

Book Three
Introductory Summary

**PERSIAN SUZERAINTY, REPATRIATION, MACEDONIAN SUZERAINTY,
SELEUCID SUZERAINTY AND MACCABAEAN INDEPENDENCE
To the Assassination of High Priest Simon Matthes.**

Book three covers roughly 586 b.c. to 134 b.c. Its length and numerous appendices, etc. reflect the larger amount of ancient and classical written detail available for its timeframe.¹

- I. Overview.**
- II. Female Data, Suzerain Dynasties.**
- III. Female Data, Hebrew Dynasties.**
- IV. Summary of Period Events.**

I. Overview.

- (1) 50 years of Babylonian domination ending c. 538 b.c.
- (2) 200 years of Persian rule beginning with Cyrus II and ending with Darius III c. 332 b.c..
- (3) 10 years of Macedonian rule under Alexander the Great, to his death in 323 b.c.
- (4) 150+ years of alternating hegemonies during warrings of Alexander's empirical generals and their dynasties.
 - (a) Ptolemies, established in Egypt, were dominant the first 125 years.
 - (b) About 200 b.c. the guardians of young Ptolemy V secured Roman intervention to ward off Seleucid king Antiochus III's attempted conquest of Egypt. The peace accord between Antiochus III and Ptolemy V was sealed by the marriage of [Laodice #3 + Antiochus III-) Cleopatra [I] to Ptolemy V. Her dowry included revenues from Phoenicia and "Coele-Syria," which included Judaea and Samaria, but the territory appears to have remained a Seleucid possession.

In 172/171 b.c. Ptolemy VI, son of Cleopatra [I] and Ptolemy V, warred with his brother-in-law, Antiochus IV, to recover the provinces of "Palestine and Coele-Syria." *Josephus* reports that Ptolemy VI and his wife, Cleopatra II, relied completely on a Hebrew-commanded army. Antiochus IV briefly gained the upper hand on the Ptolemies.

Rome conquered Perseus, the last of the Macedonian Antigonid contenders. Rome forced Antiochus IV to abandon all designs on Egypt. Retreating from Egypt, he wrought vengeance on the Palestine area, which was seized by civil strife between Ptolemaic and Seleucid factions. On pain of death for resisters, Antiochus IV proscribed all local customs, laws and circumcision, and took steps to convert both the Jerusalem and Gerizzim temples to 'hellenistic' gods. Circa 168 b.c., a forceful refusal to submit by a priest named Mattathais began the (Asmonaeen/

¹ The summary is not encumbered with citations available in book three's segments. Uncited data is drawn primarily from Appendix 3A, III (Narrative, *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*); Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 4, E (additional Alexander III data); Appendix 3A, IV (Explorative Timeline, High Priests Jeshua to Jaddua and Ezra/ Nehemiah Involvements); Appendix 3A, V (Repatriation and Reformation Source-Quoted Narratives); Appendix 3A, VI (From Death of Alexander the Great to Assassination of High Priest Simon Matthes); Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 1 (Calendar Year Comparison Timeline); and Appendix 3B, II (Chief/High/Levite Priesthoods), and related descendency charts.

Hasmonaean/) "Maccabaeen" rebellion.

Over the next approximate 25 years, sons of Mattathais, who served both as commanders and high priests, warred with heirs and usurpers of the Seleucid dynasty, at times individually being drawn into tenuous, sometimes fatal alliances with one or other foe. Those struggles culminated roughly 141 b.c., when Seleucid ruler Demetrius II granted independence to Mattathais' last surviving son, high priest Simon. Per *Josephus*, Simon "freed the Jews/[Hebrews] from the dominion of the *Macedonians*, after 170 years of the empire," which statement (a) reflects the 'Macedonian' origins of territorial dynasties established by Alexander's generals and (b) appears to count the years beginning with Seleucus I's conquest of Babylon c. 312 b.c.

(5) When Demetrius II, shortly thereafter, was taken captive on a Parthian expedition, Simon was threatened by another Seleucid contender, Tryphon. Simon turned over command to his eldest sons, John Hyrcanus I and Judas [#2], and entered league with Seleucid Antiochus VII against Tryphon. Once Antiochus VII had ejected Tryphon, however, he turned coat--on threat of war he demanded Simon make restitutions of tributes received from districts outside of the territory of Judaea. Simon invoked a league previously established with Rome. Rome returned a directive confirming Simon's authority.

About 134 b.c. Simon and two of his sons were assassinated by one "Ptolemy, son of Abubus, governor of the plain of Jericho," who was married to a daughter [unnamed] of Simon. It appears that said Ptolemy anticipated support from Seleucid Antiochus VII to take over the country. Ptolemy sent soldiers to kill Simon's son, John Hyrcanus I, and to seize Jerusalem and its temple.

(John Hyrcanus I, forewarned, saved himself, commencing the period of book four.)

II. Female Data, Suzerain Dynasties.

A number of wives and mothers are identified, of the Hebrew people's suzerain dynasties through this period, although uncertainty remains in some descendancies, due mainly to successive marriages of some queens and their frequent identical names.

Referring to the respective dynastic charts, briefly summarized it appears that:

Median and Babylonian dynasties joined via Amytis, after which is found: ?/Lydia - Media/Astyages - Mandane + Cambyses I/Anshan/Elam - Cyrus II/Persia - Atossa + Darius I/Persia - Xerxes I/Persia [time of Esther + Xerxes *and/or* Artaxerxes I] - Darius II/Persia + ? - Arsanes/Persia + Sysigambis (lineage not given) - Darius III/Persia, who was conquered by Alexander III the Great.

The Macedonian line from Alexander III's father, Philip II, passed into Egypt via Arsinoe [#1]. Arsinoe #1 may have been in a line from Aetolia in Greece, where is found a legendary Cleopatra of Aetolia. Arsinoe #1's son by Philip II, Ptolemy I (born posthumously of Philip II), commenced the Ptolemaic line.

The Seleucid line issued from Laodice #1 (possibly a derivative from Pontus): Laodice #1 + Antiochus 'A' - Seleucus I + Apame (lineage not given) - Antiochus I + ? - Antiochus II (whose marriage with and son by Berenice II, daughter of Ptolemy II, was obliterated by Laodice #2) + Laodice #2 - Seleucus II + Laodice #3 - Antiochus III [+ Laodice #3?] - Cleopatra I.

The name, Cleopatra, in this period progresses: Cleopatra I + Ptolemy V - Ptolemy VI

+ [? + ? -] Cleopatra II - Cleopatra III. Cleopatra III suffered changing Ptolemaic/Seleucid alliances by being given as a wife first to contender Bala and then Demetrius II, descending respectively from contending brothers Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV, sons of Antiochus III. Of those Cleopatras, II was forced to flee the barbarism of Ptolemy VIII to her eldest daughter, Cleopatra III, who subsequently rejected Demetrius II and (book four) retrieved Antiochus VII (of indefinite parentage) out of exile, to be her husband and her kingdom's savior.

III. Female Data, Hebrew Dynasties.

Nebuchadnezzar's captives from Jerusalem between 598 and 584 b.c. included bearers of Hebrew royal and sacerdotal lineages. After queen mother Nehushta, female data is absent entirely for both priesthood and royal lines, with the exceptions of Susanna and Esther (detailed elsewhere), to whom no children are ascribed. Many the post-exilic descendancies, paternally as given, do not appear to hold, absent unspecified unions via unnamed daughters and reflect instances where the term, "fathered," may represent *step-fathered*.

Royal bloodline on the record is shown conveyed across the exilic period via Jehoiachin/Jeconiah, young in age when queen mother Nehushta surrendered at Jerusalem c. 598/597 b.c. Jehoiachin, the son of Nehushta and Eliakim/Jehoiakim, had several children born to him while living in exile. In mid-life, some 37 years after his capture, he was elevated to formal position at the court of Amel/Awil-Marduk/Evil Merodach (Merodach ruled at Babylon c. 562/560 b.c. Zerubbabel, "leader/prince of Judah," is identified as grandson of Jehoiachin in the monarchical line.

Chief priesthood lineage paternally was conveyed from Jehozadak to Jeshua, "son of Jehozadak," who also inferrably was young when captured c. 584 b.c. (at which time chief priest Seraiah, who "fathered Jehozadak," was executed).

Zerubbabel and Jeshua together led the return(s) that followed Cyrus II's edict and its confirmation by Darius I. (*Haggai* and *Zechariah* refer to Jeshua as *Joshua*.) Per *1 Esdras*, Zerubbabel and Jeshua were accompanied by "Joacim, the son of Zorobabel [Zerubbabel];" *Nehemiah* shows "Joiakim, the son of Jeshua." Both references could apply if Joacim's mother was a daughter of Jeshua. A "Joacim" appears also as the son or son-in-law of a Zerubbabel son named Meshullam.

How or when Zerubbabel's governorship ended, and his and Jeshua's deaths, are not reported.

The record resumes with the Ezra commission. For discussion purposes, c. 458 b.c. ("alternate two") is employed, as the most useful year of three potential chronologies. Ezra is shown in the priesthood line at *Ezra* 7:1 and *2 Esdras* 1:1, as a son of (...Azariah/Azarias - Hilkiah/ Helchias -) Seraiah/Seraias. At the time of Ezra's appearance on the scene, "a son of Jeshua, whose name was Joacim, was high priest." It is unknown if he also was the individual named Joacim who was husband in exile of one Susanna, and is described as one of the most honored elders in Babylon.

