

A HISTORY OF JEWS IN GREEK GYMNASIA FROM THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD
THROUGH THE LATE ROMAN PERIOD

by

HOLLY ANN JORDAN

(Under the Direction of David S. Williams)

ABSTRACT

This thesis will look at the relationship between Greeks and Jews during the Hellenistic period, focusing primarily on the building of a gymnasium in Jerusalem under the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. After an introduction to the period, this thesis will first address at the main tenets of Second Temple Judaism. Second, it will address Greek education and education within the Ancient Near East. Third, it will address the main issues in scholarship concerning the gymnasium at Jerusalem. Finally, it will end with a discussion of the legacy of the gymnasium and the lasting effects of gymnastic culture within late Roman-era Judaism. The main primary texts addressed will be 1 and 2 Maccabees, Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, and *CPJ 3.519*.

INDEX WORDS: Hellenism, Second Temple Judaism, Gymnasia, Symposia, First Temple Judaism, Greek Education, Paideia, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Josephus, Jerusalem, Gymnasium at Jerusalem

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B.A., Converse College, 2006

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2009

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August 2009

DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to the men and women who work at Walkers Coffee Shop & Pub on College Avenue and The Taco Stand on E. Broad St. These two establishments were the fuel (so to speak) behind this thesis, and without their kind service and their free wi-fi, this thesis would never have been finished.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Williams – Thank you for taking me on as your student with such late notice. I appreciate how hard you worked with my interests to help me find a thesis topic that was both doable and fun to research. Thank you for all of your writing style suggestions and for making me get comfortable with JBL formatting. It was wonderful to have a chance to work with you.

To Dr. Coppins – Thank you so much for all of your wonderful suggestions and comments during my defense! I am so grateful for the book suggestions you gave me along the way and for the helpful feedback.

To Dr. Power – Thank you so much for being on my committee. I loved all of our conversations in your office. Thank you for the tough questions during my defense and for giving me the opportunity to talk to you as a scholar.

To Mom – Thank you for always making sure I knew just how proud you were. Your love of learning, whether it be about the Civil War, World War Two, or really any book you could get your hands on has always inspired me. Thanks for all the breakfasts when I do manage to get home and for all the care packages over the last six years. Thanks for keeping me company online at 5 o'clock in the morning when I'm still up writing a paper and for only giving me a little crap about not sleeping and for drinking too much coffee.

To Dad – Thank you for your unwavering support. A parent with three summa cum laudes is a tough act to follow, but I think I ended up doing all right. Thank you for

being so understanding during the times I would come home but not actually be able to visit (and for making me breakfast while I worked). Thank you for letting me call and vent about everything—students, homework, grading, etc. Thank you for fixing my car and slipping me gas money when Ryan isn't looking. And thank you so much for coming to visit us during the spring—it was nice to be able to hang out and to get to know each other yet again.

To Matthew – I can't even begin to express my thanks to you, kiddo. You're the best brother I could ever have and I'm so proud of you. We both have had our problems in school, and your support, love, and friendship were sometimes the only things that kept me going. Thanks for giving me such fun Christmas breaks and for always making me laugh on the worst of days. I know that once you finish school and start your career, you'll continue to make me as proud as you always do.

To my Grandparents – To Grandma Bobbie and Grandpa Joe: Thank you for all of the cards that let me know you're thinking about me and supporting me. Those helped me through so many days of school. To Grandma: Thank you for always being so proud of me every time I came home with good grades and for always letting me know how much you miss me while I'm at school so far away. To Grandpa: I know you never got to see me go to college, but I hope you are proud of me. I miss you so much and wish I could have given you a copy of this.

To Aunt Debbie, Kristen, Casey and Chip, and Erin and Chris: Thanks for being the best aunt and cousins in the world. I've gone through so many important changes and problems through the last three years and you all have been ever supportive. Thank you for visiting when you could and for picking me up at the airport and the train

station. Thank you for phone calls and emails that kept me in touch with you all while I've been in Georgia. Thank you for being my family.

To Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Dr. Jeffrey J. Poelvoorde, and Dr. Emily K. Arndt – Thank you for helping me become the student that I am today. Without each of you, I never would have joined MAL and seen (three countries of) the world; fell in love with Ideas, Culture, and the *Republic*, or regained my love of studying religion.

To Dr. Medine – Thank you for continuing to believe in me after my first year. I can never being to thank you for finding value in my research and being such a supporter of me trying something new. I wish I had had more classes with you and that I had been able to work with you more in my years here, but please do know that your faith in me meant the world to me.

To the MA of Religion Class of 2008 (and a few 2009 and 2010) – I will never forget our first days together, from our trips to Walkers and the Blind Pig to the Sexual Harassment Video day. John Starke, Christina Torns, Michelle Schingler, Sherol Scott, Crystal Aycock, Kelly Williams, Svend White (and Shabana!), Megan Lane, Matthew Hopper, Chael Mizell (and Erin!), Karen Schwerin (and Eran!), Michael Ward, Sarah Richards (and Holly!), and Tom Sorlie: Thank you for all of the times you talked me through my own research and for all of the times you shared your research with me. Thank you for YouTube marathons in the office and keeping me (mostly) sane during comps and thesis writing time. Thank you for being my friends and colleagues.

To Dr. Brett M. Rogers – Thank you for starting me down this path of study that I've grown to love. You always tell me that I finished this thesis and did this work of my own abilities, but I think my bibliography shows otherwise (I don't know what I'd do

without the Ancient Ed packet). Thank you for all of the inspiration and the help along the way. Oh, and thanks for making me unofficial tour photographer for Brett Bretterson and the Brettastics! That might be the coolest honor I've achieved during my stay in Athens!

To all of my Monday Night Walkers Friends: You know who you are. Thank you for being the friends that helped me through each week. You all are very special to me. To Donnie Wood, Matt Wineski, Courtney Holbrook, Mark Michalak, Charles Ford, Tyler Suggs, Thomas Dickey, Chuck Cohen, and Ryan Singer: I will miss you all so much after leaving Athens!

To Molly Kellam, Nicole Poteat, Philip D'Agati, Mark Mesiti, Karyn Washington, Josie Fingerhut, Joel Fingerhut, Jonathan Edman, Dave Valente, Elizabeth Jabaley, Mike London, Suraj Sheth, Renee Pascale and everyone else I have on speed dial – Thank you for the 3 A.M. phone calls reassuring me that I could do this. And thank you for accepting my apologies the next day for waking you the night before freaking out.

And last but not least, to Ryan – Thank you for the countless cups of coffee and English muffins, for the nights you didn't sleep because you were helping me stay up to write a paper, and for putting up with me the dreaded two weeks before every single finals week (and the mountains of research on every flat surface of the house that went along with it). Without your unfailing support I would not have finished this thesis or this degree. I hope when it is your turn to complete your Masters that I show you the same love and support that you have always shown me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Following the period of Alexander's conquest of the East in the 330s and 320s BCE, Hellenization spread like wildfire across his newly conquered empire. One of the main signs that Greek influence had come to an area was the appearance of traditional Greek cultural structures, including temples and gymnasia. Of these cultural structures, I will focus solely on the gymnasia. Gymnasia in the eastern part of the Greek world serve as centers of education and athletics, and quickly become the place non-Greek populations flock to for any hope of ever achieving full Greek citizenship. Palestine was not immune to these levels of Greek influence; a gymnasium was commissioned in Jerusalem in the 180s BCE was immediately met with religious opposition. However the history of Jewish involvement in gymnasia after this gymnasium is built is far less religiously hostile. This history stands as a prime example of how interconnected Greek and Jewish (especially in the Diaspora) life became during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Israelite Religion and Culture and the Beginnings of Second Temple Judaism

While the period of history I will end up discussing will be the 100s BCE, it is important to summarize the end of the monarchic period, the Babylonian Exile, and the early period of Second Temple Judaism. Without these references it is impossible to understand the cultural and religious mores of the Jews by the period of the Maccabean

Revolt. The Israelites had gone through three major governmental systems prior to the exile: the period of confederacy under the Judges;¹ a unified theocentric monarchy under Saul, David, and Solomon²; and a divided monarchy.³ Israelite religion was neither completely monotheistic nor completely centralized during this period, and *bamot* (high places used for worship) peppered the countryside.⁴ Additionally, scholars, including Raphael Patai, argue that Asherah, a Canaanite goddess, may have been worshipped alongside of YHWH within Israel.

Religion and the state held very linked, yet very separate positions within First Temple Judaism. YHWH appointed kings through prophets—the mouthpieces of God. In fact, kings did not have the authority to rule without this prophetic intervention.⁵ Priests were in charge of the temple and religious functions, and they were the only persons who could govern over sacrifices.⁶ The Hebrew Bible is very clear about the distinct roles of priest, prophet, and king—the religious reason given for YHWH choosing a king to replace Saul is that he acted in the role of the priest instead of the king. First Temple Judaism was moving towards cultic centralization by the fall of the first temple—for example, the writer of 1 Kings condemned Solomon for building *bamot*

¹ See the books of Josh, Judg, and 1 Sam.

² See 1-2 Sam, 1 Kgs, and 1-2 Chron.

³ See 2 Kgs and 2 Chron.

⁴ Raphael Patai, "The Goddess Asherah." *JNES* 24, no. ½ (1966): 37-52, 40. Patai explains that after the death of Solomon, the biblical books of Kings praise and condemn kings based on whether they remove or allow foreign shrines. With regards to the worship of Asherah and the use of cultic objects associated with her, there is a large record of this in these books. Patai notes that these books are from a pro-monotheistic point of view and are "consistently derogatory" towards anything regarding Asherah. He also observes that the repeated references to Asherah worship within Israelite society probably indicate that these practices were not isolated events but rather these practices were part of a greater (though not universal) Israelite cult practice.

⁵ Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote The Bible?* (2nd ed.; San Francisco, Ca.: HarperCollinsSanFrancisco, 1997) 37-8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

for his wives to use for worship,⁷ and writers of 1 and 2 Kings condemned many of the kings of the South for not tearing down *bamot*.⁸ Israelite religion of this period was also moving towards pure monotheism—examples include Elijah showing the power of YHWH over the Canaanite gods Baal and Asherah.⁹

The Unified Kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon split after Solomon's death between Jeroboam I in the north and Solomon's son Rehoboam in the south. The religious reason given for this split was the aforementioned apostasy of Solomon. Baruch Halpern gives different reasons, citing political and economic reasons for the split.¹⁰ Jeroboam I, in a politically brilliant but religiously futile move, established his own cult of YHWH in the North, giving his kingdom religious autonomy from the South.¹¹

⁷ 1 Kgs 11 NRSV.

⁸ 1 Kgs 15:14; 1 Kgs 22:43; 2 Kgs 14:4; 2 Kgs 15:4; 2 Kgs 15:35; 2 Kgs 21:3. The reference from 2 Kgs 21:3 actually has King Manasseh of Judah rebuild high places ripped down by his father, King Hezekiah.

⁹ 1 Kgs 18:1-46.

¹⁰ Baruch Halpern. "Sectionalism and the Schism." *JBL* 93, no. 4 (1974): 519-532. Halpern believes that the reasons for the split in the kingdom were multifold and centered around actions taken by Solomon. First, he believes that disillusionment with Solomon came because of Solomon's "preoccupation with and predilection for affairs of Judahite defense" (522). Second, in another land action, Halpern discusses lands from the north of Israel that were sold to Hiram of Tyre, found in the scriptures in 1 Kings 9 (522). This land belonged to the tribe of Asher, and most of the revenue earned by this sale of northern lands went towards the building of the Temple in the south (523). Third, In addition to working with Tyre via land purchases, Solomon also collaborated with Tyre to build a fleet of naval ships. These ships stood as a force to counteract the threat of Egypt and protected primarily the south. Halpern explains that this negatively affected the economy of the North, as it was the use of money from the sale of northern lands in conjunction with using men from northern lands that let this fleet come into being. During this time of economic problems in the North, Solomon created even more expenditures in the South (525). Fourth, he discusses unfair taxation and forced labor practices espoused by Solomon in non-Judahite territories. While acknowledging that 1 Kings says relatively little about these issues, Halpern ties in the other events under Solomon's rule, namely the selling of Northern lands and the issues with better defense in the South, to further support the seriousness of all of Solomon's acts when brought together holistically (526). Fifth, Halpern explains that Solomon divided the country into administrative zones; zones that excluded Judah and governed by a king-appointed governor. This act would have particularly heinous to the northern tribes, which had very traditional forms of rule, with tribal leaders chosen by the tribes to represent the interest of their areas (528). While the Bible does not come out and explain any of this information directly, Halpern's analysis, drawing on sources by Frank Moore Cross, Avraham Malamat, and G.E. Wright, shows that much more went into the split of the kingdoms than the religious explanation that 1 Kings 11 gives.

¹¹ Friedman, *Who Wrote*, 46-48. Jeroboam I's cult included a shift in the date of festival holidays, the establishment of two holy sites at Dan and Beth-El, and the erection of two golden bulls at these sites. He also chose a new priesthood. All of these changes allow Israel to have cultic autonomy from the South.

The Bible gives this as the eventual reason for the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians.¹² However, an analysis of 2 Kings combined with some of the points made by Halpern sheds some light on this split. The northern kingdom was highly unstable; multiple military coups and a lack of dynastic stability kept this kingdom from ever achieving internal strength. These situations combined with the lack of fortification built by Solomon left the North vulnerable. The North fell to the Assyrians in 722 BCE, two hundred years after the initial split of the kingdom.¹³ The southern kingdom fell to the Babylonians less than two hundred years later, in 587 BCE. The first temple was destroyed and the holiest item within, the Ark of the Covenant, was lost forever.¹⁴

The initial exile of the northern tribes under the Assyrians in 722 BCE followed by the exile of the remaining Israelites in 587 BCE by the Babylonians separated Jewish populations for the first time into three main geographical areas: Egypt, Palestine, and Babylon. This separation, combined with the destruction of Solomon's Temple, led to several changes within Jewish religion. The influence of Babylonian religion, namely Zoroastrianism, is highly contested within scholarship, as it is unclear just how developed and widespread this religion was during the Babylonian and Persian periods.¹⁵ What is clear from remaining literary sources, however, is the great influence Aramaic had on this Hebrew-speaking population.¹⁶ When the Jews who chose to return under Cyrus the Great arrived back in Palestine, it was to a country without a king

¹² 2 Kgs 17.

¹³ Friedman, *Who Wrote*, 89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁵ Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. (Vol. 47 of *The Library of Second Temple Studies*, London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 360-63. Grabbe explains that while some of the oldest portions of the Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, probably date back to this period, most Zoroastrian documents were not written down till after the rise of Islam. He does state that while views of God in Judaism do not change as a result of the influence of Zoroastrianism, it is definitely possible that views of dualism and eschatology were in fact influenced by Persian religion.

