

The Maccabean Revolt in the context of Rebellion in the Seleucid Empire

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of a
B.A. (Hons) Classical Studies

University of Wales Trinity St David
May 2018

Isabel Hudson
1301146

Word Count: 9333

Contents

Title Page	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Introduction	3
Chapter one: Resources	4
Ancient sources	4
1 Maccabees	4
2 Maccabees	5
Josephus <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>	6
Modern Sources	8
Chapter Three: Other Revolts Within the Seleucid Empire	29
Conclusion	33
Bibliography	35

Introduction

My intention is to show that the importance accorded to the Maccabean rebellion has more to do with a quirk of source survival than its contextual importance and that it was not an unusual occurrence within the Seleucid empire. I intend to achieve this by providing an in depth analysis of the Maccabean revolt itself and its causes and effects. In this section I will cover the causes of the rebellion according to the books of the Maccabees. I will also examine the scholarly debate on the topic and attempt to draw conclusions on the causes of the revolt. I will then go on to examine the revolts that took place prior to the Maccabean event in order to provide a context for the state of rebellion within the empire. I shall also compare the mechanisms that drove the unrest. By doing this, I hope to reveal a more contextualised perspective on the Maccabean revolt and the state of the Seleucid empire.

Unless stated all dates are BC.

Chapter one: Resources

Ancient sources.

The major issue when looking at this period of time is not only lack of sources but the inherent bias in the one sided accounts that are preserved. The Jewish position is well represented by 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus's *Antiquities*. By contrast, there is no corresponding contemporary or near contemporary source for the Seleucid view other than tangential mention in Polybius's *Histories*. Furthermore, Polybius is hostile to Antiochus IV for his own reasons.¹ However, there are some other epigraphic documents that have survived and copious numismatic evidence.

1 Maccabees

1 Maccabees is a book compiled for a new dynasty. It is primarily a propagandist celebration and justification of Judas Maccabeus and his successors and their reclamation of Jerusalem from the Seleucids, who are depicted as religiously impious and intolerant. It covers from 175 through to 135 and is ordered chronologically. It is written in a style and idiom that suggests that it was originally written in Hebrew.² This would accord with the audience it is clearly aimed at. It was undoubtedly written by a Hasmonean supporter and possibly by a court historian.³ The account is incontestably supportive of the Hasmoneans and Rome. The major motifs are the garrison, fortification of the Acra, land issues and tribute.⁴ The book ends with John Hyrcanus's

¹ Mittag 2006:18-23

² Rooke 2003:2

³ Honigman 2014: 6

⁴ Honigman 2014.288

rule. He ruled from 134-104⁵ which would give a date of about 100, presuming it was written after John's death but before the fall from favour of Rome and the Hasmoneans.⁶

2 Maccabees

2 Maccabees is specifically an account of Judas Maccabeus, starting in 175 and ending with the death of Nicanor in 160. It is florid in style, an example of Greek pathetic historiography.⁷ Early within the text, there is a statement that 2 Maccabees is an abridgement of the five books of Jason of Cyrene.⁸ Again, it is supportive of the Romans. Early in the narrative, it states that "from this time the city being possessed by Hebrews, I also here make an end of my narration",⁹ the assumption must be that it was written when Jerusalem had been constantly in Jewish possession.¹⁰ Taking this into account, Jason's original five books would have been written before 63 but likely to be earlier than 1 Maccabees as it focuses on Judas and not his successors.¹¹ Focusing as it does on martyrdom within a series of events that have been aptly described as containing "much of the miraculous and spectacular"¹² and couched in gruesome detail, 2 Maccabees has been regarded as problematic from the viewpoint of historic accuracy.¹³ However, Honigman takes a different view whilst acknowledging that recent scholarship has treated 2 Maccabees with some scepticism as it offers religious

⁵ Honigman 2014: 6

⁶ Rooke 2003: 2

⁷ Rooke 2003:2

⁸ 2 Macc.2.24-32

⁹ 2 Macc.15.38

¹⁰ Rooke 2003.2

¹¹ Rooke 2003: 2-3

¹² Rooke 2003:2

¹³ Aperghis 2011: 53

and cultural explanations for the rebellion – not political reasons.¹⁴ Honigman believes that if the desecration of the temple and the killing of the population is set to one side, the account given is political emphasising as it does discuss the increase in tribute and Seleucid and Jewish interference the appointment of the high priest.¹⁵

Rather than being linear in narrative, 2 Maccabees can be interpreted as thematically cyclical – a series of pious and impious events and people seen through the pairings of kings and priests. Taking the Heliodorus story as a starting point, depicting Heliodorus and Seleucus IV in opposition to the pious Onias, (table 1, years 175-175/4) the cycles would continue as follows; the desecration and revolt depicted by Antiochus IV and Antiochus V with the wicked priests, Jason and Menelaus (table 1, years 174 – 165/4 and 164/3 - 160) ; Nicanor's defeat featuring Demetrius I and impious priest Alcimus (table 1 year 60), culminating in the final cycle - the triumph of Judas and the Hasmonean destiny¹⁶ of a pious priestly royal dynasty.¹⁷

Josephus Antiquities of the Jews

The account of the Jewish revolt recounted in Book 12 and follows to a large extent, 1 Maccabees.¹⁸ Josephus was writing in Rome in about 94CE for a Roman audience about his people which resulted in “error, distortion and unwarranted additions.”¹⁹ For example he calls Jason ‘Jesus’ and mistakes Menelaus for Onias.²⁰ There has been scholarly debate concerning the paraphrasing, inconsistencies and additional material.

¹⁴ Honigman 2014: 288

¹⁵ Honigman 2014: 288

¹⁶ 2 Macc. 15.37

¹⁷ Honigman 2014: 68

¹⁸ Rooke 2003:3

¹⁹ Aperghis: 2011.58

²⁰ Honigman 2014: 5

The current consensus reached is that Josephus did not insert parts from other works to which he had access but composed his own writings from information gleaned to fill in what he deemed to be missing from his account.²¹ There would also be the problem that is inherent in any translation.

Polybius *Histories*

Polybius' *Histories* provides a back-drop for the time. He was contemporary to the period and was held in Rome at the same time as Demetrius 1, son of Seleucus IV who had been held from 178 -162 BCE, with whom he was acquainted.²² Demetrius I had been exchanged for Antiochus IV who was required back in Antioch. They were being held hostage in accordance with the terms of the Apamea treaty.²³

Polybius is also a good source for other revolts within the Seleucid empire. However, it should be noted that Polybius is not completely unbiased as he had an antipathy towards Antiochus IV and the Seleucids, possibly dating from the time of his time in Rome with Demetrius I whose escape he had aided. Many of his criticisms, such as the personal ones, are subjective. This negative bias may lessen his reliability as a source. On the other hand, his general historic foundation and framing are trustworthy.²⁴ Polybius even managed to praise Antiochus IV on occasion, describing him as “energetic, daring in design, and worthy of the royal dignity,”²⁵ Whilst he generally counters any praise with criticism, it could be regarded as an attempt to give a balanced view.²⁶

