of such things as supervising the underwriting of the collection of taxes to contractors, overseeing the actual tax collection, and registering ownership of slaves. (This information comes mostly from Lenger 1980: 21–22.) Administrative symmetry and Ptolemaic practice in Egypt suggest that the *oikonomos* operated collegially with at least one other official, who was probably called a *hyparchos*. So far, however, no evidence for these officials at the level of the entire region, to whom the *oikonomoi* probably reported at least in this aspect of their work, called "the manager of the revenues in Syria and Phoenicia." His one appearance in the papyrus uses a participle of the verb *dioikeo*, but he may well have held the title *dioiketes*, as did the finance minister in Egypt to whom he doubtless reported.

At the village level, the royal administration was represented by komarchs. They were responsible for seeing that the proper declarations of taxable or restricted property

(such as livestock and slaves) were filed with the *oikonomos*. There were also royal judges, called *dikastai*, but we know virtually nothing about who they were, what areas they were responsible for, or what their jurisdictional competence was.

Despite this structure, which appears to be a Greek framework imposed on the country, the Ptolemies relied substantially on local institutions and magnates to rule the countryside for them, just as they did in the cities. The story of Joseph son of Tobias (see below) indicates that wealthy locals acted as tax farmers on a large scale, just as Tobias' role as the commander in charge of military settlers in his area shows an attempt to enlist the most powerful local figures in the military side of Ptolemaic rule.

### E. Economic Management

Like any empire, the Ptolemaic was interested in exploiting its opportunities for income from the lands it controlled. Palestine was a useful backup source of wheat for Egypt when the Egyptian harvest was poor, but in ordinary times its agricultural interest was certainly more for the wide range of fruits, vegetables, oils, and wine that it produced than for wheat, which Egypt produced in abundance. The Phoenician ports had a long history as commercial centers, and these clearly offered numerous opportunities to Greeks in Ptolemaic service to make money. The Zenon papyri from the 250s show us some of the range of economic interests at stake (Harper 1928; Tchirikover 1937).

Royal interest in these activities, however, centered on taxing them. Export and import taxes at the ports, largely in the control of tax farmers, were undoubtedly important (as they were elsewhere in the Ptolemaic empire). The agricultural land of the province was also taxed. The career of Joseph son of Tobias, recounted in book 12 of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, shows us a prominent local notable bidding for the tax contract for the entire province, outbidding the longtime holders of the contract and still making a fortune over more than two decades (the dates are disputed: see Bagnall 1976: 21 n. 42).

From the reign of Ptolemy II on, the coinage for the entire region was supplied by seven coastal mints (Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, Joppa, Gaza, Berytos, and Askalon). Like Ptolemaic coinage elsewhere, it was minted on a standard with a lower weight for the drachma than was common elsewhere. The Ptolemies systematically excluded coinage from elsewhere from Palestine (as they did from Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrene), and hoard and excavation finds from the middle of the 3d century until its end show almost exclusively Ptolemaic coins. Many of them remained in circulation after the Seleucid conquest (Bagnall 1976: 180–83).

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### SELEUCID ADMINISTRATION

Only a few sources provide information about the Seleucid administration and staff in Palestine. The sources comprise a few inscriptions, the more or less extensive but tendentious accounts in 1–2 Maccabees, and the later works of Josephus. The works of Polybius and Poseidonius, who were the most important contemporary authors in the Greco-Roman ambit, as well as those of their immediate successors, are almost completely lost. The authors of the Roman Imperial period only imprecisely or summarily inform us about the management and bureaucracy of the Hellenistic period. In spite of the many problems and uncertainties concerning the historical and political development (in particular of Judea), the following survey will attempt to depict some basic features of the Seleucid administration of Palestine in the 2d century.

- A. Seleucid Conquest and Maccabean Revolt
- B. Rise of Hasmonean Rule
- C. Remnants of Seleucid Sovereignty
- D. Conclusion

#### A. Seleucid Conquest and Maccabean Revolt (200–157 B.C.)

During the Fifth Syrian War (202–ca. 195 B.C.) Ptolemy, the governor of the Ptolemaic border province of Syria and Phoenicia, sided with the Seleucid Antiochus III the Great and thus retained his position as provincial governor after Antiochus' victory. In 199 B.C. the Seleucid king perhaps regulated the legal and property relations of his newly won territory in a "decree;" in so doing, it is likely that he simply confirmed the existing Ptolemaic arrangements (see the inscription of Hefzibah, Fischer 1980: 1–3; see also Bengston 1964: 147–48; Fisher 1986: 66). Accordingly, Antiochus allowed the theocracy of Jerusalem and Judea to retain its conventional form, including the "high priest" (*archiereus*), the "council of elders" (*gerousia*, also in its traditional and unofficial sense called *hoi presbyteroi*), the "priests" (*hierais*), and the "rest of the Judeans" (*hoi alloi Ioudaioi*). However, as far as we are aware he did this only indirectly in a formal message directed to his provincial governor, Ptolemy. In this letter, Antiochus allowed "the