¹⁶ See portions of Daniel, the Targumin, etc.

and without a temple. While the Temple was replaced (albeit with an inferior copy¹⁷ of the original), the Davidic Monarchy, once thought to be eternal,¹⁸ was gone forever. During the flux of the Exile and Return, and in response to the Diaspora, Jewish religion began changing in three main areas: Sabbath observance, prayer, and centralization and monotheism.¹⁹

It was during this period of upheaval that Hellenization entered Palestine. The traditional (though likely highly unhistorical) story of the first Greek entry into Palestine was preserved for us by Josephus.²⁰ According to Josephus, Alexander arrived in Palestine in 332 BCE, greeted the High Priest Jaddua warmly, and even paid respect to YHWH. He went as far as making sacrifices to YHWH, under Jaddua's direction.²¹ Yet Josephus' story, however romantic, does not actually depict the first interplay between Jews and Greeks historically. Commercial ties between Greeks and Jews began (either directly or indirectly) as early as the eighth century BCE, when Greek pottery began to appear in Samaria.²² Herodotus' history, written in the fifth century BCE, mentions the coastal cities of Ashkelon and Gaza.²³ Additionally, archaeology has uncovered Jewish

¹⁷ Cohen, Shaye J. D., *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Library of Early Christianity 7. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 131-2. See Chapter Two of this thesis for a further explanation of this position.

¹⁸ 2 Sam 7.

¹⁹ For more information on these topics, see Chapter 2.

²⁰ James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 6. *Ant.* 2:321-336.

²¹ This is particularly interesting, as in prior monarchic history, only the priests could make sacrifice. In 1 Sam 13, Saul is punished for making a sacrifice instead of waiting for the priest Samuel. In v. 14, Samuel tells Saul that because he made sacrifice instead of waiting for the proper religious authority, he will lose his kingdom. Samuel anoints David the next king of Israel in 1 Sam 16:13, before the end of Saul's reign. To have Alexander make a sacrifice to YHWH as both a layman *and* a non-Jew shows that at least in the eyes of Josephus, a non-Jew can show respect to the Jewish God.

²² Louis H. Feldman *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*

coins minted to the Attic standard dating to the fifth century BCE, which Feldman states proves a economic connection between the two cultures.²⁴

Regardless of the historical accuracy of Josephus' account of Alexander's entrance into Jerusalem, it is clear from other sources that Alexander took Palestine in 332 and Jews were quickly exposed en masse to Greek culture. In some cases, Palestinian Jews began accepting the influence of this culture. For example, Greek names began appearing within Jewish families as early as the late third century BCE, even appearing later in the throne names of the anti-Greek Hasmoneans.²⁵²⁶ Greek quickly became the *lingua franca* of many Jews, and was the reason for the necessity of the Septuagint and Old Greek translations of the Torah and the Tanakh, respectively. Jews outside of Palestine, namely in Egypt, exhibited greater signs of Hellenization, which will be explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Structure and Method

This thesis will progress in four main stages. After focusing on the main tenets of Second Temple Judaism, Chapter Two will look specifically at Jewish texts and historical examples from the Hellenistic period giving the views of Jews regarding the cultural and religious aspects of the gymnasium. Chapter Three will present the history of the Greek gymnasium, from its beginnings in the common meals of warriors during the archaic period through its institutionalization during the classical period. Attention will then be given to discuss the cultural and religious aspects of gymnasium, and how these

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "Hasmonean" is the chosen dynastic name of the Maccabees,

²⁶ Hengel, Martin, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period* (1st American ed. Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1980), 114.

aspects change as Hellenism moves east. Chapter Four will move into the controversy of the gymnasium at Jerusalem, looking at the major figures during the event and the primary texts that recount the situation. Chapter Four will also look at the main arguments in modern scholarship regarding the gymnasium at Jerusalem and will present the views of multiple scholars on this historical event. Brief attention will be given to mention the building of gymnasia within the areas of major Jewish populations. Finally, Chapter Five will look at why the gymnasium at Jerusalem is important within Greek-Jewish history and what effects, if any, it had on the future development of gymnasia within centers of Jewish populations.

At all times, this study will use primary sources from the Hellenistic period when possible. Much of this study will rely upon expressing the views of the major scholars currently discussing the gymnasium at Jerusalem, comparing the individual work of the scholars of Greek and Jewish studies. 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* will be particularly important texts for this study, as they are the three primary texts that discuss this gymnasium. Additional sources will be used, such as *CPJ* 3.519, and the life and works of Philo and Paul will be consulted to shed further light on the controversy that was the gymnasium at Jerusalem. Attention will also be given to the Jewish community in Alexandria and the symbiotic relationship between Greeks and Jews at Sardis, both of which shed further light on the gymnasium in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 2

SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM AND ITS CONCERNS WITH GYMNASTIC PRACTICES

Introduction to Second Temple Judaism

By the time of the Jewish return from Babylonian exile, Judaism has changed greatly from its ancient Israelite and First Temple past. Lester L. Grabbe describes it beautifully when he states that Second Temple Judaism is “the story [of] how God takes a people, defeated and exiled for their sins, and returns them to their land and creates a nation once again, a nation with a restored temple and cult.”²⁷ There is little that can definitively be said about Second Temple Judaism. While much of the Hebrew Bible can be dated to prior to the Babylonian Exile, there are several important books that were either written or finished after the Exile. These books give us the starting point of what we can know about the post-Exilic period. Most notable of these books is the book Ezra-Nehemiah, which gives us a history of the immediate period after the return from the Exile. Grabbe delineates three main themes within Ezra-Nehemiah: the return from exile, the rebuilding and restoring of Jerusalem, and the threat to the Jewish community by foreigners (especially in the form of intermarriage).²⁸ In addition to these themes, there are stories in Ezra-Nehemiah placing the Persian Empire as a vehicle of God, as well as stories of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.²⁹ Beyond Ezra-Nehemiah, the prophetic books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were written during this period, and include

²⁷ Grabbe *History*, 73.

²⁸ Grabbe, *History*, 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 74-5. These foundation stories include the stories of Zerubbabel/Joshua, Ezra, Nehemiah (found in 2 Maccabees), and Sheshbazzar.

some additional themes of include the rebuilding of the temple and the community, concerns for ritual and the priesthood, and issues of marriage.³⁰ It is also argued that portions of Jonah and Ezekiel were written during this time. And finally, the historical books of the Chronicles and Esther as well as the P were compiled after the Exile.³¹

The Temple and Its Practices

The Second Temple was originally completed in 516 BCE, and was renovated and expanded beginning in 20/19 BCE by Herod the Great.³² The Temple was divided into two parts: the Holy Place (the realm of the priests) and the Holy of Holies (at this point empty due to the missing Ark of the Covenant and the realm of the High Priest).³³ Shaye J. D. Cohen explains that the Second Temple did not have the authentic quality of the First. The First Temple had been built by a Davidic king, authorized by a prophet, and authenticated by God himself (who appeared as a column of smoke within the Temple). A non-Davidic king built the Second Temple, and while a prophet authorized it, God never authenticated it. Cohen believes this to be an ideological weakness of the Second Temple.³⁴

The main sacrificial altar was in a courtyard preceding the Holy Place.³⁵ After the Exile, the priests ran not only the religion but also all of the portions of society not directly run by the Persians. The head of the priesthood was the High Priest, a position that by this time was hereditary.³⁶ The position of the High Priest expanded, becoming

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 85-89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 85-104.

³² *Ibid.*, 141.

³³ Grabbe, *History*, 217.

³⁴ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 131-2.

³⁵ Grabbe, *History*, 217-8.

³⁶ Schürer, Vermès, and Millar, *History*, 14.

not only a religious position but also a political representative of the Jews under the Persians and later the Greeks.³⁷ Also, the Sanhedrin, a body that some scholars believed to have varying governing powers that may have included some of the priests, came into power during this early post-Exilic period.³⁸ Some believed that the Sanhedrin may have heard cases on violations of religious law, and also may have served as a legislative body.

While the sacrifices at the Temple were always important, the sacrifice ceremony became *central* to the service during the Second Temple period. The priests officiated over these sacrifices, and were also responsible for knowing the law and for making cultic rulings.³⁹ These offerings are thought to be continuous offerings to God, or *tamid*, in that they happen on a regular schedule and without break. Items sacrificed included grains, fruits, breads, incense, and animals, and were paid for by public monies.⁴⁰ Offering types included whole-burnt offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings and at all times were officiated by the priests.

In addition to the sacrifice, there is evidence of singing and public prayer as part of the regular Temple service.⁴¹ Within ancient Israelite religion, prayer was spontaneous and non-creedal. By the Second Temple period, some official prayers had been instituted. Evidence from the Monarchic period through the Maccabees indicates that public group prayer occurred as a practice of Judaism. Prayer occurred *at* the Temple, not *in* the Temple.⁴² The idea of daily individual prayer arose at the time of the

³⁷ Grabbe, *History*, 230.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 234-5.

³⁹ Grabbe, *History*, 229.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 62.

⁴¹ Grabbe, *History*, 216.

⁴² Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 62-65.

Maccabees and flourished in Diaspora Judaism.⁴³ In the world of the Diaspora where sacrifices could not be made (because of the rules of cultic centralization in Jerusalem), prayer became the primary form of daily worship, and occurred at the same times as the daily sacrifices.⁴⁴ The *Shema* became a central prayer within Judaism during Second-Temple Judaism, and continues to be central to this day.⁴⁵ Tefillin and *mezuzot* are attested as early as the *Letter of Aristeas*⁴⁶ and began being used during the Greek period.⁴⁷

Synagogues and Worship in Palestine and the Diaspora

In addition to the centralization of the worship service around the daily sacrifices, Jewish culture began creating traditions and institutions during the Second Temple period which continue to this day: the institution of the synagogue as a center of worship, monotheism as the religious norm, and rules governing Jewish identity. Synagogues, especially in the Diaspora, took on special significance as worship itself adopts a personal level heretofore not a part of Judaism. This private study included both the study of the Torah and personal prayer.⁴⁸ Some of this individual worship was based in part on the compiling of the Tanakh that begins during the Second Temple period.⁴⁹ Additionally, while the daily sacrifices at the Temple were still important, Jewish weekly worship began to centralize further around the Sabbath.⁵⁰ These

⁴³ Ibid., 66.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 66-7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 69. Deut 6:4-9.

⁴⁶ *Letter of Aristeas*, 158-9.

⁴⁷ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 74.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Grabbe, *History*, 221.

Sabbath day observances along with other daily and weekly observance gained increased significance during Second Temple Judaism.

In the world of the Diaspora where sacrificial worship was not allowed, houses of prayer arose. These houses, eventually called synagogues, served a tripartite purpose: prayer-house, study hall, and meeting-house.⁵¹ The earliest reference to a synagogue comes out of Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BCE), and synagogues in Palestine were built after the Second Temple was destroyed. The synagogues in Palestine had a slightly different purpose than Diaspora synagogues—Palestinian synagogues served more as municipal buildings and men’s clubs and lacked the prayer-house function of the Diaspora synagogues.⁵²

As personal worship associated with a synagogue was on the rise, beliefs about the God of Israel are being finalized. While the Judaism of the temple was clearly monotheistic during the Second Temple period, there are some nascent elements of polytheism present in Jewish *popular* worship during the Second Temple period.⁵³ For example, there is evidence suggesting that the Jewish community at Elephantine in Egypt worshiped YHWH, there called Yahu, alongside of a female consort. Nevertheless, the Judaism that was accepted by the Babylonian overlords was the monotheism of the Temple.⁵⁴ Within Palestine specifically, centralized Judaism became the norm very quickly—during the Hellenistic period, unlike the earlier monarchic period, there is no archaeological evidence of *bamot*, the raised “high places” that were typical of decentralized worship. Additionally, no cult objects have

⁵¹ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 111.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 113.

⁵³ Grabbe, *History*, 253.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

been unearthed to indicate anything but normative monotheistic Jewish worship.⁵⁵

Second Temple worship was unquestionably monotheistic.⁵⁶

Jewish Identity and Issues of Inter-marriage

Another issue of vital importance within Second Temple Judaism was the issue of who is and who is not Jewish. At the time of Exile, three main Jewish communities formed: the community created by those who fled to Egypt, the community of those left behind in Palestine, and the community of exiles in Babylon. Upon returning to the land, and especially under the later influence of Ezra, the Jews who had remained in the land were looked at with almost second-class status by the returnees. One of the issues that came up within these arguments over who is Jewish was the issue of intermarriage. The Tanakh is quite silent on this matter—the only mention of this in the Bible is a passage of Deuteronomy that forbids intermarriage with very particular Canaanite tribes—there is no law against intermarriage in general.⁵⁷ However, Ezra no longer saw the Jews who had remained in Palestine during the Exile as part of normative Jewish religion and forbids intermarriage with them.⁵⁸ Furthermore it is Ezra who first implied that Jewish heritage should be inherited from the mother rather than the father⁵⁹, a tradition that lasts in Judaism until this day.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 80.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 50. While Cohen does not directly cite the verse, he must mean Deuteronomy 7:1-4, which condemns intermarriage between Jewish men *and* women with seven neighboring nations within the area of greater Canaan.

⁵⁸ Grabbe, *History*, 286-7.

⁵⁹ Philip S. Alexander, "The Parting of the Ways," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135: The Second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism* (Durham, September 1989) (ed. James D. G. Dunn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 5.

Anti-intermarriage sentiments continued and strengthened under the rule of the Maccabees.⁶⁰ While Second Temple Judaism did not allow for intermarriage, it did allow for conversion. Conversion at that point involved circumcision (if the person converting was male), proof of sole belief in YHWH, and a formal joining to the house of Israel. Circumcision, which as a practice predates the Maccabean period by several hundred years, became a defining characteristic of Jewish identity during the Maccabean period,⁶¹ and may have been in part a reaction to the Greek culture surrounding them. Conversion also included immersion in a ritual bath, called a *mikveh*, for entrance into ritual purity.⁶²

Second Temple Judaism and Greek Gymnasia

While the tenets of Second Temple Judaism discussed above are by no means exhaustive, they are some of the most notable. It would be impossible to discuss all of Second Temple Judaism within the purview of this paper, thus for the rest of this chapter, I will look at the beliefs of Second Temple Judaism which will come to be very important when addressing the problem of the gymnasium at Jerusalem. Three of these issues are nudity, Jewish normative sexuality, and monotheism.

