

§ 10 ALEXANDER JANNAEUS 103-76 B.C.

Sources

- Josephus *Ant.* xiii 12, 1-16, 1 (320-406); *B.J.* i 4 (85-106).
 Syncellus, ed. Dindorf I, pp. 558-9.
 Rabbinic literature: Genesis Rabbah 91:3
 yBerakhoth 11b; bBerakhoth 48a
 bYoma 26b
 bSukkah 48b
 bKiddushin 66a.
 Cf. Derenbourg, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-102.
 For the Qumran evidence see n. 22 below.
 For the coins see n. 28 below and Appendix IV.

Bibliography

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When Aristobulus died, his widow Salome Alexandra released his three brothers whom he had imprisoned, and raised the eldest, Alexander Yannai or Jannaeus, to the throne and the High-Priesthood,¹ offering him at the same time her hand in marriage.²

1. *Ant.* xiii 12, 1 (320-3); *B.J.* i 4, 1 (85).

2. There is no direct evidence for this last statement. But since Josephus calls Aristobulus's wife Salome (or Salina?) Alexandra, *Ant.* xiii 12, 1 (320), both of which names were also borne by the wife of Alexander Jannaeus, there can be little doubt about the identity. On the Hebrew name of Alexandra, see below § 11.

Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.)³ was, during his reign of twenty-seven years, almost continuously involved in foreign and internal wars for the most part deliberately provoked by him, and which by no means always turned out well.

He began by launching hostilities against the citizens of Ptolemais,⁴ whom he defeated and whose city he surrounded. They turned for help to the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Lathyrus, who having been thrust from the throne by his mother Cleopatra, was at that time ruling in Cyprus. Ptolemy arrived with an army, and Alexander through fear of him raised the siege.⁵ He then tried to rid himself of Ptolemy by overtly concluding treaties of peace and of friendship with him whilst secretly appealing for assistance to his mother. At first, Ptolemy consented willingly to the alliance, but when he heard that Alexander had secretly asked for help against him from his mother, he broke the truce and advanced with an army against Alexander. He conquered and plundered the town of Asochis in Galilee,⁶ and then confronted Alexander near Asophon (or Asaphon) on the Jordan.⁷ Alexander had an impressive army, excellently equipped. That of Ptolemy was not nearly so well armed, but his soldiers were more agile and had confidence in the tactical skill of their general, Philostephanus. As the river separated the two armies, the Egyptian troops crossed over, and Alexander allowed this to happen, hoping to crush them all the more surely. Both sides fought bravely and Alexander's army even won the initial advantages. But then the Egyptian general, by skilful manoeuvres, succeeded in forcing a section of the Jewish army to fall back; and once one part fled, the rest were unable to hold their ground. The whole Jewish army took to flight and the Egyptians hunted them down, killing them 'until their swords were blunt from murder and their hands were weary'.⁸

The whole country now lay exposed to Ptolemy. However, to counter her son's increasing power, Cleopatra sent an army to Palestine. While

3. On the chronology, see above p. 200.

4. On Ptolemais, ancient Akko, one of the most important coastal towns of Phoenicia in the immediate neighbourhood of Galilee, see vol. II, § 23, 1.

5. *Ant.* xiii 12, 2-4 (324-34).

6. Asochis is also frequently mentioned by Josephus in the *Vita*, 41 (207); 45 (233); 68 (384). It lay close to Sepphoris, *Ant.* xiii 12, 5 (338) *μικρὸν ἀπὸθεν*, *Vita* 45 (233) *παρὰ δὲ Σεπφωριτῶν εἰς Ἀσωχὴν καταβάνας*, in the plain, *Vita* 41 (207), and thus in the present plain of Beth Netophah. On its probable situation, see Guérin, *Galilée*, I, pp. 494-7; references in Avi-Yonah, *Map of Roman Palestine* (1940), p. 32.

