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Tales of the Tobiads

The stories of Joseph the Tobiad and his son Hyrcanus in Josephus AJ xii have long puzzled scholars. Morton Smith has done much to remove the puzzling from the records of the past. In gratitude for the help he gave me in my first stumbling toward teaching and scholarship, I take pleasure in dedicating to him my effort to solve the Tobiad puzzle.

When a historian writes a puzzling narrative, it is often because his own convictions drive him to consider the straightforward as embarrassing or incredible. Hence, one key to the puzzle may lie in Josephus' beliefs. First, then, let us list what were Josephus' own biases when he narrated the history of the third and second centuries B.C. Thereafter, let us summarize the Tobiad stories and the external evidence on the Tobiads so as to set forth the puzzling aspects of Josephus' narrative.

Josephus was proud that he was a descendant of Jonathan the Hasmonaean and defended the honor of the members of the Hasmonaean dynasty down through John Hyrcanus. To defend the Hasmonaeans he would denigrate their rivals. In particular, he took First Maccabees, a work of pro-Hasmonaean propaganda, as his basic source for the history of the rise of the Hasmonaean dynasty. He knew also the work of Jason of Cyrene or its abridgement, Second Maccabees; both the original and the abridgement were works of anti-Hasmonaean propaganda. Throughout his narrative, Josephus supports First Maccabees against Second Maccabees, except in the case of the story of Antiochus IV's atrocities at Jerusalem, where Josephus was forced by

\[ \text{Vita I. 2-5; AJ xii. 6. 1. 265 – xiii. 10. 7. 300} \]

\[ \text{Even Pharisees, as at BJ i. 2. 8. 67 and AJ xiii. 10. 5. 288-92.} \]
his belief in the veracity of the prophesies of Daniel to emend the text of First Maccabees.  

By the time he wrote the *Antiquities* and the *Life*, Josephus was a convinced Pharisee, but even when he was younger, he had been sympathetic to both the Pharisees and the Essenes. Accordingly, he could not approve of breaches of Jewish law.  

This pious Jewish historian first (*AJ* xii. 4. 1. 154) joins some other ancient authors in interpreting a piece of Ptolemaic propaganda in such a way as to lead to a conclusion now known from both literary and numismatic evidence to be false: that Antiochus III, on giving his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy V in 193 B.C., actually turned over to Ptolemy as a dowry "Coele-Syria, Samaria, Judea, and Phoenicia." Since the good evidence of Polybius (xxviii. 1. 3; 20.9) was surely available to Josephus (see, e.g., *AJ* xii. 9. 1. 358), why should Josephus have accepted the false conclusion?  

Josephus goes on to say (*AJ* xii. 4. 1. 155) that Ptolemy and Cleopatra shared the revenues of this dowry, farming out the taxes to prominent natives of the subject territories. An apparently gratuitous reference follows (*AJ* xii. 4. 1. 156): that in this period, the high priesthood of Onias, the Jews suffered heavily from the plundering raids of the Samaritans.  

Having thus introduced Onias II as a high priest of ill fortune, Josephus goes on to give the succession of high priests: Simon the Just, Eleazar, Manasses, and this Onias, son of Simon the Just. He characterizes this Onias II as small-minded and avaricious. At this point begins the tale of the Tobiads (*AJ* xii. 4. 1-11. 158-236). The whole tale presupposes that the Ptolemaic empire has complete control of southern Syria and of Palestine, contrary to what is known to have been true from 200 B.C., when Antiochus III conquered the area.  

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3For proof, see my *I Maccabees* (*The Anchor Bible,* vol. 41; Garden City, N.Y., 1976), pp. 55-61, 558-574, and my *II Maccabees* (*The Anchor Bible,* vol. 41A: Garden City, N.Y., 1983), pp. 16-17 (n. 80), 185-86, 302-3.  
5Appian *Syr.* 5; Porphyry, *F. Gr. Hist.* 260, F 47.  
8See Tcherikover, p. 127.
When contemptible Onias II refused to pay the customary 20 talents of his own income on behalf of the people to Ptolemy, the king became angry and sent to Jerusalem an envoy bearing a threat to dispossess the Jews and distribute their land as lots to his soldiers if the money should not be paid. Ptolemy here at AJ xii. 4. 1. 158 is strangely identified as "Ptolemy [III] Euergetes, who was the father of [Ptolemy IV] Philopator," though Josephus has said that his narrative is set in the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

Brazen Onias, however, was not "put out of countenance" (ibid., 1. 159). Young Joseph, son of Tobias and of the high priest's sister, rose to the occasion. He rebuked Onias, reminding him that his claim to be the chief spokesman of the nation (prostasian) and high priest rested on payment of the money he was withholding. Onias, unconcerned, left to Joseph the prerogative of being the people's spokesman before the king, who is here (AJ xii. 4. 2. 163) again strangely identified as "the Benefactor" (Euergetes). Joseph undertook the task and immediately impressed Ptolemy's envoy by generously entertaining him. The envoy brought back to Ptolemy and Cleopatra a favorable report of Joseph, preparing the ground for the young man's own visit to court.

Joseph, with the help of friends in Samaria,9 raised 20,000 drachmas with which he bought as rich equipment as he could, though he was ridiculed for his poor appearance by the others who had come to Alexandria to bid for tax-farming rights. Joseph made a special trip to Memphis to see the king and so impressed him there with his wit that he won the king's favor, to the point that when the king came to Alexandria, Joseph was the envy of the other bidders, and all the more when he out-bid them all by giving a figure which was double the current revenue and mentioned in addition the property he would confiscate from tax-evaders. When the king asked for the customary guarantors for so audacious a bid, the witty Joseph offered Ptolemy and Cleopatra each other. Pleased, the king let Joseph have the contract without guarantors, whereupon Joseph used a contingent from the royal army and rigorously collected the taxes in the gentile cities of Ptolemaic Syria, executing those who refused to pay.

Thus, Joseph grew very wealthy and used his wealth to purchase the favor of Ptolemy, Cleopatra, and all who were powerful at court. Joseph enjoyed this prosperity for 22 years. He begot seven sons by one wife, and then he begot an eighth son under very romantic

9If "Samaria" means the city, the friends were Greeks or Macedonians. If "Samaria" means the district, the friends may have been Samaritans. Joseph and the author, as we shall see (below, p. 140) could admit the sanctity of the Samaritan temple; cf. II Maccabees 5.23, 6.2.
circumstances. That is, when Joseph fell in love with a gentile dancing-girl, Joseph's brother, to preserve him from the sin of intercourse with a gentile woman, took his own daughter and gave her to the drunken Joseph, who fell in love with her instead and begot Hyrcanus. These events are narrated without apology, indeed proudly. Are these tales of bribery and wenching, which are romantic enough to suggest they are fiction, the sort of history one would expect from the pious Josephus?

Hyrcanus grew up to be a clever rascal, resourcefully able to carry out his father's orders, regardless of cost, and became his father's favorite son, much to the envy of his brothers. When a son was born to King Ptolemy and the aged Joseph was unable to go, of all the sons only Hyrcanus was willing to go to the royal festivities in Joseph's place. Hyrcanus asked only for a letter allowing him to draw from Joseph's steward in Alexandria whatever funds were needed for gifts. Characteristically, the clever young man used the letter to demand the vast sum of 1,000 talents from the steward and chained the steward when he refused to deliver the money. When the king himself objected to Hyrcanus' failure to present himself at court and to his treatment of the steward, Hyrcanus gave a witty reply. Back home, he said, there was a custom, that the child-of-a-father (ton gennéthenta) was not to partake of the meat of a sacrifice until he himself had brought a sacrifice to God. As Joseph's benefactor, Ptolemy was analogous to God. Hyrcanus had not presented himself to the king because he was still preparing his offerings to Ptolemy. Hyrcanus said he had punished the steward, his father's slave, for disobedience, just as the king himself had to punish disobedience. Already by his reply Hyrcanus won Ptolemy's favor.

