Hasmonaean Revolt and Dynasty, Herodian Era

October 4, 2006

Announcements

From last time:
- Hellenism, Hellenization
- Judaea in the Early Hellenistic Period

For today
- Hasmonaean Revolt, 167–164 BCE
- Hasmonaean Dynasty 152–63 BCE

Announcements

- Preliminary review sheet for midterms (10/30) is up on the website. Useful now, because it provides a brief chronology.
- Handouts for next week’s section and for the Documentary Hypothesis assignment will be up later this week.

Hellenism, Hellenization

- From the Greek word for Greece (Hellas), broadly the spread of “Greek” culture
- Culture of the conquerors
- NB: the culture of Macedonian officers and soldiers, and Greek scribes and agents, looking back at “democratic” Athens as a model

Influence on conquered population
- Sometimes directly the result of conquest: new bureaucratic needs dictate language/literary training; “Greek” cities founded by outright settlement (e.g., Samaria, late 4th C)
- But also indirect: adaptation and appropriation of new ideas, practices, language, trade goods, tastes, etc.
- E.g., under leaderships with established connections to rulers, some ancient city-states (e.g., Gaza, Tyre) “became” Greek cities.

Compare “modernization” or “Westernization” in the present developing world
Judaea in the Early Hellenistic Period

- 334–170 BC difficult to trace in detail.
- Developments:
  - A small "Temple state"—a territory governed by a temple and its priesthood (product of late Persian, Hellenistic)
  - Political (and economic) reorientation to Mediterranean rather than to Mesopotamia
  - Particularly under Seleucids: Opportunities for local elites to advance through adopting Greek language, culture; through political reform or reorganization (foundation of poleis)

Hellenistic Era Palestine

Hasmonaeanean Revolt

167–164 BCE

- Terminology: Hasmonaeans, Maccabees
- Chronology 175–160
- Interpretative problem: Why persecute?
**Terminology (i)**

- **Hasmonaeans**: A priestly family from Modi'in, lead the revolt against Seleucids.
  - Five brothers, Judah the most prominent
  - Acc. to 1 Macc. led initially by their father Mattathias
- **Maccabee**: An epithet especially associated with Judah

**Terminology (ii)**

Some other terms/people:

- Second Temple Period
- **Antiochus IV**: Seleucid king 175-163 BCE
- **Oniads**: the name for the high priestly family (Onias = Yohanan). Onias is also the name of the HP deposed by Jason
- **Tobiads**: Another significant family, possibly dating back to Nehemiah’s time
- **Jason, Menelaus**: In succession, “bought” the priesthood from Antiochus IV; set in motion “hellenizing” program

**Chronology 175–160**

- 175 “Hellenistic Reform”
  - Jason
  - Menelaus
- 169 (?) Desecration of Temple, prohibition of Jewish religion
- 167 (?) Revolt
  - Judah the Maccabee
- 164 Rededication of the Temple
- 160 Death of Judah the Maccabee
Interpretative problem:
Why persecute?

- Why persecute?
  Largely unheard of, and not to be explained based on the personality ("crazy") or policies ("Hellenizing agenda") of Antiochus IV
- Elias Bickerman
  "Desecration" the work of reformers; prohibitions inspired by their knowledge of Judaism
- Victor Tcherikover
  Revolt preceded the persecutions. "Desecration" and prohibitions were punitive.
- In both cases: requires rejection of explicit claims of our sources

Establishment of the Hasmonaean Dynasty, 152–63 BCE

- Eclipse of Hasmonaens after rededication of Temple (164)
  - Menelaus HP until 163 BCE (after reded.)
  - Alcimus HP 161-159 BCE (an enemy in 1Macc)
- Hasmonaean dominance:
  - (Re-)established by Seleucids (152, 142)
  - Peak of power, geographical expansion 103-76 BCE (Alexander Jannaeus)
- Geographical expansion (map)
- "Judaizing" policies? Combines:
  - Imposition of Jewish practice on subject peoples
  - And alliance building with anti-Hellenizing peoples
  - In Galilee (N) and Idumaea (S), seems to have stuck

Hasmonaean Expansion 152-74 BCE