7. Ἀσωφῶν or Ἀσαφῶν (as given by some MSS.) is otherwise unknown. It is probably identical with *אספון* (Jos. 13:27). See Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, p. 448.

8. *Ant.* xiii 12, 5 (343) *ἕως οὗ καὶ ὁ σιδηρὸς αὐτοῖς ἠμβλύνθη κτείνουσι καὶ αἱ χεῖρες παρέρθησαν*. For the full account, Jos. *Ant.* xiii 12, 4-5 (326-44).

it was operating there, Ptolemy succeeded in advancing as far as Egypt. He was nevertheless driven back and compelled to retreat to Gaza, and Cleopatra took possession of the whole of Palestine. Once the power was in her hands, some of her friends advised her to unite the land of the Jews with Egypt. But her Jewish general Ananias was able to divert her from this plan and to persuade her instead to conclude an alliance with Alexander. Ptolemy was now no longer able to hold out in Jewish territory, and returned to Cyprus. Cleopatra also withdrew her army, and Alexander was once again master of the land.⁹

Now he could think about further conquests. He began east of Jordan by capturing Gadara¹⁰ and the strongly fortified bastion of Amathus on the Jordan,¹¹ taking the former after a siege lasting ten months. Then he turned against Philistia, conquering Raphia, Anthedon, and finally the illustrious ancient city of Gaza.¹² He was outside that town for a full year, and in the end only seized it through treachery, whereupon he gave it up to be sacked and burnt.¹³

The conquest of Gaza must have taken place in 96 B.C., for it was about the same time that Antiochus VIII Grypus died.¹⁴

No sooner was there peace outside the frontiers of Palestine, than strife began within them. The damaging party-antagonism that had already cast its shadow over the reign of Hyrcanus, turned that of Alexander into a period of internal agitation and dissension. A rabbinic tradition of little historical value relates that there was friction between the king and the head of the school of the Pharisees, Simeon ben Shetaḥ, reputed to be a brother of Alexander's wife, Salome. According to this story, three hundred Nazirites came to Jerusalem to offer the prescribed sacrifices. Simeon found ways and means of dispensing half of them from doing so, but was unable to include the other half, and therefore petitioned the king to defray the costs, pretending that he, Simeon, was paying them. The king complied. But when he discovered that Simeon had lied to him, he was very vexed, and Simeon had to go into hiding to escape his wrath. Some time later, Parthian envoys arrived

9. *Ant.* xiii 13, 1-3 (348-56).

10. Gadara is the place well known from the Gospels, south-east of Lake Gennesaret, and at that time an important Hellenistic town. For further details see vol. II, § 23, 1.

11. *Ant.* xiii 13, 3 (356): *μέγιστον ἔρμα τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατοικημένων*, later the seat of one of the five councils instituted by Gabinius, Jos. *Ant.* xiv 5, 4 (91); *B.J.* i 8, 5 (170). According to Eusebius, it lay twenty-one Roman miles south of Pella, *Onomast.* ed. Klostermann, p. 22, *λέγεται δὲ καὶ νῦν Ἀμμαθοῦς κώμη ἐν τῇ Περαιᾷ τῇ κατωτέρᾳ Πέλλων διεστώσα σημεῖος καὶ εἰς νότον*. This statement agrees with the position of the modern site of Amatha near the Jordan, north of the Jabbok. See Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, pp. 242-3.

12. On Raphia, Anthedon and Gaza see vol. II, § 23, 1.

13. *Ant.* xiii 13, 3 (356-64); *B.J.* i 4, 2 (87).

14. *Ant.* xiii 13, 4 (365). See above p. 134.

at the royal court wishing to see the celebrated rabbis. The king turned to his wife, who knew where Simeon was, and asked her to persuade her brother to come out into the open. The queen made Alexander promise that no harm would come to him and induced him to appear. Seated between the king and the queen, Simeon then had the following conversation with Yannai:

King: 'Why did you flee?'

Simeon: 'Because I heard that my Lord, the King, was angry with me.'

