With 2 Maps

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: http://dnb.d-nb.de.

ISSN 2197-0092
ISBN 978-3-647-55252-1


You can find alternative editions of this book and additional material on our Website: www.v-r.de

© 2018, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Theaterstraße 13, D-37073 Göttingen/
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht LLC, Bristol, CT, U.S.A.
www.v-r.de

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Typesetting by SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen
“In history, as elsewhere, the causes cannot be assumed. They have to be looked for”.
Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, p. xxii

“By trying to combine a theocratic rule in the old Jewish style with a principality on the Hellenistic model, the Hasmoneans found themselves involved in more than ordinary difficulties and contradictions.”
Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, p. 113
Table of Contents

Preface ........................................................... 11
Abbreviations ..................................................... 12
A Note on the Translations used in this Book ................. 14


1. A brief overview of one hundred years of historical scholarship on the Hasmonean period (ca. 1850–1950) .................. 19
2. The reconquest of the promised land: A ubiquitous paradigm ........ 38
3. Dissident voices ................................................. 48
4. Reflexions on some of the methodological problems raised by biblical models ............................................................. 52
4.1 The borders of the promised land ............................ 53
4.2 The question of the perenniality of the commandment to conquer the promised land .................................................. 57
4.3 The “conversion” of non-Jews .................................. 58
5. “Religion” and “politics”: two problematic categories in the historiography of the Hasmonean period ......................... 59
6. The structure of this book and its guiding principles ............ 63

Part I. Did the Hasmoneans Seek to Reconquer the Promised Land or Restore Judea? The Account of the Hasmonean Wars in 1 Maccabees

1. The First Book of Maccabees: general presentation .................. 65
1.1 The contents of the book ......................................... 65
1.2 The language, context, date and compositional unity of the book .... 67
1.3 Parallel accounts: The Second Book of Maccabees and the work of Josephus ...................................................... 72
1.3.1 The Second Book of Maccabees .............................. 72
1.3.2 The Judean (or Jewish) War and Jewish Antiquities by Flavius Josephus ................................................................. 78

© 2018, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen
### Table of Contents

2. The land: an objective conspicuous by its absence .......................... 80  
   2.1 The conspicuous absence of the issue of the land of Israel  from The First Book of Maccabees ........................................... 80  
   2.2 The land in 2 Maccabees and in Josephus’ rewriting of 1 Maccabees 86  
   2.3 The territorial stakes of the Maccabean wars  ......................... 91  

3. The Hasmonean dynasty’s biblical models .................................. 94  
   3.1 A few preliminary reflections on the concept of “Bible” in the second century B.C.E. ......................................................... 94  
   3.2 Biblical models and the literary structure of 1 Maccabees .......... 99  
   3.3 Joshua, a model for the Hasmoneans? .................................. 102  
   3.4 A sacerdotal family seeking to legitimate its position as a royal dynasty ................................................................. 109  

4. The wars against non-Judean peoples: Judeans versus Canaanites? ......... 118  
   4.1 The prescriptions concerning the Canaanites in the Bible .......... 118  
      Scenario No 1: the expulsion of the Canaanites ..................... 118  
      Scenario No 2: *herem* warfare or the extermination of the Canaanites 119  
      Scenario No 3: slavery or “forced labour” .......................... 122  
   4.2 The war practices of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers:  
      an attempt to put Deuteronomy 20 into practice? .................. 126  
      4.2.1 The influence of Deuteronomy on 1 Maccabees ............... 128  
      4.2.2 The laws of warfare in Deuteronomy 20 and 1 Maccabees ..... 132  
      4.2.3 The wars waged by Judas, Jonathan and Simon, according to  
          2 Maccabees and Flavius Josephus .............................. 144  
   4.3 Do we encounter a “Canaanite” in a Hasmonean context?  
      (1 Macc 9:37) ...................................................... 149  

5. Did the Hasmoneans attempt to purify the land? .......................... 153  

6. The “inheritance of our fathers” (1 Macc 15:33–35) .......................... 161  
   6.1 The territorial dispute between the Seleucids and the Hasmoneans,  
      from Judas to Simon .................................................. 163  
   6.2 The biblical background of the phrase “the inheritance of our fathers” 171  
   6.3 The parallels between the discourses of the Seleucids  
      and Simon in 1 Maccabees .......................................... 174  
   6.4 Understanding Simon’s reply in the context of the  
      territorial conflicts of the Hellenistic era ......................... 177  

7. The development of a historico-juridical conception of Israel’s right of  
   ownership over the land .................................................. 185  
   7.1 The original allotment of the land according to the *Book of Jubilees*  
      and the *Genesis Apocryphon* ...................................... 185
The connections between the Book of Jubilees and the *Genesis Apocryphon* ........................................... 192
The Hellenistic context of the juridical or historico-juridical discourse used to establish the right of ownership ................. 193
7.2 The posterity of this historico-juridical argument in Jewish thought ................................................ 203