Nudity has had a long history of “taboo” status within Judaism, even as early as the Hellenistic period. God created his first man and woman, Adam and Eve, both sinless and without understanding of sin: “The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25). The sin of Adam and Eve, eating of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, revealed to them the fact of their nudity. Thus,

⁶⁰ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 53.

from the earliest portions of the book of Genesis, nudity was associated with sin. Adam and Eve then covered their nakedness with clothes made of fig leaves.⁶³ God punished them for their sin but did create for them more permanent clothing made of skins.⁶⁴

Josephus retold the story of Adam and Eve in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, adding to the narrative that they are “ashamed” because of their nakedness⁶⁵, so nudity gains a level of shame long with its sin status.

Another Jewish text, the second century BCE book of Jubilees,⁶⁶ is of particular significance to this study as it was probably written around the same time as building of the gymnasium at Jerusalem.⁶⁷ Jubilees, which also discusses nudity in the story of Adam and Eve, states: “On this account, it is prescribed in the heavenly tablets as touching all those who know the judgment of the law, that they should cover their shame, and should not uncover themselves as the Gentiles uncover themselves” (Jubilees 3:31-32). The author’s anachronistic⁶⁸ inclusion of the phrase “as the Gentiles” tells us that the second century author of Jubilees must have been in some way familiar with a culture that practiced nudity. Michael B. Poliakoff explains that the

⁶³ Gen 3:6-7.

⁶⁴ Gen 3:21.

⁶⁵ *Ant.*, 1:1.4 [Thackeray, LCL].

⁶⁶ VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 13-23. Jubilees does not appear in the Hebrew Bible; it is a non-canonical text belonging to the *pseudepigrapha*, non-biblical texts attributed falsely to an author. VanderKam explains that in the case of Jubilees, a second century BCE text, the author states that he writing down an oral revelation received by Moses from God. Moses, living nearly a millennia before the second century not have possibly recounted the events of this book to the author of Jubilees, hence its status as *pseudepigrapha*. The text of Jubilees was originally written in Hebrew but was quickly translated into Greek. While no Greek copy of the text is extant, scholars know at one time it existed because it is quoted consistently multiple times in Greek texts. The most complete extant copies come from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁶⁷ While VanderKam is quick to put this text at the end of the second century BCE other scholars, such as Paul Tice, are not as quick to narrow the date of this text down. Tice puts the date of this text between 250 BCE and 100 CE. See also Paul Tice, *Forward to The Book of Jubilees* (translated by R.H. Charles, San Diego, Calif.: The Book Tree, 2003). Regardless of the date, this text was very influential and well predate some of the later Jewish interactions with Greek gymnasias, and would have been an important text in some of those communities.

⁶⁸ Anachronistic in that at the time of Adam and Eve, there were no other human beings.

Greeks were not the first to practice public nudity in a Jewish world; nudity had long been a part of Canaanite religious practice.⁶⁹ These beliefs about nudity continue to be present within Jewish thought; later rabbinic literature shows a belief that public nudity was disgraceful and was a distraction away from a holy life.⁷⁰ From these texts, it seems that nudity, especially public nudity, has no place in Hellenistic Jewish society.⁷¹

As will be seen in the coming chapters, nudity was a very important component within gymnastic culture. Some Jews went as far as reversing their circumcisions to fit the image of the ideal Greek physical form. Reversing one's circumcision would have been necessary only in a society that practices public nudity and does not practice circumcision, such as the Greeks. A Jewish male is publicly circumcised on the eighth day after his birth in a ceremony called *brit milah*.⁷² After this point, his circumcised state is only known privately. Circumcision does not shape the public image of a Jew, as none of his peers after his *brit milah* would have seen this, but it would have been part of community memory that it had occurred. Conversely, the image of a Greek in the gymnasium is completely shaped by his nudity—the human form was a reflection of the gods. If a Jewish man appeared in the gymnasium nude, circumcised or otherwise, given the status of nudity within Judaism, he would be changing his image as a Jew. A

⁶⁹ Michael B. Poliakoff. "'They Should Cover Their Shame': Attitudes Toward Nudity in Greco-Roman Judaism" *Source. Notes in the History of Art* 12, no. 2 (1993): 56-62, 57.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 59-61. Poliakoff argues that nudity may have been more accepted by Greco-Roman Jews than previously thought. He refers specifically to naked figures in a fourth century CE floor mosaic from a synagogue, a third century CE wall painting from a synagogue, and a second century CE sarcophagus from a necropolis where Judah ha-Nasi, the compiler of the Mishnah was buried. His evidence, while very interesting, does not directly relate to the Hellenistic period, as the three figures in his article date to the later Roman period. They do show, however, that there were at least *some* Jews who were so influenced by Greco-Roman culture that they did not fully accept the nudity taboos of their own culture.

⁷² T. Bedelman, "Circumcision." *ER* 3:1798-1800, 1798.

reverse circumcision on top of this would not only be breaking the covenant, but would also be saying as clearly as possible that his image as a Jew has changed forever.

In addition to issues of nudity, ideas of normative Jewish sexuality became increasingly defined during the Second Temple period. Within Second Temple Judaism, normative Jewish sexuality is practiced between men and women. Polygamy was an accepted practice within Jewish society; the patriarch Jacob⁷³ and King Solomon⁷⁴ each had multiple wives. The laws of marriage, and more specifically the laws of who a man can and cannot have sex with, are addressed in Leviticus 18. Leviticus 18 begins with the reiteration of the Covenant,⁷⁵ the legal relationship between God and the Jews:

I the LORD am your God. You shall not copy the practices of the land of Egypt where you dwell, or of the land of Canaan to which I am taking you; nor shall you follow their laws. My rules alone shall you observe, and faithfully follow My laws: I the LORD am your God. You shall keep My laws and My rules by the pursuit of which man shall live: I am the LORD.⁷⁶

The laws in Leviticus 18 were compulsory to all Israelites. By reiterating the Covenant before giving these laws, the author was emphasizing their binding quality. The chapter then launches into a lengthy list of approved marriage partners. Chapter 18 spends most of its time telling the reader ineligible marriage partners. An Israelite was not allowed to “uncover the nakedness of” his mother (or any of his father’s other wives), sister (full, half, or step), granddaughter, aunt (maternal or paternal), daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and so on. Additionally, Leviticus 18:22 forbids male homosexual

⁷³ Gen 29:23, 30; 30:4, 9.

⁷⁴ 1 Kgs 11:3.

⁷⁵ The Mosaic covenant, given with the 10 Commandments is given twice in the Bible: Exod 20 and Deut 5.

⁷⁶ Lev 18:2b-5.

relationships, stating “Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence.” The pederastic⁷⁷ relationships in Greek culture, especially the culture of the gymnasia, would pose a moral problem for observant Hellenistic Jews. Pederastic relationships at the more liberal side of thought would have been non-normative, and on the conservative side of thought would be completely forbidden, especially in light of Leviticus 18:22.

Finally, monotheistic worship of God became standardized during Second Temple Judaism, especially within Jerusalem. The placement of a gymnasium in Jerusalem, especially one that in some way is near the Temple,⁷⁸ could have been extremely threatening to the monotheistic Jewish establishment within the Temple because of the polytheistic religion associated with it. The God of Judaism requires Jews to be monotheistic.⁷⁹ The book of Deuteronomy contains a restating of the laws of the people, followed by a list of blessings for those who keep the laws and curses for those who do not. The curses are particularly vivid. For those who do not follow God’s laws, “The LORD will strike you with the Egyptian inflammation, with hemorrhoids, boils, scars, and itch, from which you shall never recover.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, “The LORD will let loose against you calamity, panic, and frustration in all the enterprises you undertake [...] because of your evildoing in forsaking Me.”⁸¹ Forsaking God for the worship of another god is simply not an option for a Jew.

⁷⁷ For a complete discussion of pederasty in the Greek gymnasia, see Chapter Three.

⁷⁸ It is unclear exactly where the gymnasium at Jerusalem was located but many scholars agree it was near the Temple. See Chapter Four for a further explanation.

⁷⁹ Exod 20:3.

⁸⁰ Deut 28:27.

⁸¹ Deut 28:20.

The Bible gives examples proving that no one is exempt from these laws. For example, the sons of Eli, a priest of the holy city of Shiloh, are described in 1 Samuel as “scoundrels” who “paid no heed to the LORD.”⁸² Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are guilty of treating offerings to God impiously,⁸³ and their status as sons of an important priest did nothing to protect them from God’s laws. Hophni and Phinehas were killed in battle and the holiest object of Judaism, the Ark of the Covenant, was lost in the same battle to the Philistines, enemies of the Jews. Impiety was not tolerated under any circumstance. Even the king could not break the rules of worship for the monotheistic God. When King Solomon built shrines in honor of his wives’ polytheistic gods, God took away his dynasty.⁸⁴ His kingdom divided after his death and eventually is decimated completely by the Assyrians and then the Babylonians. Worship of gods other than the monotheistic God of Israel in gymnasia was unavoidable, as the events of gymnasia themselves were part of greater religious festivals.⁸⁵ By the time the High Priest Jason, the highest religious figure in Jerusalem, asked Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ permission to build and govern a gymnasium, it is easy to see why writers of 1 and 2 Maccabees were furious.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Second Temple Judaism continued past the Greek period and into the Roman period, and ended abruptly with destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70CE. The Temple went through some renovations under the rule of Herod, beginning in 20/19

⁸² 1 Sam 2:12.

⁸³ 1 Sam 2:17.

⁸⁴ 1 Kgs 11:6-13.

⁸⁵ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 59.

⁸⁶ 2 Macc 4:17; 1 Macc 1:15.

BCE and finishing in 62-4 CE.⁸⁷ While Herod's own identity as a Jew was questionable under Second Temple Judaism (his family was Idumean, not Judean), he did show the proper respect for these renovations, and only allowed priests to complete the work. Furthermore, he himself did not enter the Holy of Holies while overseeing the renovations.⁸⁸ After the sons of Herod, Jewish worship came under State protection, and the vestments of the priests came under Roman control from 6-36 CE. The Romans also reserved the right to give gifts and make sacrifices at the Temple.⁸⁹ The Romans did show respect for Second Temple Jewish practice to a point, and kept human images off the copper coins minted in Judea.⁹⁰

The building of the gymnasium at Jerusalem occurred during a period of great change within Judaism. For as many points of view as there are present in Judaism at this time, there are as many reactions to the gymnasium. The next chapter of this thesis will look at the institution of the gymnasium, specifically its history and traditions within the Greek world. Special attention will be given to the foundations of Greek education, the formation of gymnasia within Greek education, how gymnasia changed as they moved east, and ultimately how gymnasia entered the world of Palestine.

⁸⁷ Schürer, Vermès, and Millar, *History*, 141.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

GREEK *PAIDEIA*, GYMNASIA, AND JEWISH EDUCATIONIntroduction to Greek *Paideia*

The early modern classicists discussing Greece make remarks, without question or qualification, that the Greeks *invented* history and culture. A prime example comes from Werner Jaeger, who states in his *Paideia*: “[T]he history of what we can truly call civilization—the deliberate pursuit of an ideal—does not begin until Greece.”⁹¹

Statements such as these leave out most of Israelite culture,⁹² and leave out the entirety of the world not directly affected by the Greco-Roman empires. At least in their opinions, these early classicists make a directly link between civilization and education, as *only* the Greeks were able to create. The height of classical and Hellenistic Greek education came in the form of the gymnasium, an educational institution that arose out of previous traditions of warrior meals and symposia, which became the vehicle by which Greek culture was introduced to non-Hellenes.

It is impossible to begin a discussion of gymnastic education in Greece without talking about the evolution of education prior to gymnasia. Three great classicists, Werner Jaeger, Henri Marrou, and Yun Lee Too, have all attempted to present a history of ancient education within their scholarship. Each of these scholars deals with the

⁹¹ Werner Wilhelm Jaeger and Gilbert Highet, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (New York,: Oxford University Press, 1943), xiv.

⁹² Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York,: Sheed and Ward, 1956), xiii-xiv. Marrou states: “It was not until long afterwards, when the Christian Faith decided to organize culture and education around the Book of Books—the bible, the source of all knowledge and all life—that the literary man of antiquity finally became a scribe.” Marrou puts Greek scribal culture beginning around 1000 BCE, completely leaving out the possibility of scribal culture within Judaism.

question of *paideia*, and each defines this word somewhat differently. For Jaeger, *paideia* is defined as culture, namely Greek culture. This culture is formed and sustained through education.⁹³ He saw civilization as being invented by the Greeks and defines civilization as a conscious decision on the part of a people to shape their future in a particular way.⁹⁴ Education in ancient Greece, for Jaeger, is the process by which children became political members of Greek civilization.⁹⁵ Marrou had a similar understanding of Greek *paideia*, and explained that education was also a sign of a stable culture.⁹⁶ He believed education was something unique to each culture, and that one culture's education system did not work for another culture.⁹⁷ He believes that Greek *paideia* was so successful because it actually was actually able, unlike other educational systems, to export its culture and education to other culture, through the process of making them Greek. Too's work serves as an update to Jaeger and Marrou, and incorporates archaeological and philological evidence of which Jaeger and Marrou would have been unaware. Too explains the etymology of *paideia* as being related to the rearing of children.⁹⁸ She emphasizes the political aspects of *paideia*, explaining that it is through *paideia* that children became adults able to participate in government, something that becomes even more important after the advent of democracy.⁹⁹ This Greek ideal of *paideia* culminated in the educational institution of gymnasias.

⁹³ Jaeger, *Paideia*, xvi.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxvi.

⁹⁶ Marrou, *History of Education*, xiv.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁹⁸ Yun Lee Too, *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden; Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2001), 11.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

The Common Meal, Symposia, and Pederasty

Education arose during the archaic period and was reserved for the warrior class. This education taught these warriors how to speak and how to fight. Learning occurred through imitation,¹⁰⁰ or *mimesis*, a form of education that lasted through the classical period.¹⁰¹ Most of the extant data on the common meals of warriors comes from Sparta and Crete.¹⁰² These warrior meals were the precursors of the next form of Greek education, the symposium. At these common warrior meals, there is evidence that young men served older men during meals. In Crete, scantily clad young men often served their fathers. In Sparta, young men served as wine-pourers and were encouraged to ask questions of the older men as part of the education process.¹⁰³ Present in all warrior meals and symposia were music and poetry and certain initiation rites.¹⁰⁴ There is scarce evidence that young women served as wine pourers during the archaic period, but as pederasty became an increasingly prevalent practice within symposia, female presence dwindled to nothing.¹⁰⁵

In archaic and classical Greek education, pederasty is the sexual (generally intercrural and non-penetrative) relationship by which young men are educated by older men (who they are not biologically related to) through a relationship of battling for affection and of gift giving. It arose out of coming-of-age practices in seventh century Crete and Sparta. Evidence for these relationships comes from black and red figure

¹⁰⁰ Marrou, *History of Education*, 5.

¹⁰¹ Kevin Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 214.

