Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum

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David Goodblatt

The Monarchic Principle

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Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity

by

David Goodblatt

J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tübingen

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To My Wife
Sona

Preface

This book has had a rather long gestation period. Its origins were in research I did while teaching at the University of Haifa in the early 1980's. I continued to work on these themes while at the University of Maryland. The final stages of research and the writing took place at the University of California, San Diego. The manuscript was essentially completed by the early spring of 1992. Finally, during a stay as a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1992–93, I took the opportunity to revise and update the manuscript. Thanks are due to many colleagues, librarians, and support staff at all these institutions, as well as to those at the Hebrew Division of the Library of Congress, for their invaluable help during these years.

A number of publications came to my attention only after the book was in press. Among them is J. J. Price, *Jerusalem Under Siege. The Collapse of the Jewish State 66–70 C.E.* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1992), which offers a detailed treatment of the Judean government during the first revolt against Rome. However, nothing I have seen so far affects my main arguments.

Readers familiar with semitic languages will probably cringe at the informal system of transliteration that I have used. This resulted from limitations of the word processing program and the (undersigned) word processor. Those same readers, however, should have no trouble identifying most words, especially since Hebrew letters are used frequently. For the record, I use *v* for spirant ב, *kh* for spirant כ, *f* or *ph* for spirant פ, *s* for שׂ as well as ס, and *sh* for שׁ. Not all א's are indicated, ' may indicate א or ע, and *h* ה or ח. Vowel quantities are not indicated. I have failed still more egregiously to achieve consistency in rendering Hebrew names. Generally, when common English equivalents were available, I used them, e.g., Judah and Gamaliel. But sometimes I vacillated, e.g., Eleazar/El'azar.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Sasona, who made many sacrifices during the past quarter century so that I could pursue my academic career. Thanks are also due to our children, Keren, Michael and Grace, who made sacrifices of their own.

La Jolla, California
September, 1993/Tishre, 5754 David Goodblatt

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Abbreviations

AA	*Against Apion* of Josephus
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AJSR	*Association for Jewish Studies Review*
ANRW	*Aufsteig und Niedergang der römischen Welt.* Ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
B.C.E.	Before the Common Era
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*
C.E.	Common Era
CRINT	*Corpus Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*
DCB	*Dictionary of Christian Biography*
DJD	*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*
EJ	*Encyclopedia Judaica*
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller*
GLAJJ	*Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism.* Ed. M. Stern
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JA	*Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JH	*Jewish History*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JStJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian Hellenistic and Roman Period*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal of the Society for the Old Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JW	*Jewish War* of Josephus
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGWJ	*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
MS	Manuscript
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*

PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca.* Ed. P. Migne
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina.* Ed. P. Migne
PWRE	*Pauly-Wissowa Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
REJ	*Revue des Études Juives*
RQ	*Revue de Qumran*
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction

During the past generation a growing body of literature has emerged treating what Daniel Elazar calls "the Jewish political tradition." Certainly the creation of the state of Israel has helped stimulate an interest in the political thought reflected in earlier Jewish sources and institutions. Whatever the source of inspiration, from 1983 to 1991 at least nine books dealing with this subject appeared. Five of these works concentrate on political thought reflected in rabbinic-halakhic literature. In chronological order they are Gordon M. Freeman, *The Heavenly Kingdom. Aspects of Political Thought in the Talmud and Midrash* (University Press of America: Lanham, 1986); Sol Roth, *Halakhah and Politics. The Jewish Idea of the State* (Yeshiva University Press: New York, 1988); Martin Sicker, *The Judaic State. A Study in Rabbinic Political Theory* (Praeger: New York, 1988); Stuart A. Cohen, *The Three Crowns. Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990); and Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Political Theory* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991). This focus is understandable given the great influence the rabbinic literary corpus has had on medieval, early modern, and contemporary Jewish communities and Jewish thought. And certainly the extrapolation of the political theories contained in this vast body of literature is a legitimate subject of inquiry. On the other hand, the period which produced rabbinic literature was not one during which there was an independent Jewish state. Such was the case during at least part of what is known in Jewish historiography as the Second Temple period. From around 142 B.C.E. to 6 C.E., and again in 41–44, Judah was (at least nominally) independent under the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties, while part of the land of Israel remained nominally independent principalities under Herodians throughout the first century. And earlier, under Persian and Macedonian suzerainty, Judah retained much of its character as an ethnic state. Surely, the Second Temple period should be as fruitful a subject for those studying the Jewish political tradition as the rabbinic period. So I find it surprising that even more comprehensive studies tend to ignore the political traditions of second temple Judah. This is the case with two collective works which claim a broader scope than the works cited above, which focus on rabbinic thought. I refer to *Kinship and Consent. The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses*, ed. Dan-