King: 'And why did you deceive me?'

Simeon: 'I did not deceive you. You have given your gold, and I my wisdom.'

King: 'But why did you not tell me this?'

Simeon: 'If I had told you, then you would not have given it to me.'

King: 'Why have you seated yourself between the king and the queen?'

Simeon: 'Because it is written in the Book of Ben Sira, "Exalt wisdom and it will raise you up; it will seat you between the princes"' (Sir. 11:1). At this, the king ordered wine to be set before him and asked him to say the grace. Simeon began, 'Praised be God for the food which Yannai and his companions have received.'

King: 'So you are just as obstinate as ever. I have never before heard the name of Yannai mentioned in the grace.'

Simeon: 'Could I say that we praise Thee for that which we have eaten, when I as yet have received nothing?' The king ordered that Simeon should be brought food to eat, and when he had finished, he said, 'Praised be God for that which we have eaten.'¹⁵

Alexander's real conflicts with the Pharisees, and the people led by them, were of an entirely different and more serious nature. Their deeper cause was to be found in the general development of internal conditions since the establishment of the Hasmonaeus dynasty. The Pharisees had acquired more and more power and influence among the people. Hasmonaeus policy had increasingly deviated from their aspirations and now stood in glaring opposition to them. It could only be with suppressed rage that they saw that a fierce warrior like Alexander Jannaeus discharged the office of High Priest in the sanctuary, certainly not with a scrupulous observance of ordinances regarded by the Pharisees as of divine origin. It was in fact while he was exercising his priestly office that open rebellion broke out for the first time. On the Feast of Tabernacles, when it was customary for every participant

15. See Gen.R. 91:3; yBer 11b; bBer. 48a. Cf. Derenbourg, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-8, I. Levi, REJ 35 (1897), pp. 213-17. Cf. also Graetz, *op. cit.*, III (1905-6), pp. 125 f., 705 f. (n. 13).

to carry a palm-branch (*lulab*, *φώλιξ*) and a lemon (*ethrog*, *κίτρον*), he was once pelted with lemons by the assembled people whilst standing before the altar about to offer sacrifice. He was taunted with shouts that as the son of a prisoner of war he was unworthy to offer sacrifice. Alexander was not a man to accept this quietly. He ordered his mercenaries to intervene and six thousand Jews were massacred.¹⁶ From then on, the people's animosity was so great that they waited only for a favourable opportunity to shake off the hated yoke.

Through his love of war, Alexander was soon involved in fresh embroilments. He marched against the Arab tribes east of the Jordan and placed the Moabites and Gileadites under an obligation to pay tribute. Amathus, conquered previously but not held, was now levelled to the ground. He then commenced hostilities against the Nabataean king Obedas, but whilst fighting him in the region of Gaulanitis,¹⁷ he once fell into an ambush in which he found himself in such difficulties that he barely escaped with his life. He went as a fugitive to Jerusalem, but a poor reception awaited him. The Pharisees took advantage of the hour of Alexander's political weakness to break down his power internally as well. An open rebellion was launched against him, and with the help of foreign mercenaries, Alexander had to fight for six long years against his own people. No less than fifty thousand Jews are said to have lost their lives during this period of civil conflict. When at last his strength was exhausted he offered to make peace. But the Pharisees wished to exploit the situation so as to secure complete victory for their party. In consequence, when Alexander inquired what they wanted from him, and under what conditions they would agree to peace and obedience, they asked only for his death. At the same time, they called to their aid Demetrius III Eucærus, a son of

16. Jos. *Ant.* xiii 13, 5 (372-3); *B.J.* i 4, 3 (88). In the Talmud (bSukk. 48b; cf. bYom. 26b), the story is told of a Sadducee who, on the Feast of Tabernacles, once poured the customary libation of water, not on the altar, but on his feet, whereupon the people pelted him with lemons. Alexander's name is not mentioned, but he may well be meant. See Wellhausen, *Pharisäer und Sadducäer*, p. 96; Graetz, III (1905-6), pp. 127 f., 706-7; Derenbourg, *op. cit.*, pp. 98 f. On the Hasmonaeus unfitness to hold the office of High Priest, see *Ant.* xiii 10, 5 (292), apropos of John Hyrcanus. Cf. bKidd. 66a, where Yannai is named as the person whose mother was captured by the enemy in Modiim, which disqualified him from acting as a priest. The story is probably unhistorical but even so it fits Hyrcanus better than Alexander. See p. 214 above.