On getting the thousand talents from the helpless steward, Hyrcanus used the money to purchase an extravagant gift for the king and queen. At a royal banquet, when rivals piled the bare bones left over from the meat in front of Hyrcanus, to illustrate (as they had the royal jester say to the king) how Hyrcanus' father Joseph had stripped Syria, Hyrcanus "wittily" replied that only he had bones before him because the others, like dogs, had eaten the meat with the bones, while he, as a man, had eaten only the meat. Hyrcanus led his rivals

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10This is the reading of the manuscripts at AJ xii. 4. 8. 206. Herwerden's emendation, genethliazonta, is not to be accepted.
11Greek euergetēi; again a play of Ptolemy III's cult-epithet "Euergetes," but the king in the passage should be Ptolemy IV!
12Neither the original author nor Josephus is dismayed at the possibility that Hyrcanus ate meat that was not kosher; contrast Daniel 1.5-16 and II Maccabees 6.18-26. There are two possible explanations. Hyrcanus' abstention from meat may have suggested the prank to the malicious rivals, for Hyrcanus'
to think that his gifts to the king would be modest, so that they would
do little to compete, and then he dazzled all with his extravagant gift
to the king and queen. He also bribed important courtiers, for already at
this time his jealous brothers were trying to have him murdered.
Having won the royal favor, Hyrcanus asked only that the king write
back to his father and brothers.

On Hyrcanus' return home, however, the envious brothers tried to
kill him, with the connivance of Joseph, who was angry over the
extravagant use of his money. Hyrcanus escaped across the Jordan after
killing two of his brothers. There the young man remained, "levying
taxes" (phorologōn) on the natives. The last two sentences are
surprisingly brief for such a violent episode in the drama.
Nevertheless, Josephus' choice of words lets us know, first, that
somehow Hyrcanus was safe in Transjordan from the vengeance of
Joseph and Joseph's other sons. Surely the favor of Ptolemy protected
him in territory still under Ptolemaic control. Indeed, young Hyrcanus is
not described as an outlaw but as "levying taxes." Evidently, he became
the official collector in his district of taxes for the Ptolemaic empire.

Joseph himself probably continued to hold the profitable post of
tax-farmer of the rest of Ptolemaic Syria and Phoenicia. The fact is
strange but hardly impossible. Josephus seems not to have considered
the possibility.

At this point in the narrative (AJ xii. 4. 10. 223-24) comes a
chronological note: "Around that time Seleucus [IV (187-175)]\(^{13}\)
...became king, and Joseph, Hyrcanus' father, died, a fine and high-
minded man who had brought the Jewish people from poverty and
political weakness to more splendid opportunities of life during his 22
years as farmer of the taxes of Syria, Phoenicia, and Samaria." Onias
II also died, to be succeeded by Simon II and then by Onias III, who,

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\(^{13}\)The Seleucus here can be only Seleucus IV Philopator, for at AJ xii. 4.11. 234
he is said to have been succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The narrative
here at AJ xii. 4. 10. 223 wrongly gives the cult-epithet of Seleucus IV as "Soter,"
which was the cult-epithet of Seleucus III (225-223). Josephus may have found
"Seleucus" without any cult-epithet in his source. If so, the error belongs to
Josephus. However, as we shall see (below, n. 91), the original author could have
made the slip, if, indeed, it was a slip; see below, p. 149.
Josephus says, received a letter from "Areios," king of Sparta, which Josephus quotes.

This chronological note teems with difficulties. Josephus, as if to leave no doubt as to the correctness of the figure, mentions twice Joseph's 22 years as tax-farmer (AJ xii. 4. 6. 186; 10. 224). But Josephus' own chronological framework leaves no room for the 22 years. Measuring the 22 years from the marriage of Ptolemy V to Cleopatra I in 193, we reach at least 172, long after the death of Seleucus IV in 175, whereas, Josephus placed the accession of Seleucus IV around the time of Joseph's death and held that Seleucus IV reigned at least several years (AJ xii. 4. 11. 234). Measuring even from Antiochus III's conquest of Syria and Palestine in 200, we reach at least 179, one year after the death of Ptolemy V, which Josephus places after the death of Joseph (ibid., 235). Equally difficult is the end of Josephus' chronological note. Areus I, king of Sparta, died in 265, and even the child-king Areus II died in 254. Moreover, Ben Sira's words strongly suggest that a Simon was high priest at the time of Antiochus III's conquest of Judaea, but on Josephus' chronology no Simon could have been so, since Simon I was succeeded by Eleazar, a contemporary of Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.), and Simon II became high priest in the reign of Seleucus IV. Why does Josephus assume so unlikely a chronology?

Josephus resumes the thread of the narrative with the death of Joseph, which was followed by violent struggles among the Jews. The majority backed the elder sons of Joseph against Hyrcanus, as did Simon, the high priest. The narrator explains that Simon's decision was based on his relationship (syngeneian) to the elder sons. This statement makes sense only if Simon, Joseph's first-cousin, was somehow more closely related to Joseph's first wife than to Hyrcanus' mother. Since the narrator, as we shall see, later condemnns the elder brothers as wicked, he appears here to have gone out of his way to cast aspersions on the character of Simon II, associating him with the wicked. Why would he do so?

The story goes on to say that Hyrcanus remained in Transjordan as a robber-baron preying on the Arabs and built a fortress "Tyre," which is described in detail. Hyrcanus held power in the region "for seven years, through all the time that Seleucus was king of Syria." However, when the forceful Antiochus IV (175-164) replaced Seleucus IV and the

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Ptolemaic empire was left under a weak regime of child-heirs (Ptolemy VI Philometor, 180-145, and his younger brother), Hyrcanus committed suicide rather than fall into Antiochus' hands, and his property was seized by Antiochus. Suddenly here we find Syria and Palestine no longer in Ptolemaic but in Seleucid hands, and this situation is probably what Josephus understood by "through all the time that Seleucus was king of Syria." "Syria" in AJ xii means "Syria and Palestine," the territory conquered by Antiochus III in 100; in the Antiquities it begins to mean "the Seleucid empire" from xiii. 4. 1. 80. If so, we may acquit Josephus of underestimating the length of the reign of Seleucus IV (187-175); rather, he thought that Seleucus IV gained control of Syria and Palestine around 181. His source, however, as we shall see, knew that the region was under Seleucid rule from 200.

So end the tales of Joseph and Hyrcanus. The narrative goes on to say that in the struggles which broke out in Jerusalem between rival claimants to the high-priesthood, the surviving Tobiads supported Menelaus, while the majority of the people supported Jason. We next read that it was Menelaus and the Tobiads who, hard pressed, then went to Antiochus IV and received his permission to follow Greek ways in Jerusalem. Strangely, nothing is said here of their having received the king's help to suppress their rivals. As we shall see, Josephus or his source had reasons for the silence.

When Josephus wrote his brief account of our period in his Jewish War, he had no other sources than are reflected by his account in his Antiquities. However, important books were not in his possession when he was writing his earlier work, so that he wrote from memory an account full of mistakes. Thus, at BJ i. 1. 1. 31-32 he has Onias-Menelaus confused with Jason. He writes that Onias-Menelaus expelled the Tobiads from the city, and the Tobiads took refuge with Antiochus, who invaded Judaea, took and sacked Jerusalem and the temple, slaying a large number of Jews who were partisans of the Ptolemaic empire. If we substitute Jason for Onias-Menelaus in the foregoing sentence, we have the historical fact.

Chance has preserved for us on papyrus in Egypt the archives of Zenon, an agent of Apollonius, dioiketes (finance minister) of Ptolemy

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16Jason's coup against Menelaus occurred in 169 B.C. On the date and on the confusion in Josephus' narrative of Antiochus IV's activities in Jerusalem, see my I Maccabees, pp. 207, 558-68, and my II Maccabees, pp. 246-47.
17See my I Maccabees, pp. 60-61.
18Similar in origin is Josephus' confusion, at BJ vii. 10. 1. 423-24, of Onias III with Onias IV. Josephus had further troubles writing from memory: at AJ xx. 10. 3. 235 he turned Onias IV into a son of Onias-Menelaus!
II. Among the documents reflecting Zenon's extensive business contacts in Ptolemaic Syria are documents of 259 and 257 revealing that a certain Tubias was in command of a unit of Ptolemaic military colonists settled at Birta in the Ammanitis (i.e., the Biblical Land of Ammon in Transjordan) and that this Tubias wrote letters directly to the king and to his powerful minister.¹⁹ Birta is probably identical with 'Arāq el-Emīr in Transjordan and with the place Josephus calls "Tyre." At the site are extensive ruins, as well as an inscription of the name Tobiyāh in Hebrew characters of the sixth or early fifth century B.C.²⁰

On the basis of the inscription and the clues in Josephus, in the archives of Zenon, in the Bible, and in other ancient documents, Mazar has been able to trace the Tobiad family well back into the time of the first temple.²¹ Scholars agree that Josephus' Tobiad Joseph was a descendant, probably the son, of the Tubias in the Zenon papyri.²²

Second Maccabees is an abridgement of a longer work, no longer extant, by Jason of Cyrene.²³ At Second Maccabees 3.11 the high priest Onias III protests to Heliodorus, the minister of Seleucus IV, that it would be wrong for him to confiscate the money on deposit in the temple. Onias informs Heliodorus that part of the money on deposit belongs to the very great personage Hyrcanus the Tobiad. This is very strange, since we learn from Josephus that Hyrcanus was a rebel against the Seleucid empire,²⁴ whose goods were forfeit to the king.²⁵ Why should Jason of Cyrene have thus presented Onias as weakening his own case?