²¹ Honigman 2014:5

²² Nabel 2017: 10,12,

²³ Polyb. 31.2, 31.11–15

²⁴ Mittag 2006:18-23

²⁵ Polyb.28.4.18

²⁶ Mittag 2006:18-23

Epigraphic evidence

Where ancient literary sources are potentially questionable, biased or sparse, epistolary evidence is of prime importance. For example, the discovery and deciphering of the Olympiodoros inscription, Appointment of Olympiodoros SEG.57.1838, in 2007 sets Heliodorus' visit to Jerusalem in a different context giving credence to the development of new theories.²⁷ The Tyriaion inscription from Asia Minor documents the process of becoming a polis with particular reference to a gymnasium, giving innovative insight into Jason's motives in Jerusalem.²⁸

Modern Sources

A discussion of modern sources for the Maccabean revolt must begin with Bickerman. His 1937 *Der Gott der Makkabees* was a watershed for the modern study. Bickerman was the first to look at the revolt within the wider context of Jerusalem's position within the Seleucid empire. He paid close attention to ancient sources cross-checking them with historically reliable documentary evidence. For example, using the Apamea treaty of war reparations to show potential financial pressures for the Seleucids and using inscriptions of Seleucid state practices and administration for comparative effect.²⁹ He concluded that the rebellion was caused by Seleucid religious persecution that was a result of the Hellenists agenda.

This methodology of contextualising Judean events in their Seleucid setting opened up an era of new academic research. Tcherikover in his 1959 *Hellenistic civilisation and the Jews* contended that a *politeuma* coexisted with the temple state and that the reforms would have been political and financial not religious. Placing Menelaus' theft from the

²⁷ Honigman 2014:29.

²⁸ Honigman 2014: 29-30

²⁹ Honigman 2014: 11-13

temple as the trigger for the revolt, he was the first to suggest that the religious prohibitions were a response to the revolt, an inversion of the prevailing view – not a contention that was taken up by academics until very recently.³⁰ According to Honigman, these two books created a paradigm which has informed and reformed academic research on this subject. It is always salient to remind oneself that academics view history through their own times and shape their theories accordingly³¹ and it seems that the scholarship from 70s and 80s, reflected the understanding of those decades that history was driven by economic and political motivations.³² I have looked at scholarship primarily from the 21st century and find this still to be true. As Baumgarten remarks “The lenses of ideology and contemporary experience through which historians see the past can be of many sorts, more or less widely accepted in their time and place. When this is the case the vision of the past these historians present will appear clear and true to at least some others.”³³

The many and varied articles and books that I have examined do fit the Bickerman - Tcherikover paradigm to some degree with added economic and political emphasis. However they also demonstrate that scholarship is not necessarily perpetually held within a framework constructed by past academics but does progress and innovate. The works that I have studied (see bibliography) show that a modern interdisciplinary and comparative approach provides an informative and fascinating insight into the Maccabean revolt, particularly where new evidence, such as the Polyiodorus inscriptions, becomes available.

³⁰ Honigman 2014: 13-15

³¹ Coloru 2013: 53

³² Honigman 2014:15

³³ Baumgarten 2007:179

Chapter Two: The Maccabean Revolt

In this chapter, I will attempt to provide a summary of the events, causes and impacts of the Maccabean revolt. I shall begin to set out how this connects to the other revolts within the empire and the consequences for the integrity of Seleucid control. The Seleucids came to rule the area of Coele Syria in around 200BC following over a hundred years of Ptolemaic control.³⁴ There were several states within the area including the small state of Judea centred around the city of Jerusalem. During the fifth Syrian war the Judeans had sided with Antiochus III and the Seleucids and as such had been treated well.³⁵ The Seleucid empire was ethnically diverse and the Seleucids had a pragmatic approach towards their native subjects.³⁶ Judea would have been regarded as a less important province within the larger empire.³⁷

The Maccabean revolt began in 166 following about ten years of growing tensions between the Seleucids and their Jewish subjects. According to Maccabees 1 and 2, Seleucid control had begun to appear oppressive to a faction of the Jewish population. In addition to 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees, one of the main sources for the history of the Jews is Josephus who reports the details of the royal decree that followed the original take-over of the region. The details are stated in a letter from Antiochus III to his general Ptolemaios for the settling of the area of Judea at this time. It is important to discuss here as it gives an insight to the established state of affairs in Judea prior to the revolt. The letter starts with the reasons for the subsequent concessions to be made to the Judeans:

³⁴ Polyb.5.31

³⁵ Honigman 2014: 299, 303

³⁶ Taylor 2014: 223

³⁷ Aperghis 2011: 21

“In as much as the Jews, from the very moment when we entered their country, showed their eagerness to serve us and, when we came to their city, gave us a splendid reception and met us with their senate and furnished an abundance of provisions to our soldiers and elephants, and also helped us to expel the Egyptian garrison in the citadel, we have seen fit on our part to requite them for these acts and to restore their city which has been destroyed by the hazards of war, and to repeople it by bringing back to it those who have been dispersed abroad.”³⁸

The letter goes on to detail how Antiochus III will allow twenty thousand pieces of silver for sacrificial purposes “in accordance with their native law”³⁹. The temple would be restored and the wood from Judea, other nations and Lebanon would be free of any toll charge. This implies that there is likely to have been a tax on goods entering Jerusalem.⁴⁰ He then goes on to delineate a specific group of people –the senate, priests, temple scribes and temple singers to be exempted from poll tax, crown tax and salt tax. As an incentive for people who had fled the area to return, those who came back before a prescribed time, would be exempted from taxes for three years and have relief from a third of their tribute. There was also to be freedom for those who were carried off and enslaved with their property being restored.

There was a clear intention for the Seleucids to start off on peaceable terms with their new subjects. As mentioned above, the Seleucids pragmatism meant that relationships with their subjects would vary according to the regional customs and the circumstances. As the Judeans had supported them from the outset, they were accorded a reasonably generous settlement. This settlement is not unlike that of Sardis by Antiochus III after

³⁸ Jos.JA: XII.138-9

³⁹ Jos.JA: XII.140

⁴⁰ Aperghis 2011: 24

the revolt of Achaeus.⁴¹ It would be in line with the Seleucids' general practice and is evidence of their acceptance of diverse cultures and religions.⁴² Administrative personnel would have stayed in situ where suitable. For example, Ptolemaios, son of Thraseus, the recipient of the letter from Antiochus III containing the Royal decree, was an appointee of Ptolemy V who had stayed as governor and high priest of Coele Syria after Antiochus III took control.⁴³ Jerusalem had welcomed and assisted the Seleucid takeover and the Royal decree specifically stated that "... all the members of the nation shall have a form of government in accordance with the laws of their country, and the senate, the priests, the scribes of the temple and the temple-singers".⁴⁴ To this effect, the Judean political and social organisation and social leadership would have been unchanged.⁴⁵ Where integration into the empire was initially achieved through conquest, it was followed by a mixture of co-operation, diplomacy and political goodwill as the primary aim would always be to establish stability in a region as soon as possible.⁴⁶

For the remainder of the reign of Antiochus III, relations with the Jewish population seem to have remained positive and financial agreements would have remained at a level that would assist recovery and assimilation into the empire.⁴⁷ Antiochus III died in 187 and was succeeded by his son, Seleucus IV.

It is towards the end of the reign of Seleucus IV that problems appear to have arisen.