¹⁰² Jan Bremmer. "Adolescents, *Symposion*, and Pederasty," in *Symptotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (Ed by Oswyn Murray. Oxford [England] New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1990), 136..

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 137-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

paintings in the seventh century¹⁰⁶ and from the classical period writings of Plato and Xenophon.¹⁰⁷ Pederasty became a part of education in Athens during the sixth century, and Jan Bremmer believes it is the introduction of pederasty, coupled with the introduction of hoplites into warfare, that led to the end of the elite symposia culture.¹⁰⁸ These hoplites came from the non-elite classes and became the mainstay of the Greek army. As symposia became less and less exclusive, its culture changed and gave rise to gymnasia. During the 500s BCE, pederasty had taken complete hold within Greece, and the participants in symposia became younger and younger.¹⁰⁹

Gymnasia

The institution of the gymnasia arose out of these aforementioned warrior meals and pederastic symposia. It originally served to train hoplites, Greek foot soldiers which make up the newly made citizen army, for battle.¹¹⁰ From what scholars can gather from vase paintings, gymnasia originally were open spaces on the outskirts of cities usually near a source of water that was used for bathing.¹¹¹ Buildings became associated with gymnasia in the sixth century BCE and gymnasia were often placed near temples. Beginning early in the period of gymnasia was an association between gymnasia and the gods. Early gymnasia included statuary depicting different gods as representative of the three stages of male life: Eros for prepubescent youths, Hermes

¹⁰⁶ W.A. Percy. *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 97.

¹⁰⁷ Bremmer, "Adolescents", 142.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 142-3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 144.

¹¹⁰ Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, 113.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 98.

for the ephebic stage, and Herakles for adult men.¹¹² Religion and gymnasia were inseparable: gymnasia themselves were considered to be under the patronage of the gods, victory was attributed to successfully pleasing the gods, and athletes who broke the rules of competition were guilty not just of unsportsmanlike conduct but of sacrilege.¹¹³ The presence of Hermes and Herakles within gymnasia continued through the Hellenistic and into the Roman period,¹¹⁴ suggesting that though the function of gymnasia expanded dramatically, the religious practices associated with it remained consistent. During the sixth century, the three gymnasia in Athens that became the Academy, the Lyceum, and the Cynosarges were built. The fifth century gives rise to the first literary sources about gymnasia, which give evidence for both public and private gymnasia.¹¹⁵

Some of the pederastic practices of the symposia were present in gymnasia.

According to W. A. Percy:

That courting, sex play, and even sexual acts occurred in and near palaestras and gymnasia is clearly attested. [...] The 'undressing room' [...] which Socrates and his circle so loved to frequent was not merely a locker room [...] Here all awaited the special twelve-year-old beauty that each palaestra seemed to spawn. This was the cruising area par excellence of the athletic complex.¹¹⁶

Gymnasia, in addition to these remnants of the symposia, were the centers of athletic training—stemming from its history as a place for training hoplites. Gymnastic training occurred in the nude and began being the traditional form of exercise around 720

¹¹² Ibid., 98. *Ephebes* were boys who had reached puberty.

¹¹³ Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles*, 59.

¹¹⁴ Forbes, Clarence A. "Expanded uses of the Greek Gymnasium." *CP* 40, no. 1 (1945): 32-42, 42.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 112.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 113.

BCE.¹¹⁷ Nudity held no shame in classical Greek culture, and rather was seen as being a part of religion and the mysteries of procreation.¹¹⁸ Eventually, through the history of warrior meals, symposia, and gymnasia, the first schools arose. Our first reference to a school was recorded by both Herodotus and Pausanias, who tell of a school in Chios which collapsed in 496 BCE, killing 119 of its pupils.¹¹⁹ Later in the classical period, gymnastic education began to focus more on the educational aspects and less on the preparation for warfare. In any case, schools are the initial the way most Western societies currently acculturate and train their youths and it is clear that their beginnings came from the symposia and gymnasia culture of archaic and classical Greece.

Literacy, Plato, Xenophon, and the Spread of Gymnastic Education

The rise of literacy in fourth century Greece changed gymnastic education dramatically. As stated before, much of Greek education in the archaic period relied upon *mimesis*, or education via imitation. Education came from choral and musical training and was supported in part by the city.¹²⁰ Plato, as seen especially in his *Republic* and *Laws*, believed the poets, as authors of mimetic texts, had too much power over controlling the *paideia* of Greece and he argued that instead only a few of the poets of Greece should even be read.¹²¹ Ultimately, Plato rejected this former method of education, replacing it at his Academy instead with the writing of texts in the form of dialogues.¹²² This corresponded with a rise in book trading in the fourth

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 114.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 115.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹²⁰ Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 214-5.

¹²¹ Ibid., 219, 237. Robb makes the interesting point in this section that this is the first time in history that anyone attempts to create a list of the Greek poetic canon as such.

¹²² Ibid., 235.

century.¹²³ Within the next generation, Aristotle instituted at his Lyceum the close reading of texts as a part of education for the first time (possibly the dialogues of Plato's Academy).¹²⁴ Plato's ideal education as portrayed in the *Republic* and the *Laws* may not have become the status quo for Greece, but nevertheless he linked *paideia* with literacy from that point forward.¹²⁵ By the Hellenistic period, illiteracy became synonymous with being uncultured and uneducated.¹²⁶

One of Plato's texts that became standard as a text for study in schools like the Lyceum was the *Republic*, a treatise wherein he outlined his perfect society and the means by which they will be educated. In the *Republic*, he summarized his education, using the ideal categories of artisans, guardians, and philosopher-kings within his utopia. The language of the *Republic* does not speak to ordinary citizens, yet it still manages to shape all levels of Western education after it. Another text that set up an equally utopian educational system was Xenophon's *Cyropaideia*. In it, Xenophon used a historical figure, the Persian king Cyrus the Great, as his ideally educated man. Xenophon described a Persian system of education broken down first by age groupings and second by the subjects learned under each grouping. Education in the *Cyropaideia* was broken down into four major age groupings: boys (*paides*), adolescents (*aphêbes*), mature men (*teleioi andres*), and men beyond the years of military service (*geraiteroi*).¹²⁷ Cyrus went through these forms of education the same as all other Persians, but with some additions. Cyrus' mother Mandane was Median, not Persian, so for a portion of his education he went to Media to study with his grandfather,

¹²³ Ibid., 234.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 235.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 238.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 221.

¹²⁷ *Cyropaideia* 1.2.4.

Astyages.¹²⁸ There he learned how to ride and commandeer horses, something that was not a part of Persian education. By leaving Persia and learning also in Media, he becomes a well-rounded ruler.

P. Stadter believes that Xenophon used a historical place, Persia, instead of creating an ideal state like Plato's Kallipolis, and has Cyrus interact with his family and friends, not the fictitious guardians and auxiliaries of Plato's *Republic*, to make his ideal state that much more real.¹²⁹ Furthermore, he states, "[T]he figure of Cyrus is not a literal model of historical action [...] but an imagined ideal of how one man might act to govern well."¹³⁰ Though Xenophon's *Cyropaideia* does not get the widespread academic use during the late Classical and early Hellenistic periods that Plato's *Republic* does, Xenophon's work does have some interesting implications for Hellenistic education. What we do know of actual Persian education is scant; the education that Xenophon presents as Persian is actually an interesting blend of Athenian¹³¹ and Spartan¹³² education. Xenophon wrote the *Cyropaideia* some time after the battle of Aegospotami in 404 BCE nearly a century prior to Alexander's Eastern campaign and the introduction of Hellenism to the East. The *Cyropaideia* unknowingly anticipates Hellenistic literature and education—Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* will look at Alexander as this same ideally educated individual, and Hellenistic education will begin blending Greek and Eastern forms of education.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 1.3.1-2.

¹²⁹ P. Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the *Cyropaideia*," *AJP* 112, No. 4 (Winter 1991): 461-491, 473.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 464.

¹³¹ For Athenian themes in education, see Eugene S. McCartney, "The City as Educator," *CJ*, 50, No. 5 (Feb. 1955): 221; Robin Seager, "Xenophon and Athenian Democratic Ideology," *CQ*, New Series, 51, No. 2 (2001): 365-397; and Helen North, "The Concept of Sophrosyne in Greek Literary Criticism," *CP* 43, No. 1 (Jan. 1948): 1-17

¹³² For an comprehensive study of Spartan education, see Mark Griffith, "'Public' and 'Private' in Early Greek Institutions of Education," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed by Yun Lee Too. Leiden; Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2001).

Hellenistic Gymnasia

By the end of the fourth century, Hellenism has spread across the newly conquered East, and gymnasia are being built across the Empire. Alexander and the *Diadochoi*, the generals who split the empire after Alexander's death, began founding Greek-style cities, usually named for themselves,¹³³ all throughout Alexander's newly conquered empire. In these cities they quickly set up institutions of Greek culture. Excavations of gymnasia at Pergamon and Ephesus have uncovered permanent tiered seating believed to be used for instruction.¹³⁴ Lectures were given at the Pergamene gymnasium, and were attended not only by young men but also possibly by the public at large.¹³⁵ Some gymnasia also housed small libraries; inscriptions state that libraries were present at two gymnasia at Pergamon.¹³⁶ The gymnasia of Asia Minor and Egypt, like the gymnasia of Athens, were used primarily for intellectual and gymnastic training.¹³⁷ Due to their size as a meeting area, Hellenistic gymnasia also became a meeting place for large city feasts,¹³⁸ for judicial matters, and sometimes for public addresses by important political figures.¹³⁹

The education within Hellenistic gymnasia became more standardized than its classical period counterparts. Documentary and archaeological evidence has allowed for a more realistic understanding of education than what is given in the primary texts we have had at our disposal until the recent period. Scholars have learned from

¹³³ Peter Green, *The Hellenistic Age: A Short History* (Paperback ed. New York: Modern Library, Random House Publishing Group, 2007), 47.

¹³⁴ Forbes, "Expanded Uses," 34.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 36-7.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

documentary evidence that during the Hellenistic period there was a gradation of handwriting styles that indicated four levels of handwriting education.¹⁴⁰ Education itself was divided into three stages: primary, secondary, and tertiary education. As students progressed through these stages, they became more familiar with literary texts and rhetoric.

Primary education began around age seven and taught students reading, writing, and basic mathematics.¹⁴¹ Learning to write progressed from abecedaries to syllables to words and finally to sentences and short pieces of poetry.¹⁴² Around the age of ten or eleven, students progressed to secondary education, where they primarily learned grammar and literature. Heavy attention was paid to declining nouns and conjugating verbs, and to the memorization of important Greek texts are also stressed.¹⁴³ A very select few students progressed from the secondary stage into the tertiary stage. Unlike the primary and secondary education, where students studied with teachers, tertiary education students studied either with orators or philosophers.¹⁴⁴ Students learned simple compositions, called *progymnasmata*, which prepared them to write the different kinds of standard speeches: judicial, rhetorical, and epideictic, and historical.¹⁴⁵

Gymnastic Education in Hellenistic Egypt

One of the best examples of Hellenistic education comes from Hellenistic Egypt, as we have many of their documents preserved due to Egypt's unique climate

¹⁴⁰ Ronald F. Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*. (ed. by J. Paul Sampley. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 199.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 202-3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 204, 206.

conditions. Raffaella Cribiore is one of the most recent experts on Hellenistic Egyptian education and in her book *Gymnastics of the Mind*, she gives a thorough analysis of what this education looked like and how it related to the preceding classical education. In the tradition of using texts that began at Aristotle's Lyceum, textbooks were used in Hellenistic Egypt. These textbooks, called *hermeneumata*, included glossaries, vignettes of everyday life, and short texts such as the fables of Aesop. They have been found in Egypt in both Greek and Latin.¹⁴⁶ Education across Egypt became fairly standardized and progressed in three stages: reading and writing, grammar and poetry, and rhetoric.¹⁴⁷ Rather than schools being centered in a particular location, Hellenistic schools in Egypt were centered on a teacher; so, if a teacher moved, the students went with them or they quit their education.¹⁴⁸ Unlike some parts of the Hellenistic world, evidence for both female students and teachers is present.¹⁴⁹ Schools during the early Hellenistic period in Egypt offered education primarily in Greek but also in Demotic, a middle Egyptian language that used Greek characters.¹⁵⁰

Gymnasia in the Jewish World

The gymnasia played an important role in the educational institutions of Hellenistic Greece. Evidence of gymnasia becomes readily found as of the third century BCE. During the early Ptolemaic period, gymnasia were only to be found in the largest centers of Greek populations. By the Roman period, gymnasia were present in all

¹⁴⁶ Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

major cities and citizens enrolled their children at the age of 14.¹⁵¹ While not as prevalent in the East as it had been in Greece, pederasty remained a part of the education of gymnasia.¹⁵² Looking more specifically at our area of study, Palestine was not immune to this Hellenization via gymnasia. The gymnasium at Jerusalem was commissioned during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE), prior to 167 BCE. In the first century BCE, Herod the Great funded and built three gymnasia in area of Greater Syria at Damascus, Ptolemais-Acco, and Tripolis.¹⁵³ Additionally, papyri confirm the existence of a gymnasium built in Samaria, a portion of Palestine.¹⁵⁴

Brief attention should be paid to the beginning of Greek involvement in Palestine. Prior to Alexander's invasion of the east, the Jews had been vassals of the Persian Empire, which was defeated by Alexander and his armies in 332 BCE.¹⁵⁵ Greek construction began immediately; the earliest Greek cities founded in Palestine, Samaria and Gerasa, were founded either by Alexander just prior to his death or by Perdikkas, the imperial regent after Alexander.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, the ancient city of Shechem, once the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel¹⁵⁷, was rebuilt as the Greek city Sikima. After Alexander died and his empire was split by the *Diadochoi*, Palestine was originally under the governance of Ptolemy I Soter.¹⁵⁸ Antigonus Monophthalmus, another of the

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵² Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, 34.

¹⁵³ Royce Manojkumar Victor. "Colonial Education and Class Formation in Early Judaism: A Postcolonial Reading" (Ph.D. diss., Brite Divinity School, 2007), 242-3. For more information on these gymnasia, please see Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁴ Forbes, "Expanded Uses," 38.

¹⁵⁵ Hengel 1980, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁷ 1 Kings 12:25.

¹⁵⁸ Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 13.