17. The name of the place is given in *B.J.* i 4, 4 (90) as *κατὰ τὴν Γαυλάνην*. This is ancient Golan, the capital of the region of Gaulanitis, east of Lake Tiberias. In *Ant.* xiii 13, 5 (375), the best manuscript gives *κατὰ Γάδαρ κώμην τῆς Ἰουδάνιδος*. Instead of *Γάδαρ*, other manuscripts have *Γαραδα* or *Χαραδρα*; in place of *Ἰουδάνιδος* most read *Γαλααδίτιδος*. The term *κώμη* shows that the well-known town of Gadara cannot be meant. The correct form of the name of the district is probably, from *B.J.* i 4, 4 (90), *Γαυλανίτιδος*. See Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, p. 149.

Antiochus Grypus and at that time ruler of part of Syria¹⁸—this being about 88 B.C.¹⁹

Demetrius came with an army. The Jewish people's party joined him at Shechem and Alexander was totally defeated; he lost all his mercenaries and was forced to flee to the mountains.²⁰ But now a feeling of national solidarity seems to have made itself felt among the Jews allied to Demetrius. They preferred to be subject to a Hasmonaean prince in a free Jewish state than to be annexed to the empire of a descendant of the Seleucids. Six thousand Jews went over to Alexander, and Demetrius subsequently returned to his own land. The remaining Jews, who persisted in their rebellion, tried to deal with Alexander on their own. But they were defeated in several battles and many of them were slain. The leaders of the revolt finally fled to Bethome (or Bethoma) or Bemeselis,²¹ where they were besieged by Alexander. After capturing the town, Alexander took them as prisoners to Jerusalem, and whilst carousing with his mistresses—according to the account of Josephus—had about eight hundred of them crucified before his eyes in the centre of the city. Furthermore, he obliged them while they were still alive to watch the slaughter of their wives and children. His opponents in Jerusalem were so terrified at this that eight thousand of them fled by night and avoided Judaea for as long as he lived.²²

For the rest of his reign, Alexander enjoyed peace at home. But not so abroad.

18. *Ant.* xiii 13, 5 (375-6); *B.J.* i 4, 4 (90-2).

19. I.e., more than six years after the conquest of Gaza (96 B.C.), therefore after 90 B.C., but still prior to 86 B.C., as the coinage of Demetrius III Eucuerus in Damascus continues down to 88/7 B.C., but is then replaced in 87/6 B.C. by that of Antiochus XII. See pp. 134-5 above.

20. *Ant.* xiii 14, 1-2 (377-9). *B.J.* i 4, 4-5 (92-5).

21. The former according to *Ant.* xiii 14, 2 (380), the latter according to *B.J.* i 4, 6 (96). Neither can be proved. Bemeselis may be properly Bemelchis = Beth ha-Melekh, see S. Klein, *Tarbiz* 1 (1930), p. 157, and is commonly identified with Misilye, some 10 miles north-east of Samaria. See Abel, *Géog. Fal.* II, p. 178.