Ezra solicited repatriatees out of Media as well as Babylon. In the ensuing Ezra/ Nehemiah re-formation of the state of Temple, certain men were "expelled out of the number and honor of the priests." Some returning son-priests were rendered illegitimate due to unacceptable motherblood. Some were denied status because they could not produce a wife of acceptable genealogy; but a polygamist with one acceptable wife had the option of

putting away the others and their offspring.

The form of proof of acceptable ancestry at that time is not described. A general policy summarized by *Josephus* implies that the rule of requisite motherblood never was broken:

"[O]ur forefathers...made provision that the stock of the priests should continue unmixed and pure...[and that]...he who is partaker of the priesthood must propagate of a wife of the same nation...make a scrutiny, and take his wife's genealogy from the ancient tables, and procure many witnesses to it. And this is our practice not only in Judea, but wheresoever any body of men of our nation do live...for they send to Jerusalem the ancient names of their parents in writing...and signify who are the witnesses also. *But if any war falls out...those priests that survive them compose new tables of genealogy out of the old records, and examine the circumstances of the women that remain; for still they do not admit of those that have been captives...* [T]he strongest argument of our exact management in this matter is...that we have the names of our high priests *from father to son* set down in our records of the interval of two thousand years..." (*Against Apion*, 1.7; italics supplied.)

Among the first excommunicated priests were "sons of Jeshua/Jesus, the son of Jozadak/Josedec, and...brothers." Clusters of particular proper names suggest a major reformation schism. Among other listed excommunicants--presumably, together with any daughters they may have had--were Jehiel/Hiereel of Immer[/Harim/ Annas/Hananiah]; Elioenai/Elionas of Pashur/Phaisur; Mattaniah, Zechariah and Jehiel of Elam; Elioenai, Eliashib, and Mattaniah of Zattu, etc. It reasonably can be assumed that practicing Hebrews would know their own clan's genealogy and, apart from any then-requisite administrative proof, know themselves or other family members to be lineally legitimate under The Law as they received it.

There are allusions to two involved females during the Ezra/Nehemiah period and what appear to be ongoing factions:

(a) "Many [were] sworn to [Joseph] Tobiah because son-in-law he was of Shecaniah...and Jehohanan his son had taken the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah."

(b) "[O]f the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib, the priest high [seemingly unnamed--Johanan/Jonathan/Johanan?--] son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite...I [Nehemiah] chased him away." The Sanballat daughter is not identified.

In the chief priesthood line, an unnamed daughter of (Mattathais -) Simon Matthes is the only female reference which remains at close of the within approximate 400-year epoch. Her fate, similar to that of the daughters of king Mattaniah following Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, is untold.

In the royal line, the seven sons of (Zerubbabel-[Hananiah]-Jehiel-[Shecaniah]-) Elioenai appear to be the last descendants of king David directly identified as such. However, the lineage lists for Jesus of the *New Testament* given by *Luke* 3:23ff. and *Matthew* 1:6ff. are very different (from book four of this work):

(a) *Luke's* list proceeds (. . . Jesse-David-) *Nathan*; *Matthew's* list proceeds (. . . Jesse-David-) *Solomon*.

(b) *Luke*, which lists no king names other than David's, shows 18 generations between (Neri-Shealtiel-) Zerubbabel and (Heli/Eli-) Jesus. One consensus is that Heli/Eli was the name of the father of Mary [A], mother of Jesus; her father's name is given by the *Gospel of Mary* as "Joachim."

(c) *Matthew's* list shows all but two known Judah kings between Solomon and Jehoiachin and nine generations between (Jehoiachin-Shealtiel-) Zerubbabel and Joseph, "the husband of Mary, out of whom was generated Jesus."

To the same extent that maternally-conveyed lineages are unavailable, female perpetuation of Davidic and Aaronic bloodlines in accordance with The Law over time, together with potential transmission to future generations, cannot be disproved.

IV. Summary of Period Events.²

Globally, Cyaxares II of Media bowed to the charismatic genius of his nephew, Cyrus II, who gradually knit Mede and Persian forces into an army totally loyal to him. Cyrus II multiplied allies as he went and culminated Persia's domination of Asia Minor with the taking of Sardes in 546 b.c. Cyrus II then took his army to Babylonia city. There, his captains took its palace without a major battle. *Daniel's* report of intrigue at the Babylon court suggests that a favorable palace faction may have been prepared for the conqueror's arrival, basis being afforded that the unnamed queen-mother at Babylon's court--she who summoned Daniel to read the foreign writing at "Belshazzar's feast"--was Amytis, Cyrus II's middle-aged aunt, the dead Nebuchadnezzar's only named wife.

Cyrus II commanded the greatest Asian empire yet, as suzerain over all of the fertile crescent. "[I]n year first of Cyrus [taken as 538 b.c. when he gained Babylon]...he made a proclamation...: 'Thus says Cyrus, the king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the Earth has given to me the God of the Heavens, and He has appointed me to build to Him a house in Jerusalem. Who among you of all His people...let him go up.'" "[R]ulers of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin went in haste, yet did many [then] stay at Babylon, not willing to leave their possessions."

An initial return briefly is described as being led by one "Sheshbazaar," whose identity remains unsettled.³ *Ezra* and *1 Esdras* sequence it directly after Cyrus' edict, without specifics as to number or composition of repatriatees. *Josephus* reports after the edict that Cyrus sent an epistle "to the governors that were in Syria...Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes," informing them that he had sent his "treasurer, Mithridates, and Zorobabel/[Zerubbabel], the governor of the Jews," with authority to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple, and that being returned with them were "the vessels which king Nebuchadnezzar pillaged." *Josephus* states 42,462 persons accompanied the return.

Cyrus II died c. 529 b.c. and was succeeded by his son, Cambyses II.⁴ Following Cyrus II's death, 'Samaritans'/persons from the Samaria district⁴ brought pressure to bear on Persia's regional governors about the restorations underway at Jerusalem. The governors wrote to Cambyses, the new Persian monarch, and he ordered a stop to the work.

Cambyses II was succeeded c. 522 by Darius I. Whether or not Zerubbabel either was or was with "Sheshbazaar" for the initial repatriation, when the altar only was built and before work was stopped by Cambyses II, it does appear that Zerubbabel was twice at Jerusalem. *Josephus* relates that "Zorobabel/[Zerubbabel]... governor of the Jews that had been in captivity, came to Darius from Jerusalem, for there had been an old friendship between him and the king; [he came]...with two others, thought worthy to be guard of the king's body; and [he] obtained that honor which he hoped for." According to *Josephus* and *1*

² Due to the sheer amount of data, detail summarized here from book three's many segments is more condensed than in the introductory summaries of books one and two.

³ It has been considered that "Sheshbazaar" was a Persian name for Zerubbabel.

⁴ Refer to paragraph at fn. 13.

Esdras, Darius granted Zerubbabel authority to restore Jerusalem after holding an oratory competition, which Zerubbabel won (thenceforth Darius would “call him “cousin”).

Generationally, Zerubbabel (grandson of Jehoiachin), could have been on the Jerusalem scene c. 537 b.c. and again, c. 520/519 b.c. as Darius I’s sub-satrap of the district of Judah. Day-to-day involvements of local sub-satraps with Persia’s regional satraps only can be conjectured. There is some description in the Zerubbabel period (not to the extent as later with Ezra/ Nehemiah) of hostilities between repatriates and regional residents, and resulting entanglements with provincial administrators. It is not known of the region’s residents how many were descendants of families that had not been exiled and how many, descendants of earlier Assyrian and Babylonian colonizations. Differences cannot be relegated completely to ‘north’/‘south’ and ‘establishment priests’/‘rural priests’ competitions, nor is it possible in the Zerubbabel period to discern influence at a distance by hierarchical elders/blueblooded descendants in the exilic communities in Babylon and Elam.⁵

Both the scriptures and *Josephus* next give a full account of a Zerubbabel-led return in Darius I’s second year, c. 520/519. *1 Esdras*, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* list eight repatriatee categories and the numbers of persons in each; *Josephus* lists six. The sources contain variations, but they tally in some subtotals while presenting odd correlations in others.⁶ The temple foundation is reported as laid in “the second year” after Darius I’s commission, or c. 518/517 b.c., at which time regional contentions heightened. ‘Samaritans,’ who had asked leave of Zerubbabel to help with restoration and been denied, caused regional governors to write about the matter to Darius I. The governors cited Cambyses II’s epistle forbidding rebuilding, and they questioned Zerubbabel’s authority. A copy of the original Cyrus II edict was uncovered at the Ecbatana palace; and Darius I, in his second year, rededicated its content and ordered cooperation of regional administrators. The temple was “finished...in the sixth year of Darius,” c. 516/515 b.c.