The narrative of Second Maccabees probably touches upon Tobiad matters gain when we learn (Second Maccabees 4.26, 5.7) that Jason the Oniad, who supplanted his brother Onias III as high priest, on being driven from Jerusalem both in 171 and in 169 B.C.²⁶ fled to the Ammanitis, the area of the Tobiad stronghold. Jason the Oniad was a second-cousin of Hyrcanus and likely shared his political views.

Both books of Maccabees let us know that the "Tobiad Troop" of soldiers, many if not most of them Jews, continued to exist in the lands

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²³II Maccabees 2.19-23.
²⁴AJ xii. 4. 11. 229-36.
²⁶See above, n. 16.
east of the Jordan long after Hyrcanus was dead. They are mentioned in connection with events of 163 B.C.27

We have, then a long list of puzzling questions:

1. Why does the pious Josephus tell the often unedifying stories of Onias II and the Tobiads, especially since in the narrative there is no apology for the unedifying aspects?
2. Why does Josephus accept Ptolemaic propaganda at AJ xii. 4. 1. 154 instead of following the reliable Polybius?
3. Why does Josephus at AJ xii. 4. 1. 156 bother to refer to Samaritan raids during the high-priesthood of Onias II?
4. Why does Josephus take the story of the Tobiads, which presupposes that the Ptolemies were ruling Palestine and southern Syria, and place it in a period too short to accommodate even Joseph's 22 years as tax-farmer, the reign of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I, who ruled after the Seleucid conquest of the area?
5. Why does Josephus twice take a king, who he has said is Ptolemy V, husband of Cleopatra I, and identify him as Ptolemy III Euergetes, father of Ptolemy IV Philopator?
6. Why does Josephus at AJ xii. 4. 10. 224-27 move Simon II into the reign of Seleucus IV and date a letter of the third century B.C. in the reign of Seleucus IV?
7. Why does the narrative at AJ xii. 4. 11. 229 associate the high priest Simon II with wicked men?
8. Why does Josephus or his source at AJ xii. 5. 1. 240-41 say nothing of how Antiochus IV suppressed the rivals of Onias-Menelaus and of the Tobiads?
9. Why did Jason of Cyrene present Onias III as mentioning the deposits of Hyrcanus the rebel?

To these questions we may add two more:

10. The sensational and witty details of the Tobiad stories are so reminiscent of the Biblical tales of Joseph and of Hellenistic romances; can these details be true?
11. Pious Jews treasured stories of miracles. Second Maccabees Chapter 3 contains traces of two versions of the miracle of the repulse of Heliodorus.28 Why does the pious Josephus say nothing of the miracle?

27I Maccabees 5.13; II Maccabees 12.17, 35; see my I Maccabees, pp. 298-99, and my II Maccabees, pp. 439-40, 446.
28See my commentary.
No author proceeding to write an account on the basis of his own knowledge would confront his reader with the spectacle of such problems. Two factors will suffice to explain how Josephus came to do so. First, Josephus' only source for the events was one which Josephus, having the biases we noted above, found incredible. On the basis of his own presuppositions and aims he tried to "correct" it. Second, the *Antiquities* is a huge work, written when Josephus was no longer young.\(^{29}\) Large sections of the work Josephus turned over to his Greek secretaries to copy and restyle from existing Greek sources, reserving for himself the important tasks of translating Hebrew and Aramaic sources and of determining and revising content.\(^{30}\) Sometimes he overlooked passages which needed to be revised, as in the numerous cross-references taken over from his sources which now have nothing to refer to in Josephus' work.\(^{31}\) The Tobiad stories contain such overlooked passages.

To use these factors to solve our problems, we must first determine as accurately as possible what the original story of the Tobiads was. We are fortunate that in two instances Josephus overlooked words of the original which needed revision, so that his secretary copied the original, producing our Question 5.

Several facts guarantee that the words identifying the Ptolemy of the story as Ptolemy III Euergetes represent the original reading, overlooked by Josephus, rather than corrections by a later scribe. As Tcherikover has noted,\(^{32}\) no later scribe would have felt the need to correct the passages since Josephus has already explained how Ptolemy V came to be ruler of Syria and Palestine after they had been conquered by Antiochus III.

Furthermore, a Jewish or Christian scribe would have identified Ptolemy III in the normal manner, as the son of his father, not as the father of Ptolemy IV Philopator, the more so as Ptolemy III's father was Ptolemy II Philadelphia, famous from *AJ* xii. 2. 1-15. 11-118, whereas Ptolemy IV Philopator otherwise is barely mentioned by Josephus (*AJ* xii. 3. 3. 130-31).

Another guarantee is the punning on Ptolemy III's cult epithet, *Euergetēs* ("Benefactor"; *AJ* xii. 4. 2. 163 and 8.206).

Moreover, at *AJ* xii. 4. 3. 167 and 4. 178 the king and queen are referred to as "the king and his wife" rather than as "the king and

\(^{29}\) *AJ* i. Prooem. 2. 7; Josephus was born in 37/8 of the Christian era (*Vita* 1. 5) and finished the *Antiquities* in 93/4 (*AJ* xx. 12. 1. 267).


\(^{31}\) E.g., *AJ* xii. 5. 2. 244; xiii. 2. 1. 36 and 4. 6. 108.

queen." Not all Ptolemaic queens bore the title "the King's Wife." Berenice II, wife of Ptolemy III bore the title "Wife" as part of her official style. On the other hand, Cleopatra I Syra, wife of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, bears the title only on a dedication of ca. 186. Berenice I, wife of Ptolemy I Soter bears the title "Wife" on one dedication but probably was not officially so styled. We thus may exclude from consideration Ptolemy II and his wives, Arsinoë I and Arsinoë II, as well as Ptolemy IV and his wife Arsinoë III, for these queens did not bear the title "Wife." Since none of the Ptolemies after Ptolemy V had any claim to the taxes of Syria and Palestine, we need not consider later royal couples.

Josephus also overlooked in his source the need to correct the 22 years of Joseph's career as tax-farmer. They cannot be fitted into the reign of Ptolemy V, but they can easily be accommodated within the reigns of Ptolemies of the third century.

Indeed, if we take Ptolemy III and Berenice II to be the king and queen under whom Joseph became tax-farmer, the details of the story of the Tobiads fit better than with any other identification. Thus, we may exclude Ptolemy I, all of whose sons were born before he ever had secure control of Syria and Palestine so as to be able to turn the taxes over to tax-farmers, contrary to AJ xii. 4. 7. 196. Nor could Joseph have become tax-farmer under Ptolemy I with part of his twenty-two-year tenure extending into the reign of Ptolemy II. Zenon, writing under Ptolemy II, knows nothing of the mighty tax-farmer Joseph or of the Transjordanian robber-baron Hyrcanus. Joseph's activities are incompatible with the policy of Ptolemy II, and Transjordan was firmly held by Ptolemies I-III. Moreover, any sons of Ptolemy II to correspond to AJ xii. 4. 7. 196 were probably born in the reign of Ptolemy I.

Furthermore, so firm was the hold of Ptolemies I and II on Syria and Palestine after 301 B.C., that it is hard to see how the

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34*Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, ed. Priesigke and Kiessling (Strassburg and Göttingen, 1915-), 8927.
35*Sammelbuch* 10091.
38See Tcherikover, p. 460, n. 43.
39For the present, see Tcherikover, pp. 61, 64-65, 105-6.
41For the present, see Tcherikover, pp. 57-74, 105-6.
parsimonious high priest Onias could have dared to refuse to pay tribute to either. The Seleucid empire did not relinquish its claim to the area, but never challenged Ptolemy I and in conflicts with Ptolemy II never got near Judaea. The hold of the Ptolemies on Palestine weakened first under Ptolemy III.