22. *Ant.* xiii 5, 2 (389-91); *B.J.* i 4, 6 (96-8). Jannaueus's conflict with Demetrius III and his cruelty towards his political opponents appear to be echoed in the Qumran literature. Whilst the theory advanced by some scholars (e.g. M. Delcor, *Essai sur le Midrash d'Habacuc* (1951), pp. 56-61; M. H. Segal, 'The Habakkuk "Commentary" and the Damascus Fragments', *JBL* 71 (1952), pp. 131-47; F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1956), pp. 91-8; J. van der Ploeg, *Excavations at Qumran* (1958), pp. 60-1) concerning the identity of the Wicked Priest and Alexander Jannaueus is seriously weakened by the findings of archaeology (viz. the Qumran establishment was founded 30 to 40 years before the time of Jannaueus), most historians agree in recognising in him the villain of the Nahum Commentary (see J. M. Allegro, *DJD V, Qumran Cave 4, I* (1968), pp. 37-42; preliminary publications in *JBL* 75 (1956), pp. 89-95; *JSS* 7 (1962), pp. 304-8; see *PEQ* 91 (1959), pp. 47-51; cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (1961), pp. 268-70; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (1968), pp. 65, 231-5; J. Carmignac, *Les textes de Qumran II* (1963), pp.

The Seleucid empire was at that time in its death throes. But its last convulsions brought unrest to Judaea also. Antiochus XII, the youngest of the five sons of Antiochus Grypus, was at war simultaneously with his brother Philip, and the king of the Nabataeans. Once when he intended to pass through Judaea on his way to Arabia, Alexander Jannaueus wished to prevent him from doing so by throwing up a great wall and a trench from Joppa to Capharsaba, fortifying the

53-4, 85-7; A. Dupont-Sommer, 'Observations sur le Commentaire de Nahum', *Journ. des Savants* (1963), pp. 201-27, etc.).

The two most important passages are: (1) 1 QpNah I 2 on Nah. 2:12 (Whither the lion goes, there is the lion's cub with none to disturb it).

(2) [Interpreted this concerns Deme]trius king of Greece [דמי]טרוס מלך יון who sought on the counsel of those who seek smooth things to enter Jerusalem . . . (1 QpNah I 6-8 on Nah. 2:13 (And [the lion] chokes [מחנק] prey for its lionesses and it fills its caves with prey and its dens with victims):

'Interpreted it concerns the furious young lion (כפיר הזרון) [who executes re-]venge on those who seek smooth things and hangs men alive (ויתלה אנשים חיים), [a thing never done] formerly in Israel. Because of a man hanged alive on the tree (לתלוי חי על העץ) He proclaims, 'Behold I am against you, says the Lord of Hosts . . . (Nah. 2:14)'.
It is clear that the 'Furious Young Lion' is a Jewish ruler accused of having 'hanged men alive', a shocking novelty in Israel. The phrase 'to hang a man alive' means 'to crucify'; see Sifre on Dt. 21:22 § 221, תולין אותו חי כדרך, שהמלכות עושין חנק 'to choke, to strangle' in the Nahum text. For an assimilation of the fourth Mishnaic death penalty, strangulation (*henek*) with crucifixion, see Tg Ruth 1:17 (צליבת קיסא); cf. also J. Heinemann, 'The *Targum* of Ex. xxii, 4 and the Ancient *Halakha*', *Tarbiz* 38 (1968-9), pp. 294-6 (in Hebrew with an Engl. summary). This 'hanging men alive' is an act of vengeance on 'those who seek smooth things' (דורשי החלקות) an expression referring to a group, most likely the Pharisees, whose doctrines and customs were condemned by the Qumran writers (cf. pNah I 2; II 2, 4; III 3, 6-7; 1QHod. 2:12, 32; CDC 1:18).

Bearing all this in mind, one can have little doubt concerning the identification of the 'Furious Young Lion' as Alexander Jannaueus. Moreover, if a distinction between the 'Wicked Priest' and 'the last Priests of Jerusalem' mentioned in 1QpHab. IX 4-7 is recognised, Yannai is bound to be counted among the latter; cf. G. Vermes, *Discovery*, pp. 78-9; *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, pp. 64-5. For the 143 coins of Alexander Jannaueus found at Qumran see R. de Vaux, *L'archéologie et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (1961), p. 15.