“[I]n general it is sufficiently clear that the subjects of Persia were far more favourably placed than [those under] Assyria.” “Both “Cyrus [II] and Darius [I] permitted not merely the rebuilding of the...temple..., but laid the cost of it on the[ir] royal treasury.” Persia’s kings also provided the cost of sacrifices offered on behalf of themselves and their sons. Darius I refined the territorial administrative organization begun by Cyrus II, employing policies under which “great regard was paid...to the traditional life and custom of the many diverse peoples gathered into the vast empire. ... [F]rom the early years of Darius [I] onwards...the Persian proved a peaceful [and] tolerant government. ... [T]he Persian kings were ready to continue the forms and the religious associations of conquered monarchies...[and]... actively supported the temple-worship of the gods of their subjects, or contributed to the building of their temples, and conferred special privileges on priesthoods and religious institutions.”⁷

The Persian empire under Darius I was formed of 20 provinces (“satrapies”), subdivided further into districts and governed by appointed governors (“satraps”) and sub-governors.⁸ “The fifth satrapy (V) known as Abar-Nahara, *i.e.* Beyond-the-River, consisted of Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and Cyprus.” “At times the same [regional] governor was placed in charge of two or more complete satrapies: for example, Ushtanni [Tattenai?], as a Babylonian contract attests, was, in the third year of Darius...’satrap’ of Beyond-the-River and

⁵ An earlier example of elders in exile interacting with local affairs is the Jeremiah correspondence relative to priests Shemaiah and Zephaniah—Appendix 2C, VII, “Jeremiah.” (*Refer to Appendix 3A, V, B for the events of Esther.*)

⁶ *Refer to Appendix 3B, II, sub-part III.*

⁷ Cf. Ezra 6:4, 8, 10. Non-scriptural quoted material in these and following paragraphs is from Cambridge, vol. IV: ch. VII.III, pp. 187-188; ch. VII.IV, pp. 194ff.; ch. VII.V, p. 200.

⁸ Cambridge suggests that the prophet Zechariah (1:11) recognized Darius I’s settling of the empire in the phrase, “behold, all the earth sits and is at peace” (vol. IV, ch. VII.II, p. 181).

Babylon, [being] satrapies V and VI.... The satraps were men of high births...in some cases members of the royal family by birth or marriage, appointed for indefinite periods...[with] functions and powers...widest in civil administration and wide also in military matters.”

A regional satrap appointed by Persia was “the highest judicial authority within the province, which in Aramaic was termed *medinah*, judicial district. ... He had to maintain good relations within his own province [where] questions often arose which required reference to the king, such as was made by Tattenai (?Ushtanni), the satrap of Beyond-the-River, in the matter of the rebuilding of the...Temple...associated with disputes” between districts. “An important function of the satrap...was the control of finance [and] the duty of raising the specified amount [of taxation] from his province.” “The household of each satrap was provided for by his own province, and that of each sub-satrap by the district under his charge.”

Irreconcilables posed by the extant formats of the books of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *1* and *2 Chronicles* anchor a belief that they originally consisted of a single scroll, the natural sequencing of which was lost. Related Persian monarch tenures have been derived primarily from incomplete or damaged archeological inscriptions, where generic ‘throne titles’⁹ may substitute for proper names. Identification is complicated further by unusual renditions of monarchical names in some of the related scriptures, and contradictions between them and *Josephus*. Therefore, indecision persists as to which Persian rulers are referenced in the pertinent narratives of *Esther*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*. As a result, alternate potential chronologies exist for the Ezra/Nehemiah period.¹⁰

Ezra/Esdras, “principal priest of the people in Babylon...determined to go up to Jerusalem, and to take with him some of those Jews [/Hebrews] that were in Babylon.” Ezra also notified “all those of his own nation that were in Media.” Ezra varyingly is described as ‘scribe’ and ‘priest’ and Nehemiah, as ‘governor.’ There is confusion as to the order of their sojourns and related events, but biblical texts clearly name Ezra and Nehemiah together at the same time in Jerusalem at least once. The major problem with striking a chronology is the uncertainty of under which Persian monarch each actually served. *Josephus* designates simply “Xerxes,” as the monarch under whom all of both Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s works occurred. *Ezra*, *Nehemiah* and *1 Esdras* designate “Artaxerxes.” (Theorizing that the references are to the same monarch appears precluded in that *Josephus* seems to make a distinction.) As to Ezra’s commission, “All the main traditions converge upon the reign of Artaxerxes I.”¹¹

Apart from the question of actual years of Ezra and Nehemiah commissions, correlating names of individuals reported present at various times yields some contradictions in the sequencing of their administration(s)--particularly as regards persons named as present during the wall building, *vis-a-vis* the ‘excommunications’ of men with ‘foreign’ wives and offspring and persons ultimately named as submitting to that covenant. Associated elements are (a) the diminution of the priesthood division/line of (Jehiel-) Shecaniah/Shemaiah of the

⁹ Latin Darius and Greek Dareios derive from the Persian root *dara* = a king; equated in Herodotus with the Greek *herxeies* = keeper or ruler; the Hebrew form of Darius, *daryawesh*, derives from a similar root = to raise or make high.

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix 3A, IV, from which “Alternate Two” is employed in this discussion.

¹¹ (a) Nehemiah 8:9 and 12:367ff.; (b) After concluding, “Now [all] this was done in the days of Xerxes,” the next chapter of *Josephus*, which tells the story of *Esther*, commences, “After the death of Xerxes, the kingdom came to be transferred to his son Cyrus, whom the Greeks called Artaxerxes;” (c) “There is a growing consensus of opinion that the...work of Ezra presupposes that of Nehemiah.” However, “It is very generally agreed...that Ezra did not return before Nehemiah, though it is disputed whether to place the priestly scribe between the first and second visits of Nehemiah.” Cambridge, v.VI, p. 174-175. (b) refer also to Appendix 3A, IV timeline.

sons of Elam;¹² (b) Nehemiah conflicts with descendants of Elioenai; (c) conveyance of the high priest line from Joiada/Jehoiada to Johanan/Jonathan/Jehohanan/John; (d) the tenure of Persian governor, Sanballat/Sanaballat; and (d) the tenure of one Bagoas/Bagosos/Bagohi--all of which fall within unspecified tenures of six named high priests.

The language of the assembled descriptions allows that the formal proceedings resulting in the expulsion of certain lines could have occurred after the dedication of the wall, when Nehemiah as well as Ezra was present. After *Nehemiah* 12's description of the wall inauguration, 13:1 states that, "On *that day* they read in the book of Moses.... And it was found written in it that not should come the Ammonite and the Moabite into the assembly of [Tet.].... And was it [then], when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed races.... And before this, Eliashib the priest...who was related to Tobiah" had established himself at temple. (Coincidentally, *Ezra* 9's account which commences, "[A]t the end of these things," does not follow from the chapter preceding it.)¹³

Fundamental causes for differences between the areas of Judah and 'Samaria' remain clouded. A major difficulty advanced in framing "a consistent...reconstruction of the course of events and of the relations"¹⁴ between Judah and 'Samaria' is generalization of the terms, "Samaria" and "Samaritans" in scriptural descriptions. Actual territorial line(s) of 'Samaria' are not drawn (e.g. Sanballat, "the Horonite," may have been from Beth-horon, under 20 miles from Jerusalem). 'Samaritan' could describe district residents, without distinguishing individuals who privately may have counted themselves as legitimate temple subjects under The Law.

During Persian rule, the chief priest appears to have been second to the suzerain's local governor: "Within certain satrapies, older or local forms of government were in a measure... perpetuated, such as...the Jews under high-priestly government and the law-book of Ezra, to which was given the force of state-law by Artaxerxes, in the satrapy of Beyond-the-River." "[The] men [who] offered the largest sacrifices..., used great magnificence in the worship..., and dwelt in Jerusalem...made use of a form of government that was aristocratical, but mixed with an oligarchy, for the high priests were at the head of their affairs."¹⁵ "Certain smaller countries and city-states that had submitted voluntarily to the Persians retained their monarchies, in vassalage to Persia."¹⁶ "Definite instances of the exemption of priests or

¹² Refer to Appendix 2A, *Elam*. "Philologists have not been able successfully to relate" the Elamite language, which appears on the "Behistun" inscription of Darius I, "to any other known tongue." Aid, p. 501. Jeremiah was "against Elam," 49:34. Elamite mention ends c. 33 a.d./c.e.: "There was then in Jerusalem resident Jews, men representing all of the nations under heaven, who, at occurrence of [a preceding loud report], gathered in a crowd and were confused--because each one heard his own language spoken [by a group of particular gentlemen]--and beside themselves were wondering aloud, 'Don't all these persons speaking look like Galilaeans? How is it, then, each of us is hearing our own language, in which we were generated?--Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those inhabiting Mesopotamia, Judaea and also Cappadocia, Pontus, and the Asia, Phrygia and also Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya on down to Cyrene, and those sojourning Romans, Jews/[Hebrews] ...Cretans and Arabians....'" Acts 2:8-11.

¹³ Although the proceedings as reported by Josephus and Ezra focus on Ezra's presence, Cambridge remarks: "Nehemiah's last step--the purging of the priesthood ["]instigated by the leading men"--appears to have some reference to the great Samaritan [north/south] schism, when the intermittent hostility between [the two regions of] Judah and Samaria led to the subsequent enmity of two closely-related though rival sects." Vol. VI, pp. 169, 171; italics supplied. Cf. differences among the three main repatriatee listings (Ezra, Nehemiah and 1 Esdras; Appendix 3B, II, Attachment 1)--examples being (a) 1 Esdras alone includes sons of "Ananias/[Hananiah]," vis-a-vis the lineage strings Zerubbabel-Hananiah-Shecaniah/Sons of Shecaniah-Shemaiah-Neariah-Elioenai and [Berechiah-]Meshullam-[Tobiah-]Jehohanan (Appendix 3B, II, Attachment 3); and (b) where 1 Esdras names the representative chief of the sons of David as "(Sechenias-) Lettus" vs. Ezra's "Hattush." In this connection, it is noted that, at Ezra 4:9 of the interlinear text referenced in this work, the Hebrew is translated interlinearly as "the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites" (concerning those who complained to the Persian king during temple rebuilding), but at the margin is rendered "the men of Sosa, the Dahavites, who were Elamites."