Tcherikover and Stern try to date Onias' refusal of tribute in 242 or ca. 240, near the close of the Third Syrian War, when Seleucus II was counterattacking against Ptolemy III and threatening the Ptolemaic holdings in Asia. However, in that year Ptolemy III kept firm hold on Jerusalem. Seleucus II did capture Damascus and Orthosia and held out against vigorous Ptolemaic efforts to retake them in 242/1, but his attempt to push on into Ptolemaic territory in that year failed completely. Hence, in 242/1 there was little if any time in which a high priest in Jerusalem could decide it was safe to refuse tribute, receive a threatening message from a Ptolemy, and reject it. Moreover, the narrative of the Tobiad story at its outset reflects a time of peace: what king would harshly demand tribute in an insecure border-area? What tax-farmer would bid high in a time of insecurity? Rather, Onias' refusal to pay tribute probably came in the inactive last years of Ptolemy III, after 241.

Joseph's clever son, Hyrcanus, went to Egypt to felicitate a Ptolemy on the birth of a son (AJ xii. 4. 7. 196-97). Leading men from the entire empire came to celebrate the birth; hence, it was the birth of a legitimate child. The child can be neither of the two sons of Ptolemy III. Ptolemy IV was about 17 years old at his accession late in 222, and his brother Magas was old enough to be a menace to him. Both, then, were born before 234, and Hyrcanus, who was begotten after 241, after his father became tax-farmer, cannot have come as a youth of over 13 (AJ xii. 4. 6-7. 190-97) in honor of the birth of either. The son born to a Ptolemy could be only Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the one son of Ptolemy IV, and he was born in 210. Reckoning back again from Hyrcanus' age upon his visit to Alexandria, we find that Joseph must have become tax-farmer before 223.

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43 P. 129.
44 Tarbiz, XXXII, 43.
45 Justin xxvii. 2. 5; Daniel 11.9; Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1671.
48 Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1679.
49 Volkmann, "Ptolemaios 23," RE, XXIII, 1691; cf. Stern, Tarbiz, XXXII, 43-44.
A logical time for the end of Joseph's 22 prosperous years as tax-farmer would be the death of Ptolemy IV Philopator in 205 or 204.\(^{50}\) In the troubled years which followed, no tax-farmer for the Ptolemies in Syria and Palestine would enjoy good fortune; after Syria and Palestine became the theater of the bitter fighting of the Fifth Syrian war in 202, any such tax-farmer lost heavily.\(^{51}\) An end for the 22 years around 205 implies a beginning around 227.

The story of the Tobiads gives no reason why Onias II refused to pay tribute to Ptolemy III. As we shall see, the original author of the story was a pro-Ptolemaic Jewish propagandist. It was not to his interest to suggest that in the reign of Ptolemy III there was a pro-Seleucid plot among the Jews which involved the high priest himself. Hence, the original author ascribed the refusal of tribute to the stupidity, childish stubbornness, and avarice of an old man.

Onias, however, may have had good political reasons to refuse to pay tribute. By shortly after 230 Seleucus II had finally won his war with his brother Antiochus Hierax;\(^{52}\) in 228/7 Antiochus Hierax was killed in Thrace.\(^{53}\) With the threat from his brother removed, Seleucus II could think of expansion at the expense of his neighbors, the Ptolemaic and Attalid kingdoms. We know nothing of overt moves by Seleucus II before his death in 225. He may have encouraged Onias II to defy Ptolemy III. The next Seleucid, Seleucus III (225-223), did indeed proceed promptly against the Attalids, and Daniel 11:10 suggests that Seleucus III with his brother, the future Antiochus III, planned an attack on the Ptolemaic empire.\(^{54}\) Thus, Onias II could have had good

\(^{50}\)See Hermann Bengtson, *Griechische Geschichte* (4th ed.; München, 1969), p. 425, n. 5. Stern, *Tarbiz*, XXXII, 45-47, suggests that the 22 years ended in 218 when Joseph could have been driven by the brilliant but temporary victories of Antiochus III (Volkmann, *RE*, XXIII, 1680-84) to acts which lost him Ptolemaic favor. However, Josephus' narrative implies that Hyrcanus' mission to congratulate Ptolemy IV on the birth of his son in 210 fell within the 22 years (*AJ* xii. 4. 7. 196: Joseph was still one of the grandees of Syria and the territories subject to the Ptolemies; 10. 224). Also, the motive for Joseph's anger against his favorite son may have been fear that Hyrcanus had supplanted him as tax-farmer.

\(^{51}\)Volkmann, *RE*, XXIII, 1692-95, 1699, 1702; *AJ* xii. 3. 3. 129-39.

\(^{52}\)Bickerman, "Notes on Seleucid and Parthian Chronology," *Berytus*, VIII (1944), 78.

\(^{53}\)Bengtson, p. 410.

\(^{54}\)See Edwyn R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London, 1902), I, 204; Daniel 11.10 (Q\(\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}
reason to refuse tribute either in the reign of Seleucus II or in the reign of Seleucus III.\textsuperscript{55}

We still must account for the story of the king and queen both being involved in the giving of tax-farming contracts and for Joseph's witty suggestion that they each be his surety for the other. These strange facts do not presuppose Antiochus III's fictitious gift of Syria and Palestine as dowry upon the marriage of Cleopatra I to Ptolemy V. Many documents show how Ptolemies associated their wives with them in transactions and decrees. This was especially true beginning with the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor,\textsuperscript{56} but is well documented already under Ptolemy III.\textsuperscript{57} Even if the strong-minded Berenice II did not hold land in Syria and Palestine in her own right, she could still have been involved with her husband in the negotiations for farming the taxes,\textsuperscript{58} or else, if the original author wrote taking for granted the institutions existing from the reign of Ptolemy VI, the original author could have imagined she was so involved.

Thus, the only internal evidence against setting the story of the Tobiads in the reigns of Ptolemies III and IV is the queen's name, "Cleopatra." The first Ptolemaic Cleopatra was the wife of Ptolemy V. The treatment of the name is Josephus' text is strange. The queen is only mentioned in connection with the king, but wherever the queen is mentioned, her husband is mentioned only as "the king," never with his name "Ptolemy" or with his cult-epithet.\textsuperscript{59} We shall see that Josephus found the original version of the story chronologically incredible. It is

\textsuperscript{55}Onias may also have expected the imminent fulfilment of Daniel 2.44. I cannot deal here with the possibility.


\textsuperscript{57}Volkmann, \textit{RE}, XXIII, 1675-77.

\textsuperscript{58}The formula in the document selling the taxes to a tax-farmer was "we sell" (\textit{poloumen}). In extant documents the subject of the verb is not expressed. It could as easily be the king and queen as the king alone. See Claire Préaux, \textit{L'économie royale des Lagides} (Bruxelles, 1939), p. 451; Ulrich Wilcken, \textit{Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit}, I (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), p. 509, on No. 112, Col. I, line 1.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{AJ} xii. 4. 1. 154 is Josephus' own effort to give the chronological setting. At 3. 167, we have "the king and his wife, Cleopatra"; at 3. 171 and at 4. 178, neither is named; at 5. 185, we have "the king and Cleopatra"; at 8. 204, we have "Cleopatra...the king...Cleopatra"; at 9. 217, "the king...Cleopatra."
easy to understand how Josephus could have removed the king's name and cult-epithet in an effort to "correct" the narrative he found so incredible. If so, did he also alter the queen's name to "Cleopatra"? By Josephus' time, the belief had long been prevalent, that all Ptolemaic queens were Cleopatras. However, it is more likely that Josephus did not so "emend" the text, for if he had, one would have expected him also to identify the king as Ptolemy V Epiphanes. As we shall see when we identify him, the original author had good reason to misname Berenice II and Arsinoë III as "Cleopatra," and good reason not to name the king.

We must now consider the subsequent career of Hyrcanus. As long as the Ptolemies held the region, he could remain uneventfully in Transjordan, as tax-collector. With the Seleucid conquest, he probably lost his office of tax-collector but may still have held an influential if precarious position in the area. The original author, if he was indeed a pro-Ptolemaic propagandist, would say little or nothing of his hero Hyrcanus' accommodations with the rival Seleucids. For their part, the Seleucids may have been content to leave Hyrcanus unmolested for many years in Transjordan, on the principle, "Let sleeping dogs lie." With the death of Joseph, some time after the accession of Seleucus IV in 187, Hyrcanus attempted to return by force to Jerusalem, but he was repulsed and thereafter became a "robber-baron" in the old Tobiad stronghold. We may be able to date Hyrcanus' attempt and repulse more accurately, but first we must survey this entire phase of his career.