iel J. Elazar (University Press of America: Lanham, 1983), based on a 1975 colloquium sponsored by the Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought, and *Politique et Religion Dans Le Judaïsme Ancien et Médiéval*, ed. D. Tollet (Desclée: Paris, 1989), the proceedings of a 1987 colloquium of the Centre d'Études Juives of the Sorbonne. The former has chapters on biblical and rabbinic topics, but nothing to do with the Second Temple period. The latter book includes essays on subjects such as the Septuagint, Jewish communities in Rome, Philo on the biblical Joseph, the Jewish revolts against Rome, and political messiahs in first century Judah. Herod is discussed only in connection with the Psalms of Solomon, while the Hasmoneans are hardly mentioned. Again, the topics covered are all worthy ones. But surely there is more to say about the politics of the six centuries of the Second Temple era, including the century and a half of Judean independence. Only Daniel Elazar and Stuart Cohen, *The Jewish Polity. Jewish Political Organization from Biblical Times to the Present* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1985), treat this entire period, and their treatment (by design) is schematic. Cohen, in his *Three Crowns,* does devote a chapter to the period 135 B.C.E.–100 C.E., but his main focus is rabbinic political thought. J.S. McLaren, *Power and Politics in Palestine. The Jews and the Governing of their Land, 100 BC–AD 70* (Sheffield, 1991 [*JSNT* Supplement Series 63]) is more or less alone in his concentration on (a part of) Second Temple times. However, McLaren concentrates on the actual mechanisms of government rather than the theory or ideology behind them. Even when we come to what is often called the rabbinic era, more remains to be done. This sounds surprising when we recall the five monographs listed above. But the rabbinic materials are only part of the picture. It is increasingly recognized that the rabbis did not have a monopoly of leadership in either Roman-Byzantine Palestine or in Sasanian Babylonia, nor did their thinking exhaust the ideas of the Jewish communities of the ancient world. In other words, there were sources of political thought in addition to and outside of rabbinic circles.[1] So even with regard to the post second temple era there remains work to be done on the Jewish political tradition. The present study intends to rectify this state of affairs by focussing on institutions

[1] For pioneering studies regarding Roman-Byzantine Palestine, see A. Büchler, *The Political and Social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris in the Second and Third Centuries* (Oxford, 1909); and G. Alon, "Ilen Demitmanyin Biksaf," *Zion* 12 (1947), pp. 101–135. More recently see Martin A. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Totowa, N.J., 1983); and Lee I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem, 1989). For Babylonia see J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, 5 Vols., (Leiden, 1965–70). S.A. Cohen's *The Three Crowns, op. cit.*, is one of the rare studies of rabbinic political thought which takes the actual historical realities into account.

and ideas from the second temple period and, in the post second temple era, by examining some of the traditions which originated outside the rabbinic circles.

A related goal is to select the traditions to be studied not on the basis of their subsequent influence, but on the basis of their influence in the ancient period. Specifically, I am most interested in those institutions which actually exercised dominant powers in Jewish societies. What ideologies did they adduce to defend or justify their role? Thus my approach is two fold, historical and theoretical. The historical aspect is the establishment of the persons or institutions actually in power. The theoretical is the search for the ideas those person and institutions used to support their power. I should emphasize here that my focus on a given ideology should not be taken to imply that no other ideologies circulated in Jewish societies at that time. Thus my focus on the ideologies supporting priestly rule does not imply that Davidic royalism was absent from the consciousness of all contemporaries. Obviously, the hope for a king from the House of David remained alive in some circles, as literary sources attest. All I am arguing, and I believe proving, is that the ideologies I discuss were (also) present in ancient Jewish society.