Part II. The Era of the Conquests: Rise and Fall of the Hasmonean State

1. The inescapable Flavius Josephus: was his perspective anti-Hasmonean? 214
1.1 Strabo ...................................................... 219
1.2 Nicolaus of Damascus ........................................ 227
1.3 The Judean (or Idumean) origins of some of Josephus’ criticism of the Hasmoneans ........................................... 232
1.4 Josephus’ point of view ...................................... 236

2. The different stages, the nature, and the motivations of the Hasmonean territorial expansion ............................................. 240
2.1 John Hyrcanus ............................................... 240
   The motivations of John Hyrcanus .................................. 254
2.2 Aristobulus I .................................................. 260
2.3 Alexander Jannaeus .......................................... 267
   103–92 B.C.E. .................................................. 267
   92–83 B.C.E. .................................................. 270
   83–76 B.C.E. .................................................. 272
2.4 Jannaeus’ successors to the throne until 63 B.C.E. ..................... 279

3. The “forced conversions” ........................................... 283
3.1 The Idumeans .................................................. 290
   3.1.1 Josephus’ account of the Judaization of the Idumeans .......... 290
   3.1.2 Ptolemy the Historian’s account of the Idumeans ............ 294
   3.1.3 Strabo’s account of the Idumeans ........................... 296
   3.1.4 Was the Judaization of the Idumeans an innovation on the biblical models? ............................................. 298
3.2 The Itureans .................................................... 305
3.3 The questions raised by the case of Pella .......................... 309
3.4 Summary ....................................................... 314
3.5 The presentation of the imposition of Judean laws on the conquered territories as a Seleucid idea in 1 Maccabees 10 ............. 316

4. The use of mercenaries ........................................... 324
4.1 A sign of the Hellenization of the Hasmoneans .................... 324
4.2 The Judaization of non-Judean populations
   *versus* the use of foreign mercenaries ................................ 329
4.3 The mercenaries and the Judean opposition to the Hasmoneans 331
4.4 The Hasmoneans’ accumulation of riches 335

Part III. Polemic, Memory, Forgetting

1. The polemic against the Hasmoneans 342
1.1 The critique of the Hasmoneans in the Qumran manuscripts 342
1.1.1 The first two generations: Mattathias and his sons 343
1.1.2 John Hyrcanus 345
4Q379: Was John Hyrcanus the “man of Belial”? 345
4QTestimonia, a threefold critique of John Hyrcanus 354
The Essenes and prophecy 359
A list of false prophets (4Q339) 360
The fallibility of the prophet Joshua according to 4Q522 362
The rules of war in the Temple Scroll 366
1.1.3 Alexander Jannaeus 372
The times of wickedness in 4Q390 372
The Pesher on Isaiah (a) (4Q161) 372
4Q448: for or against king Jonathan? 375
The Pesher on Nahum 383
The Pesher on Habakkuk 386
Is there a condemnation of the Hasmonean wars in 4Q471a? 388
1.2 The critique of the Hasmoneans in the Psalms of Solomon 390

2. Memory and Forgetting: the Hasmonean expansion in rabbinic literature 395
2.1 The memory of the Hasmonean victories in rabbinic literature 396
2.1.1 The memory of these victories in Megillat Ta’anit 396
2.1.2 Beyond Megillat Ta’anit: the memory of the wars of liberation in the rest of rabbinic literature 402
2.1.3 On some of the echoes of Jannaeus’ conquests in the Babylonian Talmud 404
2.1.4 The implications of John Hyrcanus’ gift of prophecy 407
2.2 The critique of the accumulation of powers and the attempt to control the exercise of royal power 408
2.2.1 The critique of the accumulation of powers 408
2.2.2 The attempt to control the king’s exercise of power 416
2.3 The ambiguity of the Babylonian Talmud 416
2.3.1 The presence of anti-Hasmonean revisions in the Babylonian Talmud 417
The chronology of Seder ‘Olam in b. Avodah Zarah 8b–9a 418
Alexander Jannaeus as the murderer of the Sages 420
The account of the fratricidal conflict between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II in *b. Menahot* 64b .......................... 421

2.3.2 The Hasmonean dynasty versus the Davidic dynasty in the Babylonian Talmud ........................................... 423

**Conclusion** ........................................................................................................................................ 427

Excursus: Eupolemus’ perspective on the reigns of David and Solomon ......................................................... 434

List of the documents describing the diplomatic relations between the Hasmoneans and Rome before 63 B.C.E. ..................................................................................................................... 439

Chronology .............................................................................................................................................. 440

Maps .................................................................................................................................................. 445

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................................... 447

Index of ancient sources ....................................................................................................................... 479