Hyrcanus' policy as a robber-baron in Transjordan surely looked to the Ptolemaic empire. A petty chieftain preying on border territories claimed by one empire can hardly help looking for support and safety to the near-by rival empire, especially if he enjoyed Hyrcanus' earlier close ties of friendship with the reigning dynasty of the rival empire. The high priest Simon II probably led the Jews to change their allegiance from the Ptolemaic to the Seleucid empire. Simon II supported Hyrcanus' "wicked" brothers, surely because both Simon and the brothers had a pro-Seleucid policy. Indeed, Hyrcanus was regarded as a rebel by the Seleucid kings, and his brothers had the favor and support of Antiochus IV, who at their behest massacred the pro-Ptolemaic faction in Jerusalem (BJ i. 1. 31-32; cf. AJ xii. 5. 3. 247).

Thus Livy at xxvii. 4. 10 calls Arsinoë III, the wife of Ptolemy IV, "Cleopatra." So prevalent was the name among the females of the later Ptolemaic dynasty, that even Berenice III bore the name after 89 B.C. See Stähelin, "Kleopatra 21," RE, XI (1922), 782. The brief reign of Berenice IV and the brief prominence of Arsinoë, sister of Cleopatra IV, left little impression.

See above, n. 15.
Hyrkanus won a minor victory when the high priest Onias III sympathized with him enough to accept his deposits at the temple (Second Maccabees 3:11), but the death of Ptolemy V in 180 and the bungling regime of the guardians of his child-heirs left Hyrkanus with small hope of support. Hyrkanus' death can be placed with considerable confidence late in 170 or in 169, when Antiochus IV's victories in Egypt seemed to end all hope that the Ptolemies would reconquer Syria and Palestine.\footnote{Volkmann, "Ptolemaios 24," RE, XXIII, 1704-9, and for the present, see especially Otto Mørkholm, Antiochus IV of Syria (København, 1966), pp. 64-87. I shall treat the subject in a later study.}

Against this dating stands the note at AJ xii. 4. 11. 234, that Hyrkanus' career as robber-baron lasted "seven years, through all the time that Seleucus was king of Syria." The natural interpretation of the words is that Hyrkanus was a robber-baron for no longer than seven years, and that his career came to an end only a short time after the death of Seleucus IV. If so, the seven years would extend from 182/1 to 175 or 174. This would be in harmony with the implication of AJ xii. 4. 11. 234-35, that Ptolemy V (died 180) died after Hyrkanus became a robber-baron. However, Josephus appears not to have understood his sources properly. The same passage has Ptolemy V dying at the same time as Seleucus IV, or later. Moreover, Josephus' own account puts Hyrkanus' suicide in the reign of Antiochus IV and suggests that Ptolemaic weakness had as much to do with Hyrkanus' suicide as had Seleucid power.\footnote{AJ xii. 4. 11. 234-36.} Antiochus IV is not reported to have invaded Transjordan. Hence, his reported confiscation of Hyrkanus' property probably took place when he sacked the temple in 169: Antiochus IV accomplished what Heliodorus failed to do (cf. Second Maccabees 5.18). If so, reckoning the seven years as ending in 170 or 169, we have them beginning in 177/6 at the earliest. We might disregard, as a mistake of Josephus', the questionable implication at AJ xii. 4. 11. 234-35, that Ptolemy V died after Hyrkanus became a robber-baron. Alternatively, we might regard the number "seven" as corrupt. Then, though there would be no way of being sure what the original number was, one could suggest a plausible guess. If in Josephus' source numbers were expressed not in words but in figures, "17" (ι tat) could easily have become "7" (ζ). If so, the 17 years began near the beginning of the reign of Seleucus IV, between 187 and 185.

Thus, the original account of the Tobiads made sense and had a consistent chronology, which we may summarize as follows:
Tales of the Tobiads

Between 227 and 224 Seleucid ambitions threaten Ptolemaic hold on Syria and Palestine. Onias II refuses to pay tribute to Ptolemy III Euergetes. Joseph the Tobiad becomes tax-farmer.

Between 226 and 223 Hyrcanus born.

221 Accession of Ptolemy IV Philopator.

210 Birth of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Hyrcanus wins favor of Ptolemy IV, but his jealous brothers drive Hyrcanus to flee to Transjordan, where he becomes a tax-collector.

205 or 204 Death of Ptolemy IV, leaving Ptolemaic empire weak under the child-king, Ptolemy V.

Between 205 and 202 End of Joseph’s 22 prosperous years as tax-farmer.


Late summer or early autumn, 169 Jason the Oniad fails in pro-Ptolemaic coup at Jerusalem. Antiochus IV sacks the temple. Jason withdraws to Ammanitis.

As for the sensational details of the story which appeared so incredible as to provoke our Question 10, only the figure for the taxes of Syria and Palestine at AJ xii. 4. 4. 175 need be fictitious. Ancient authors writing of a past generation famous for their prosperity were prone to such exaggerations even when they aimed to write the sober

64 See my 1 Maccabees, p. 207, and my II Maccabees, pp. 246-54. Rejected by Antiochus IV, who let Menelaus supplant him, Jason could easily have turned to the pro-Ptolemaic side. Indeed, Jason’s coup is described as pro-Ptolemaic at BJ i. 1. 1. 32, as we saw above. Further confirmation of Jason’s position can be found in the fact that after the failure of his coup he fled first to the Ammanitis (II Maccabees 5.7), stronghold of the pro-Ptolemaic Hyrcanus, who probably committed suicide shortly before.

65 See Tcherikover, p. 460, n. 42.
truth. Though we have established the original chronology, the story of
the Tobiads in Josephus remains a puzzle. The narrator is sympathetic
to the Ptolemies. He approves of, indeed takes pride in, the heroes
Joseph and Hyrcanus. But the Ptolemies lost their hold on Syria and
Palestine and their defeat meant the ultimate failure of Joseph and
Hyrcanus; the surviving members of the family, according to the story
itself, were traitors to the Jews, implicated in the atrocities of
Antiochus IV. What Jew would tell proudly of the temporary financial
and diplomatic successes of a father and son from such a family? Yet
the narrator gloats in such a way over the discomfiture of gentiles that
he cannot have been a non-Jew.

The story could hardly have come from a larger work on the history
of the Jews, or Josephus would have drawn on the larger work to give a
better picture of the period. In its setting in Josephus, the tale of the
family of tax-farmers makes a poor substitute for national history.
Surely more occurred in the years between Ptolemy V's marriage to
Cleopatra in 197 and Antiochus IV's sack of Jerusalem in 169 than the
careers of the Tobiads which Josephus forces into the period. Ben Sira
informs us of many undertakings, especially the activity of the high
priest Simon II. The focus of our story is so closely on the cleverness of
Joseph and Hyrcanus and on the relations with the Ptolemies that it is
hard to see how it could come from a national history. No specifics are
given as to how Joseph improved the lot of his people (AJ xii. 4. 10.
224), and the tale of the begetting of Hyrcanus and the details of
Hyrcanus' conduct in Alexandria were surely not the stuff of history for
a Greek, much less for a Jew. Such stories could be used as illustrations

67See, e.g., Plutarch Alexander 5-9, Demetrius 4-5, Eumenes 1, and Pyrrhus 4; cf.
Tcherikover, p. 461, n. 50.
68AJ xii. 4. 2. 160, 166; 3. 167, 173; 5. 182; 6. 186, 189-95; 8. 207; 9. 214, 219-20; 10. 224.
70Josephus probably knew of Ben Sira's work, copies of which have been found
at Masada and Qumran. Josephus may have followed his own chronological
theories to date Ben Sira in the third century and to regard Ben Sira's high
priest Simon as Simon I "the Just." More likely, however, the pro-Hasmonaean
Josephus may have discounted Ben Sira's book as propaganda favoring the
high-priestly line of Simon II and Onias III and Onias IV, the challenger of
Hasmonaean high-priestly legitimacy. Ben Sira is, indeed, a pro-Oniad
propagandist.
of national decadence, but the author on the contrary takes pride in them.