The present book falls into two parts. Chapters 1–4 treat the Second Temple era, while 5–8 treat what is often called "the period of the Mishnah and Talmud." By the latter phrase I refer to the period from 70 C.E. till the conquest of the middle east by the Arabs in the seventh century. Chapters 1 and 4 deal with the historical question. In the first of these chapters I present the case for the existence of priestly monarchy throughout most of the Second Temple period. The word "monarchy" is used in the purely etymological sense to mean the rule of one person. That person may or may not bear the title "king." In the case at hand the latter title was usually not used. When I refer to regimes or ideologies which used the title "king," I shall refer to "kingship" or "royalism." The point here is that it is no refutation of my arguments about priestly monarchy to allude to the non-use of the title "king." That the high priests served as the supreme native rulers of Judah is essentially the consensus view. However, in view of certain dissents from this consensus, a review of the evidence is in order. Complementing Chapter 1 and supporting it with a negative argument is Chapter 4. Here I discuss the question of a national council in Second Temple times. Many scholars argue that such a council played a major, indeed predominant role, in the Judean polity. In fact, the assumption of a dominant council is the basis of the challenge to the view that the high priests ruled. In the chapter mentioned I review the evidence and come to the conclusion that there was no dominant national council. Councils of one kind or another may have existed. But if they did, their roles were decidedly secondary and did not challenge the priestly supremacy sketched in the first chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 then discuss two distinct theories capable of justifying priestly monarchy. Chapter 2 treats the relatively abundant materials from

Second Temple times which argue that rule by the high priest is traditional and divinely ordained. Significant portions of this evidence are pre-Hasmonean in origin, as we shall see. This reinforces our view that priestly monarchy was not an innovation of the Hasmonean dynasty. Chapter 3 discusses the theory of a diarchy of priest and prince. This theory assigns greater significance to the high priests than is apparent in materials relating to the First Temple era. Moreover, given the departure of the Davidic dynasty from the public stage, the upshot of this theory was to allow priestly supremacy. Hence I believe many of the diarchic theories in fact justified priestly rule.

The second half of the book concerns the post 70 era. I concentrate here on what are commonly recognized to have been the dominant institutions in the two large Jewish communities which have left us literary evidence: Israel and Babylonia. The importance of the Palestinian patriarchate and the Babylonian exilarchate is widely acknowledged. Yet, as the five monographs on rabbinic political thought demonstrate, it is not to these institutions that students of the Jewish political tradition usually turn. This book hopes to correct this oversight. Chapter 5 is a survey of the powers and ideology of the Palestinian patriarchate. Chapter 6 seeks to uncover the origins of this institution. This is especially important in view of the following fact. If I am right that Second Temple Judah was ruled by a priestly monarchy, then the patriarchate represents a significant innovation: the move from priestly to lay rule. This move seems to me to be part of a general transformation of Jewish civilization from a priestly to a non-priestly character, a move which was decisive in the development of rabbinic Judaism. That such a move took place is widely recognized, but it is usually dated earlier than I shall put it. Chapter 7 supplements the discussion of the patriarchate by arguing that no council played a major role after 70 – any more than before 70. The final chapter treats the Babylonian exilarchate and its ideology. To be sure, no one doubts that both the patriarchate and the exilarchate relied on an attenuated Davidic royalism to justify their rule. I call it attenuated because neither institution arrogated to itself use of the royal title – though such might be implied by use of the Hebrew title *nasi'*. What Chapters 5 and 8 try to offer are comprehensiveness and perspective. First, I hope these chapters will provide the most comprehensive survey and thorough examination of the evidence for the Davidic claims of both the patriarchs and exilarchs in pre-Islamic times. Second, I try to show that our sources reflect a tendency to downplay the importance of the patriarchate and exilarchate, and I try to compensate for that bias. Especially in the case of the Palestinian patriarchs, I think it is possible to see what their Davidic claims looked like before they were filtered through the perspective of the rabbis.