There is much academic debate as to the causes of the Maccabean revolt. 1 Maccabees is an account of the Hasmonean Dynasty whilst 2 Maccabees is an account of the revolt and

⁴¹ Aperghis 2011: 26

⁴² Coloru 2013: 52

⁴³ Honigman 2014: 300

⁴⁴ Jos.JA: XII.142

⁴⁵ Honigman 2014: 307

⁴⁶ Honigman 2014: 299

⁴⁷ Ramsey 2011: 35

focuses primarily on Jerusalem.⁴⁸ For this reason, I have concentrated on 2 Maccabees for the creation of a timeline of events to facilitate discussion of the varying academic approaches and their divergences but will supplement it with events from 1 Maccabees to assist in clarification of the consequences. 2 Maccabees is imbued with hyperbole and florid language. In order to make more sense of the chronology, it seemed appropriate to pare down the account as far as possible. The actual revolt started in 166 during the reign of Antiochus IV but it is necessary to go back to 175 when Seleucus IV was still king to appreciate the build up to the revolt from the Jewish perspective.

Table One

175	Onias (Jewish High Priest) visited Seleucus IV to seek support against Simon (temple overseer) who had approached Apollonius , governor of Coele Phoenicia, to inform him that the temple was full of available money – The king sent Heliodorus , his chief minister, to collect the money Heliodorus attempted to rob the temple at Jerusalem but was deterred by divine retribution (2 Macc. 3.1 – 37) Heliodorus murdered Seleucus IV ⁴⁹ Antiochus IV succeeded and killed Heliodorus for the death of his brother Seleucus IV .
175/4	Jason replaced his brother Onias as High Priest, having offered King Antiochus IV 350 talents of silver and fourscore talents from other revenues. Jason asked for and was granted authority by the king to found a gymnasium and <i>ephēbeion</i> and encouraged the Hellenisation of the Jewish people (2 Macc.4.7- 20)
171	Jason sent Menelaus , brother of Simon , to Antiochus IV on temple business. Menelaus , offered 300 talents more than Jason and was appointed High Priest in his place (Macc. 4.23-24)
170/169	Menelaus was in arrears with the tribute of Judaea. He attempted to pay off part of his debt by selling temple treasures and bribing the king's representative at Antioch, Andronicus . This did not succeed because of the king's intervention. Menelaus then instructed his brother Lysimachus to take more of the Temple treasures. This was unsuccessful too because of the furious reaction in Jerusalem which resulted in Lysimachus ' death. Menelaus then persuaded Andronicus to kill Onias who had upbraided Menelaus from a supposedly safe place. (2 Macc.4.27 – 42)

⁴⁸ Kosmin 2016: 33

⁴⁹ Will, Sherwin-White 2003: 1381-2

168	Menelaus evaded prosecution by bribes and retained his position (2 Macc.4.43-50) Rumours of Antiochus IV's death in Egypt prompted Jason to mount a merciless but unsuccessful coup killing many of his own countrymen which ended in his death (2 Macc.5.5-10) In fear that the Jews would no longer abide by the alliance, Antiochus IV, en-route back from Egyptian campaign, made for Jerusalem and took it by force with the resulting slaughter of 40,000 and the enslavement of a further 40,000. (2 Macc. 5.11-14) Antiochus IV, accompanied by Menelaus as his guide, entered the holy Jerusalem temple, handled the holy vessels and seized 1800 talents before returning to Antioch leaving Philip, a 'barbarous Phrygian', as governor (2 Macc.5.15-21)
168 cont.	
167	Antiochus IV sent Apollonius, his general, with an army of 22,000 to further suppress any opposition in Jerusalem and to build a garrison (The Acra) Apollonius, pretended peace and then attacked on the Sabbath day slaying many. Judas Maccabeus withdrew to the countryside with his men (2 Macc.5.24-27) Antiochus IV issued a decree compelling the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers and accept Hellenic customs and make pagan sacrifices. The temple at Jerusalem was to be called the temple of Jupiter Olympius and was defiled by Gentile revelling, culminating in the abomination and desolation of the temple(2 Macc.6.1-9) The revolt starts
166	7 brothers and their mother are put to death for refusing to eat unclean meat (2 Macc.7.1-41) and the revolt continues in earnest. Judas assembled an army and conducted guerrilla warfare. Philip, concerned by Judas's success wrote to Ptolemy, the governor of Coele Syria for assistance. He sent Nicanor aided by Gorgios to assemble an army and rout the Jews (2 Macc.8.1-10)
165	There then followed a series of victories for Judas. He split the army giving his brothers, Simon, Joseph and Jonathan 1500 men. Judas succeeded in putting Nicanor's army to flight, beat Gorgios at Emmanaeus, and Lysius at Bethsur. The Jewish army returned to Jerusalem, and divided up their spoils (2 Macc.8.24-33)
165/164	Having recovered Jerusalem and the temple, Judas ensured that the temple was purified (2 Macc.10.1-8)
164/3	In the meantime, Nicanor had returned to Antioch unhappy at the destruction of his army. (2 Macc. 8.34-36) Antiochus IV also started his return from Persia having attempted to rob a temple at Persepolis but had been routed by the people of the city. At Ecbatana, he heard of the defeat of Nicanor and Timotheus, was suffused with rage and commanded to be driven to Jerusalem. He was struck by a plague and died. Before the end he vowed to restore the temple and wrote to the Jews, reminding them of past beneficence by his family and beseeched them to accept his son Antiochus V as king. (2 Macc. 9.1-29)
163	Antiochus V with Lysias as his regent succeeded Antiochus IV and engaged with the Jewish army at Bethsura. (2 Macc. 11.6) He agreed peace terms with the defenders of Jerusalem to keep their own laws and customs.

	Romans also sent a letter to the Jews to agree to uphold whatever terms Antiochus V and Lysias had granted (2 Macc. 11.12-36) Antiochus V put Menelaus to death after he tried to deceive Antiochus V into making him Chief ruler. (2 Macc.13.1-7) But then Antiochus V took against the Jews (2 Macc.13.9) He marched against the Jews at Bethsura but was repulsed (2 Macc. 13.19) He then fought against Judas and was overcome. Thinking Philip had rebelled in Antioch, he reconciled with Judas. (2 Macc. 13.23)
161	Demetrius, son of Seleucus IV, who had been held hostage in Rome, escaped and captured Lysias and Antiochus V killing them both (1 Macc.7.1-4)
160	Demetrius having been primed by Alcimus, who wanted to be high priest, as to the sedition and warmongering of Judas Maccabeus sent Nicanor with an army into Judea. Nicanor was reluctant to fight so a conference was called and peace terms agreed and settled in Jerusalem. Alcimus reported back to Demetrius that Nicanor had assented to foreign interests and intended to make Judas his successor. Demetrius ordered Nicanor to deliver Judas as a prisoner to Antioch. Nicanor unable to oppose Demetrius, threatened to lay the temple to waste and dedicate it to Bacchus. (2 Macc.14.1-33) Nicanor attacked the Jews at Adasa on the Sabbath but was killed. Judas commanded that his head, hand and shoulder be cut off and removed to Jerusalem 2 Maccabees ends here. Recap on the above according to 1 Maccabees Having been apprised by Alcimus, Demetrius sent Bacchiades to assess the situation. On information received, Demetrius appointed Alcimus high priest having instructed him to take revenge on the children of Israel. He then sent Alcimus and Bacchiades back to Judea where Alcimus pretended to be pursuing peace terms before attacking (1 Macc.7.5 -22) Once Demetrius had heard of Nicanor's defeat, he again sent Alcimus and Bacchiades back into Judea with his right wing of troops against Judas Maccabeus who was encamped at Laiza, where he was slain. (1 Macc.9.1-18) Jonathan was then appointed Jewish leader (1 Macc.9.31-32) Battle with Bacchiades on the banks of the Jordan. Bacchiades withdrew fortifying Judean towns as he went and constructing garrisons.
159	Alcimus having commanded that the inner walls of the sanctuary be pulled down and the works of the prophet destroyed, fell ill and died. Bacchiades returned to Antioch and there was peace for 2 years (1 Macc.9.54-57)
157	A "council of the wicked" was convened and agreed to end the peace and ease enjoyed by Jonathan and his followers. Bacchiades was recalled and persuaded to take Jonathan in one night.