The narrative does not serve the purposes of family history, either, for it completely ignores the earlier glories of the Tobiads\textsuperscript{71} to assert that Joseph rose purely through winning the favor of the Ptolemies. And then the author goes to great lengths in describing how Hyrcanus duplicated his father's feat of winning Ptolemaic favor, an achievement which was not only sterile but cost Hyrcanus and his family dearly.\textsuperscript{72}

Could Josephus' source have been a biography or a fictional romance? The Biblical stories of the Patriarchs and of Moses, Samson, Saul, and David might have served a Jewish writer as precedents for a biography. Works like Tobit, Esther, Judith, and Third Maccabees could have served as examples of Jewish romances. The little that is known of Hellenistic biography – its interest in scandalous and spectacular exploits and reversals of fate – suggests that a Hellenized Jew might have written our story as biography.\textsuperscript{73} However, such a biography surely would have had considerable detail on the character and deeds of Joseph and Hyrcanus, including their religious practice and Hyrcanus' relations with his fellow-Jews while in exile in Transjordan. Hellenistic biography and fictional romance give much attention to the hero's piety and group loyalty.\textsuperscript{74} Surely the pious Josephus would not have omitted such details so as to leave the narrative with its present remarkably unedifying character. Hence, Josephus' source could hardly have been a biography, whether after the Greek or after the Jewish pattern.

Still less could it have been a fictional romance. The historical fiction produced by Jews in the Hellenistic period (e.g., \textit{Aristeas to Philocrates}, the Hebrew and Greek books of Esther, Judith, and Third Maccabees) all had both a happy ending and an edifying message. Both are conspicuously absent from the Tobiad story in Josephus. If our story was extracted from a larger work of fiction, one could ask, what came after the end of our extract? Moralizing on Hyrcanus' bad end? That would be strange in view of the sympathy shown him in the narrative and would still leave the ending sad. More events about the Tobiads? The surviving members of the family were wicked and came to

\textsuperscript{71}Mazar, \textit{IEJ}, VII, 137-45, 229-38.
\textsuperscript{72}Cf. Stern, \textit{Tarbiz}, XXXII, 37-38.
\textsuperscript{73}See Albin Lesky, \textit{Geschichte der griechischen Literatur} (2d ed.; Bern and München, 1963), pp. 741-42.
a bad end. Moreover, the accurate historical allusions and the date of composition, as we shall see, put the story too close to the events to leave it likely that here is a historical romance. The ancients did not write romances about the recent past.\textsuperscript{75}

If the story is not history and is not fiction, what is it? There is at least one other possibility. The story could be propaganda. It does indeed have a message and a moral: that it pays for a Jew to cooperate with the Ptolemies. Joseph, who did so, prospered and was the benefactor of his nation. This Joseph might succumb to sexual temptation, as Judah did with Tamar and King David did with Bathsheba, but the Tobiad’s brother saved him from sinning thereby. The offspring of the brother’s virtuous trickery was Hyrcanus. Talented young Hyrcanus would have continued the policy of collaboration with the Ptolemies which had such beneficial results. The Jewish nation, however, was robbed of enjoying Hyrcanus’ talents. Hyrcanus’ envious brothers, aided by the high priest Simon II, drove him out of Jerusalem and turned to a policy of collaboration with the wicked Seleucids. Finally wicked Antiochus IV drove Hyrcanus to suicide.\textsuperscript{76}

As far as we can tell, Pro-Ptolemaic-anti-Seleucid policy in the Tobiad family ended with Hyrcanus’ death. But Jewish collaboration with the Ptolemies against the Seleucids was a live issue into the first century B.C. The original author obviously survived Hyrcanus’ death. A pro-Ptolemaic propagandist among the Jews could not have allowed his work to conclude with the disastrous fate of Hyrcanus. In fact, the account in Josephus presents more information on the Tobiads, information which serves the same propagandistic purpose: Menelaus and the surviving, pro-Seleucid Tobiads, rejected by the majority of their people, bought Antiochus IV’s support by toadying to the mad enthusiasms of the Seleucid king and thus brought first the "Hellenization of Jerusalem" and then the atrocious persecution.

This view Josephus could have derived from no other source known to us. The author of First Maccabees 1.11-64 does not name the wicked, nor does he say that the Hellenizers were driven by any domestic pressures. To him their wickedness was deliberate perversity; and divine wrath, not the advice of Tobiad renegades or the rebellion of pro-Ptolemaic Jews, turned Antiochus IV into a persecutor (ibid., verse 64). Jason of Cyrene never blames the Tobiads but with great emphasis lays the guilt upon the Oniad Jason and upon Menelaus and secondarily


\textsuperscript{76}Cf. Stern, \textit{Tarbiz}, XXXII, 39-40.
upon their followers and again ascribes the persecution to God's wrath
(Second Maccabees 4.7-17; 6.12-16; 13.3-8).

To give bribes against the interests of justice and against the
interests of one's countrymen is normally considered discreditable. Jason
and Menelaus both bribed Antiochus IV in order to usurp the high-
priesthood (Second Maccabees 4.8-9, 24), and Menelaus gave further
bribes to the king's officials in order to obstruct justice (ibid., 4.34, 45).
The Tobiads, too, surely offered incentives to Antiochus. All these
bribes could be shown to have disastrous results for the Jews. Hence, an
impartial observer writing a history of the Jews (e.g., Herod's friend,
the historian Nicolaus of Damascus) probably would have named all
three groups of bribers, or, like First Maccabees, he would have named
none. We can understand why Jason of Cyrene (or the abridger), writing
long after the events, cares nothing for the guilt of the Tobiads, an
extinct wicked family but goes to great lengths to condemn the impious
high priests. In Second Maccabees, Jason the Oniad, the eventual
partisan of the Ptolemies, receives at least as much condemnation as
Menelaus, the loyal creature of the Seleucids. Indeed, though Jason of
Cyrene quotes a speech complimentary to Hyrcanus the Tobiad (II
Maccabees 3.11), he nowhere shows us any pro-Ptolemaic bias. The
account in Josephus' Antiquities, on the other hand, shifts all blame
from Jason to the surviving Tobiads, and to Menelaus and Antiochus. To
blame the surviving Tobiads and Menelaus and Antiochus fits the
propaganda message of the story of Joseph and Hyrcanus, and hence we
are correct in assuming that AJ xii. 5. 1. 239-41 as well as BJ i. 1. 1. 31-32
came from that same source. The account at AJ xii. 5. 1. 239-41 does a
strange thing: it exonerates Jason, who has the support of the majority
of the people. Does it do so because of his pro-Ptolemaic position? We
might also ask, does Josephus' history contain any further sections
which might be ascribed to this same source? To answer these questions
we must first establish the identity of the author of our story and the
date of its composition, a task which Josephus' carelessness has made
easy.

The terminus post quern is given by AJ xii. 4. 1. 158, where the writer
finds it necessary to say that this Ptolemy Euergetes is the father of
Ptolemy Philopator, implying that by his time there had been more
than one Ptolemy Euergetes. Hence, he wrote sometime after Ptolemy
VIII assumed the cult-epithet "Euergetes." Ptolemaic kings assumed
cult-epithets upon their accession, and there is no reason to assume that
Ptolemy VIII did otherwise. The only question is, when did Ptolemy
VIII consider he had "acceded"? He counted his regnal years from his
joint reign with Ptolemy VI, which began in 170. He arrived in Egypt as
a rival claimant against Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VII by late
September, 145. He certainly had "acceded" by the time he married Cleopatra II, by late spring, 144, and an inscription shows him bearing his cult-epithet while married only to Cleopatra II, hence before his marriage to Cleopatra III in 142; another inscription probably shows him bearing the cult-epithet while courting Cleopatra II.77

Who was the pro-Ptolemaic, anti-Seleucid Jewish propagandist? He wrote after summer, 145. He believed that there could be sympathetic mutual respect between Greeks and Jews. In particular, he admired clever Jews who succeeded in the Greco-Macedonian world through loyal service to the Ptolemies. He believed that the Torah should be obeyed, but his moral sense was not much offended by the sexual lapses of Joseph and the sharp practices of Joseph and Hyrcanus. He hated the pro-Seleucid Tobiads and Menelaus, the first usurper to