Finally, a note about usage. Until the last chapter, I have generally preferred to use the term "Judean" rather than "Jew" or "Jewish." Unlike modern English (and French), ancient languages did not distinguish between the first word

and the latter two. The Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin terms commonly translated "Jew" or "Jewish" seem to me to have stronger territorial and ethnic connotations than the latter English terms, which are often understood to refer above all to religious affiliation. Even in the diaspora, these terms often meant people who originated in the province or state of Judah, rather than (just) devotees of the religion of the torah of Moses.[2] Certainly when we refer to the government and politics of the Persian province of Yehud, of Yehudah/Ioudaia of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods, of the Hasmonean "*Hever* [if this means 'commonwealth'] of the *Yehudim*" and of Roman Iudaea, "Judean" seems more appropriate. I reserve "Judahite" to refer to affiliation with the tribe of Judah.

[2] I follow here A.T. Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora. Six Questionable Assumptions," *JJS* 33 (1982), pp. 454–455. R.S. Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," *HTR* 82 (1989), pp. 35–53, argues that the terms can also refer to adherents to the Jewish religion. But she does not dispute Kraabel's conclusion that at least in certain contexts the Greek and Latin terms refer to geographical origin.

1

The Practice of Priestly Monarchy

> The salient characteristic of the Jewish constitution in the post-exilic era is that the High Priest was also the political leader of the nation. At the beginning of the Persian rule, this was not yet the case. But it indisputably became so from the second half of that period until the Roman-Herodian domination. The High Priests of the pre-Maccabean as well as the Hasmonean age were not merely priests but also princes.[1]
>
> [This view,] docilely accepted by modern scholars, is anachronistic. The High Priest of Jerusalem was neither the head of the state ... nor even the master of the Sanctuary. The most important lacuna in our knowledge of the Jewish polity under the Ptolemies and the Seleucids ... is our ignorance of the political role of the High Priest.[2]

The first quote, retained from the original text of Schürer in the recent revision by Vermes and Millar, represents the most common position. In fact, the author of the second passage, Bickerman, had himself been among the modern scholars who "docilely accepted" this view. In one of his important publications he even assembled the evidence for the emergence of the high priest, in the course of the fourth century B.C.E., as a "priest-prince" at the head of the hierocratic regime which ruled the Judean nation.[3] In any event, the disagreement attested by the above quotations requires us to begin by reviewing the evidence for the role of the high priests in the Judean polity during the Second Temple period. The pre-Hasmonean era is especially important, since everyone, including Bickerman, acknowledges the supremacy of the high priest during the Hasmonean regime.[4] We shall examine the evidence for what I shall call priestly monarchy, i.e., the possession of the highest office within

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[1] E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ.* A New English Version Revised and Edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, Volume II (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 227. For the original see E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, Vol. I, (Third-Fourth Edition: Leipzig, 1901), p. 181.

[2] E. J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 143.

[3] *Idem, The God of the Maccabees*, Trans., H. R. Moehring (Leiden, 1979), pp. 37–38. The German original was published in 1937. More recent examples of scholars who agree with the Schürer position include H. D. Mantel, "The Development of the Oral Law During the Second Temple Period," in M. Avi-Yonah and Z. Baras, eds., *Society and Religion in the Second Temple Period* [The World History of the Jewish People. First Series, Volume 8] (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 42 (with references to older literature); and M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* Trans., J. Bowden (Philadelphia, 1974), Vol. I, p. 24.

[4] Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 143. *Idem, Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938), p. 165.

the Judean polity by the high priest. It should be stressed that such a regime excludes neither a state of vassalship to a foreign suzerain (who might be represented by a resident governor) nor the existence of other centers of power within Judah (whether "behind the throne" or alongside it). What counts is formal recognition of the supremacy of the high priest by the Judeans themselves and by outside powers.