For a fresh approach to this text in the light of the Temple Scroll (col. LXIV, lines 6-13), see Y. Yadin, 'Peshet Nahum (4Q pNahum) reconsidered', *IEJ* 21 (1971), pp. 1-12. Yadin argues that execution by 'hanging' was not an innovation by Jannaueus but a traditional penalty inflicted on persons guilty of a crime against the state. Cf. however J. M. Baumgarten, *JBL* 91 (1972), pp. 472-81.

On Alexander's proverbial cruelty, see *Jos. Ant.* xiii 14, 2 (383). The nickname *Thrakidas* (*ibid.*) is associated by J. M. Allegro, *PEQ* 91 (1959), pp. 47-51, with the 'Lion of Wrath' of 4Q pNahum, but without valid reasons, as is shown by M. Stern, 'Thrachides—Surname of Alexander Yannai in Josephus and Syncellus', *Tarbiz* 29 (1959-60), pp. 207-9. R. Marcus, *Josephus* (Loeb) VII (1957), p. 419 renders *Thrakidas* (the Thracian) as 'the "Cossack"'.
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wall with wooden towers. But Antiochus set the whole structure alight and marched over it.²³

As Antiochus met his death in battle against the king of the Nabataeans (Aretas), whose authority stretched as far as Damascus, the latter became from then on the Jews' most powerful and dangerous neighbour. In the south and east, Palestine bordered on regions within the Nabataean sphere of influence. Alexander Jannaeus felt its effect directly. He was obliged to retreat before an attack by Aretas on Adida (in the heart of Judaea), where he suffered a considerable defeat, and was able to persuade the Nabataean king to withdraw only by making concessions.²⁴

He had more success in the campaigns which he undertook during the next three years (about 83-80 B.C.) east of the Jordan, with the object of extending his power in that direction. He conquered Pella, Dium and Gerasa, then advanced further north and took Gaulana and Seleucia, and finally the strong fortress of Gamala. On his return to Jerusalem after these exploits, he was received by the people, this time with rejoicing.²⁵ Not long afterwards, he contracted, as a result of over-drinking, an illness which lasted for the three remaining years of his life (79-6 B.C.). He nevertheless carried on with his military enterprises until, in the midst of the turmoil of the siege of the fortress of Ragaba,

23. *Ant.* xiii 15, 1 (389-91); *B.J.* i 4, 7 (99-102). Capharsaba (Kēphar Saba), north-east of Tel-Aviv, *lāy* near the later Antipatris. See vol.-II, § 23, 1.

24. *Ant.* xiii 15, 2 (392); *B.J.* i 4, 8 (103). On Adida (Ḥadid), see above p. 186 on 1 Mac. 12:38. It lay east of Lydda and commanded the road leading from Joppa to Jerusalem. On Aretas and the Nabataean kings in general, see Appendix II below.

25. *Ant.* xiii 15, 3 (393-4); *B.J.* i 4, 8 (104-5). These all lie east of the Jordan. On Pella, Dium and Gerasa see vol. II, § 23, 1. In *B.J.*, Josephus mentions only Pella and Gerasa, and in *Ant.* only Dium and Essa, the latter certainly a textual corruption for Gerasa since the more detailed statements in regard to both places are identical. Instead of Dium, the manuscripts in our passage give the form *Δίαν* which is also found elsewhere (see vol. II, § 23, 1). Gaulana is ancient Golan east of Lake Tiberias, from which the province of Gaulanitis derives its name (*Dt.* 4:43; *Jos.* 20:8; 21:27; 1 Chr. 6:56). Eusebius knew it still as a large village, *Onomast.* ed. Klostermann, p. 64: *καὶ τὴν Γαυλῶν καλεῖται κώμη μεγίστη ἐν τῇ Βατανάῃ*. But its position has not been determined, see Abel, *Géog. Pal.*, pp. 338-9. Seleucia is also frequently mentioned by Josephus in the history of the Jewish war, *B.J.* ii 20, 6 (574); iv 1, 1 (2); *Vita* 37 (187). According to *B.J.* iv 1, 1 (2), it lay on Lake Semechonitis: It can be identified as the modern Seluqiye, south-east of Lake Huleh, Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, pp. 453-4. On Gamala, the conquest of which by Vespasian is related in detail by Josephus in *B.J.* iv 1, 3-10 (11-83), see § 20. From the list of Nabataean towns, *Ant.* xiv 1, 4 (18), inherited by Hyrcanus II from his father Yannai, M. Stern concludes that the defeat by Aretas at Ḥadid must have been followed by a Jewish victory over the Nabataeans some time between 83 and 76 B.C. Josephus's silence is explained by his use of a Hellenistic source, probably Nicolaus of Damascus, hostile to Alexander and ignoring his victory. See 'The Political Background of the Wars of Alexander Yannai', *Tarbiz* 33 (1963-4), pp. 335-6.