Diadochoi temporarily interrupted Ptolemaic rule of Palestine, but by 301 the Ptolemies held sole power over Palestine.¹⁵⁹

Under the Ptolemies, inhabitants of greater Syria, including the Jews of Palestine, began immigrating to Egypt and lived reasonably well there.¹⁶⁰ Those remaining in Palestine found themselves constantly in the middle of conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids known as the Syrian Wars.¹⁶¹ During their rule, the Ptolemies built several military settlements and cities in Palestine, including Philoteria, Pella, Philadelphia (modern-day Amman, Jordan), and Heliopolis.¹⁶² The Seleucid king Antiochus III A began a conquest for Palestine in 223 BCE and by 200, Palestine was his. Palestine does not survive unscathed; the holy city of the Jews, Jerusalem, was partially destroyed.¹⁶³ As a sign of good will, Antiochus III supported the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, which had been damaged during the sacking of Jerusalem, and also proclaimed that foreigners were not allowed to enter the Temple.¹⁶⁴ Antiochus IV Euphianes succeeded Antiochus III and was not as kind to Palestine. Antiochus IV Euphianes systematically looted holy sites, including the Temple, of their wealth and holy items.¹⁶⁵ Antiochus IV Euphianes was also the king who gave permission to the High Priest Jason to build the first gymnasium in Palestine in the holy city of Jerusalem itself.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 14-16.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶² Ibid., 25-6.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 40-1.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁶ 1 Macc 4:7-10.

Israelite and Jewish Education

There is scant evidence of Jewish education in scripture. Compared to the plethora of information uncovered about Greek education, little is known about Israelite education. From what we do have, it is safe to say that education in Palestine, even after Greek involvement, was quite different from the fairly institutionalized gymnasia of Greece. James L. Crenshaw cites biblical evidence for schools from the books of Proverbs,¹⁶⁷ Isaiah¹⁶⁸ and Sirach.¹⁶⁹ He argues that while evidence for learning is present, evidence for anything resembling formal Jewish education prior to the second century BCE simply does not exist.¹⁷⁰ The first reference to a Jewish school appears in the book of Sirach,¹⁷¹ written in Jerusalem sometime prior to 180 BCE in Hebrew. Sometime after 132 BCE, Ben Sirah's grandson, living in within the Jewish community in Egypt, translated it into Greek. The Author of Sirach, Ben Sira, has his own "house of instruction":

Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction. Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why do you endure such great thirst? I opened my mouth and said, Acquire wisdom for yourselves without money. Put your neck under her yoke, and let your souls receive instruction; it is to be found close by. See with your own eyes that I have labored but little and found for myself much serenity. Hear but a little of my instruction, and through me you will acquire silver and gold.¹⁷²

Evidence for nearby schools in areas such as Egypt and Ugarit are substantial during the ancient period, however evidence for schools in ancient Israel is very much

¹⁶⁷ James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*. 1st ed. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1998., 90

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 92.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 98.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 86.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 86.

¹⁷² Sir 51:23-28 NRSV.

lacking.¹⁷³ Evidence for education within Israel comes from several extrabiblical sources, including abecedaries, drawings of schools, and exercises in reading foreign language.¹⁷⁴ Some light can be shed on ancient Israelite education by looking at nearby Egyptian education. The similarities between both ancient and Hellenistic education within Egypt and Israel are important to pursue, as they lend themselves to a theory of shared educational practices across the Mediterranean. Education within Egypt predates Hellenization by over a millennium. Within the Old Kingdom, education was restricted to the children of bureaucrats. Literacy within Egypt goes as far back as the Early Dynastic¹⁷⁵ and Old Kingdom periods.¹⁷⁶ Education opened up to the masses during the New Kingdom (1567-1085 BCE), which we know from references to scribal schools to train government employees.¹⁷⁷

Both early Egyptian and Jewish education involved the giving of “instruction.” In Egypt, the term *sh’yt w* used to describe these instructions, often addressed to young royalty and government officials. These instructions included “appropriate etiquette, table manners, conduct in the presence of officials, eloquence, restraint, behavior with respect to women, control of passions, [and] knowing when to speak and when to be silent.”¹⁷⁸ Jewish instructional literature, often used a personified form of Wisdom, described with the feminine word *okmâ*.¹⁷⁹ James L. Crenshaw notes that “[b]oth in Egypt and in Israel, four character traits distinguish wise from foolish, good from evil:

¹⁷³ Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 86.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁷⁵ The Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom periods lasted from c.3000-2613 BCE.

¹⁷⁶ Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 42.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

silence, eloquence, timeliness, and modesty.”¹⁸⁰ He believes that “a significant literature from ancient Egypt [...] and Israel possess sufficient thematic and formal unity to suggest a ‘common context of origin’ and purpose.”¹⁸¹ While often very different in terms of audience and topic, early Egyptian and Jewish literatures used for education show common themes, which yield themselves to comparing both the literatures themselves and their greater education systems.

In later Hellenistic Jewish history, the wealthy studied religious texts, such as the Torah, on the Sabbath at synagogues.¹⁸² While gymnasia are attested, other solely Jewish forms of Greek-style education are not attested in Palestine.¹⁸³ Like in Egypt, there were disciple-type schools centered around a particular teacher, called *bēt midrash*. This is yet another way that Egyptian and Jewish education shared characteristics outside of those introduced by Greek education. These Jewish disciple-type teachers are both referred to as rabbis and by the Greek *didaskaloi*.¹⁸⁴

These examples from early Egyptian and Israelite education show that while Greece may have invented a form of education that permeates Western society to this day, that they themselves are not the inventors of education as a new concept, as some early modern classicists have suggested.¹⁸⁵ While Greek gymnasia were an important symbol of Greek education and culture, and while they did affect Jewish education (and all of Western education) from the moment they encountered Jewish culture, Jewish

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 77-8.

¹⁸² Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 120.

¹⁸³ Ibid. I say solely Jewish, as there is evidence outside of Palestine for Jews participating in Greek education (eg. Philo). Please see Chapter 5 for more information.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ See both Marrou’s introduction to his *A History of Education in Antiquity* and Jaeger’s introduction to his *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*.

education, in the form of *yeshivot* and rabbinical schools survived out of the ancient period and through to modern times.

CHAPTER 4

THE GYMNASIUM AT JERUSALEM

Introduction of Hellenistic Influence in Palestine

The history leading into the Seleucid takeover of Palestine was an unstable one. After Alexander's death in 323, Palestine became central to the goals of the *Diadochoi*, mostly for its strategic place between three continents. Philip Arrhidaeus (the brother of Alexander the Great), Perdikkas, Antigonos Monophthalmus, Seleukos, and Ptolemy I Soter all laid claim to Palestine during this period.¹⁸⁶ Ptolemy I took over Palestine and enslaved many Jews, who were then freed under his successor Ptolemy II Philadelphus.¹⁸⁷ From 301-223 BCE, Palestine existed in relative peace. A peace agreement was signed between Ptolemy II and Antiochus II and the families intermarry, but the peace was short-lived.¹⁸⁸ After their deaths, the Third Syrian war broke out between Seleukos II and Ptolemy II. Antiochus III succeeds Seleukos II in 223 BCE and immediately goes after the territory of Palestine, and he wins Palestine from Ptolemy V in 200 BCE.¹⁸⁹

For Jews, life under Antiochus III began well; he enjoyed the support particularly of a group of Jews known as the Tobiads. Unfortunately, during the battle for Palestine, Jerusalem was all but destroyed and the Temple was damaged. Antiochus III promised monies for the rebuilding of the Temple plus additional funds for animals for sacrifices.

¹⁸⁶ Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 13-15.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 21, 28.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-40.

He gave tax-exempt status to civilian leaders in the Jewish community, and those living in Jerusalem were exempt from taxes for three years to give them money to rebuild the Temple. Additionally, Antiochus III decreed that only ritually pure animals could be kept within the city of Jerusalem, regardless of whether a Jew or a Greek owned them.¹⁹⁰ Antiochus III was killed by locals and his son Seleukos IV took power and seized the treasury at Jerusalem.¹⁹¹

The period of history directly after Seleukos IV within Palestine was recorded within three main sources: 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*. Each of these is an extrabiblical, Jewish source. 1 and 2 Maccabees are part of the Catholic Bible, but appear as apocryphal¹⁹² texts within Protestant and Jewish traditions. Josephus' *Antiquities* is a lengthy history of the Jews beginning with the creation of the earth and ending with the first Jewish revolt against the Romans. Each of these texts recounts the same basic history of the gymnasium, and each is interesting because of their authors' backgrounds and biases.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 42-3.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁹² Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, Anchor Bible Commentary 41a:ix. According to Goldstein, "The term Apocrypha (or "Deuterocanonical Books" in Roman Catholic usage) is popularly understood to describe the fifteen books or parts of books from the pre-Christian period that Catholics accept as canonical Scripture but Protestants and Jews do not. . . . they were preserved for the most part in Greek by Christians as a heritage from the Alexandrian Jewish community and their basic text is found in the codices of the Septuagint. . . . Christians and Jews now unite in recognizing the importance of these books for tracing the history of Judaism and Jewish thought in the centuries between the last of the Hebrew Scriptures and the advent of Christianity."

The Sources: 2 Maccabees, 1 Maccabees, and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*

2 Maccabees has a unique structure, and was clearly compiled out of several sources. It includes an introduction, two letters, a forward, a history and an epilogue. The history is purported to be an abridged version of a five-book history written by Jason of Cyrene.¹⁹³ Jason's book was originally written in Greek, but the letters at the beginning were probably written originally in Aramaic.¹⁹⁴ The history within 2 Maccabees begins in the 180s BCE and concludes with the defeat of the Seleucids in 161 BCE;¹⁹⁵ its primary purpose was to establish the holiday of Hanukkah to Jews in the Diaspora.¹⁹⁶ Judaism in Egypt during this period was practiced primarily in Leontopolis and Alexandria, and this letter attached to a Greek history of the Jews of Palestine would have spoken to this Egyptian Jewish audience. According to John J. Collins, the letters themselves were meant to unify Judaism, and not condemn the Jews of Egypt for not keeping the same practices as the Jews of Palestine.¹⁹⁷

2 Maccabees, whether because of the original language of Jason of Cyrene's history, or from the editor who redacted it, has a highly moralistic tone and the author repeatedly inserts moral commentary within the history.¹⁹⁸ Collins explains that the Judaism presented in 2 Maccabees explains that "[w]hen the laws were well observed [...], the city was inhabited in unbroken peace."¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the centrality of the Temple and its holiness were essential to this book, culminating with the rededication of

¹⁹³ Thomas Fischer, "Maccabees, Books Of," *ABD* 4:42

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 65.

¹⁹⁶ Fisher, "Maccabees, Books Of," 4:443. See also 2 Macc 1:9

¹⁹⁷ John Joseph Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed., The Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids, Mich. Livonia, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub.; Dove Booksellers, 2000), 81.

¹⁹⁸ Fischer, "Maccabees, Books Of," 4:443.

¹⁹⁹ Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 79.

the Temple, which stood as the first Hanukkah celebration.²⁰⁰ Jason's history is not overtly pro-Maccabean nor is it opposed to the Maccabees, unlike other sources on this history.²⁰¹ The Hasmoneans themselves are given relatively little attention, and Collins believes that this is again an attempt to not ostracize the Jews of the Diaspora reading this text.²⁰² Josephus did not use this text within his *Antiquities*, which is interesting as it was completed well before Josephus began writing.²⁰³

1 Maccabees, even without being viewed comparatively with 2 Maccabees, is a strongly pro-Maccabean text.²⁰⁴ This text was originally written in Hebrew, but was quickly translated into Greek. The oldest Hebrew manuscripts are lost and the oldest extant Greek copy paraphrases and extrapolates on the text, and is not as reliable as the Latin copy, which was based on an earlier Greek translation.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, the text is hard to date: Arnaldo Momigliano dates it between 146 and 129 BCE and Goldstein dates it around 90 BCE.²⁰⁶ James VanderKam puts it around 100 BCE, citing that the last event mentioned in the book was around 104 BCE.²⁰⁷ Ultimately, Thomas Fischer argues that the text had to be written no later than the first century BCE, as it still presents a good relationship between the Jews and Rome.²⁰⁸ VanderKam agrees, saying that because of the goodwill towards the Romans in this text, 1 Maccabees had to be written prior to the Roman takeover of Palestine in 63 BCE.²⁰⁹ David Williams

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 69.

²⁰¹ Fischer, "Maccabees, Books Of," 4:443.

²⁰² Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 83.

²⁰³ Lawrence H., Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Publishing House, 1991), 126.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 441.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 440.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 441.

²⁰⁷ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 62.

²⁰⁸ Fischer, "Maccabees, Books Of," 4:441.

²⁰⁹ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 62.

summarizes, saying that the text is usually dated to 100 BCE, and admits that the earliest it could have been finished would be approximately 104 BCE and the latest before 63 BCE.²¹⁰

The text of 1 Maccabees mimics earlier Hebrew histories; for example, Martha Himmelfarb states that its structure mimics that of Judges and Samuel. She believes that the use of these literary styles, along with the Hasmoneans use of Hebrew instead of the *lingua franca* of the period, Aramaic, gives legitimacy to the new Hasmonean dynasty. She makes parallels particularly between two of the Maccabees with two of the earlier heroes: Mattathias with Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, and Judah with King David.²¹¹ Furthermore, 1 Maccabees is a religiously conservative text, and is written with a Judean audience in mind. It is unclear who the original author is, but Thomas Fischer posits that given 1 Maccabees heavy pro-Maccabean bias and the extensive history recorded within it, that the author was someone deeply integrated into the Hasmonean family.²¹² This person, according to Fischer, could possibly have been a Court Historian for the Hasmonean dynasty. VanderKam supports the position that the writer of 1 Maccabees was wholly in support of the Hasmoneans, remarking that for such a religiously conservative text, 1 Maccabees never criticizes the Hasmoneans for acting as priest when they themselves did not come from a priestly family.²¹³ Himmelfarb, who also posits this idea, states: “1 Maccabees is a dynastic history—propaganda for the Hasmonean family.”²¹⁴ David Williams, expanding upon the work of

²¹⁰ David Williams, *The Structure of 1 Maccabees* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1999), 2.

²¹¹ Martha Himmelfarb. "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees." *Poetics Today* 19, no. 1, Hellenism and Hebraism Reconsidered: The Poetics of Cultural Influence and Exchange I (Spring 1998): 19-40, 21.

²¹² Fischer, "Maccabees, Books Of," 4:442.

²¹³ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 65.

²¹⁴ Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism," 21.