¹⁴ Cambridge, v. IV, p.171.

¹⁵ *AJ* XI.IV.8.

¹⁶ Concern of the Sanballat and Tobiah parties (discussed later) that Nehemiah had such ulterior motives at Jerusalem may have prompted their remark to him, that "prophets you have set up to preach about you, at Jerusalem, saying, 'A king in Judah!'"

sacred classes from taxation...[was a] decree of Artaxerxes forbidding tribute, impost or toll to be levied on the priests and on the temple personnel at Jerusalem. (Ezra vii. 24).”

Apart from a text statement that Ezra and high priest Joacim died at about the same time, there is no direct data as to years or lengths of tenure of high priests. For the first 206 years of this 404-year period--from a 538 b.c. repatriation to Alexander III the Great's arrival at Jerusalem c. 332 b.c.—six high priests only are identified: Jeshua, Joacim/Joiakim, Eliashib, Joiada/Judas, Johanan/Jonathan, and Jaddua/Jaddus.¹⁷ Related uncertainties involve the *Elephantine* correspondence and a seeming second “Sanballat” at a different time. The several connected vagaries could lend credence to a third alternate chronology that has been conjectured for the Ezra/Nehemiah period¹⁸ --as examples, Manasseh “was sent into Samaria by Darius, the last king [III of Persia, conquered by Alexander III];” and a “Sanballat” told Alexander “that he had a son-in-law, Manasseh, who was brother to the high priest, Jaddua.” One female name is found about this time: a Sanballat daughter named Nicasio who became a wife of Jaddua's “brother, Manasseh.”¹⁹

Alexander III's father, Philip II of Macedonia, had died in 336 b.c., four years before Alexander entered Jerusalem. In the preceding decades Philip II had consolidated Macedonian power over mainland Greece and, after his death, son Alexander apparently set his own cap for the world. By 335 b.c. every Greek state except Sparta had submitted to Alexander III as commander-in-chief of Macedonia and the Grecian League of Corinth. By 332 b.c. he had put Persia's Darius III on the run and was advancing toward Egypt, along “the immemorial route through Palestine.” High priest Jaddua (after some hesitation out of loyalty to his former Persian suzerain) submitted peaceably to Macedonian hegemony.

Once Alexander had control of Egypt he resumed pursuit of Darius III and finished the conquest of Persia. The canon and apocrypha contain a few references to forces of ‘Hellenism,’ as Asia Minor and the mid-East assimilated cultural ‘modernities’ introduced by Macedonian rule. Alexander III was planning to take his imperial expedition ever eastward, but within a year he died. His death unleashed dynastic succession issues and competitions among the generals and captains left in key territorial control of different parts of the empire. During the following century and a half ‘Coele-Syria’ and Palestine regions would be subjected politically and militarily to conflicts between Alexander's major contending successors and their descendants, in varying alliances.

In the ensuing period, territories formerly encompassed by the Davidic empire--north to south, west and east of the Jordan--become referenced in various configurations of mixed provinces and districts, e.g. ‘Coele-Syria,’ upper and lower Galilee, Samaria, Judaea, Idumaea, etc. (In contrast is *Herodotus'* earlier statement, that “Phoenicia...that part of Syria, and all the region extending from hence to Egypt, is known by the name Palestine.”) It cannot be generalized that differing political affiliations amongst the people were confined to their districts of residence, or that loyalties and popular factions were confined to specific areas. As an example, support garnered toward the end of Persia's rule by would-be (or actual) high priest Manasseh--brother or son-in-law of high priest Jaddua--resulted in Alexander III authorizing construction of the Gerizzim temple.

How long Jaddua remained as high priest after welcoming Alexander III is not known. Sequentially, Jaddua is the last chief priest of lineage mentioned in the *Old Testament* canon, after whom data rests with *Josephus* and *Maccabees*. When Jaddua was dead, “Onias [I] his son took the high priesthood;” no detail is offered on Onias I. “When Onias [I] the high priest was dead, his son Simon [“the Just”] became his successor.” “When he was

Nehemiah 6:7.

¹⁷

Refer to Appendix 3B, II, Detail B, High Priests Eliashib to Jaddua.

¹⁸

See Appendix 3A, VI.

¹⁹ Refer to Appendix 3B, II, Detail B.

dead, and had left a young son, who was called Onias [II], Simon's brother, Eleazar...took the high priesthood."

Following a decisive battle in 301 b.c. among post-Alexander III contenders, Ptolemy [I] obtained "Coele-Syria," which in the context of the time embraced Judaea as well as the 'Samaria' and Galilee regions.²⁰ *Josephus* reports that Ptolemy I was a liberal hegemon, and that Hebrews in Alexandria received equal privileges with the Macedonians. "However, there were disorders among [the Hebrews'] posterity [descendants]...those of Jerusalem said that their temple was holy, and resolved to send their sacrifices [money] there; but [those in the Samaria region] were resolved that they should be sent to Mount Gerizzim."

Territorial claims persisted, however, on the part of the Seleucids, as to their share of Alexander's former empire. Their Antiochus I lost Miletus, Phoenicia and western Cilicia to Ptolemy II (Ptolemy I's successor) in the "First Syrian War" (276-272 b.c.). Ptolemy II lost a "Second Syrian War" (260-255) to Antiochus II, who was supported by Antigonus II; the Seleucids regained Ionia, 'Coele-Syria' [in its greater or lesser context is not clear], and western Cilicia.

Ptolemy II and Antiochus II finally put an end to warring c. 252 b.c. They "made a friendship...and a league." Antiochus II's queen, Laodice [#2] was deposed, and Ptolemy II's daughter, Berenice II, became Antiochus II's new queen. It is not said whether Ptolemy II and High Priest Eleazar at Jerusalem were related by marriage, but good relations are apparent between them. Eleazar responded with grace to Ptolemy II's request for a translation of the Temple codices into Greek; Eleazar sent scholars to produce it. Accord between Ptolemies and Antiochii lasted, however, only until Ptolemy II died, at which time Antiochus II recalled queen-mother Laodice [#2]. Laodice soon killed her husband, Berenice II, and Berenice II's infant-heir.

High priest Eleazar's death is not reported. "[A]fter Eleazar's death his uncle Manasseh, took the priesthood." Warring of Ptolemies and Seleucids, after reinstatement of queen Laodice, persisted through the reign of Ptolemy III and into that of Seleucus II, with various losses and acquisitions, until regional hegemony was taken firmly into Seleucid hands under Antiochus III c. 195 b.c., in the "Fifth Syrian War."²¹

It is not until the advent of Antiochus III that high priest detail recommences. "[A]fter he [Manasseh] had ended his life, Onias [II] received that dignity." Precisely when Onias II's term began cannot be determined, but it appears to have coincided at some point with that of Ptolemy III. Onias II, described reluctant as to high priest duties, failed to pay taxes to Egypt as had "his forefathers,..out of their own estates." Ptolemy III threatened to confiscate land. One Joseph, son of Tobias, whose mother was Onias II's sister, outbid all other "principal men of dignity" and obtained "the farming"/collecting of Ptolemy III's taxes. Ptolemy III gave Joseph Tobias an army of 2,000 foot soldiers to enforce collection in 'Syria' and Phoenicia. Joseph did not hesitate slaying principal men of Askelon and Scythopolis when met with refusals to pay, quickly bringing the more northern cities into line. Joseph Tobias maintained his lead position for some 22 years.

In renewed warring between respective dynastic successors, Ptolemy IV (222-205 b.c.) and Antiochus III (223-187 b.c.), Antiochus III seized Judaea. The next Ptolemy, V (by his general Scopas), briefly regained Judaea and many Coele-Syrian cities; but Antiochus III supravened, regained the lost cities and took Samaria as well. Then he and Ptolemy V effected a reconciliation, in which Antiochus III's daughter, Cleopatra I, became wife and queen to Ptolemy V. Antiochus III yielded up, as his daughter's dowry, Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Samaria, and Judaea. (There is a contradiction as to whether the land itself, or only its

²⁰ Refer to Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 1, fn. 13.

²¹ During that interim, Ptolemy III (Berenice II's brother) invaded Asia ("Third Syrian War"/"War of Berenice"), and obtained surrender from Seleucus II (Laodice #2's son with Antiochus II) of the Syrian coasts and south Asia Minor.

revenue, was bestowed.) Onias II is reported as high priest at the time of the accord.

Subsequently, local politics reflect exacerbation of factioning of Ptolemaic and Seleucid supporters, reminiscent of the Eliashib/Tobiah differences with Nehemiah. “[T]he Samaritans were in a flourishing condition” and “making incursions into Judaea.” Onias II, opposed by one “Simon of Bilgah,”²² was seen as supporting the Seleucids.

Meanwhile, Joseph Tobias--“hindered from going by old age”--had sent his youngest son, Hyrcanus [designated herein as Hyrcanus Tobias], to a celebration at the Ptolemaic Alexandrian court. Hyrcanus charmed the court, bestowed extravagant gifts, and was dispatched home with high honors. Envy caused a confrontation prior to Joseph’s death--Hyrcanus killed two of his “brethren” and “many others of those that were with them, but the rest escaped to Jerusalem to their father.” Hyrcanus “retired beyond the river Jordan,” and there established himself in the vicinity of Heshbon.