	Jonathan and Simon hearing of the plan went to Bethbessen and fortified it. Bacchiades attacked but lost to Jonathan. Peace was agreed between Bacchiades and Jonathan. Jonathan subsequently based at Machmas (1 Macc.9.58-73)
152	Alexander Balas, illegitimate son of Antiochus IV took Ptolemais. Demetrius, hearing about it, gathered an army to retake it. Demetrius sent a letter to Jonathan setting out terms for alliance against Alexander Balas, giving authority for an army to be raised. Jonathan put this before the people of Jerusalem. Jonathan moved to Jerusalem and repaired the city (1 Macc.10.1-10) Alexander Balas, hearing of this also wrote to Jonathan appointing him High priest and offering friendship, a purple robe and golden crown. Jonathan accepted and gathered an army (1 Macc.10.15-21)
152 cont.	
151/50	Demetrius then offered many further concessions to the Jews, including amongst other things, the Acra in Jerusalem, freedom from taxes and tributes, three other cities and the proceeds of Ptolemais to fund the Jewish holy places.
150	However, Jonathan continued his allegiance to Alexander Balas 1 Macc.10.21-44 Demetrius and Alexander Balas met in battle. Demetrius was killed. Alexander Balas wrote to Ptolemy VI, King of Egypt, calling for peace between them and allying the relationship through marriage. Jonathan was summoned to the wedding of Alexander Balas to Ptolemy's daughter Cleopatra and treated with honour. Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem (1 Macc. 10.50-66)
145	Alexander Balas returned to Antioch having heard that Demetrius I's son, Demetrius had arrived from Crete. Demetrius appointed Apollonius as his general, gathered an army and then sent for Jonathan to challenge him. Jonathan and Simon defeated Demetrius's army and withdrew to Jerusalem. Alexander Balas further honoured Jonathan (1 Macc.10. 67-88) Ptolemy VI gathered an army with the deceitful intention of acquiring Alexander Balas's kingdom. Ptolemy VI attempted to blame Jonathan for destruction caused. However, Jonathan met with Alexander Balas and then returned to Jerusalem. Slandering Alexander, Ptolemy VI then suggested to Demetrius that they enter an agreement which would include his daughter Cleopatra (Alexander's wife) (1 Macc. 11.1-18) Ptolemy VI marched into Antioch. Alexander Balas's army marched against them but was put to flight. Alexander fled to Arabia for protection but his head was cut off and sent to Ptolemy VI who died three days later. Demetrius II was now king of the Seleucid empire and Ptolemy VII king of Egypt (1 Macc.11.1-19)
144	Jonathan attempted to take the Acra in Jerusalem. His enemies informed on him to Demetrius II who summoned Jonathan to Ptolemais. Jonathan's men continued besieging the castle.

143	Taking gifts, Jonathan met Demetrius II, winning his support. Jonathan's request that Judea be free from tribute was granted along with very much the same grants and terms as Demetrius I had offered in 151/50. Demetrius II sent his forces away, keeping only the foreign army to hand. (1 Macc.11.20-38) Tryphon then emerged to set up Antiochus VI, son of Alexander Balas, as a rival king to Demetrius II. (1 Macc. 11.39) In the meantime, Jonathan petitioned Demetrius II to cast out those that were still holding the Acra as they fought against Israel. The king replied that he would do so but requested that Jonathan send men to assist as the king's army had been sent away. Jonathan sent 3000 men to Antioch. Demetrius II survived an attack from within Antioch thanks to these men who returned to Jerusalem with glory and spoils of war. Demetrius II then alienated himself from Jonathan (1 Macc.11.53) Tryphon put the diadem on Antiochus VI having rallied Demetrius II's dispersed army. They fought against Demetrius II who fled. Tryphon took Antioch. Antiochus VI confirmed Jonathan in his position as high priest restating the grants that had been given and made Simon, Jonathan's brother governor from Tyre to the borders of Egypt Jonathan made a progress through the country and after various skirmishes including one with Demetrius II's generals, successfully returned to Jerusalem. (1 Macc.11.54-74) Jonathan sent an embassy to Rome and to Sparta to renew the existing treaties The generals of Demetrius II having increased their army, came against Jonathan but disappeared after he left with an army to meet them. Jonathan returned to build up the fortresses of Judea. Tryphon lured Jonathan to Ptolemais and captured him (1 Macc. 12.1-48) The state of Judea was now weakened by the loss of their leader. Simon rallied the people and was appointed in place of Jonathan. Simon sent an army into Joppe. With Jonathan in custody, Tryphon moved against Judea. He sent a ransom message to Simon, demanding 100 silver talents and Jonathan's two sons as hostages in return for his release. Simon sent the money and children. He knew he was being deceived but could not afford to bring down the wrath of the Jewish people if he did not comply and Jonathan was killed. (1 Macc.12.53- 13.19)
142/1	Tryphon killed Jonathan and his sons near Bascama. Simon retrieved the bones and buried them at Modin, creating a sepulchre to honour his family (1 Macc.12.23-30) Tryphon put Antiochus VI to death and took the crown of Asia (1 Macc.12.31-32)

	Simon further fortified Judea and sent men to Demetrius II to grant an immunity to the land. Demetrius II replied agreeing peace and freeing the Jews from direct Seleucid rule. (1 Macc.12.33-41)
141	Simon took Gaza The Acra was still under siege in Jerusalem. Those within eventually asked for peace which Simon granted. (1 Macc.12.43-50)
140	Demetrius II assembled his army and went to Media to raise assistance to fight against Tryphon. Arsaces, king of Persia and Media sent an army against him and had Demetrius II captured (1 Macc.14.1-3) Rome and Sparta then renewed the alliances with Simon on tablets of brass and set on Mount Sion (1 Macc. 14.16 -69) Antiochus VII son of Demetrius II sent letters to Simon from exile stating that he would honour all previous grants and terms and would allow for the minting of coins. (1 Macc. 15.1-9)
138 138 cont.	Antiochus VII drove out Tryphon who took refuge at Dora and there besieged him (1 Macc.15.10-15) The Romans sent a missive stating that all matters within Judea should be referred to Simon as high priest (1 Macc.15.16-25) Antiochus VII ignored this and camped outside Dora besieging Tryphon. Simon sent 2000 men, money and equipment. Antiochus VII refused all and broke the covenant that had been made. He sent Athenobius to treaty claiming his lands back and accusing Simon of causing havoc in the land. Alternatively, Simon could pay 500 silver talents for the land and another 500 for tribute and the havoc caused. If Simon refused, Antiochus VII threatened bring battle to him. Simon refused, claiming the inheritance of his fathers (1 Macc.15.25-36) Tryphon escaped by ship to Orthosias. Antiochus VII pursued. He sent Cendebus with an army to march on Judea. Cendebus fought his way through Judea. (1 Macc.15.25-41) Hearing of the injuries to his people, Simon sent his two eldest sons, Judas and John with 20,000 men to meet the oncoming army. Cendebus was put to flight (1 Macc.16.1-8)
135	Ptolemy, son of Abobas, captain in the plain of Jericho, plotted treachery against Simon and his sons. Simon and his sons Mathathias and Judas went down through Jericho on a journey to check on the cities of Judea. Ptolemy received them as guests to a feast and then murdered them. (1 Macc.16.11-16) Ptolemy, informing Antiochus VII and requested the king send an army and Ptolemy would deliver the country, cities and the tributes. He sent men to kill John and others to take Jerusalem. John was warned and escaped to take on the mantle of High priest. (1 Macc.16.18-24) End of 2 Maccabees