77Cf. Volkmann, "Ptolemaios 27," RE, XXIII, 1721, 1725-26. First inscription: Wilhelm Dittenberger, Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae 130. In the inscription Cleopatra II as was customary shares her husband's cult-epithet. The inscription of a statue-base from Crete, however, records that King Ptolemy VIII, already bearing the cult-epithet "Euergetes," set up a statue of his sister, Cleopatra II Philometor, naming her with the cult-epithet she got from her first husband, Ptolemy VI. The statue was probably a conciliatory gesture by Ptolemy VIII, already recognized by some as Ptolemaic king, during his negotiations with Cleopatra II in 145 or 144 and before their marriage. Hence, we would know that Ptolemy VIII assumed the cult-epithet before the marriage. The inscription was published by Margherita Guarducci (Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni [Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1963], pp. 214-221), who dated it between 124 and 116, viewing the statue as a conciliatory gesture at the end of the war of 131-124 between Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II. Apparently she never considered the possibility of dating it in 145-144. The later date is unlikely for several reasons. In 145-144 "Philometor" was an innocuous part of Cleopatra II's official name. In 131 it became a piece of propaganda against Ptolemy VIII, stressing that only the line of Ptolemy VI had the right to rule; see below, n. 113. No other document of 124-116 shows Ptolemy VIII allowing the use of the provocative epithet. Finally, though the Ptolemaic empire had a garrison at Itanos on Crete in the reign of Ptolemy VI and perhaps for a short time after his sudden death, thereafter there is no trace of a Ptolemaic foothold on Crete; see Guarducci, ibid., p. 219, and Inscriptiones Creticae, Vol. III, p. 77, and Stylianos Spyridakis, Ptolemaic Itanos and Hellenistic Crete ("University of California Publications in History," Vol. LXXII; Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), pp. 82-83, 86, 98; Walter Otto, Zur Geschichte der Zeit des, 6. Ptolemäers ("Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung," Neue Folge, Heft XI [1934]; München, 1934), p. 133. See now Wehrli, ZPE, XV (1974), 8-10. On the date of the marriage of Ptolemy VIII to Cleopatra III, see Heinz Heinen, "Les mariages de Ptolémée VIII et leur chronologie," Akten des XII. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses ("Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrologie und antiken Rechtsgeschichte," LXVI; München, 1974), pp. 147-55.
break the line of Oniad high priests. As Stern has noticed, the author was so attached to the Ptolemaic system that he uses Ptolemaic terminology, calling the huge province in which Joseph was active "Syria and Phoenicia" or simply "Syria," rather than using the Seleucid names "Coele-Syria and Phoenicia" or simply "Coele-Syria."

There is an obvious candidate fitting this description: Onias IV, son of the high priest Onias III, trusted and loyal military commander for Ptolemy VI and for his sister-wife and successor Cleopatra II. Onias IV was also the disappointed legitimate Oniad pretender to the high-priesthood and the founder of the Jewish temple of Leontopolis in Egypt. Onias IV could have written his propagandistic memoirs (hypomnēmata). The strange manner in which the high priest Jason is exonerated at AJ xii. 4. 1. 158 serves to confirm the identification of the author with Onias IV. His uncle Jason, though a usurper and a Hellenizer and a temporary collaborator with the Seleucids, had had nothing to do with forcing Jews to violate the Torah and was a legitimate member of the Oniad line. His pro-Ptolemaic coup, though unsuccessful and regarded by Jason of Cyrene as murderously cruel, served to atone for his collaboration with the Seleucids. Onias IV moved in the Hellenistic world as much as his uncle Jason had. Probably, so did Onias III, who was highly esteemed by gentiles when he was murdered after long residing at Antioch. Perhaps even Ben

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78 The Oniads traced their descent from the high priest Jeshua of the priestly clan of Yeda'yah. See Ezra 2.36; Nehemiah 7.39, 12.1, 6, 10-11; I Chronicles 9.10, 24.7; and R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel (New York, 1961), pp. 388-403, and J. Liver, "The 'Sons of Zadok the Priests' in the Dead Sea Sect," Revue de Qumran, VI (1967), 18-28. Menelaus came from the priestly clan of Bilghah; see II Maccabees 4.23-25 and 3.4, reading Balgea with the Latin versions. Josephus' effort to represent Menelaus as an Oniad is a piece of pro-Hasmonaean, anti-Oniad propaganda, whether due to Josephus himself or to his source.

79 Tarbiz, XXXII, 39.

80 AJ xii. 4. 3. 169.

81 Ibid., 3. 174; 5. 180; 7. 196, 201; 9. 212. Josephus did not understand the terminology and mistakenly tried to correct it at AJ xii. 4. 1. 154, at 4. 175, and at 10. 224.

82 Josephus found the Ptolemaic terminology in his source puzzling. Probably he was not even acquainted with Seleucid terminology, as is indicated by his own introductory paragraph at AJ xii. 4. 1. 154, where he feels it necessary to mention Samaria and Judaea though the Seleucid province of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia included them.


84 See my II Maccabees, pp. 35-36.
Sira's revered Simon II had been something of a moderate Hellenizer. Onias IV surely held against Jason the supplanting of Onias III. But he would tend to pass over in silence any pro-Seleucid tendencies of his ambiguous uncle as well as any role of Jason's in the atrocious persecutions inflicted on the Jews by Antiochus IV. On the other hand, Onias IV could well be proud that Joseph and Hyrcanus, the earlier distinguished Jewish supporters of the Ptolemaic cause, were his close kin, and could well stress the fact in his narrative.

Even errors in the account as presented by Josephus are partly explained by the assumption that Onias IV was the author, in particular, the naming of the queen as Cleopatra rather than Berenice or Arsinoe. Onias IV and his heirs owed their successes especially to the female sovereigns of the Ptolemaic line, Cleopatras II and III. Onias IV was a clever soldier but hardly a professional writer of propagandistic history intent on giving an impression of accuracy. Writing after summer, 145, he was late enough to imagine that early Ptolemaic queens were also Cleopatras; and wishing to flatter his energetic patroness, Cleopatra II, Onias IV may have deliberately singled out an imagined earlier Cleopatra as the patroness of his kinsman. Cleopatra II hated her second husband, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. She also bitterly hated her daughter, Cleopatra III, after Euergetes II married Cleopatra III in 142, though a strange compromise by 139 saw the Ptolemaic empire with two queens. Thereafter the official style distinguished the two Queens Cleopatra by giving Cleopatra II the title "Sister" and Cleopatra III the title "Wife," of Ptolemy VIII. It may have been Onias IV, not Josephus, who refrained from naming the king in our story after twice identifying him at AJ xii. 4. 1. 158 and 2. 163. Thereafter, the name and cult-epithet might have irritated his patroness by reminding her of the hated Euergetes II. In fact, Euergetes II strove mightily in his propaganda to

85Onias III: II Maccabees 4:5, 33-35; Simon II: see above, n. 15. With considerable probability, one may trace back farther the family heritage of the Oniads, to seek relations of mutual respect between Greeks and Jews. Chronologically, the Onias to whom Areus I of Sparta addressed a letter can have been only Onias II. The letter is authentic and probably was preserved in an archive at Jerusalem. See my I Maccabees, pp. 455-59, and my II Maccabees, p. 29.

86One who intended to discredit the Oniads might also stress their kinship with the Tobiads (as did Josephus), but he would not have written a narrative proudly sympathetic to Joseph and Hyrcanus. Josephus borrowed a previously-written narrative.

87See above, n. 83.

identify himself with Euergetes I and his wife, Cleopatra III, with Berenice II.\textsuperscript{89} On the other hand, Onias IV's narrative emphasizes the merits of the real Benefactor King, Euergetes I, and his queen-wife, who benefited the Jews in contrast to the poor sham of the reigning Euergetes II and Cleopatra III, who were hostile or indifferent to the Jews.\textsuperscript{90} For the sake of the contrast Onias IV could have displayed the name "Cleopatra" prominently in his narrative. Onias IV lived late enough to know little or nothing of the Tubias who dealt with Ptolemy II. Onias IV was glad to portray Tubias' son Joseph, offspring of an Oniad mother, as a self-made man like himself.\textsuperscript{91}

Another peculiarity of our story becomes understandable if Onias IV was the author, the identification of Ptolemy III Euergetes at AJ xii. 4. 1. 158 as the father of Ptolemy IV Philopator rather than in the normal way, as the son of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Onias IV had good reason to identify the real benefactor king as the father of Ptolemy Philopator. After the death of Ptolemy VI in the late summer of 145, his young child by Cleopatra II, Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator, was the heir to the throne, but the Alexandrians rebelled against Cleopatra II and her son and offered the throne to Ptolemy VIII. Though Cleopatra's cause was supported by her Jewish army-commanders, one of whom was Onias IV, she was unable to prevail. As a compromise, she let Ptolemy VIII take the throne and married him. However, on the wedding day Ptolemy VIII had the young Philopator murdered.\textsuperscript{92} Thereafter, Cleopatra II and her supporters could appreciate allusions suggesting that a real benefactor king would be the father, not the murderer, of a Philopator.