One Simon/Simeon, “of the tribe of Benjamin, who was made governor of the temple,” is depicted in contention with high priest Onias II. An appeal by Simon/Simeon to the Coele-Syrian and Phoenician governors resulted in an investigation of Temple wealth by Seleucus IV, who succeeded Antiochus III c. 187 b.c. Onias II explained to Heliodorus, the Seleucid official, that part of the temple money was a care fund for widows and orphans, and part was the property of Hyrcanus Tobias. Heliodorus insisted the “money must be confiscated for the royal treasury,” which caused great distress “throughout the city.” A mysterious attack on Heliodorus and his bodyguards aborted their intent and Heliodorus returned to his king; but it is reported that henchmen of Simon/Simeon, who believed Onias II responsible for contriving the attack, resorted to murdering their opponents.

“Seleucus [IV] died...[and] his brother Antiochus [IV]...took the kingdom,” becoming “king in year 137 [175/174 b.c.] of the kingdom of the Greeks.” The ensuing dozen or so years were again a period of major changes, globally as well as locally. Cleopatra I, mother of Ptolemy VI, had taken governance of Egypt, as regent for her young son by Ptolemy V, who had died c. 180 b.c. When she died soon thereafter, Ptolemy VIII Physcon contended with Ptolemy VI. Meanwhile, Rome declared war against Perseus c. 172/171, heralding the last of Macedonia.

In Jerusalem, one Menelaus/[Onias III], gave some of the temple’s gold vessels to Andronicus, Antiochus IV’s man-in-charge.²³ High priest Onias II withdrew to “an inviolable sanctuary at Daphne, near Antioch,” and made his protests public. At Onias III’s instigation Andronicus lured out Onias II and killed him.²⁴ Joseph Tobias (Onias II’s nephew) also had died. Onias II left the priesthood to his son Simeon/Simon (referenced also as a son of “Jochanon” and seemingly a second Simon/Simeon). Hyrcanus had considerable support, however.²⁵ “[T]he multitude was divided, but the greater part joined with the elders [of Joseph’s sons; half-brothers of Hyrcanus] in this war; as did Simon, the high priest, by reason he was of kin to them.” The people “grew seditious” ...[for] the elders [of Joseph’s sons] made [civil] war against Hyrcanus.”

Antiochus IV made an expedition against Egypt and captured and confined Ptolemy VI. Ptolemy VIII *Physcon* briefly held Egypt’s throne, and then “was expelled by Antiochus

²² Given in some translations is a “certain Simon, of the priestly course of Bilgah, who had been appointed superintendent of the temple.”

²³ Some uncertainty/overlap of events is found in the reigns of Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV vis-a-vis local events; Josephus, in reporting that “Seleucus IV succeeded Antiochus III and “reigned over Asia [c. 187 b.c.],” the phrase, “At that time,” leaves a question as to this sequencing of events.

²⁴ A timing uncertainty relative to Andronicus is posed by 2 Maccabees verses 34-38: “When the king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Jews of the city, together with the Greeks who detested the crime, went to see [the king] about the murder.” Antiochus IV humiliated Andronicus publically and put him to death.

²⁵ Hyrcanus, on his territory “beyond the Jordan” “not far from the country of Heshbon,” had built a strong castle with impressive grounds and appointments, over which he ruled “for seven years,” including a period of Seleucus IV’s reign.

[IV], who restored Philometor [Ptolemy VI] but kept Pelusium (“the key to Egypt”) for himself.” Ptolemy VI, wanting to free himself from the Seleucids, recalled Ptolemy VIII to reign jointly and help repel Antiochus IV.

“[W]hen Simeon/Simon was dead, Onias [III/Menelaus] succeeded.” Notwithstanding confusion as to Simeons/Simons, the tenure of “high priest” Simon/Simeon appears to have been brief; and Onias III did not succeed immediately. “[U]pon the death of Onias [II]...they [who, is not designated] gave the high priesthood to Jesus/[Jason] his brother; for that son [Onias IV], which Onias [II] left, was yet but an infant.”

“[G]reat sedition fell among the men of power in Judea...about obtaining the government.” Antiochus IV, who “had a quarrel with the sixth Ptolemy about his right to the whole country of Syria,” “took measures for his own security” and made an excursion into Jerusalem. He was received with great pomp “by Jason/[Jesus] and the people of the city,” and Jesus/Jason promised a large tribute. “Three years later,” Antiochus IV replaced Jesus/Jason with Onias III, who “outbid Jason by 300 talents of silver.”

Contention between Jesus/Jason and Onias III continued, with “the multitude...divided between them.” Although “the greater part of the people assisted Jason,” “the [elder] sons of Tobias took the part of Menelaus [/Onias III];” and Jason...was driven out as a fugitive to the country of the Ammonites.” Onias III then cast out the “sons of Tobias,” who appealed to Antiochus IV “to make an expedition into Judea.” Antiochus IV complied and sacked the city. “As for Hyrcanus Tobias, when he saw that Antiochus [IV] had a great army, and feared lest he should be caught...he slew himself with his own hand, while Antiochus seized upon all his substance.”²⁶

Subsequently, Antiochus IV began a second expedition to Egypt. Upon false rumor that he had died, Jason tried an attack,²⁷ failed, and retreated once again “to the country of the Ammonites.” Antiochus IV was forced by the Romans to abandon his attempt on Egypt, after which Ptolemy VI banished Ptolemy VIII. “Utterly humiliated,” Antiochus IV turned on Jerusalem, “took the city, the 143rd year (168 b.c.) of the kingdom of the Seleucidae,” and “slew a great multitude of those that favoured Ptolemy [VI].” (It was that same year that Perseus/Perseus lost against Rome, which divided Macedonia into four unrelated republics.)

Antiochus IV left Onias III as high priest and one “Philip, a Phrygian by birth,” as governor at Jerusalem, and left Andronicus at Mount Gerizzim. Two years later, Apollonius, Antiochus IV’s Mysian commander of the cities of Judah, with a 22,000-man force, entered Jerusalem, ostensibly peaceably. Instead, he attacked the city in a great onslaught, fortified the City of David with a massive wall and towers and made it a Seleucid citadel.

Antiochus IV proscribed all local customs, laws, and circumcision, and ordered that his own temples, altars and idols be erected in every city and village. Those who did not comply “every day underwent great miseries and bitter torments,” including crucifixion. A general Bacchides, who was sent to the region by Antiochus IV “to keep up the fortresses,...indulged all sorts of the extremest wickedness.” “But Judas Maccabeus and about nine others withdrew to the wilderness...,” and lived in caves.

“Not long after this” Antiochus IV sent an Athenian senator to enforce compliance with his edicts and to dedicate the Jerusalem and Mount Gerizzim temples to hellenistic gods. By decree, all neighboring Greek cities also were ordered to enforce compliance and kill anyone who did not comply. Some persons discovered observing the sabbath in secret were burned to death; several other tortures and cruelties are told.

²⁶ Refer to Appendix 3B, II, Attachment 5, fn. 8, concerning the lack of origin of the name “Hyrcanus.” While no connection becomes apparent between this Hyrcanus Tobias and (Mattathais - Simon Matthes -) John Hyrcanus I, introduced below, possibility exists that the latter was son of a Tobias descendant-daughter.

²⁷ Which attack included the burning of gates referred to in one of the letters quoted in 2 Maccabees 7ff.—see at Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 1, fn. 35.

Judas Maccabeus' father was Mattathais, "son of John, son of Simeon, the son of Asamoneus of the Order of Joiarib." (From *Asamoneus* came the versions "Hasmonean," and from Judas *Maccabeus*, "Maccabees.") Mattathais was "a priest...citizen of Jerusalem," who had retreated to his native village of Modein/Modin, about 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem.²⁸

A company charged with enforcing Antiochus IV's edicts attempted to induce Mattathais to exemplify compliance and "be numbered among the King's Friends." Mattathais refused. Then, when "a certain Jew/[Hebrew]" did comply, Mattathais "killed him upon the altar...[and] also killed the messenger of the king." Joined by others, Mattathais "thereupon...fled to the mountains [where] many of the people followed him" and made dwellings in caves with their wives and children. Officers and soldiers "who were in the City of David, in [the garrison at] Jerusalem" went in pursuit, and used fire to cause about a thousand people to smother and die in the caves.

Mattathais' followers looked to him as both commander and chief priest. Exhorting them to fight "even on the sabbath day," he proceeded to collect an army from "all those who were fleeing from the [Jerusalem] disaster [being also] joined by a group of Hasideans." Within the year he fell ill, however, and died, "whereupon his son Judas [Maccabeus] took upon him the administration of public affairs in the 146th year [165 b.c.]." Before dying Mattathais ordained his first son, Simon Matthes, family patriarch.

While "Judas...gathered an army out of his own countrymen," Antiochus IV began to assemble his own, "to go against Maccabeus the following spring;" but a depleted treasury (taxes not being paid during the uprising) decided him first to make a Persian expedition, hoping to sack Elymais["Persepolis"²⁹], where reportedly Alexander the Great had left much gold. In 164 b.c. Antiochus IV left Lysias, a nobleman "of royal blood who governed the provinces of Coelesyria and Phoenicia," in charge of all Seleucid territory between the Euphrates River and Egypt's frontier." Meanwhile, Judas and his companions entered villages secretly, summoned their kinsmen, and by also enlisting faithful others...assembled about 6,000 men." They made surprise attacks on villages, captured strategic positions, killed many of the enemy and put a large number to flight. Apollonius, "general of the Samaritan forces," himself was killed in an early battle. Seron, Seleucid general in Coele-Syria, also fell in battle, in a next engagement at Beth-horon.