The causes of the rebellion have always been of interest to academics. For many years, the accepted position has been that it was the Hellenising agenda of the Seleucids, causing social and political rifts between the Jews that were responsible.⁵⁰ There was an understanding that the Seleucids conquered by Bickerman's "surrender and grant" method.⁵¹ This would entail any autonomy being first suspended, then re-conferred and would apply to both Greek cities (*poleis*) and native cities (*ethneis*) according to a strict format that differentiated between *polis* and *ethnes*.⁵² More recent study has suggested an alternative mode, depicting the kings as interacting with their subjects in a multi-ethnic polity.⁵³ Coloru, posits that what he terms "multiple approaches" ensured that there was no "universal Seleucid citizenship" as such, more that citizenship was tied to the city rather than the empire.⁵⁴ As long as there was loyalty to the king and taxes were paid to the royal treasuries, local elites could remain in charge of local administration.⁵⁵

Honigman develops this line further, postulating that the pragmatic Seleucids took account of local circumstances. Therefore, settlements would be particular to whichever city was in question, obviating any difference in approach between Greek or native cities. An agreed contract could then be further negotiated and adjusted rather than imposed, particularly where there had been rapid capitulation - what is termed by Honigman as "flexible praxis"⁵⁶. This would accord with a desire to create stability after the turmoil of war. Certainly the Royal decree in the case of Jerusalem can be read in this light.⁵⁷ The decree was quite specifically aimed at Jerusalem as opposed to Judea and did not

⁵⁰ Honigman 2014: 11-15

⁵¹ Honigman 2014: 302

⁵² Honigman 2014:303

⁵³ Taylor 2014: 223 pace Sherwin-White, Kuhrt

⁵⁴ Coloru 2013: 51

⁵⁵ Coloru 2013: 52

⁵⁶ Honigman 2014: 303

⁵⁷ Honigman 2014:303

include tax relief on any agricultural activities. Judea would presumably have continued paying taxes and tribute. The main beneficiaries would have been the ruling class and the temple in Jerusalem.⁵⁸

Given the propitious start to Seleucid rule in Judea and that the Seleucids were accepting of the culture and religions of their conquered peoples, as evidenced by benefactions to and construction of many temples within the empire, the supposition that it was the imposition of Hellenistic practices that caused problems seems at odds with their general *modus operandi*.⁵⁹

2 Maccabees gives a detailed description of the effects that the building of a gymnasium and *ephēbeion* by Jason, the high priest, had on the Jews – their dress altered, priests neglecting the altar and sacrifices, honouring Grecian glories above those of their fathers and even sending money for sacrifice to Hercules.⁶⁰

Aperghis suggests that penetration of Hellenistic practices into Jewish life caused friction between the traditionalists and the elite.⁶¹ The upper classes would have benefitted as trade improved following the Seleucid conquest. Becoming part of the Seleucid empire would have opened up Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor - but would have involved some relaxation of Jewish custom and practice. He further argues that enrolment into an *ephēbeion*, a civic institution for the two year training for Greek youth at 18, implies that there was an intention to upgrade Jerusalem to an Antioch, effectively changing its status from an *ethnes* to a *polis*. At this point, Antiochus IV had no quarrel with the Jews but had continued the practice of his father Antiochus III in

⁵⁸ Aperghis 2011: 25-26

⁵⁹ Taylor 2014: 223-224

⁶⁰ 2 Macc.4.7-20

⁶¹ Aperghis 2011: 54

allowing their religious and social customs to continue. The push for change came from their high priest Jason.⁶² As Jason was indebted to Antiochus IV for his position, petitioning the king to become a *politeuma* and building a gymnasium would be a way of acknowledging the debt and integrating Jewish traditions into a Hellenistic framework.⁶³ 1 Maccabees states that the Hellenisers felt that “covenanting with the heathen” may put an end to the evils that had befallen them.⁶⁴ Aperghis argues that doing so would be in line with other Hellenised cities in Coele Syria and goes on to suggest that the likelihood was that the upper classes saw potential financial benefit in that their tax position could be improved, markets opened up with the potential to strike coins, topped off with an air of Greekness to enhance their positions in society.⁶⁵ He further agrees that it might have been akin to the settlement of a *politeuma*, at Babylon under Antiochus IV in 173/2, a self-governing Greek community of native people but differentiated from those of the *polis*.⁶⁶

Honigman supports this contention, adding evidence from the Tyriaion Inscription containing two letters from Eumenes II, king of Pergamum (197-158)⁶⁷ responding to a request from the Toriotoi comprising of a village and a military settlement under Attalid control, for civic status, their own laws and a gymnasium. They were granted the right to form a single citizen body (*politeuma*) and use their own laws. Honigman believes that the inscription documents an established procedure, a parallel precedent for Jason’s request.⁶⁸

⁶² Aperghis 2011:58

⁶³ Coloru 2013:49

⁶⁴ 1 Macc.1.12

⁶⁵ Aperghis 2011: 55

⁶⁶ Aperghis 2011: 59

⁶⁷ Errington 2012: 567-8

⁶⁸ Honigman 2014: 363-4

However, Honigman does not accept the view that cultural and religious reforms were the main cause of the revolt, rather she argues that it was a political response to a change in fiscal reforms that were instituted at the end of his reign by Seleucus IV and carried out by Antiochus IV.⁶⁹ If the revolt was the cause of the crackdown on Jerusalem by Antiochus IV, described in graphic terms in both 1 and 2 Maccabees, rather than its consequence, then it was not the result of a religiously intolerant diktat from on high or a desire to impose one culture on another but a reaction to administrative reforms. Furthermore, this interpretation would allow that whilst 1 and 2 Maccabees are undoubtedly biased accounts, when stripped of rhetoric (see table above), they essentially show an understanding of the underlying causes and nature of the revolt as both of the books point to political causes.⁷⁰

The discovery of the Olympiodorus inscription from Marise in Idumea, Greek inscriptions, written as a series of correspondence between Seleucus IV, his chief advisor Heliodorus and two lower royal officials, gave Seleucus IV, from the Judeans point of view, a free hand to interfere in the affairs and treasuries of sanctuaries⁷¹ and shines a light on the manner in which Seleucus IV's reforms tightened control over the temples of Coele Syria and Phoenicia. It also supplies an alternative explanation as to why Heliodorus visited the Jerusalem temple in 175.⁷²

As discussed above, there was a benefit to the Seleucids to allow a conquered country to recover financially but it should be noted that the Royal decree did not allow freedom from taxes for everyone or forever.