Nils Martola, explains that while the pro-Maccabean theme is important within 1 Maccabees, that ultimately “the theme is only a veneer, and the primary purpose of the book—its main story—is to convey the account of the capture and liberation of Jerusalem.”²¹⁵ Additionally, unlike 2 Maccabees, it was used extensively by Josephus in his *Antiquities*.²¹⁶

The Roman-era historian Josephus wrote the last of our main sources about the gymnasium at Jerusalem in his *Antiquities of the Jews*. Josephus himself has an interesting history. A direct descendent of the Hasmoneans, Josephus was born c. 37-38 CE²¹⁷ into a priestly family and underwent a thorough Jewish education as a child.²¹⁸ Until the age of 19, three primary sects of Judaism educated him: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.²¹⁹ Josephus went to Rome as a part of an embassy to the Emperor when he was 27 (64 CE), for issues concerning Jewish-Roman relations in Palestine. He then fought in the Galilee against the Romans and served as a general over Jewish forces during the first Jewish revolt.²²⁰ During the revolt he was captured by the Romans and brought to Rome. There, he was brought into the Flavian family, the family of the emperors of Rome, where he spent the remainder of his life writing histories, treatises, and his autobiography.²²¹ His works include the aforementioned *Antiquities*, his autobiography *Life*, his history of the Jewish revolt entitled *The Jewish War*, and a treatise entitled *Against Apion*.²²² Josephus’ version of the Maccabean history in the *Antiquities* is slightly different than the accounts in 1 and 2 Maccabees, and

²¹⁵ Williams, *The Structure of 1 Maccabees*, 107.

²¹⁶ Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 126.

²¹⁷ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 142.

²¹⁸ Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus” *ABD* 3:981.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:982. *The Life* 7-12.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:981.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 3:982.

²²² VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 144.

Feldman believes this may be because he had oral history at his disposal that the other sources would not have given his familial ties to the Hasmonean dynasty.²²³ This may also be because of Josephus' self-proclaimed purpose for the *Antiquities*, which he explains in *Against Apion*.²²⁴ The *Antiquities* were meant to be apologetic in nature and were supposed to emphasize the good of the Jewish people (and conversely to criticize those who do not fit that mold).²²⁵ Josephus began the *Antiquities* with a moral lesson about what John J. Collins calls the "doctrine of retribution in history."²²⁶ Thus, the *Antiquities* were meant to provide a moral message and to support Josephus' idea of normative, pious Judaism.

The History and Scholarship: 2 Maccabees

I shall begin with the passage from 2 Maccabees, as it is a longer version of the story, and the details from 1 Maccabees and Josephus serve to add to this first source.

2 Maccabees 4:7-20 states:

When Seleucus died and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption, promising the king at an interview three hundred sixty talents of silver and from another source of revenue eighty talents. In addition to this he promised to pay one hundred fifty more if permission were given to establish by his authority a gymnasium and a body of youth for it, and to enroll the people of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch. When the king assented and Jason came to office, he at once shifted his compatriots over to the Greek way of life. He set aside the existing royal concessions to the Jews, secured through John the father of Eupolemus, who went on the mission to establish friendship and alliance with the Romans; and he destroyed the lawful ways of living and introduced new customs contrary to the law. He took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he induced the noblest of the young men to

²²³ Feldman, "Josephus," 3:989.

²²⁴ *Ag. Ap.* 1:1-5.

²²⁵ Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 61.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

wear the Greek hat. There was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and no true high priest, that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing, distaining the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige. For this reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to imitate completely became their enemies and punished them. It is no light thing to show irreverence to the divine laws—a fact that later events will make clear. When the quadrennial games were being held at Tyre and the king was present, the vile Jason sent envoys chosen as being Antiochian citizens from Jerusalem, to carry three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Hercules. Those who carried the money, however, thought best not to use it for sacrifice, because that was inappropriate, but to expend it for another purpose. So this money was intended by the sender for the sacrifice to Hercules, but by the decision of its carriers was applied to the construction of triremes.

There are many interesting problems and ideas posited within this passage.

Verse 12 introduces two major problems when it states “[Jason] took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he induced the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat.” First, what is the exact location of the gymnasium, and second, what is referred to by this “Greek hat.” With regards to the physical location of the gymnasium of Jerusalem, there has been no direct archaeological evidence unearthed in Jerusalem to date, and all scholars can glean from 2 Maccabees is that it is the gymnasium was “right under the citadel” in Jerusalem. Scholars have argued that this “citadel” was in fact the Temple Mount but without archaeological evidence, it is difficult to make a definitive argument regarding the placement of this gymnasium.

Jonathan Goldstein explains that in Greek cities, gymnasia were traditionally built near a

civic center or temple. In light of this tradition and taking into account 2 Maccabees 4:12, he believes that the gymnasium was near either the Temple or the *Akra*.²²⁷

Akra is a synonym of the word *akropolis* and refers to a citadel built in a high place that overlooks a city from a position of dominance.²²⁸ The *Akra* in Jerusalem was originally run by Egyptians and was then taken over by the Seleucids in 200 BCE. The *Akra* controlled Jerusalem from this period until 152 BCE (except a period from 164-161 BCE when the Hasmoneans had complete control of it). The *Akra* had some power over Jerusalem through 141 BCE, when it fell during the rule of Antiochus VII.²²⁹ David Williams elaborates further the multiple problems with locating the *Akra* and by proxy the gymnasium. He explains that there are two hills in Jerusalem: an eastern hill that was the home of the Temple, and a western hill. He explains that if one goes solely on the information from 1 Maccabees, the *Akra* would have been present on the eastern hill, just north of the City of David.²³⁰ However, he says additional evidence from Josephus complicates the matter, which will be discussed in the section on Josephus.

The second issue within 2 Maccabees 4:12, that of the Greek hat, is equally mysterious. A. T. Olmstead describes the function of this hat as follows:

The wearing of the hat has always, from the days of Alexander to the present, marked the West from the East. However much the higher classes of the present-day Orient may adorn themselves with European clothes, one rarely indeed sees a true oriental wearing the hat. It is still the symbol, as it was to the unknown author of 2 Maccabees, of complete Europeanization.²³¹

²²⁷ Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 41a:229 n. 12.

²²⁸ Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, Anchor Bible Commentary 41:214.

²²⁹ Joseph Sievers, "Jerusalem, The Akra, and Josephus," Pages 195-209 in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith, Studia Post-Biblica*, (ed. by Morton Smith, Fausto Parente, and Joseph Sievers, Vol. 41. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 196.

²³⁰ David S. Williams, "Recent Research in 1 Maccabees." *CurBS* 9 (2001): 169-184, 175.

²³¹ A. T. Olmstead, "Wearing the Hat," *AJT* 24, no. 1 (1920): 94-111, 95.

This quote is typical of early twentieth century scholarship on this topic. Jonathan Goldstein's theories about this hat are completely different. He believes this hat is making a subtle message about nudity within the gymnasium, explaining that *ephebes*, while exercising in the nude, wore broad-brimmed hats called *petasos* to protect their heads from the sun. The inclusion of this detail, Goldstein believes, may be the author's way of implying to the reader that these Jewish *ephebes* were exercising in the nude.²³²

The narrator of 2 Maccabees, ever willing to put in his opinions against sin, remarked that the "there was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and no true high priest, that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar."²³³ The priests of the Temple begin forsaking their duties in the house of God to participate instead in the wrestling competitions at the gymnasium.²³⁴ The author of 2 Maccabees is clear about the gravity of these actions, stating, "It is no light thing to show irreverence to the divine laws."²³⁵

The High Priest Jason's sins did not end with the building of the gymnasium;. After he secured permission to build the gymnasium, he then sent a delegation bearing three hundred drachmas to be used for a sacrifice to Herakles to the quinquennial games in Tyre. These games were an athletic competition held every five years in Tyre,²³⁶ and were in honor of the god Tyrian Herakles.²³⁷ During these games, the king

²³² Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 41a:230.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 4:13-14.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:14.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:17.

²³⁶ Julian Morgenstern, "The King-God among the Western Semites and the Meaning of Epiphanes," *VT* 10, no. 2 (1960): 138-197, 163-4. Morgenstern believes that because these games were held every five years and brought in people from all over the Seleucid Empire, these games were meant to mimic earlier Olympic-style games.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.

became the earthly representation of Tyrian Herakles, also called Melcarth (a Tyrian god associated with the sun), and was a part of a festival honoring Herakles/Melcarth's Awakening. Jason's delegation did not use the money to give sacrifices to Herakles, but rather donated it to be used for the fitting of Greek triremes.²³⁸ Jason of Cyrene, referring to the High Priest Jason in this passage as "the vile Jason," made it clear that it was the High Priest Jason's intent to have the money used for the sacrifice to Herakles. Jason of Cyrene's anger was justified; what worse sin could a High Priest commit than to donate money towards the worship of another god?

The History and Scholarship: 1 Maccabees

The passage from 1 Maccabees is much shorter than the passage from 1 Maccabees, but it adds two elements to the description of the events of the gymnasium that Jason did not mention directly: pederasty and nudity. 1 Maccabees 1:10-15 states:

From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks. In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us." This proposal pleased them, and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

With regards to pederastic relationships, the author states that the Jews participating in events at the gymnasia "joined themselves to the gentiles"²³⁹ and Jonathan Goldstein

²³⁸ 1 Macc 4:18-20.

²³⁹ 1 Macc 1:15.

explains that this turn of phrase mimics Numbers 25:3²⁴⁰ and refers to sexual acts.²⁴¹ Goldstein bases this on the evidence from Numbers 25:1, which states that Israelite men were sleeping with Moabite women and were worshipping their gods. This unique phrase “joined/attached itself” appears both in Numbers (in Hebrew) and in 1 Maccabees (in Greek). Because “joined/attached itself” refers to sexual acts in Numbers, Goldstein also believes that this phrase connotes sexual activity in 1 Maccabees.²⁴² There is evidence to suggest that the Hellenistic East did not as readily accept pederastic relationships like they had been accepted in Athens.²⁴³ Therefore, he believes it is possible that the connections that can be made between 1 Maccabees and pederasty may not actually be viable. I believe the evidence that *something* against Jewish sexual mores was occurring is too overwhelming to ignore. If one is unwilling to accept Goldstein’s argument, one might argue that the aforementioned passage from Numbers might be referring to Jewish men marrying Greek women. Evidence, however, shows that Jewish-Greek intermarriage was occurring as early as the third and second centuries BCE.²⁴⁴ However, as discussed in Chapter Two, prohibitions against intermarriage increased in importance during Second Temple Judaism, which could lend itself to confirming a theory about the “joining themselves” language being

²⁴⁰ Num 25:1-3: “While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women, who invited the people to the sacrifices for their god. The people partook of them and worshipped that god. Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and the LORD was incensed with Israel.” Peor here is in reference to a geographical location. Baal-peor is the people of Peor’s representation of the storm god. See Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 334.

²⁴¹ Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*, Anchor Bible Commentary 4:201.

²⁴² Ibid. Goldstein states, “‘Joined themselves’ reflects Num 25:3, and here as there the writer probably means sexual association. This no doubt refers to the pederastic relationships at the gymnasium.”

²⁴³ Nigel B. Crowther, “Studies in Greek Athletics. Part II,” *CW* 79, no. 2 (1985): 73-135, 30. Crowther discusses the negative views on pederasty in the East, citing Ehrenberg as his source: V. Ehrenberg, *Das Agonale in Ost und West. Studien zur geschichtlichen Problematik der Antike* (Brunn-Prague-Leipzig-Vienna 1935).

²⁴⁴ Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians*, 114.

about marriage. Ultimately, I believe that something sexual was occurring between the men in the Jewish gymnasia, probably of a pederastic nature.

The reference to nudity in 1 Maccabees is on the surface just as vague as the reference to pederasty, but if one understands the importance of nudity in gymnasia the reference becomes readily apparent. The author describes the actions of Jews in the gymnasium, explaining that they “removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant.”²⁴⁵ The act of circumcision is not simply a unique cultural practice of the Jews; it is physical manifestation of the covenant between God and his people.²⁴⁶ To reverse this surgery is ultimately to reject the worship of God. If people exercised with clothing in the gymnasium, this surgery²⁴⁷ would not have been necessary. Gruen finds it interesting that 2 Maccabees, with all its religious piety, does not discuss nudity like 1 Maccabees.²⁴⁸ But, if we accept Goldstein’s argument from 2 Maccabees that the Greek hat worn in the gymnasium was worn by people exercising in the nude, than 2 Maccabees may also be talking about nudity within the gymnasium. This reference to the Greek hat may not mean much to the modern reader, but to the individuals reading 2 Maccabees directly after its publication, who would have known the significance of this hat, the reference to nudity may have been much more apparent, and would serve to support the validity of the reference to nudity within 1 Maccabees.

²⁴⁵ 1 Macc 1:15.

²⁴⁶ The Abrahamic covenant is found both in Gen 15 and Gen 17. The command to circumcise sons on the eighth day is given in Gen 17:12. The punishment for not being circumcised is explicitly stated in verse 14: “And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant.”

²⁴⁷ Robert G. Hall, “Epispasm: Circumcision in Reverse.” *BRev*, August (1992): 52-57. Epispasm, from the Greek *epispasmos*, refers to a surgery which reverses male circumcision. Hall believes that 1 Macc is proof that epispasm was widely practiced by Jews, but even admits himself that the practice dies with the end of the Roman period, indicating that Greek culture did not successfully change Jewish opinions on the importance of circumcision.

²⁴⁸ Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30. Berkeley: University of California Press 1998), 30.

The History and Scholarship: Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*

If there is any question that the act of reverse circumcision surgery mentioned in 1 Maccabees was related to the nudity present within *gymnasia*, it was answered by Josephus. Written after both 1 and 2 Maccabees, Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* (12.236) discusses the building of the Jerusalem gymnasium and explains the reasoning for the reverse circumcision surgery:

About this same time the high priest Onias also died, and Antiochus gave the high priesthood to his brother; for the son whom Onias had left was still an infant. But we shall relate all the facts concerning this son in the proper place. Jesus, however,—this was the brother of Onias—was deprived of the high-priesthood when the king became angry with him and gave it to his youngest brother, named Onias; for Simon had three sons, and the high-priesthood came to all three of them, as we have shown. Now Jesus changed his name to Jason, while Onias was called Menelaus. And when the former high priest Jesus rose against Menelaus, who was appointed after him, the populace was divided between the two, the Tobiads being on the side of Menelaus, while the majority of the people supported Jason; and being hard pressed by him, Menelaus and the Tobiads withdrew, and going to Antiochus informed him that they wished to abandon their country's laws and the way of life prescribed by these, and to follow the king's laws and adopt the Greek way of life. Accordingly, they petitioned him to permit them to build a gymnasium in Jerusalem. And when he had granted this, they also concealed the circumcision of their private parts in order to be Greeks even when unclothed, and giving up whatever other national customs they had, they imitated the practices of foreign nations.²⁴⁹

Where 1 and 2 Maccabees give veiled references to nudity and where 2 Maccabees does not deal with reverse circumcision at all, Josephus states in much stronger language that both of these conventions were part of the gymnasium.