The Persian Period. From the Judean perspective this period begins with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. and ends with the surrender of the province of Yehud to the forces of Alexander of Macedon in 332 B.C.E. Very little is known of the history of Persian Judah, for no connected narrative history has survived.[5] This is unfortunate for the question at hand. As the quote from Schürer-Vermes-Millar cited above shows, many believe that this era saw the emergence of the priestly regime in Jerusalem. Certainly by the end of the Persian period, as we shall see below, priestly monarchy was so well established that an outside observer could be led to believe that the Judeans had never had a king (i.e., a non-priestly monarch). In any event, certain steps in the evolution of this form of government can be discerned. Contemporary sources from the late sixth century indicate that the high priest occupied an important place in Judean society, but apparently not the supreme position.[6] For our purposes here we may ignore the Persian governor of the province. Although he might be of Judean descent, the governor was a Persian official. His power did not come from within, but was imposed upon, Judean society. Its sources of legitimation were external.[7] Our concern here is with the native authorities whose

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[5] Even the first century of Persian rule, for which we have a variety of biblical sources, is problematic. So great are the difficulties that P. Ackroyd refrained from reconstructing a connected history in his survey "The Jewish Community in Palestine in the Persian Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 130–161. See especially his comments on pp. 135–136. Contrast, in the same volume, the greater willingness to produce a narrative history on the part of E. Stern, "The Persian empire and the political and social history of Palestine in the Persian Period," *ibid.*, pp. 70–87. The attempt to compensate for the paucity of sources by using comparative material and theoretical constructs does not always convince. See the attempts and the critiques collected in P.R. Davies, ed., *Second Temple Studies. 1. The Persian Period* (Sheffield, 1991) [*JSOT* Supplement Series 117].

[6] See the books of Haggai and Zechariah, and the early chapters of the book of Ezra. For discussion see Ackroyd, "The Jewish Community," *op. cit.*, pp. 136–143; S. Japhet, "Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel Against the Background of the Historical and Religious Tendencies of Ezra-Nehemiah," *ZAW* 94 (1982), pp. 66–98; and the material cited below, Chapter III, n. 4.

[7] There is considerable debate concerning the status of the territory of Judah within the Persian empire and, analogously, the status of the chief Persian official in Jerusalem. See the discussion of this issue and references to literature in Stern, "The Persian empire," *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 82–87; Ackroyd, "Jewish Community," pp. 156–158; S. E. McEvenue, "The Political Structure in Judah from Cyrus to Nehemiah," *CBQ* 43 (1981), pp. 353–364;

power came from within Judean society. These were diverse. Our sources mention heads of clans, "nobles," "princes of Judah," and elders. We are probably safe in thinking of a landed aristocracy.[8] Then there was the high priest, who presumably was in charge of the temple precincts. Some indications of the increasing political power of the high priests begin to appear from the middle of the fifth century. It is significant that the hereditary governors of the neighboring provinces of Samaria and Ammon both felt it worthwhile to establish ties with the family of the Jerusalem high priest. Granted, the families of those governors, those of Sanballat and Tobiah, were both Yahwistic, but the ties seem to be for political rather than cultic reasons.[9] By the end of the fifth century there is clearer evidence that the high priests now enjoyed considerable political power. This evidence comes from the petitions of the Judean military colonists at Elephantine in Upper Egypt. In November 407 the priests of the temple of Yahweh in Elephantine, which had been destroyed in an attack, addressed a petition to Bagohi, the governor of the Persian province of Yehud, asking his help in having their temple rebuilt. The petitioners mention that they addressed a similar request to Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat governor of the province of Samaria. A memorandum of the reply of Bagohi and Delaiah is also preserved. But what is of note for us is that the fact that the petitioners had first written for help to "our lord Yehohanan the high priest [כהנא רבא] and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem, to Ostanes the brother of 'Anani and to the nobles [חרי] of the Judeans." One imagines that the Judeans in Elephantine first turned to the native Judean authorities, and only when the latter failed to respond did they turn for help to the Persian authorities in Judah and Samaria. The identity of Ostanes brother of 'Anani is not known.[10] Still, the passage does suggest that the leadership of Judean society consisted of the priests and a lay aristocracy. And the mention of "our lord the high priest" in first place could indicate that he stood at the

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Japhet, "Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel," *op. cit.*, pp. 81–82. The Persian governor might be a native and might even have some independent standing within the native community. Still, he owed his position at the apex of local power to Persian appointment.