The fiscal requirements of the treaty of Apamea after the defeat of Seleucus III at Magnesia are frequently cited as the reason why the Seleucids needed to keep raising

⁶⁹ Honigman 2014: 377

⁷⁰ Honigman 2014: 3

⁷¹ Shanks 2008: 56-60

⁷² Honigman 2014: 322

money. The terms were that after initial payments of 3000 silver talents to the Romans and 50 to Eumenes, another 12,000 would be paid to the Romans over 12 years and 350 to Eumenes over 5 years.⁷³ According to 2 Maccabees 8.10 – 12, Nicanor reckoned that there were still 2000 talents outstanding to be paid to the Romans by 166.⁷⁴

The Seleucid empire was dynamic, expanding and contracting. Antiochus IV was preparing for a campaign to Egypt which would need funding. Generally the Seleucids had no standardised systemic regime for exploiting resources post-conquest. There was more an *ad hoc* approach suited to local conditions and circumstances. Coele Syria bordered Egypt and after 20 years, there was room for adjustment to facilitate the funding of the relaunching of the Seleucid policy of conquest by Antiochus IV.⁷⁵

The Heliodorus incident recounted in 2 Maccabees⁷⁶, stripped of all hyperbole and propaganda can be seen as a result of this policy. Honigman argues that in view of the tightening in control of the temples as evidenced by the Olympiodorus inscription, Simon as overseer of the temple would have been accountable to and acting on the orders of Seleucid officials in conducting a survey of the temple revenues and assets and reporting to Apollonius, governor of Coele Phoenicia.⁷⁷ The responsibility for any tensions arising would therefore lay with royal administration rather than tax arrears⁷⁸ or possible misconduct as has been suggested by other academics.⁷⁹ Certainly tension between Onias, protecting sacred treasures, and Simon and then Heliodorus⁸⁰ would be understandable. It is arguable that it was considered that the Jerusalem temple should be

⁷³ Honigman 2014: 219

⁷⁴ Aperghis 2011: 20

⁷⁵ Honigman 2014: 317

⁷⁶ 1 Macc.; 2 Macc.3.4-34

⁷⁷ 2 Macc. 3.4-6

⁷⁸ Aperghis 2011

⁷⁹ Honigman 2014: 334 re Bickerman

⁸⁰ 2 Macc.3.7-11

as liable for royal taxation as any other given it was over 20 years since it had been specifically exempted from taxation in the Royal decree.⁸¹ However, they were both enforcing unpopular reforms. The fact that Seleucus IV sent such a high ranking official as Heliodorus, his chief minister, could imply that the Judeans were not the only peoples objecting to the reforms.⁸² A fillip to Onias' reaction to the request to hand over treasure could be that Antiochus III had given the tribute of Coele Syria as a dowry to Ptolemy V on his marriage.⁸³ On the death of his wife, both Seleucus IV and then Antiochus IV had contested the continuation of the tribute to the Ptolemaic court. It could be that Heliodorus' main aim was to retrieve the revenue before it was sent to Alexandria. This explanation would also give a further reason for Heliodorus' involvement.⁸⁴

Other incidents leading up to the revolt are recounted in 2 Maccabees. There is infighting between Menelaus and Jason for the position of high priest.⁸⁵ For a synopsis of the subsequent events see Table 1 years 170 – 169.

Rather than another temple robbing episode, Taylor and Aperghis argue that the 1,800 talents taken by Antiochus IV en-route from Egypt is unlikely to have been sacrilegious temple despoliation but the collection of taxes owed as evidenced by the impecunious state of Menelaus's affairs.⁸⁶ Whilst they disagree on the manner in which the amount taken could be accounted for, they do agree that there was no reason why Antiochus IV would want to offend his subjects - but he would want monies owed. According to Aperghis, 1,800 talents would equate to the normal Greek practice of doubling the

⁸¹ Honigman 2014: 339

⁸² Honigman 2014: 344

⁸³ Jos.JA: XII.154-155

⁸⁴ Honigman 2014: 342-3

⁸⁵ 2.Macc.4.23-24

⁸⁶ Taylor 2014: 232-234, Aperghis 2011: 60

amount owed for non-compliance *i.e.* 3 years of 300 talents (Menelaus's bribe for the post) then doubled.⁸⁷

Late in the second Egyptian campaign, Jason mounted a coup on hearing the rumour that Antiochus IV had died, this could explain why Antiochus IV chose that time to collect his dues. However, the precise dating and sequence of the events from I Maccabees, 2 Maccabees and Josephus covering the period 168 – 167 (see Table 1) becomes muddled and remains as Honigman remarks “irreparably confused”.⁸⁸

Academics seem to choose whichever dating sequence fits their agenda. Following this example, I will assume that the rebellion would have happened during the second campaign. Honigman gives cogent argument that Antiochus IV would have been unlikely to pursue a second campaign if there was already a rebellion within his empire so close to the Egyptian border.⁸⁹ 2 Maccabees timing of the account provides the reason for collection of the 1800 talents and a further destabilised Egypt would be favourable for a neighbouring revolt from the Judeans point of view.

In response to Jason's revolt, Antiochus IV returned to Antioch having installed a governor, Philip and sent Apollonius, his general to carry out a punitive attack on the city, either install or enlarge an existing garrison, and further fortify the Acra (table 1, Years 168-7).

This would not have been an unusual response to local insurgency.⁹⁰ There is discordance between I and 2 Maccabees regarding the second assault by Apollonius.

According to 1 Maccabees, it was a full two years after Antiochus IV's first attack.⁹¹ 2

Maccabees, suggests a much shorter interim between the two incidents.⁹² It must always

⁸⁷ Aperghis 2011: 60

⁸⁸ Honigman 2014: 382

⁸⁹ Honigman 2014: 382

⁹⁰ Rooke 2003: 9

⁹¹ 1 Macc.5.1.30

⁹² 2 Macc.5.22-24

be borne in mind that the Maccabees are works of propaganda, glorifying the successful revolt as divine retribution for acts of despoliation and sacrilege whilst painting the Seleucids, particularly Antiochus IV, as impious defilers of temples.