"When therefore the [opposing] generals had been beaten so often," Judas spurred his people to go up to Jerusalem, where they refurbished the deserted temple and held a celebration and rededication in the "148th year [163 b.c.]," on the same day of the same month three years after its desolation by Antiochus IV. "[T]hey built high walls and strong towers around Mount Zion...and a garrison there to protect it." Judas also fortified Bethsur, "that the people might have a stronghold facing Idumea." An enemy garrison, however, still occupied the Jerusalem citadel.

Antiochus IV, routed at Persepolis and in retreat at Ecbatana, heard of the Maccabean victories and was determined to go to Judaea himself; but illness or injury overtook him. Antiochus IV died "in Persia in the year 149 [162 b.c.]." Before dying he entrusted his "companion"/"foster brother," Philip, with guardianship and education of the minor heir, Antiochus [V], and to preserve the kingdom for him. But before Philip could discharge his duties, Lysias took control of the young king and seized power as commander-in-chief of Coelesyria and Phoenicia. Philip withdrew to Ptolemy VI in Egypt.

²⁸ According to an article bylined "Leon Jaroff reported by Eric Silver/Jerusalem," which appeared in *Time* magazine, vol. 146, No. 22, Nov. 1995, Israeli road construction 30 kilometers NW of Jerusalem uncovered caves where archaeologists subsequently discovered *ossuaries*/stone boxes containing bones, upon one of which was inscribed "the partly obliterated Hebrew word Hasmonian.... .the first that that word has been found on archaeological evidence. Other of the ossuaries "were inscribed with such names as Sarah, Mariama, Eliezer and Elazar, all in Greek letters, and Simon in Hebrew. The cave also held coins and oil lamps unique to Hasmonian times."

²⁹ Lempriere, 1826 ed.

Surrounding “nations...uneasy at the revival of their [the Maccabaeans’] power” marshalled forces against them, including local rulers of Ptolemais/Acco; gentile Gileadites and Ammonites under one Timotheus/Timothy (joined by Bacchides) and “posterity of Esau” in Idumaea. Judas split his army into three forces, one under (Zechariah-) Joseph and Azariah to guard Judaea and one under brother Simon Matthes into the Galilee, while Judas and brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan east into Gilead, from where particular appeal for aid had come from “Toubiani.”

In “the 150th year of the dominion of the Seleucidae [161 b.c.]” Judas resolved to take out the opponent garrison in the Jerusalem citadel, “called all the people together,” and prepared to besiege it. The following year “151,” Judas “learned that Demetrius I, son of Seleucus IV had set out from Rome to halt usurpation of the Seleucid dominions. The Ptolemaic soldiers at Acco received Demetrius I as their lawful sovereign.

Meanwhile, Onias III joined Lysias/Antiochus V and marched with an enormous mercenary army into Idumaea, where Maccabaeans did battle many days at Bethsur. In Jerusalem, the siege of the citadel was started, and Judas took his own forces out to meet the foe head-on. Two battles later, brother Eleazar was dead and Judas had “retired to Jerusalem,” prepared to endure a siege there. Concomitant with their taking of Beth-Sur, news reached the camp of Lysias/Antiochus V that Philip, the originally-designated guardian of Antiochus V, was heading a rebellion at Antioch.

“Dismayed,” general Lysias was forced to abandon a Jerusalem siege and instead “parleyed with the Jews.” An agreement was effected by which “Judas Maccabeus [was] left as military and civil governor of the territory from Ptolemais to the region of the Gerrenes.” (The people of Ptolemais were angered over the peace treaty, but Lydias won them over “by persuasion.”) Onias III--made scapegoat as being “the origin of all the mischief”--was executed by order of Lysias/Antiochus V; Onias III “had been high priest ten years.” One Jacimus/Alcimus was appointed to replace him. Lysias/Antiochus V then returned “in haste” to Antioch, took control and killed Philip.

High priest Jacimus/Alcimus courted king Demetrius I. Eventually--abetted by some of the king’s “friends”--he specifically accused Judas, Judas’ kin, those “called Hasideans led by Judas Maccabeus,” and the “whole ‘nation’” as seditious warmongers depriving him of his high priesthood dignity and hindering peace. Demetrius I was stimulated to send Jacimus/Alcimus back with a contingent under general Bacchides, to enforce Jacimus/Alcimus as high priest.

Judas distrusted and rejected a Bacchides’ offer to negotiate. Bacchides searched out and punished partisans around the countryside, and then retired from the region. Judas retaliated by killing all he found of the opposing party. Jacimus/Alcimus renewed his accusations, which caused Demetrius I to appoint general Nicanor as governor of Judaea, with a force believed sufficient to destroy Judas and “set up Alcimus/[Jacimus] as high priest.” Simon Matthes suffered a slight repulse in a first engagement with Nicanor, who was indisposed to shedding blood over the issue. Nicanor sent an embassy to Judas; formal negotiations were held and an agreed peace was established.

Judas and Nicanor proceeded to develop a friendship. Meanwhile, Jacimus/Alcimus went to Demetrius I with the treaty, told him that Nicanor had designated Judas to be Alcimus’ successor, and accused Nicanor of plotting against the state. Nicanor was sent orders from the king to negate the treaty, arrest Judas immediately and extradite him to Antioch. “Nicanor was dismayed.... However, there was no way of opposing the king, so he watched for an opportunity.” Judas, reading the signs, gathered a large number of men and went into hiding. When Nicanor demanded Judas’ surrender, the temple priests denied they knew his whereabouts, despite Nicanor’s threat to level the shrine if Judas wasn’t handed over.

Nicanor learned that the Maccabaeans were in Samaria territory and made a plan to

attack them on a day of rest. Those “Jews who were forced to follow Nicanor” pleaded against it. He dismissed their godliness, saying, “I, on my part, am ruler [here], and my orders are that you take up arms and carry out the king’s [Antiochus V’s] business.” Judas filled his troops with fresh courage. “Those who remained in the city suffered a like agony, anxious as they were about the battle in the open country. Everyone now awaited the decisive moment,” as the enemy advanced in battle line, with their troops, elephants and cavalry “to the sound of trumpets and battle songs.” But Judas and his men “laid low at least 35,000.... When the battle was over...they discovered Nicanor lying there in all his armor. Then, Judas...ordered Nicanor’s head and whole right arm to be cut off and taken to Jerusalem. When he arrived there, he assembled his countrymen, stationed the priests before the altar, and sent for those in the citadel. He showed them...Nicanor’s head and arm,...cut out the tongue of ...Nicanor, saying he would feed it piecemeal to the birds....[and] hung up Nicanor’s head on the wall of the citadel.”³⁰

“High priest Jacimus was resolved to pull down the wall of the sanctuary,” but “in the year 153” he was smitten and “at length, died, when he had been high priest four years; and when he was dead, the people bestowed the high priesthood on Judas, who, [then] hearing of the power of the Romans...entered into a league of assistance with them. (Judas asked for the league, “when [he]/Judas was high priest of the nation and Simon [Matthes] his brother was general of the army.”)

Demetrius I now sent out Bacchides again. Bacchides first did battle in the Galilee, and then encamped near Jerusalem in “the year 152 [159 b.c.]” Judas died at the end of a day-long battle with Bacchides at Beth-zur/“Bethzetho.” Dissension in Judaea continued; a famine induced some to “apostatize” and assist Bacchides, while resisters gravitated to Judas’ brother, Jonathan, as their general. Bacchides supervened, restored Jerusalem’s walls and placed garrisons in several Judaeian cities. Jonathan and his brother Simon had escaped; but Bacchides shut up the sons of “principal Jews...in the citadel [garrison].” After securing all Judaea with garrisons, Bacchides “returned to the king.”

“[T]he affairs of Judea were quiet for two years,” until opponents of Jonathan convinced Demetrius I to send out Bacchides a third time. Instead of an easy capture of Jonathan as had been intimated, Jonathan’s and Simon’s combined forces felled many of Bacchides’ men and laid waste to his war engines. The situation put Bacchides in mind to end the siege “after a decent manner. When Jonathan understood [that], he sent a proposal for a mutual league and restoration of captives by each side,” and Bacchides accepted. Bacchides and Jonathan swore to desist from making further war against the other, Bacchides returned to Antioch, and he “never came into Judea again.” Jonathan went to live in Michmash, “and from there governed the multitude.”

In “the year 160³¹ [151 b.c.],” Alexander Bala,³² son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, laid claim to the Seleucid crown. Demetrius I was at Ptolemais/[Acco], which was given over to Bala “by the [Ptolemaic] soldiers,” who deserted him because they had not been recompensed as formerly they had. Bala was supported by Ptolemy VI, Attalus II of Pergamum, and Rome. A treaty between Ptolemy VI and Bala was sealed by marriage to Bala of Cleopatra III, the daughter of Cleopatra II. The nuptials took place at Ptolemais “in the year 162 [149 b.c.]”

Jonathan supported Bala, who recognized Jonathan as high priest--“Jonathan put on the pontifical robe/sacred vestments “four years after” the death of brother Judas. Demetrius I then countered with a phenomenal offer to Jonathan for alliance: Jonathan would receive

³⁰ 2 Maccabees’ writer closes with, “Since Nicanor’s doings ended in this way, with the city remaining in the possession of the Hebrews from that time on, I will bring my own story to an end here too....” 15:37. (By public vote it was unanimously decreed never to let [that] day pass unobserved, but to celebrate it on the 13th day of the 12th month, called Adar in Aramaic, the eve of Mordecai’s Day.”)

³¹ Also found as the year “165.”