The other major issue discussed within Josephus is the height and location of the gymnasium. Josephus confirms its height, stating “He burnt the finest parts of the city,

²⁴⁹ Josephus, *Ant.* 12.236 (Thackeray, LCL).

and pulling down the walls, built the *Akra* (citadel) in the Lower City; for it was high enough to as overlook the temple, and it was for this reason that he fortified it with high walls and towers.”²⁵⁰ Josephus explains that the *Akra* was higher than the Temple. According to David Williams, if this were the case, the only area topographically higher than the Temple is present is on the western hill.²⁵¹ Prior to the 1970s, scholarship argued for the placement of this *Akra* based on the evidence from Josephus. However, recent archaeological evidence has pointed in different directions.²⁵²

In a major archaeological report of sites unearthed dating to the Hellenistic period in Palestine, Rami Arav documents the Hellenistic ruins found in Jerusalem as of 1989, and as of then nothing connected to the gymnasium had been found. What has been found from the Hellenistic period, according to Arav’s report, are additions to Nehemiah’s city walls, a tower at the Northwest end of the city wall, a second tower attached to the Hasmonean wall improvements.²⁵³ Williams explains that no archaeological digs have uncovered any evidence of a large Greek structure on the western hill, thus since the 1970s, archaeologists have been looking for sources on the eastern hill.²⁵⁴ Most scholars are looking for a site south of the Temple; in fact the only scholar opposing this idea is Jonathan Goldstein, who feels that this structure is northwest of the Temple.²⁵⁵ Williams adds to evidence that a large Hellenistic presence was south of the Temple in the City of David area, as multitudes of Hellenistic-era pottery and amphorae from Rhodes and other Greek islands have been found

²⁵⁰ *Ant.*, 12.250-53 (Thackeray, LCL)

²⁵¹ Williams, “Recent Research in 1 Maccabees,” 175.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 175-6.

²⁵³ Rami Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine: Settlement Patterns and City Planning, 337-31 B.C.E.* (BAR International Series, 485. Oxford, England: BAR, 1989), 72-3.

²⁵⁴ Williams, “Recent Research in 1 Maccabees,” 175-6.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

there.²⁵⁶ Joseph Sievers adds to the discussion, reminding historians that while the *Akra* was a greatly important structure within Jerusalem, especially in the second century, understanding its function is more important than knowing its exact location.²⁵⁷ Sievers explains that the *akropolis* of any Greek city, especially during the Hellenistic period, would have served important economic and fiscal, as well as defensive functions.²⁵⁸

Conclusions

Both the writers of 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus presented the High Priest Jason, his priests, and the *ephebes* who participated in the events at the gymnasium as being guilty of apostasy. Jason of Cyrene implies in 2 Maccabees 4 that the events that led to the Maccabean revolt were a result of the building of this gymnasium. If this is true, then it is important to note that the Maccabean revolt began *eight years after* the announcement of the building of the gymnasium. None of the primary Jewish texts tell us how long it took to build this gymnasium, nor when it was finished. They also notably do not give any evidence that there was any attempt on the part of the Jews to keep this structure from being built, either initially or during and after the Maccabean revolt.

In the time between the announcement of the building of Jason's gymnasium and the Maccabean revolt, the High Priest Menelaus ousted Jason and Jason fled to the eastern side of the Jordan River.²⁵⁹ Jason, falsely hearing that Antiochus IV Epiphanes has died, attempted to recapture Jerusalem. Jason encountered opposition by both the

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 177.

²⁵⁷ Sievers 1994, 196.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 197.

²⁵⁹ Edwyn Robert Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (2 vols., vol. 2.; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 171-2.

followers of Antiochus and by pious Jews.²⁶⁰ In response to this rebellion, Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered the Temple in Jerusalem and plundered it.²⁶¹ He had the worship of God replaced with the worship of Zeus Olympios, erected a Greek altar in the Temple, and allowed the sacrificing of pigs on the altar, one of the most unclean animals in Jewish religion.²⁶² He ultimately outlawed the practice of Judaism.²⁶³ The gymnasium may have aroused anger within the pious Jews of Jerusalem, but it is the desecration of the Temple and not the announcement of the building of the gymnasium that directly preceded the Maccabean revolt. The abolishment of the Jewish religion by Antiochus IV Epiphanes was an active affront to Judaism and could not be ignored for any length of time. During the Revolt, the Temple was taken back by the Maccabees, was cleansed, and was rededicated to God²⁶⁴. Destroying the gymnasium would have been the perfect opportunity for the Maccabees to assert their religious authority within their new dynasty, but as Joseph Sievers notes, “[t]he Jerusalem gymnasium is never mentioned again after the time of Jason, but since we do not hear of its destruction, there is a strong likelihood that it remained in use throughout most of the Akra’s history.”²⁶⁵

The gymnasium at Jerusalem was not the last gymnasium built in the area of Palestine and Greater Syria. Herod built three main gymnasia at Damascus, Ptolemais-Acco, and Tripolis, and also sponsored athletic events within Jerusalem itself.²⁶⁶ By this period, gymnasia had truly become symbols of importance within Hellenistic cities. In

²⁶⁰ Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 163.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁶² Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, 173.

²⁶³ 2 Macc 6:6.

²⁶⁴ 1 Macc 4:36-61.

²⁶⁵ Sievers, “Jerusalem,” 203.

²⁶⁶ Victor, “Colonial Education,” 242-3.

classical Greek cities, gymnasia had been outside city walls. By the Hellenistic period, gymnasia were central in the city, near the agora and other important city buildings.²⁶⁷ According to A. W. Bulloch, by the period of Herod, a century and a half after the high priesthood of Jason, “[t]o spend money on the building or the decoration of a gymnasium was the best demonstration of philhellenism a king could give.”²⁶⁸ Herod, in another building project, renovated the former city of Samaria, renaming it Sebaste. At Sebaste, there is a Herodian era stadium-gymnasia, which was part of these renovations.²⁶⁹ Herod also renovated the water system connected to the gymnasium at Laodikeia in Syria, a gymnasium which dates back to the second century BCE.²⁷⁰ In addition to the Herodian-era gymnasia at Damascus, Ptolemais-Acco, and Tripolis, Herod was responsible for a vast building project in Nikopolis, a city on the Greek mainland. Nikopolis was host city for the Aktian games, Olympic-style games founded and sponsored by the Roman emperor Augustus.²⁷¹ This last example is most interesting, as it stands as a unique example of Palestinian influence on Greek life well outside of Palestine and Greater Syria. The final chapter of this thesis will further explore this trend of Jews becoming increasingly more accepting of gymnastic culture, looking at examples of Jews within Jerusalem, Asia Minor, and Egypt.

²⁶⁷ A. W. Bulloch, *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 12, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 271.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Duane W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 209, 212.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 228-9.

CHAPTER 5

THE LEGACY OF GREEK EDUCATION AND GYMNASIA IN JEWISH CULTURE

In light of the anti-gymnastic rhetoric posited by 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus, we are left with one striking question: What would a Jew in Palestine have gained by renouncing his faith in the eyes of the religious elite to participate in the gymnasium? When one looks at the political climate of Hellenized areas in the East, it becomes easier to see why the Jews of Jerusalem, in spite of all warnings against apostasy, would be drawn to the gymnasia. Jonathan Goldstein explains that throughout the Hellenistic world, completing education through either a gymnasium or an ephebic organization, both of which existed under Jason's gymnasia, afforded men a higher status in their new Greek surroundings, and in some cases, even Greek citizenship.²⁷²

This issue of citizenship becomes problematic later in Jewish history—during 41 CE the Greek citizens of Alexandria managed to convince the Roman emperor Claudius to ban Jews from participation in the gymnasiarch game held there. This ban also effectively banned them from any gymnastic training, and thus would have barred them from gaining citizenship.²⁷³ Given the instability of Palestine both during the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods, it is certainly possible that Jews saw participation in the gymnasium as a way of being more accepted, and therefore protected, by the Greek

²⁷² Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 229.

²⁷³ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 57.

rulers. The writers of Jewish biblical and pseudo-biblical texts had agendas to fulfill, and these agendas usually involved anti-sin, anti-polytheistic rhetoric. However, there is evidence, both literary and archaeological, that not all Jews were acting as the heretics described by the overtly religious authors we've discussed so far.

Jews in other Greek Gymnasia: CPJ 3.519

Additional evidence from the Hellenistic and Roman periods was not as quick to damn the Jews as the writers of 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus. For example, an important Greek document discussed the presence of Jews in gymnasia. Originally called Papyrus Schubart 37, this text now entitled *CPJ 3.519* was found in Egypt and first published and edited in 1950. This text is very fragmented; reconstructed it states:

Col. 1 ...this man too bearing a Jewish burden.—Why do you laugh? why are some of you disgusted at what was said or at the man you see? But somehow some behaved more properly to us yesterday....

Col. 2 ...will think outspokenly (?) about those who admitted to the contest. Or is it indeed reasonable that a man should be excluded even because of bodily ugliness—and yet this sort of thing is regarded as a misfortune, not at all as matter for blame—but when there is in a man intemperance both of life and of regimen (?)....

Col. 3 ...him...to run, as when we try to obstruct those who are competing against us, but not those who are not competing against us. And they did well to admit their own weakness, so that you may neither think yourselves deprived of some great spectacle and...

(Fr. C.) ...judge... yet... new city (Neopolis?)... age (ages)... larger... have... after falling ill...not...²⁷⁴

There are several interpretations of this text. Alexander Fuks and Menahem Stern believe the text is in reference to a performance where an actor was identified as a Jew by an object he was carrying. This is not all that surprising, they explain, as Jews were often objects of mockery in mimes of the period. Furthermore, they think this object

²⁷⁴ "A Fragment of a Discourse on Athletics and Theatrical Performances," Alexander Fuks and Menahem Stern (*CPJ 3.519*).

may have been a Torah scroll or *tefillin*. They admit that this object may also have been in reference to a tax directed at Jews.²⁷⁵ On the other hand, Allen Kerkeslager does not believe this text is in reference to a mime or theater production of any kind. He believes that the text features a speaker before a group at a gymnasium discussing the presence of a Jew in the competitions.²⁷⁶ While the speaker seems to be in favor of allowing this Jew to compete, the audience sees this Jew as an object of humor and revulsion.²⁷⁷ The text then turns to a discussion of the disqualification of another athlete based on actions committed before the competition.²⁷⁸ Kerkeslager admits, however, that *CPJ 3.519* is fragmentary and very open for interpretation.

CPJ 3.519 is particularly hard to date; scholars have dated it as early 63 BCE as and as late as 200 CE.²⁷⁹ Fuks and Stern put the text later, in either the late second or the early third century CE.²⁸⁰ Kerkeslager argues that it is likely that this text is indeed Egyptian and he dates it to between 20 BCE and 41 CE, based on linguistic and historical evidence. In addition to the difficulties in dating the text, the original provenance of *CPJ 3.519* is unknown.²⁸¹ While found in Egypt, the text does not necessarily describe a gymnastic site in Egypt. The text refers to a site called Neopolis, or “new city.” Attributing this text to a Neopolis is problematic because there were over 27 sites in antiquity referred to by this name.²⁸² With regards to Jewish populations,

²⁷⁵ Fuks and Stern, “A Fragment of a Discourse,” 116.

²⁷⁶ Allen Kerkeslager. “Maintaining Jewish Identity in the Greek Gymnasium: a Jewish Load” in *CPJ 3.519* (= P. Schub. 37 = P. Berol. 13406)1,” *JSJ* 28, no. 1 (1997): 12-33, 19.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 20, quoting *CPJ 3.519*:18-23.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 16-7. Possible disqualifications included improper athletic training or drunkenness. Kerkeslager discusses these disqualifications on page 18 of his article, citing evidence from Pausanias and Philostratus.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

²⁸⁰ Fuks and Stern, “A Fragment of a Discourse,” 116.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Kerkeslager, “Maintaining Jewish Identity,” 27.

Kerkeslager argue that this Neopolis could refer either to the city of Flavia Neopolis (modern-day Nablus) or to a section of Alexandria also called Neopolis.²⁸³

If one accepts Kerkeslager's interpretation of *CPJ 3.519*, it becomes an important text within the discussion of Jews in gymnasia for two reasons. First, it stands as important non-Jewish evidence that Jews did participate in gymnasia.²⁸⁴ Second, *CPJ 3.519* presents evidence that not all Jews participating in gymnastic training were as Hellenized as the writers of 1 and 2 Maccabees would have us think, as the Jew in the text is circumcised. Kerkeslager disagrees that the mimes have a common theme of using Jews as an object of ridicule and argues that the humor and revulsion described in line 20 is not directed at the fact that the man is Jewish, but rather at his circumcised penis²⁸⁵. This laughter or revulsion could either be directed almost sympathetically to a man who they would see as unfortunately deformed or could be a horrified reaction to such a non-Greek cultural practice which in their eyes would border on mutilation.²⁸⁶

Additionally, *CPJ 3.519*, unlike 1 and 2 Maccabees, Kerkeslager's interpretation of this text gives us a uniquely Greek perspective on Jewish participation in the gymnasium. It also stands against scholarship, both ancient and modern, which argues that the rampant Hellenization in 1 and 2 Maccabees was normative for Jews in the gymnasium. Not every man was undergoing painful reverse circumcision surgery. Furthermore, it shows that Jews were participating in a *Greek* gymnasium, not a separate *Jewish* gymnasium as has been argued by scholars such as Aryeh Kasher.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Ibid., 27.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 26.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 21.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 22.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 33. Kerkeslager is referring here to Kasher's article "The Jewish Attitude to the Alexandrian Gymnasium in the First Century A.D" *AJAH* 1 (1976) 148-61 and Kasher's book *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (English ed., Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum

Feldman agrees with Kerkeslager, and even states his opinion even more strongly than Kerkeslager when he states that there is no evidence whatsoever that Jews were ever participating in non-Greek Jewish gymnasia.²⁸⁸

Philo and Paul

Two Jews of the early Roman period who may have gone through gymnastic education are Philo and Paul. Philo was unique in that not only did he undergo gymnastic education, but he also wrote about its merits and attempts to reconcile the problems between Greek education and Jewish religion. Philo lived sometime²⁸⁹ around the time of Christ, and came from a wealthy and influential familial background. His brother Alexander was a part of the administration within Alexandria²⁹⁰ and reportedly was one of the wealthiest men in the empire.²⁹¹ Philo was a citizen of Alexandria (possibly a Roman citizen as well), a position not often accorded to Jews during the Roman period. He was respected enough within both the Jewish and Roman worlds that he was sent in 40 CE to petition the Emperor Caligula to end the persecution of Jews in Egypt.²⁹² While Jewish, his personal writings were preserved throughout history by Christians and were important within early Church writings.²⁹³

7: Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985).

²⁸⁸ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 59.

²⁸⁹ Kenneth Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 9, 14. While Philo's exact birth and death dates are unknown, scholarship generally attributes his birth to 20 BCE. The last mention of him in history is his attendance of a horse race in 47 CE.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁹¹ James D. Newsome, *Greeks, Romans, Jews: Currents of Culture and Belief in the New Testament World* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 368.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Schenck, *Brief Guide to Philo*, 3.