he at last succumbed to his illness and his exertions, in 76 B.C.²⁶ His body was brought to Jerusalem, where he was buried with great pomp.²⁷

Of the coins minted by Alexander Jannaeus,²⁸ the most interesting are those with the bi-lingual inscription:

יהונתן המלך ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ

Yehonathan the King—King Alexander

F. de Saulcy was the first to realise that the Hebrew inscription gives the Hebrew name of Alexander. Yannai is thus an abbreviation of Jonathan, and not, as was formerly assumed, of Yehoḥanan. Other coins issued by him bear the inscription:

יהונתן [ינתן] הכהן הגדל וחבר היהודים

Yehonathan (or Yonathān) the High Priest and the
Congregation of the Jews.²⁹

As a result of Alexander's conquests, the frontiers of the Jewish state now extended far beyond those established by John Hyrcanus. In the south, the Idumaeans were subjugated and Judaized. In the north, Alexander's rule reached as far as Seleucia on Lake Merom. The sea-coast, where once Joppa had been the first conquest of the Maccabees, was now almost entirely under Jewish control. With the sole exception of Ascalon, which had managed to preserve its independence, all the coastal towns from the Egyptian frontier to Mount Carmel

26. *Ant.* xiii 15, 5 (398); *B.J.* i 4, 8 (106). According to Josephus, Ragaba was situated in the region of Gerasa (*ἐν τοῖς Γερασσηῶν ὄροις*), i.e., east of Jordan. It may be identical with Regeb in Perea, mentioned in the Mishnah, *mMen.* 8:3, as yielding the second best oil in Palestine, but it was certainly not 'Eργά, fifteen Roman miles west of Gerasa, Eusebius, *Onomast.* ed. Klostermann, p. 16, for the latter must have long since been in Jannaeus's possession. For the same reason it cannot be identified with the modern Ragib near Amathus. Cf. Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, p. 427.

27. *Ant.* xiii 16 1 (405-6). The monument of Alexander is mentioned by Josephus in *B.J.* v 7, 3 (304).

28. On the coins of Alexander Jannaeus, see A. Kindler, 'The Jaffa Hoard of Alexander Jannaeus', *IEJ* 4 (1954), pp. 170-85; Y. Meshorer, *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period* (1967), pp. 56-9, 118-21; cf. B. Kanael, 'Altjüdische Münzen', *Jahrb. f. Num. u. Geldgesch.* 17 (1967), pp. 167-71. For the view that some of his Aramaic and Greek coins are dated to his 20th and 25th years, see J. Naveh, 'Dated Coins of Alexander Jannaeus', *IEJ* 18 (1968), pp. 20-5, and A. Kindler, 'Addendum to the Dated Coins of Alexander Jannaeus', *ibid.*, pp. 188-91. Cf. Appendix IV below.