³² Frequently (and occasionally also in this work) found as Alexander Balas.

the citadel and religious freedom; all “Jews...captives... slaves... and inhabitants” would be set free, and Jonathan could decree Jerusalem the temple of Jewish worship. Further, Demetrius I would remove the greatest part of tributes and taxes formerly payable to his predecessors, forgive the salt tax, relinquish entitlement to one-third of the fruits of the field and half of the fruits of the trees, relinquish to Jonathan the head tax payable in Judaea plus the three adjoining toparchies (Samaria, Galilee and Perea), let Jonathan fortify any Judaeian town he wished at Demetrius’ expense, *and* Demetrius would pay--out of his own revenue--150,000 drachmae toward expenses connected to temple sacrifices.

In 149 b.c. in the Roman arena, Macedonia became a Roman province upon defeat of a last contender, Andriscus. In 148, Rome made war against the Achaeans; it was finished within a year. In 147, Rome declared new war on Carthage [the “Third Punic War”], declaring, “Carthage must be destroyed,” it was, by Scipio, while Mummius destroyed Corinth.

East of the then-western world, Bala “raised a great army of mercenary soldiers, and of those that deserted to him out of Syria, and made an expedition against Demetrius [I].” The left wing of Demetrius’ force held, but he in the right wing suffered a falling horse. There he died from many dart wounds, “when he had reigned eleven years.” In the “165th year [146 b.c.]” his son, Demetrius II, sailed from Crete to Cilicia with a mercenary army--“[I]n the hundred threescore and fifth year came Demetrius son of Demetrius out of Crete into the land of his fathers.”

In Egypt, Onias IV solicited and obtained permission from Ptolemy VI to build a temple at Heliopolis. Onias IV assured Ptolemy VI that it would cause the Jews to be “so much readier to fight” against the Seleucids, and that they “would then come to Ptolemy with greater good will.” “Onias [IV] had a mind to contend with the Jews at Jerusalem...[and] thought that by building this temple he should draw away a great number from them to himself.”³³

“The Alexandrian Jews, and those...who paid their worship to the temple...at Mount Gerizzim, did now make a sedition one against another, and disputed...before Ptolemy [VI] himself: the Jews saying that, according to the laws of Moses, the temple was to be...at Jerusalem; and the Samaritans saying that it was to be...at Gerizzim.” Ptolemy VI held a formal council to hear the matter; according to a pre-agreement, the loser-representatives would pay with their lives. (Messalamus-) Andronicus presented the case for Jerusalem. Ptolemy VI decided that the temple be restored at Jerusalem, and northern speakers Sabbeus and Theodosius were put to death.

At Heliopolis, Onias IV “built a fortress and a temple.” Ptolemy VI “also gave him a large country for a revenue in money.” Onias, however, “did not do this out of a sober disposition, but he had a mind to contend with the Jews at Jerusalem, and could not forget the indignation he had for being banished. Accordingly, he thought that by building this temple he should draw away a great number from them to himself.”³⁴

Civil strife began anew. Bala hastened from Ptolemais in Phoenicia to Antioch to prepare for the contention with Demetrius II. His general Apollonius, governor of Coelesyria was enroute to Jamnia with a large army and sent Jonathan a written challenge. Jonathan and Simon Matthes took 10,000 soldiers and pitched camp outside of Joppa, where Apollonius had a garrison. Joppa’s people opened the city gates for them. While Balas confronted Demetrius II at Antioch, the Maccabaeian force under Jonathan and Simon won a resounding victory over Apollonius. Afterward, Bala claimed that Apollonius’ actions had been unauthorized, paid Jonathan honors and increased tributes to him.

³³ It now had been some 17 years since Onias IV, “son of the high priest [Onias II], who...was left a child when his father died, when he saw that the king [Antiochus V/Lysias] had slain his uncle, Menelaus/[Onias III] and given the high priesthood to Alcimus/[Jacimus]...fled to Ptolemy [VI].” (Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 3, Heliopolis.)

³⁴ BJ VII.X.3.

Next, Ptolemy VI led his army to Ptolemais to support Bala, who was absent, dealing with a revolt in Cilicia. But at Ptolemais Ptolemy VI became convinced that Bala was plotting against his life. Ptolemy VI abandoned his alliance with Bala, repossessed Cleopatra III, and sent an immediate offer to give her to Demetrius II in a league to restore Demetrius II to “the principality of his fathers.” Ptolemy VI easily persuaded the people of Antioch to reject Bala. Antioch’s leaders and army would have made him king of Antioch, but Ptolemy--wary of Roman envy, should he wear Asia’s crown as well as Egypt’s--persuaded them to receive Demetrius II, pledging not to permit him to usurp his rule.

“In the hundred and threescore and ninth year [“169th year”/142 b.c.], “the Jews that be at Jerusalem and in the land of Judea” wrote to “the Jews...throughout Egypt,” and told about all the “trouble...in those years, from all time that Jason[/Jesus] and his company revolted, and burned the porch, etc.”

Bala soon came out of Cilicia into Syria with another army, burning and pillaging. Ptolemy VI and new son-in-law Demetrius II battled with Bala, who finally fled into Arabia. “Alexander...Balas reigned over Asia five years,” and “Demetrius II became king in the year 167 [144 b.c.]” Ptolemy VI, however, received mortal wounds in a last battle. “Three days later [from when is not said exactly], king Ptolemy [VI] himself died, and his men in the fortified cities were killed by the inhabitants of the strongholds.” Cleopatra II, Ptolemy VI’s widow, laid claim to the Egyptian crown for Ptolemy VII, her infant son by Ptolemy VI. Ptolemy VIII (*Physcon*), a son of an undesignated mother by Ptolemy V, rose up as a contender.

Cleopatra II had the support of the ‘Jews’. She and Ptolemy VI “[had] committed their whole kingdom to the Jews.... ...Onias [unspecified; IV?] and Dositheus, both Jews...[were] generals of their whole army.” And when “Onias brought a small army afterward upon the city at the time when Thermus the Roman ambassador was there...he did rightly...; for that Ptolemy who was called Physco[n], upon the death of...Philometer came from Cyrene, and would have ejected Cleopatra [II] as well as her sons out of their kingdom [and]...Onias undertook a war against him on Cleopatra’s account.”

“All Egypt revolted when the king [Ptolemy VIII/*Physcon*] had basely murdered all the young men of Alexandria.” (“[W]hen Ptolemy Physco had the presumption to fight against Onias’ army and had caught all the Jews that were in the city [Alexandria],” he partially was prevented from causing further harm by the supplication of his concubine, Ithaca/Irene.) Generals Onias and Dositheus are reported as deserving “thanks for saving Alexandria....[for] when [certain unspecified] Alexandrians were making war with Cleopatra the queen, these Jews brought them to terms of agreement, and freed them from the miseries of a civil war.”

Ptolemy VIII fled to Cyprus. Fearing that “the Alexandrians should...place the crown on the head of his son by his ‘sister Cleopatra,’³⁵ he sent for the young prince, Memphitis “and murdered him as soon as he reached the shore. It was “at last agreed that Cleopatra [II] would marry Physcon,” on condition that at his death Ptolemy VII would be heir. However, after the ceremony Physcon “murdered Cleopatra’s son in her arms,” that very day. Physcon “repudiated Cleopatra [II]” and “married her daughter by Philometor, called also Cleopatra [IV] ... Soon after...he obtained a victory over the forces of Cleopatra [II] ...[who] fled to her eldest daughter Cleopatra [III], who [now was] married [to] Demetrius II, king of Syria.”

Jonathan appealed to Demetrius II to clear the garrisons in his territory and in Jerusalem’s citadel. Demetrius II, who knew Jonathan was levying an army, requested an audience with him at Ptolemais. Jonathan laid preparations for besieging the Jerusalem garrison and went to Ptolemais. There he pacified Demetrius II “and received from him confirmation of his high priesthood,” together with written confirmation of his dominions: Judea, Perea, Galilee, and three toparchies/prefectures in Samaria, together with all remittals

³⁵ The identity of this Cleopatra/ [C?] is unclear--refer to Appendix 3A, VI, Attachment 6 (2). The following sequencing of events, leading to Ptolemy VIII’s ultimate accession, is indefinite.

previously conferred by Demetrius I.

Demetrius II had established peace in his kingdom around himself, but he retained only his mercenary soldiers from Crete and discharged others, despite the mutual league. This raised hatred in the Ptolemaic soldiers--the king's predecessors had paid them in peace as well as war. Subsequently, Demetrius II suffered a revolt of his remaining troops (their full composition is not detailed; it is reported that Ptolemaic soldiers returned to Alexandria). Demetrius II was confined to his castle, while the populace ("120,000 strong") massed and rioted in the streets. He appealed to Jonathan for aid, promising grants greater than before; Jonathan responded with 3,000 men, who "killed about 100,000," saved the king's life and restored peace. Jonathan returned to Jerusalem with much plunder. Once Demetrius II was restored, however, "he broke all his promises and became estranged from Jonathan," threatening to make war if tribute was not paid to *him*.

Meanwhile, Diodorus Tryphon,³⁶ a pretended or actual son of Bala, emerged with young Antiochus VI from Arabia, where the boy had been reared. Tryphon--bent on raising Antiochus VI to the Seleucid throne--was joined by "the whole forces that had left Demetrius II, because they had no pay." While Demetrius was battling and winning several victories over Mithridates I of Parthia, Tryphon occupied Antioch. Demetrius retired into Cilicia.