[8] See G. Widengren, "The Persian Period," in J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judaean History* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 522–523.

[9] Nehemiah 13:4, 28. See Ackroyd, "Jewish Community," p. 151. Also note Josephus, *JA* 11: 302–303.

[10] For the text and date of the letter, originally published by Cowley, and further literature see the recent edition by B. Porten and J. C. Greenfield, *Jews of Elephantine and Arameans of Syene. Aramaic Texts with Translations* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 90–93. The passage quoted is Cowley 30, ll. 18–19. The reference to the letter sent to Delaiah and Shelemiah sons of Sanballat is at l. 29. For a memorandum of the reply of Bagohi and Delaiah see Cowly 32, edited by Porten and Greenfield, *ibid.*, pp. 98–99. F. M. Cross, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *JBL* 94 (1975), p. 10, suggests that 'Anani might be the Davidide mentioned at I Chronicles 3:17–24. He admits, however, that no Ostanes is mentioned among the six brothers of 'Anani listed there.

apex of the internal Judean leadership.[11] This suggestion is given added probability by the fourth century evidence. A small silver coin recently deciphered bears the Hebrew inscription "Yohanan the Priest." The coin has been dated to the middle third of the fourth century. Speculation about the circumstances in which the coin was minted continues.[12] At the very least, this coin suggests that Yohanan enjoyed a status similar to that of Yehizqiyyah the Governor, who appears on apparently somewhat earlier coins. The difference between the two is that the governor owed his authority to external powers, while the priest, presumably the high priest, was legitimated by internal Judean sources.[13]

The middle third of the fourth century brings us to the eve of the Macedonian conquest. At this chronological juncture Josephus relates the story of the marriage between Nikaso, daughter of Sanballat governor of Samaria, and Menasheh, the brother of the high priest in Jerusalem. Faced with the choice of divorcing Nikaso or giving up his "sharing of the high priesthood" (μετέχειν τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης – *JA* 11:306), Menasheh explains to his father-in-law that "the priestly office was the highest in the nation" (τῆς μέντοι γε ἱερατικῆς τιμῆς

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[11] Bickerman, *Jews in Greek Age*, pp. 141–142 sees the letter as evidence of a "collective priestly leadership." However, the special mention by name of Yehohanan and the use of the title "our lord" suggest that the latter was at least first among equals, and probably much more than that. Cf. the address in the letters from Sparta to the Hasmoneans Jonathan and Simeon at I Maccabees 12:6 and 14:20.

[12] See D. P. Barag, "Some Notes on a Silver Coin of Johanan the High Priest," *BA* 48 (1985), pp. 166–168 and J. W. Betlyon, "The Provincial Government of Persian Period Judea and the Yehud Coins," *JBL* 105 (1986), pp. 633–642. The former dates the coin to 360–340 and wonders if its issue had any connection with the Tennes rebellion. The latter connects other Yehud coins with Judean participation in anti-Persian activity while dating the Yohanan coin to 335–331 on the basis of comparisons with Phoenician coinage of the period.

