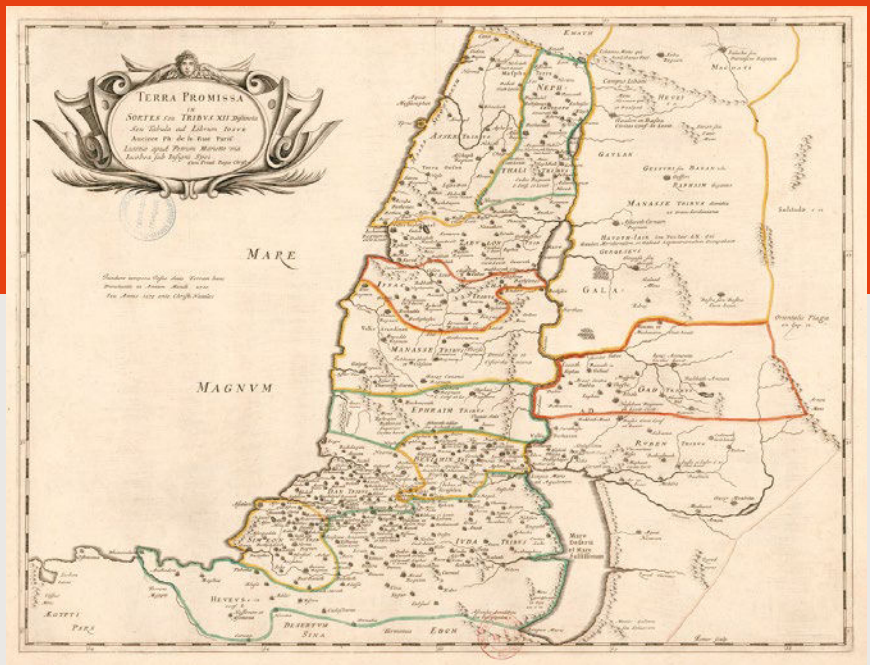


Katell Berthelot

# In Search of the Promised Land?

The Hasmonean Dynasty Between Biblical Models and Hellenistic Diplomacy



V&R Academic

# Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements

Edited by  
Armin Lange, Bernard M. Levinson  
and Vered Noam

## Advisory Board

Katell Berthelot (University of Aix-Marseille), George Brooke (University of Manchester), Jonathan Ben Dov (University of Haifa), Beate Ego (University of Osnabrück), Ester Eshel (Bar-Ilan University), Heinz-Josef Fabry (University of Bonn), Steven Fraade (Yale University), Maxine L. Grossman (University of Maryland), Christine Hayes (Yale University), Catherine Hezser (University of London), Jodi Magness (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Carol Meyers, (Duke University), Eric Meyers (Duke University), Hillel Newman (University of Haifa), Christophe Nihan (University of Lausanne), Lawrence H. Schiffman (New York University), Konrad Schmid (University of Zurich), Adiel Schremer (Bar-Ilan University), Michael Segal (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Aharon Shemesh (Bar-Ilan University), Günter Stemberger (University of Vienna), Kristin De Troyer (University of St Andrews), Azzan Yadin (Rutgers University)

Volume 24

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Katell Berthelot

# In Search of the Promised Land?

The Hasmonean Dynasty Between  
Biblical Models and Hellenistic Diplomacy

Translation by Margaret Rigaud

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

This work has been produced within the framework of the Unit of Excellence LabexMed – Social Sciences and Humanities at the heart of multidisciplinary research for the Mediterranean – which holds the following reference 10-LABX-0090.

This work has benefited from a state grant administered by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche for the project Investissements d'Avenir A\*MIDEX which holds the reference n°ANR-11-IDEX-0001-02.



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

Cover image: Terra promissa © Bibliothèque nationale de France, [www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr)

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

## **Introduction. The Historiography of the Hasmonean Period: The Influence of Biblical Models and of Modern Debates on the Creation of a Jewish State**

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 perennality 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

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 <i>versus</i> 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: <i>herem</i> 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 <i>Book of Jubilees</i> and the <i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> .....	185



The connections between the <i>Book of Jubilees</i> and the <i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> .....	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 <i>versus</i> 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 <i>Temple Scroll</i> . . . . .	366
1.1.3 Alexander Jannaeus . . . . .	372
The times of wickedness in 4Q390 . . . . .	372
The <i>Pesher</i> on Isaiah (a) (4Q161) . . . . .	372
4Q448: for or against king Jonathan? . . . . .	375
The <i>Pesher</i> on Nahum . . . . .	383
The <i>Pesher</i> on Habakkuk . . . . .	386
Is there a condemnation of the Hasmonean wars in 4Q471a? . . . . .	388
1.2 The critique of the Hasmoneans in the <i>Psalms of Solomon</i> . . . . .	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 <i>Megillat Ta'anit</i> . . . . .	396
2.1.2 Beyond <i>Megillat Ta'anit</i> : 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 <i>Seder 'Olam</i> 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 <i>b. Menahot</i> 64b .....	421
2.3.2 The Hasmonean dynasty versus the Davidic dynasty in the Babylonian Talmud .....	423
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	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