During his life, Philo wrote approximately seventy treatises, of which approximately fifty are extant at least in part.²⁹⁴

Philo wrote very little about himself or his education in his writings, but in his *ON the Embassy to Gaius*, he mentioned that he was provided a good education.²⁹⁵ Jews in Alexandria in general were educated in the synagogue. In these synagogue schools, the Hebrew scriptures were not read in Hebrew, but rather were read from the Old Greek translation of the scriptures. Philo himself had no working knowledge of Hebrew; he worked solely with the Old Greek, which he saw as an official version of the Bible.²⁹⁶ While Philo was aware of the definitions of Hebrew words necessary for his exegetical studies of scripture, in all of his writings he quoted from the Old Greek.²⁹⁷

Philo's *On the Special Law* leads scholars to believe that he was also educated at least in part at the Greek *gymnasia*.²⁹⁸ While the Greek religious education received at the *gymnasia* was problematic for the religious Jewish community in Jerusalem, was not a problem for Philo. Philo, who lived less than two hundred years after the building of the gymnasium at Jerusalem, did not condemn *gymnasia* on religious grounds as one might expect, but rather spoke well of it, especially the physical training to be found there.²⁹⁹ The *gymnasia* also factors into his later philosophy of education, in which he described *gymnasia* as places where the souls of children were trained.³⁰⁰

According to Raffaella Cribiore, evidence of formal Greek education within Egypt, specifically in Alexandria, comes during the third-century BCE in the poetry of Herodas.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 14.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁹⁶ Newsome 1992, 368.

²⁹⁷ Schenck, *Brief Guide to Philo*, 10.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 11, 24.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 11.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

These schools taught in both Greek and Demotic.³⁰¹ The earliest of these schools taught grammar to younger students and rhetoric to older students.³⁰² These schools evolved into more formal Hellenistic schools, teaching the gymnasia. From Philo's writings, it is apparent that he was educated in what became the medieval *trivium* and *quadrivium*.³⁰³ James L. Crenshaw explains that the upper class Jewish populations within Alexandria underwent the same education as their Greek and Egyptian neighbors, studying the *encyclia* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music³⁰⁴; grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic³⁰⁵).³⁰⁶ The *encyclia* became important in Philo's philosophy of education. Kenneth Schenck states that by using the *encyclica*, "Philo could allegorize both Greek myths and Jewish stories to find a philosophical middle ground."³⁰⁷

The goal of Philo's education model was to create the ideal man. According to Philo, the ideal education led this ideal man to an understanding of his God. Moses is often used as the figure of the ideal man in Philo's writings. According to James VanderKam, Moses "enjoyed an extraordinary status in Philo's system. He was the supreme lawgiver, the ideal king, prophet, and priest, through whom the divine laws became incarnate."³⁰⁸ Again employing the use of allegory, in his *On the Life of Moses*, "Philo presents Moses according to the highest ideals of Greek culture. He gives him a Greek education, no doubt similar to the one Philo himself enjoyed."³⁰⁹ This education far surpasses normal Greek education and includes "Egyptian philosophy and

³⁰¹ Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 25.

³⁰² Ibid., 38.

³⁰³ Schenck, *Brief Guide to Philo.*, 11.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. These four subjects together comprised the *quadrivium*.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. These three subjects together comprised the *trivium*.

³⁰⁶ Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 11-12.

³⁰⁷ Schenck *Brief Guide to Philo*, 45.

³⁰⁸ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 141.

³⁰⁹ Schenck, *Brief Guide to Philo*, 100. *Mos.* 1.21-24

mathematics, Assyrian literature, [and] Chaldean astrology and mathematics.”³¹⁰ Philo goes as far as to say that the Greek philosophers gained their knowledge and logic from Moses himself.³¹¹ Within Philo’s model of education, Moses became the archetype of the ideal philosopher: excelling in reason and thought, and inspired by God to give to others true philosophy. This description of the ideal man is not far from the *paideia* of Greece, nor is Moses’ international education dissimilar to Xenophon’s *Cyrus*.

Paul is another interesting first century CE Jew who may have undergone a Hellenistic educational process. Luke tells us that Paul was not only a Jew but also a Roman citizen, something Paul never confirms nor denies, and something which scholars to this day debate.³¹² Direct information about Paul’s Hellenistic educational background is all but nonexistent. Some scholars believe that based on his life and his writings, Paul must have had some level of Greek education. For example, Hans Dieter Betz states: “The fact that Paul acted as an international envoy, first on behalf of Jewish authorities, then as a Christian missionary, means that he must have received a good Hellenistic education.”³¹³ He justifies this position with evidence from Paul’s speeches, epistles, and theological debates, and adds that in Acts 24:1 that even “Luke regards Paul as well-equipped to defend himself in court, while the Jewish priests must have a professional orator.”³¹⁴ In this passage, Paul litigates in front of a governor and against a professional orator, Tertullus.³¹⁵ While this does not imply that he is just as talented as the professional orator, it does indicate that he had sufficient abilities in this arena.

³¹⁰ Mary E. Andrews, “Paul, Philo, and the Intellectuals” *JBL* 53, no. 2 (July 1934): 150-166, 159.

³¹¹ VanderKam, *Early Judaism*, 140.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Hock, “Paul and Greco-Roman Education,” 216.

With regards to gymnastic education, Paul has a few things to say in his epistles. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 specifically speaks to his knowledge of the *gymnasia*—he gives accurate descriptions of the events and shows he is at least familiar with its educational institutions as well.³¹⁶ Additional passages include Galatians 2:2, Philemon 2:15, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:7, and Titus 2:4. These passages additionally talk about running, boxing, and other forms of exercise.³¹⁷

Ronald Hock undertook one of the most in-depth studies of the Hellenistic qualities of Paul's writings, and through a thorough analysis of all of the Pauline writings, shows evidence for primary, secondary, and tertiary Hellenistic education.³¹⁸ Evidence of Paul having primary Hellenistic education appears in Galatians 6:11, where Paul discusses his writing style and the shape of his letters, a skill which is mastered during primary education.³¹⁹ He also quotes maxims and proverbs used in primary Hellenistic education to teach students to write lines, such as "Bad company ruins good morals," which appears in 1 Cor. 15:33.³²⁰ Evidence of his secondary education, according to Hock, is seen in his ability to analyze texts, primarily the Greek Jewish scriptures.³²¹ Paul quotes the Greek Jewish scriptures over ninety times in his epistles.³²² In Galatians 3:16 in particular, Hock explains that uses a method called *chreiai*, an advanced exercise in noun declension, to study the promises God made to Abraham.³²³ With regards to the tertiary level of education, Hock believes that the style and command of language within Paul's epistles themselves. Tertiary education taught

³¹⁶ Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," 216.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ See Chapter Three for more information about the levels of education during the Hellenistic period.

³¹⁹ Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," 208.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid., 209.

³²³ Ibid.

students how to compose strong rhetorical arguments. These arguments had a temporal quality, Hock explains: “the prescribed method for composing a characterization was to structure it temporally, beginning with the present, then moving to the past, and finally looking to the future.”³²⁴ Hock believes the best example of this temporal-style argument can be found in Paul’s epistle to Philemon.³²⁵ He also shows how Galatians 1:10-2:21 fits into a Hellenistic literary genre called an *encomium*.³²⁶ The book of Galatians as a whole also falls into the format of a formal judicial speech.³²⁷

The Gymnasium-Synagogue at Sardis

In addition to these examples, an interesting archaeological discovery in Turkey links Jews and Greeks even further. Sardis (modern-day Sart) came under Hellenistic rule when Alexander conquered the area in 334 BCE and set up a military garrison there. Sardis was quickly Hellenized—Greek names began appearing in Sardis as early as 300 BCE and before the end of the fourth century tombstones were erected in the Greek style³²⁸. A Jewish community in Sardis was founded under the reign of Antiochus III. According to Josephus, Antiochus III is responsible for the relocation of two thousand Jewish families from the area of Palestine to sites in Lydia and Phrygia (*Ant.* 12.147-151), and of these communities was built in Sardis. Sardis originally was founded between the seventh and sixth centuries BCE.³²⁹ Proof of a Jewish population in Sardis, possibly the group described by Josephus as being displaced by Antiochus

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid., 210.

³²⁶ Ibid., 212.

³²⁷ Ibid., 214.

³²⁸ Mitten, David Gordon, "A New Look at Ancient Sardis," *BAR* 29, no. 2 (May 1966): 38-68, 58.

³²⁹ Ibid., 38.

III, comes from archaeological evidence, including Greek and Hebrew inscriptions³³⁰ and the archaeological remains of a synagogue dating to the second century CE.

The structure of the synagogue at Sardis mimics that of Christian basilicas of the period, but overwhelming evidence proves that this site is in fact a synagogue. This evidence includes Hebrew and Greek inscriptions and multiple representations of *menorot*, a prominent symbol of Judaism especially during this period.³³¹ The most unique aspect of this synagogue is its location within Sardis—it is architecturally a part of a gymnasium. Located within the south wing of the greater gymnasium complex, this synagogue went through several periods of building and renovation³³². While the extant walls of the building date to the Roman period, the foundation dates to the Hellenistic period.³³³ Initially, there is evidence that the area of the synagogue was not originally intended for use as a Jewish house of worship. Andrew R. Seager believes that this area was originally used as preparation rooms, such as dressing rooms, for the gymnasium.³³⁴

The original gymnasium was damaged during an earthquake in 17 CE, and the renovations from this destruction date no later than 166 CE.³³⁵ Seager believes it is possible to state that this structure becomes the Jewish synagogue near 166 BCE, citing evidence from a Hebrew fragment found in the synagogue which may be

³³⁰ Frank Moore Cross, "The Hebrew Inscriptions from Sardis," *HTR* 95, no. 1 (2002): 3-19; 7, 10, 16. All of the inscriptions discussed in Cross' article date from between the third and fourth centuries CE. These inscriptions are in Hebrew and come from the synagogue at Sardis.

³³¹ Andrew R. Seager, "The Building History of the Sardis Synagogue," *AJA* 76, no. 4 (1972): 425-435, 426.

³³² Marianne P. Bonz, "The Jewish Community of Ancient Sardis: A Reassessment of Its Rise to Prominence," *HSCP* 93 (1990): 343-359, 344.

³³³ Seager, "Building History", 430.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 431.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 432. The Hellenistic and early Roman portions of this structure are difficult to date. Coins and pottery date the structure to somewhere after the 17 CE earthquake and an inscription on a statue inscribed to the emperor Lucius Verus dates the completion no later than 166 CE.

interpreted as stating that the Roman emperor Lucius Verus approved the building of the synagogue within the gymnasium complex.³³⁶ Marianne P. Bonz dates the conversion of this area from gymnastic dressing rooms to a synagogue later, possibly around 270 CE.³³⁷ By the second half of the third century, this site is a fully functional synagogue complete with decorations and mosaics.³³⁸ One of these decorations includes an elaborate relief of eagles clutching thunderbolts in their talons.³³⁹ This Jewish community has heavily adopted Greek culture, inscriptions bear the names of congregants including Polyhippos, Pegasios, Euphrosynos, and Sokrates.³⁴⁰ This Jewish community has not fully Hellenized, however, as there is no evidence that God is depicted in any physical way in this synagogue, as the gods are in other Greek temples. The synagogue is still Jewish, even if it is within a Greek gymnasium.

Conclusions

Attempting to understand the importance of Jason's gymnasium in the Hellenization of Palestine is difficult for a number of reasons. Persons associated with the Jewish religion who were clearly personally against the gymnasium wrote the primary texts, 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus. No documents are extant which give the opinions of the Jews who were participating in gymnastic life at this gymnasium. Without that very important piece of evidence, one must look outside of Palestine for

³³⁶ Ibid., 432.

³³⁷ Bonz, "The Jewish Community of Ancient Sardis," 347-356. Bonz justifies her argument with a discussion of the economic policies of emperor Septimus Severus, which she believes led to an economic decline in the area around the time the synagogue portion of the complex was established. This economic decline allowed the Jews of third century CE, who until that time had not had any viability politically or economically, to become a part of the greater community.

³³⁸ Seager, "Building History," 433.

³³⁹ Mitten, "Ancient Sardis," 64.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 65. Specifically, an inscription on a menorah indicates that its donor was named Sokrates.

any sort of answers. According to Allen Kerkeslager, *CPJ 3.519* gives a fragmentary glimpse into the life of a Jewish man who kept the covenant of circumcision and was still an athlete in the gymnasium. The archaeological record from Sardis stands as physical proof that a large community outside of Palestine disagreed with the rhetoric found in 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus and did not see a need for religious separation from Greek culture. And, the evidence of the gymnasia built by Herod the Great after the Hasmonean dynasty had ended shows that their revolt did not end gymnastic culture in Palestine.

If the Maccabean revolt truly began as a reaction to Jason's gymnasium as posited by 2 Maccabees, and if, as Erich Gruen notes, Jason had been out of power for several years prior to the revolt,³⁴¹ then given that we have no direct or indirect evidence that the Hasmoneans succeeded in or even attempted to destroy Jason's gymnasium, we must believe that if the gymnasium was truly their motivation, then their revolt failed. And, after the revolt, while there is evidence that the Hasmoneans destroyed pagan sites within their land, the sites that they destroyed predate the Greeks, and there is absolutely no evidence that the Hellenizers of 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus were ever sought out by the Hasmoneans.³⁴² Gruen supports these positions, and adds that the Hasmoneans not only did not attempt to quell the Hellenism around them after their ascent to power, but also actually participated in Hellenistic culture. He states:

[T]he Hasmonaeans themselves, in the course of the century that followed the Maccabean revolt, engaged regularly in diplomatic dealings with Greek kings, adopted Greek names, donned garb and paraded emblems redolent with Hellenic significance, erected monuments, displayed stelai,

³⁴¹ Gruen *Heritage and Hellenism*, 4.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 7-8.

and minted coinage inspired by Greek models, hired mercenaries, and even took on royal titlature. The ostensible paradox has often generated puzzlement. How could a movement that owed its origins to the rejection of Hellenism and Hellenizers within the Jewish community retain strength and appeal if its very leaders succumbed to the allure of Greek institutions?³⁴³

In addition to this, Gentile names begin appearing within the names of the Hasmonean dynasty within the generation after the initial revolt and continue throughout their dynasty.³⁴⁴ This gymnasium inspired a myriad of problems and discussions both within history and within scholarship, and while we may never know exactly what was happening culturally in Palestine during Antiochus IV Epiphanes' rule, we can say with complete conviction that the building of Jason's gymnasium was a physical sign unlike any other that Hellenism had reached Palestine.

³⁴³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 31.

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