29. According to Kanael, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-71, High Priest, King, High Priest, is the probable sequence of the titles used by Yannai. His relinquishment of the royal style may have resulted from his conflict with the Pharisees. However the Aramaic-Greek coins (מלכא אלסודרוס/ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ) dating to the 25th year of his rule would indicate that two years before his death he still used, or reverted again to the title 'King'. Cf. Appendix IV, below.

had been conquered by Alexander.³⁰ But in addition, all the country east of the Jordan, from Lake Merom to the Dead Sea, came under his jurisdiction, including a number of important towns which had until then been centres of Greek culture, such as Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Dium and others.³¹

This work of conquest proved, however, to be at the same time a work of destruction. It was not a question of the advancement of Greek civilisation, as in the conquests of Alexander the Great, but of its annihilation. For in this, Alexander Jannaeus was still Jew enough to subject conquered territories as far as possible to Jewish customs. If the captured towns refused to comply, they were razed to the ground.³² In particular, this was the fate of the large and hitherto prosperous coastal towns and of the Hellenistic cities east of Jordan. It was not until the time of the Romans, Pompey and Gabinius, that these ruined places were rebuilt and helped to a new prosperity.

30. Josephus in *Ant.* xiii 15, 4 (395-7), expressly names the following places as having been at that time in Jewish possession: Rhinocorura on the Egyptian border, Raphia, Gaza, Anthedon, Azotus, Jamnia, Joppa, Apollonia, Straton's Tower (see vol. II, § 23, 1). But Dora must also have been part of Alexander's domain, for Straton's Tower and Dora had previously belonged to a tyrant called Zoilus, who was subdued by Alexander, *Ant.* xiii 12, 2 (324-9) and 4 (334-5). On the other hand, it is no accident that Ascalon is not mentioned. It had been an independent city since 104/3 B.C., as is attested by the era it used, and by Roman recognition of its freedom (see vol. II, § 23, 1). Cf. M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (1966), pp. 67-8.

31. A sketch of the extent of Jewish territory at the death of Alexander is given in Josephus *Ant.* xiii 15, 4 (395-7). See also the list of places taken from the Nabataeans in *Ant.* xiv 1, 4 (18). A similar survey, derived from a source independent of Josephus, is given by the Byzantine chronicler, Georgius Syncellus, ed. Dindorf I, pp. 558-9. On the reliability of this evidence, see H. Gelzer, *Julius Africanus* I (1880), pp. 256-8. Syncellus relies on Africanus, and he in turn on older Jewish sources, possibly Justus of Tiberias (see above p 36.). He mentions several towns absent from Josephus, e.g. Abila, Hippus and Philoteria. The reference to Philoteria is especially significant, since this place is quite unknown at a later period. According to Polybius v 70, 3-4, it was one of the most important towns on Lake Tiberias at the time of Antiochus the Great. See p. 144 above. Although Josephus does not say so expressly, it may safely be assumed that Alexander Yannai built the fortresses of Alexandrium and Machaerus, both used by his widow Alexandra; see *Ant.* xiii 16, 3 (417); cf. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine* I, pp. 238-9. On the two strongholds, see further pp. 307-8 and 511 below.

32. This is expressly said of Pella at least, *Ant.* xiii 15, 4 (397) ταύτην δὲ κατέκαψαν οὐχ ὑποσχομένων τῶν ἐνοικούντων ἐς τὰ πάτρια τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνη μεταβαλεῖσθαι. (The οὐχ before ὑποσχομένων, omitted by Niese, but found in almost all the manuscripts, is certainly to be retained, since the text otherwise becomes meaningless.) The fact that such destruction took place is also mentioned in connexion with several other towns, or may be deduced from what is known of Pompey and Gabinius with regard to their reconstruction, *Ant.* xiv 4, 4 (75-6); 5, 3 (88); *B.J.* i 7, 7 (155-6); 8, 4 (166). See esp. *Ant.* xiv 5, 3 (88) τὰς πόλεις πολλὸν χρόνον ἐρήμους γενομένας.