Neither book puts Antiochus IV at Jerusalem for the second assault that results in the abomination of the temple. However, Kosmin's fascinating examination of contemporaneous parallel events in 2 Maccabees involving Heliodorus' first entrance into the Temple and Antiochus IV's attempt on the Nanayan temple in Persia⁹³ clarifies how the narration can be interpreted as a literary device - to conflate the events in the mind of the reader – King and minister both impiously plundering temples.⁹⁴ Honigman contends that the gap between the two attacks and the element of Apollonius's duplicitous method, is another literary smoke screen, a device designed to separate the events in order to mask the timing of the revolt. The effect being to obfuscate the true causes, financial reform and the internal politicking and factionalising of the Jewish population – a heady mix of internal and external pressures. An attack by the king in response to a revolt, would be justified. However, as depicted in 1 and 2 Maccabees, it is an apparently unprovoked attack that fires the revolt giving further credence to the Maccabean theme of Jewish piety versus Seleucid impiety.⁹⁵

A more likely scenario for the violence and subsequent desecration of the temple is of Apollonius carrying out the king's orders to the letter in accordance with a typical Greek response to a rebel city. Aperghis suggests that the desecration of the temple was likely to have been carried out by the soldiers from the garrison who would have been mercenaries with no understanding of Jewish sensibilities.⁹⁶ The Seleucids strengthened

⁹³ 2 Macc. 3.1-33, 1.12-17

⁹⁴ Kosmin 2016: 33-36

⁹⁵ Honigman 2014: 391

⁹⁶ Aperghis 2011: 60-61

their kingship by adapting their rule to respect local custom and religion. Up until the desecration of the temple and the issuing of the decree, Antiochus IV's actions add up to a practical socio-economic political solution to a potential or actual revolt.⁹⁷

Following the above reasoning, the decree prohibiting Jewish customs⁹⁸ would have been issued following the outbreak of the revolt in 167. (See table 1 year 167) The intention, effects and veracity of the decree have always been of interest to academics. The contrasting arguments are convoluted and beyond the scope of this dissertation. Aperghis provides an excellent summation of the various academic positions and attendant reasoning.⁹⁹ Suffice to say, whilst forcible intervention would be reasonable in a province bordering on the Ptolemaic empire, the subsequent religious persecution would be uncharacteristic of the Seleucids, however, permanently quelling the rebellious spirit of Judean Jews would be understandable.¹⁰⁰

Honigman elects to disregard the decree completely as not being based in fact but another Maccabean literary device. Her persuasive contention is that the factors triggering the rebellion were the fiscal reforms which would have promoted popular participation and the political fall-out from the priestly power struggle which would have factionalised the elite.¹⁰¹

Shorn of its hyperbole and layers of Maccabean anti-Seleucid rhetoric,¹⁰² under close examination, 2 Maccabees reveals itself to be a reasonably accurate historic account of the convoluted interwoven causes of the Maccabean revolt – primarily caused by “economic distress and political destabilisation”.¹⁰³ A contention that is given further

⁹⁷ Fischer-Bovet 2015: 30

⁹⁸ 1 Macc.1.43-54, 2 Macc.6.1

⁹⁹ Aperghis 2011: 62-69

¹⁰⁰ Rooke 2003: 9

¹⁰¹ Honigman 2014: 40

¹⁰² Fischer-Bovet 2015: 24

¹⁰³ Honigman 2014: 404

credence by evidence such as the Olympiadorus letters. It is a theory which also sits well with the understanding that the most common revolts within the Seleucid empire were not religious or ethnic in nature but led by elites, satraps and kings occurring most frequently at succession and times of political destabilisation.¹⁰⁴ The Maccabean revolt was not a stand-alone event but analogous to other revolts within the empire as will be detailed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁴ Bovet-Fischer 2013:27

Chapter Three: Other Revolts Within the Seleucid Empire

This section will mainly cover the revolts under Antiochus III, however some mention will be made of others for which we have fewer sources. An issue in discussing other revolts other than those under Antiochus III, is the perennial problem of evidence and dating, particularly for those in the far east of the empire. For this reason attention will be paid to the revolts of Molon and Alexander and that of Achaeus with only brief mention of others when appropriate.

It is important to understand how the Seleucids controlled such a vast and diverse empire that had been integrated through a complex process of conquest, reconquest and diplomacy. Cohesion was maintained through the appointment of loyal and trusted supporters from the royal circle for the highest level of appointment and then supplemented by administrative officials also dependent on royal mandate and political good will. Effective and stable rule was therefore reliant on the maintenance of allegiances and loyalties with key individuals.¹⁰⁵ Problems arose where as in Molon's and Alexander's case, regional interests outweighed the benefits available from the Seleucid empire. There would be no reason why a local satrap or dynast would not then seek to sever ties.¹⁰⁶ There was historical precedent – somewhere between 250-240, Diodotus had pursued just this path when he succeeded in seceding Bactria with its abundant resources and trade connections from the Seleucid empire taking advantage of the distracted court of Antiochus II and Seleucus II.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Ramsey 2011:35

¹⁰⁶ Ramsey 2011:40-41

¹⁰⁷ Ramsey 2011:41

Antiochus III came to the throne after the death of his brother Seleucus III who had been murdered whilst on campaign in Asia Minor.¹⁰⁸ They were both the children of Seleucus II and were quite young at the time of succession.¹⁰⁹ Antiochus III's youth was seen as a problem by some of those who had been appointed by his father. Polybius states this as one of the reasons that Molon and Alexander, the satraps of Media and Persis, chose to revolt.¹¹⁰ The strength of the region of Media was considerable¹¹¹ and it had provided much of the wealth and military might of both the Seleucid and Persian empires.¹¹² This was a time of transition between kings.

There had been two successions in a short time period which would have caused destabilisation in the empire, especially in the peripheries which were on the borders of Molon's and Alexander's satrapies. Connected to this issue, was the problem of powers at court which were more likely to weigh heavily on a young and inexperienced king as can be seen in the example of Hermais who, according to Polybius, was feared by Molon and Alexander for his influence.¹¹³ As can be seen from Hermais' treatment of Epigenes, who he had framed and executed, these fears would not have been unfounded.¹¹⁴ Some scholars would argue that Molon had been appointed commander of the Upper Satrapies.¹¹⁵ If this was so, Molon would have been in an even better position to use coercion and bribery to achieve his goals.¹¹⁶ Antiochus III was campaigning against Egypt - on Hermais' advice¹¹⁷ – at a great distance from the Upper

¹⁰⁸ Polyb.4.48

¹⁰⁹ Polyb.4.48

¹¹⁰ Polyb.5.41

¹¹¹ Polyb.5.44

¹¹² Ramsey 2011:41

¹¹³ Polyb.5.41

¹¹⁴ Polyb.5.41, 5.50

¹¹⁵ Chrubasik 2016: 102

¹¹⁶ Polyb.5.43, Fischer-Bovet 2015: 27

¹¹⁷ Polyb.5.41

Satrapies. When Antiochus III's generals finally made it to the area of Apollonia¹¹⁸, they had suffered two defeats by Molon's forces¹¹⁹. According to Polybius, his army comprising of Persians and Greeks, were supporting Molon for personal financial gain. He also states that Molon was not sure of their loyalty as his conquest of the provinces had been recent and abrupt.¹²⁰ He was proved correct. When Antiochus III's returned from Egypt to fight Molon, Molon's soldiers gave their loyalty to the king when it became apparent that he would win, thereby providing financial stability.¹²¹

Achaeus' revolt was different. It occurred about two years after that of Molon and Alexander. Achaeus had proved himself loyal in the past to both Seleucus II and Seleucus III and then to Antiochus III himself. When offered the diadem by the army, after the death of Seleucus III he refused instead insisting that it go to Antiochus.¹²² Achaeus seems to have had some family connection to the Seleucid royal line¹²³ which may have influenced his loyalty. The details of the connection are not made clear in the sources,¹²⁴ this relation may have explained the willingness of the army to offer him the diadem after Seleucus III's death. Achaeus set himself up separately from the Seleucids striking coins in Sardis where he had made his capital, bearing the name *Basileus Achaeus*.¹²⁵ The revolt was ultimately unsuccessful and he was besieged at Sardis for over two years before being brutally executed.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ Polyb.5.52

¹¹⁹ Chrubasik 2016: 103

¹²⁰ Polyb.5.52.4

¹²¹ Fischer-Bovet 2013: 27-28

¹²² Polyb.4.48

¹²³ Polyb.4.48

¹²⁴ Chrubasik 2016:103-104

¹²⁵ Chrubasik 2016:106

¹²⁶ Polyb.5.