[13] For use of the title "priest" to refer to the official usually called the "high priest" in Second Temple sources, note the following. Aaron, understood to be the first high priest, is never designated by the latter title in the Bible. Most commonly he is simply referred to by his name. In a number of other instances he is called "Aaron the priest," e.g., at Exodus 31:10; 35:19, 39, 41; Leviticus 1:7; 7:34; 13:2; 21:21; Numbers 3:6; 18:28; 33:38; Joshua 21:4, 13. Similarly, Aaron's son and successor Eleazar, when he is given a title, is called simply "the priest." See for example Numbers 17:4; 19:3,4; 27:2,19,21,22; 31:12,21; 32:2,28; 34:17; Joshua 14:1; 17:4; 19:51; 21:1. Note also how Numbers 25:13, which promises Phinehas and his descendants a covenant of eternal priesthood, is modified by Ben Sira 45:24 into a promise of eternal high priesthood. On the other hand, the Hebrew text at Ben Sira 50:1 calls Simeon son of Yohanan simply "the priest." So too at 1QSa, II, 19 (and restored at II, 12) "the priest" is generally understood to be the chief or high priest. See D. Barthelemy and J. T. Milik, *DJD* I (Oxford, 1955), notes *ad loc.*, p. 118; Y. Licht, *The Rule Scroll* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 266. In sum, both the titles "high priest" and "chief priest" are later developments, which become common in the Second Temple period. At the same time, some archaizing post-exilic authors might prefer to use the older form, "the priest," when referring to the high priest. In any event, both Barag and Betlyon assume that the Yohanan of the coin was not just a priest, but the high priest.

μεγίστης οὔσης ἐν ἔθνει – *ibid.*, 309). Unfortunately, it is not possible to date the source of this account.[14] Even more problematic is Josephus' account of the meeting between Alexander and the Judeans. These materials clearly portray the high priest as the supreme official of the Judean polity. For example, while engaged in the siege of Tyre, Alexander writes "to the high priest of the Judeans requesting him to send him assistance and supply his army with provisions and send him the gifts which they had formerly sent as tribute to Darius" (*JA* 11:317). But since these materials are almost unanimously believed to be later legends, they cannot serve as evidence for the state of affairs at the time of the Macedonian conquest.[15] Equally problematic is accepting the testimony of the Book of Judith on the political supremacy of the high priest. For example, in 4:6–7 the high priest Joakim organizes the defence of the country. While 4:8 and 15:8 also mention "the senate [γερουσία] of the people [δῆμος]/ sons of Israel," the high priest is mentioned first. One could argue that, even though not historical, the book attests the constitutional structure in Judah at the time of its composition. And there are some who attribute the book to the Persian period. However, the common view dates Judith to a later period.[16]

As it turns out, the best evidence for the political supremacy of the high priest by the end of the Persian period comes from an early hellenistic source, Hecataeus of Abdera. In a well known and much discussed passage, excerpted by the first century B.C.E. historian Diodorus of Sicily, Hecataeus of Abdera describes the origins of the Judeans. Hecataeus wrote his account towards the end of the fourth century.[17] The passage is important for the ideology of priestly monarchy, but here I cite it only for the historical reality it may reflect. The relevant lines are as follows.

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[14] See M. Mor, "Samaritan History: The Persian, Hellenistic and Hasmonean Period," in A. D. Crown, ed., *The Samaritans* (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 4–6 and the literature cited there.

[15] See S. J. D. Cohen, "Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest According to Josephus," *AJSR* 7–8 (1982–83), pp. 41–68. Cohen distinguishes two sources in Josephus' account: an "adventus story" and an "epiphany story." The former he dates to pre-Hasmonean times. If this is correct, then we have further evidence for the political power of the high priest in the Ptolemaic or Seleucid era. For a recent attempt to defend the historicity of Alexander's meeting with the high priest and visit to Jerusalem see D. Golan, "Josephus, Alexander's Visit to Jerusalem, and Modern Historiography," in U. Rappaport, ed., *Josephus Flavius. Historian of Eretz-Israel in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 29–55.

[16] See the survey in G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," in M. E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* [*CRINT*, Section Two, Volume II] (Assen, 1984), pp. 50–51. Nickelsburg himself suggests that a story originating in the Persian period was rewritten in Hasmonean times.

[17] See M. Stern and O. Murray, "Hecataeus of Abdera and Theophrastus on Jews and Egyptians," *JEA* 59 (1973), pp. 159–168. Stern dates the account to 305 at the earliest; Murray argues for 320–315. See also the survey and bibliography in M. Stern, *GLAJJ*, Vol. I

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R. = *rav* or *rabbi*. Names may appear in the text without the patronymic, e.g., Judah son of Il'ai often appears simply as Judah.