Jonathan pledged alliance to Antiochus VI. Jonathan's high priesthood was reconfirmed by the new Antioch regime, and brother Simon Matthes was made "general over the forces from the Ladder of Tyre unto Egypt." Jonathan was authorized "to raise...a numerous army out of Syria and Phoenicia, and to make war against Demetrius' generals." He scoured Coele-Syrian cities exhorting support of Antiochus VI, going "over all the country, as far as Damascus." Cities received him warmly and promised assistance but gave no troops. Provoked, Jonathan despoiled land around Gaza until it agreed to the league and took hostages to secure performance.

Jonathan got word that a Demetrius II force was at Cadesh/Kadesh, confident of drawing out Jonathan by calculating that Jonathan "would not overlook the Galileans, who were his own people, when war was made upon them." Jonathan went, leaving Simon Matthes in Judaea. (In Jonathan's absence, Simon would raise a force and obtain surrender of Beth-sur, the strongest garrison in the region.)

Jonathan pitched camp near the waters of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee/Lake Tiberias), where, unknown to him, an informed Demetrius force stood ready in ambush on the plain of Asor/Hazor. Trapped, all but 50 men and two commanders³⁷ of Jonathan's company disbursed. A remaining small group fought valiantly until fleeing soldiers saw the tide turning and rejoined. Jonathan's force emerged victorious.

On his return to Jerusalem, Jonathan sent selected men to Rome and obtained a confirming decree of mutual friendship from the Senate, which issued to his ambassadors letters of safe conduct addressed "to all the kings of Asia and Europe, and to the governors of the cities." Jonathan also sent diplomatic regards to the Spartans and Lacedaemonians.

In the interim, Demetrian generals had gathered greater forces. Jonathan was resolved to keep them out of Judea. Intelligence work enabled him to elude a surprise attack in the vicinity of Hamoth, and he drove the retreating foes back into their own territory. Jonathan "then went into Arabia, fought against the Nabateans...[and] took captives;" at Damascus he "sold off what he had taken." Simon fortified strongholds "over all Judea and Palestine, as far as Askelon," and took Joppa, where he placed a garrison. Jonathan and Simon together, on their return, organized restoration of Jerusalem's walls and towers and had a wall built in the middle of the city, to weaken the still-existing opponent garrison by cutting off the citadel from the market-place.

³⁶ Frequently (and occasionally also in this work) found as Trypho.

³⁷ (Absalom-) Mattathias and (Chapseus-) Judas.

Bala re-entered 'Syria' from Cilicia with another army and battled Ptolemy VI and Demetrius II. Bala finally was forced to flee to Arabia, where he soon met death at the hands of an Arabian prince, who sent his head to Ptolemy VI.

Then Tryphon, "determined to become king of Asia...and do away with King Antiochus [VI]," laid a plot against Jonathan. Jonathan, anticipating a fight, took 40,000 men to a meeting with Tryphon at Scythopolis/Beth-Shan. Tryphon, however, chose deceit and treachery over battle. Through assurances and gifts he convinced Jonathan that he intended to give him Ptolemais. Duped, Jonathan dismissed almost all of his own army, proceeded to Ptolemais with only 1,000 men, and fell into a prearranged trap. Tryphon took Jonathan captive.

Great fear arose among the people upon Jonathan's capture; formerly quiescent neighbors also began to rise up against them, as Tryphon's force prepared to make war on Judaea. Simon Matthes held an inspiring assembly and obtained overwhelming endorsement from the multitude, who made him their governor. Then Simon "got together immediately all his own soldiers that were fit for war," and hastened to strengthen the city walls and erect new high towers. He sent a company under friend (Absalom-) Jonathan to "eject the inhabitants out of [Joppa]...lest they should deliver up the city to Tryphon," while Simon, himself, held fast at Jerusalem.

Tryphon had Jonathan in bonds when the armies faced off at Adida, on a hill above the Judaeian plains. Tryphon demanded 100 talents of silver and two of Jonathan's sons as hostages, in exchange for Jonathan. Simon did not trust Tryphon but had no real choice. He complied, on the slim chance Jonathan could be saved. Once Tryphon had the money and hostages he simply changed course to invade Judaea via Idumaea. The garrison at Jerusalem's citadel expected Tryphon that night; but an unusually heavy snowfall made passage impossible for the cavalry and Tryphon removed his army to Coele-Syria. He fell "vehemently upon the land of Gilead" and there he killed Jonathan. Jonathan had been high priest and governor for "four years."

Simon Matthes "was made high priest by the multitude [and] on the very first year...set his people free...and permitted them to pay tribute...no longer; which liberty and freedom from tribute they obtained after a hundred and seventy years." Simon continued to fortify Judaea; and "in the year 171 [140 b.c.]" he besieged and starved the last resisters out of the citadel. (Afterward he caused it and the hill on which it stood to be demolished.)

"In the year 172 [139 b.c.]," Demetrius II marched to Mesopotamia/Media, "looking for resources to fight Tryphon," and also "to lay a foundation for recovering his entire kingdom," including Babylon. "Greeks and Macedonians who dwelt there" had sent promises that they would aid Demetrius II against Parthian king Arsaces/Phraates ("king of Persia and Media," per *Maccabees*). Demetrius planned to overthrow the Parthians and then, with an increased army, eject Tryphon out of Syria. Demetrius II lost the fight with Arsaces, was captured, and was imprisoned.

"[I]n the year 172, that is, the third year under Simon the high priest...in a great assembly of priests, people, rulers of the nation, and elders of the country," a proclamation was issued and an inscription was engraved on a bronze tablet in the temple precincts (copies being deposited also in the treasury), which decreed Simon "as high priest, governor general, and ethnarch...to exercise supreme authority over all."

The people of Gazara capitulated; Simon did not destroy them but made them leave the city, where he "settled men who observed the law. He improved its fortifications and built himself a residence." He granted peace to Gadara, and son John was stationed there as governor and army commander. Rome and Sparta sent Simon missives of condolence for Jonathan's death and reaffirmed the pacts established under Judas and Jonathan. In return, Simon sent to Rome a "great gold shield weighing 1,000 minas, to confirm the alliance."

"[A] little while after Demetrius II had been captured" by Arsaces, young Antiochus VI died (reputedly at the hands of Tryphon), after a reign of "four years." Tryphon assumed "the crown of Asia," securing himself through shrewd artfulness with the populace and promises of great wealth to the military. Once in firm power, however, he reverted to his true nature; and "the soldiery, [who] hated him, revolted from him to Cleopatra III, who was then shut up in Seleucia with her children.

Meanwhile, Antiochus VII, the brother or half-brother of Demetrius II, had been in exile from Tryphon. Cleopatra III now sent to Antiochus VII "and invited him to marry her and take the kingdom." Antiochus VII wrote to high priest Simon Matthes of their intentions and, in return for a mutual assistance league, offered Simon cancellation of all debts, freedom for the temple and its citizens and the significant authority to strike coinage. Simon readily accepted and provided supplies and money.

At first, Antiochus VII "concealed himself; but he soon obtained the means of destroying his enemy." In the "year 174 [137 b.c.]" he ejected Tryphon from Upper Syria into Phoenicia. Tryphon fled to Dor/Dora, where he fell under continuous assault. Simon had provided 2000 elite troops, gold, silver and much equipment; but Antiochus VII now refused his aid. "[I]n fact, he broke all agreements...with Simon" and threatened war, unless Simon either paid him a considerable amount of money, or relinquished Joppa and Gazara and the tribute of all "districts outside the territory of Judea" of which Simon had taken possession. Simon offered 100 talents but refused to return territory.

Antiochus VII was enraged. Before personally pursuing Tryphon he made "Cendebeus" commander of the seacoast, gave him forces and ordered him to move against Judaea. Cendebeus arrested many people at Jamnia, killed and took captives in other incursions into Judaea, fortified Kedron, and patrolled the roads. Tryphon (who had escaped from Dor) ultimately either was captured by Antiochus VII at Apamia and put to death, or, "hemmed up...[was] forced to kill himself." "[H]e had reigned three years."

John (Hyrcanus I), a son of Simon Matthes, went from Gazara to Jerusalem to inform his father of Cendebeus' acts. Simon, advanced in years, turned over primary defense command to John (/Hyrcanus I) and Judas, "his oldest sons." Hyrcanus I "mustered in the land 2000 warriors and horsemen." In a battle near Modein/Modin, "Cendebeus and his army were put to flight." Judas was wounded; but John chased Cendebeus back to Kedron and put fire to enemy towers on the plain, killing about 2000 of the enemy there. Afterward, "John [Hyrcanus I] then returned to Judea in peace." In the interim, Simon had envoyed an appeal to Rome for assistance. Rome returned a directive to all surrounding regions that any troublemakers were to be handed over to Simon.

In "year 177" [134 b.c.] high priest Simon Matthes and two of his sons, Mattathias [#2] and Judas [#2], on a routine inspection of their cities, were deceitfully welcomed and feasted by one "Ptolemy, son of Abubus," Simon's son-in-law, governor of the plain of Jericho. When Simon and his sons were sufficiently drunk, Ptolemy Abubus and his men killed all three guests and their attendants. This Ptolemy "also caught Simon's [unnamed] wife, and two [other] of his sons, and kept them in bonds"/"put them in prison." "He sent men to Gazara to kill John [Hyrcanus I], and others to seize Jerusalem and temple mount." He also sent a written report of Simon's death to Antiochus VII, requesting troops and that the country be turned over to him.

At Gazara, Ptolemy Abubus's men were seized and put to death. Hyrcanus I had received advance notice of the turn of events, which placed the high priesthood mantle and command now upon his shoulders.