According to Polybius had Molon assumed that Achaeus would at the most support him or at the least, remain neutral. This is a suspect suggestion, given Achaeus' long held support and loyalty to the Seleucid empire which hadn't yet faltered at this point. It may be the case that in this situation, Polybius is reading back and making judgements in retrospect given Achaeus' later actions.

An alternative way of viewing this assumption of neutrality may be an insight into Molon's attempts at negotiation with other satraps. Polybius dismisses Molon as bribing and threatening his way past the other local satraps, although it could potentially be assumed that it is a similar level of negotiation to that seen during and after the Maccabean revolt. This is simply obscured by the nature of Polybius' account, ie. that it is an historical overview rather than an in-depth account or analysis.

It is possible to compare the timing of the revolt of Molon and Alexander shortly after the death of Seleucus III to that of Jason's attempt to take control in Jerusalem at the time of the rumoured death of Antiochus IV. Both events follow a disturbance in the status quo - the supposed death of a King and the possibility of a young successor.

Achaeus declared himself king not of the whole Seleucid empire, but of Asia Minor. Again, there is similarity to the Maccabees' situation where they eventually elect for independence of their region. The intention in both cases was to secure their regions as opposed to challenge the Seleucid crown.

Conclusion

The Seleucid empire was a shifting entity throughout its 300 year existence, a combination of invasions, internal revolts and break-away states equating to a “near continuous crisis.”¹²⁷ This is perhaps unsurprising when one considers the sheer extent at its territorial height. Plutarch relates the story of the Indian Sphines demonstrating to Alexander the Great the problems of ruling a large empire by stepping on the peripheries of a dried hide and noting how the opposite edges shifted, emphasising the importance of centralised control.¹²⁸ Revolts occurred throughout the empire’s existence at times of conflict or transition, especially when the attention of the ruling king was focused elsewhere. This is the context in which the Maccabean revolt needs to be placed. It is not a surprise event but a part of a regular cycle of dissent and revolt within the empire. Whilst these revolts may have differences in character, their mechanisms can be quite similar. They grow out of instability and a desire for more localised control. The way we view the Seleucid empire is coloured by the surviving accounts although the accounts do not come from the Seleucids themselves. The account that will be most familiar would be that of the Maccabees as it gets caught up in the history of not only the Jews but also the Christians.

In this dissertation I have attempted to examine the causes and mechanisms of revolt using the Maccabees as a starting point. The Maccabean revolt appears to be typical within the context of the later Seleucid empire and its particular prominence is surely due to the survival of sources and their incorporation into Christian traditions. The manner in which the latter stages and aftermath of the revolt tie into the Roman

¹²⁷ Taylor 2014: 241

¹²⁸ Plut. *Alex.*65.

narrative, influences perception and serves to subsume the Seleucids into the story of Rome's inexorable rise to power. However, modern scholarship in conjunction with new evidence allows a more Seleucid oriented and therefore balanced assessment to be taken. The Maccabean revolt was not an isolated event that caused the empire to decline but an event in a series which occurred simultaneously with the internal tensions and internecine struggle that ultimately caused the decline of the empire.

Bibliography

Ancient Sources

Authorized (King James) version. *Apocrypha*. 1992. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Diodorus Siculus. *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian in Forty Books: Volume two*. G.Lauren (trans.). 2014. Marston Gate: Sophron

Flavius Josephus. *Jewish Antiquities*. R. Marcus (trans).1998. Cambridge MA: Loeb Harvard University Press

Plutarch, *Great Lives: A selection of nine Greek Lives*. R. Waterfield (trans.). 1998. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Polyaenus. *Stratagems of War*. R. Shepherd (trans). 1974. Chicago: Ares Publishers

Polybius. *The Histories*. R. Waterfield (trans). 2010. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Polybius. *The Histories, Volume VI: Books 28-39. Fragments*. W.R. Paton, S.W. Olson (trans). 2012. Cambridge MA: Loeb Harvard University Press

Strabo. *Geography*. H. Leonard Jones (trans). 1930. Cambridge MA: Loeb Harvard University Press

Modern Scholarship

Ager, S.L. 2005. 'An uneasy Balance: from the Death of Seleukos to the Battle of Raphia' in Erskine, A. (ed.) *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 35-50

- Aperghis G.G. 2011 “Antiochus IV and his Jewish Subjects: Political, Cultural and Religious Interaction” in Erickson, K and Ramsey, G. (eds.). *Seleucid Dissolution: The Sinking of the Anchor*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 57-70
- Aperghis G.G. 2011 “Jewish Subjects and Seleukid Kings: A Case Study of Economic Interaction” in, Z. H. Archibald, J.K. Davies, V. Garielson (eds.). *The Economies of Hellenistic Societies, Third to First Centuries BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.19-41
- Baumgarten, Albert I., 2007. ‘Elias Bickerman on the Hellenizing Reformers: A Case Study of an Unconvincing Case.’ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 97, 2, 149–180.
- Churubasik, B. 2016. *Kings and Usurpers in the Seleucid Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Coloru, O. 2013. ‘Seleukid Settlements: Between Ethnic Identity and Mobility’ in *Electrum* 20, 37-56
- Fischer-Bovet, C., 2015. ‘Social Unrest and Ethnic Coexistence in Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid Empire.’ *Past & Present*, 229,1, 3–45.
- Grabbe, L., 1991. ‘Maccabean Chronology: 167-164 or 168-165 BCE.’ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 110, 1, 59-74
- Honigman, S. 2014. *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochus IV*. Oakland, CA.: University of California Press
- Kosmin, P. 2016, 'Indigenous Revolts in 2 Maccabees: The Persian Version', *Classical Philology*, 111, 1, 32-53

Mittag, P.F. 2006. *Anitiochos IV Epiphanes: Ein Politische Biographie*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag

Nabel, J. 2017. 'The Seleucids Imprisoned: Arsacid-Roman Hostage Submission and Its Hellenistic Precedents' in J. Schlude, B. Rubin (eds.). *Arsacids, Romans, and Local Elites: Cross-Cultural Interactions of the Parthian Empire*. Oxford: Oxbow Books. 25-50

Ramsey, G. 2011 'Seleucid Administration - Effectiveness and Dysfunction Among Officials' in K.Erickson, and G.Ramsey (Eds.), *Seleucid Dissolution: The Seleuki Sinking of the Anchor*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 35-4

Rooke, D.W. 2000. 'The Maccabean Conquest: Jonathan and Simon the Maccabees' in *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Online pages 1-39

Shanks, Hershel, 2008. 'Inscription Reveals Roots of Maccabean Revolt' *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 34, 6, 56–60

Taylor, M., 2014. 'Sacred Plunder and The Seleucid Near East.' *Greece & Rome*, 61,2,,222-241