If propagandistic memoirs by Onias IV were Josephus' source for the account of the Tobiads in Book xii of the Antiquities, two other sections of the Antiquities surely draw on the same source. One is Josephus' detailed account of the origins of Onias IV's temple at Leontopolis (AJ xiii. 3. 1-3. 62-73). The other is AJ xiii. 4. 5-9. 103-20. There Josephus suddenly ceases to paraphrase First Maccabees and substitutes a


\textsuperscript{90}Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1726, 1730; Bickerman, "Ein jüdischer Festbrief vom Jahre 124 v. Chr.,” Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXXII (1933), 246-54.

\textsuperscript{91}Onias IV, remembering only that Seleucus IV used a cult-epithet also found among the Ptolemies, could have made the error of calling him "Soter" instead of "Philopator." See above, n. 13.

\textsuperscript{92}Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1725-26
narrative from another source, markedly favorable to Ptolemy VI Philometor where First Maccabees 11 is hostile and markedly hostile to Alexander Balas where First Maccabees 11 is favorable. As the beneficiary of Ptolemy VI Philometor and his queen, Cleopatra II, Onias IV could well be the author, describing how Ptolemy VI’s untimely death prevented a new golden age of Ptolemaic benevolent rule over Judaea and how Seleucid treachery sent the survivors of the Ptolemaic expeditionary force fleeing back to Alexandria. We may imagine that Onias' narrative went on to report how the returning survivors put the wicked Ptolemy VIII in power, so that the death of Ptolemy VI and the ensuing Seleucid treachery brought evil results both for the Jews and for the Ptolemaic empire. Josephus omitted such propaganda as uninteresting, but he probably preferred Onias' account of Ptolemy VI's struggle with Alexander Balas because Greco-Roman opinion of Ptolemy VI and Alexander Balas coincided with Onias'. Josephus was writing for a Greco-Roman audience.

From Onias IV's propaganda as the founder of the temple of Leontopolis (AJ xiii. 3. 1-2. 66-68, 70-71), we can infer one cardinal point of his ideology: the temple at Jerusalem is no longer (or not yet) "the place which the Lord hath chosen." Hence the sole unbroken earthly link to the cult prescribed by God in the Torah is the Aaronid-Zadokite-Oniad line of high priests, of which Onias IV was the heir. From Ben Sira's praise of this high-priestly dynasty we can infer that Ben Sira was their eager propagandist and shared their views. Along with praising the Zadokite priesthood and the present representative of it, the high priest Simon II, Ben Sira also strongly denies the possibility of immortality and resurrection, probably in agreement with the Oniad position. Hence, Onias IV and his followers probably denied the doctrines of immortality and resurrection, and as

94 See Polybius xxviii. 21. 4-5; Diodorus xxxiii. 1. 3. 12. 1; Justin xxxv. 2. 2; Athenaeus v. 211a.
95 Deuteronomy 12.5-7 etc.; Jeremiah 7.3-15, Ezekiel 24.21, Lamentations 2.7, etc. Onias IV could claim that no miracle had as yet attested God's presence in the second temple. See my I Maccabees, pp. 546-47, and my II Maccabees, pp. 13-16.
96 See I Chronicles 6.1-15 and above, n. 78.
97 Ecclesiasticus 45.6-26, 50.1-24, 51.12 ix.
98 Ibid., 17.27-28, 22.11, 28.6, 41.11-13, and the lack of any utterance to support the doctrines.
partisans of the Zadokite line they could well have been the first to be called "Sadducees" (= "Zadokites").\textsuperscript{99}

If Onias IV pressed the claims of his family to be the sole unbroken earthly link to the cult prescribed by God in the Torah, how could he prove his point? The strongest proof he could produce to show that God's favor still rested upon the family would be a miracle on behalf of an Oniad high priest in the age of the second temple, when miracles were rare or absent. We read in Second Maccabees 3 that such a miracle did occur, through the merit of Onias IV's own father Onias III. If Onias IV knew of the miracle, surely he must have told of it. Jason of Cyrene, who wrote around 90 B.C. in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus,\textsuperscript{100} could draw on the work of Onias IV. Indeed, Jason did draw on it, as can be seen from clues in the narrative of Second Maccabees. Two of these clues are most conspicuous.

The sanctity of the second temple is an unquestionable fact both for Jason of Cyrene and for his abridger: God himself protects the temple, except when Israel sins.\textsuperscript{101} Yet the abridged history in Second Maccabees begins with the strange assertion (3.1) that only the piety of Onias III (not God's providence!) gave the Holy City the blessings of peace. This reflects a view like that of Onias IV, that the second temple is not, or is not yet, the place which the Lord hath chosen.

Still more conclusive a clue is the mention of Hyrcanus the Tobiad at Second Maccabees 3.11, which was so puzzling as to produce our Question 9. Indeed, Hyrcanus is nowhere else mentioned in Second Maccabees and need not have been mentioned at 3.11, where by mentioning the deposits of an outlaw Onias III impairs his own plea that the deposits in the temple were inviolable. Onias IV could well have presented Onias III as having done so, for thus he was able to show that divine providence protected both his father Onias III and his hero Hyrcanus. By associating Onias III with Hyrcanus, Onias IV was also able to show that his scrupulous father, too, had pro-Ptolemaic leanings. Jason of Cyrene, who had no such motives, must have taken this part of his story from one of his sources.\textsuperscript{102} Who but Onias IV would both ascribe a miracle to the merit of Onias III and regard Hyrcanus as a hero?

Let us now try to determine more precisely the date at which Onias IV wrote. The convergence of the evidence allows us now to state more

\textsuperscript{99}Cf. J. \textit{Bj} ii. 8. 14. 165 and \textit{AJ} xviii. 1. 4. 16, and see my \textit{II Maccabees}, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{100}For proof, see my \textit{II Maccabees}, pp. 82-83.

\textsuperscript{101}\textit{II Maccabees} 2.19-22; 3.12, 18, 30, 38-39; 5.17-20.

\textsuperscript{102}See above, n. 28, and M. Stern, "The Death of Onias III," \textit{Zion}, XXV (1960), 5 (in Hebrew)
confidently that Onias wrote propaganda stressing that the Ptolemaic dynasty is normally good to the Jews and that Ptolemy III Euergetes I and his wife "Cleopatra" were the real benefactor couple. Onias might need to write such propaganda as soon as a reigning Ptolemy showed hostility to the Jews, as did Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II around the beginning of his reign in 145. Onias could argue about who were the real benefactor couple only when there was a rival "benefactor couple" to whom Onias and his patroness, Cleopatra II, were hostile. Such a couple existed only after the marriage of Ptolemy VIII to Cleopatra III in 142.

At what Jewish audience did Onias aim his propaganda? The use of Ptolemaic terminology might suggest that it was the Jewry of the Ptolemaic empire, but the interests of the Oniad dynasty surely included winning the support of the Jews of Judaea for the return of the dynasty to the high-priesthood. We ought therefore to look for times at which it would be possible and desirable for Onias to direct such propaganda toward both Jewish audiences.

Onias was a soldier who could be punished for propaganda against the reigning Ptolemy. He would risk such propaganda only when he found it necessary to rally Jewish support around Cleopatra II and only when there was hope that Cleopatra's cause could prevail and only when there was some hope of convincing his Jewish audiences. The years immediately following the marriage in 142 were hardly conducive to such propaganda. The Jews in the Ptolemaic empire must have been impressed by Simon the Hasmonaean's achievement of independence for Judaea in that same year of 142. Simon had won without Ptolemaic aid. Jews in the Ptolemaic empire still remembered how Ptolemy VIII's hostility had menaced them. It would have been difficult to convince even Jews within the Ptolemaic empire that collaboration with the Ptolemites was the best course for Jews everywhere, and it would have been quite impossible to argue that case successfully to Jews of Judaea.

For about a decade after 142 it would appear that Jews and Onias himself had nothing to fear from the regime of Ptolemy VIII. In 145/4 Ptolemy VIII proclaimed a sweeping amnesty for his opponents, and even if the story in Josephus of the miraculously foiled massacre of the

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103 J. Ap. ii. 5. 51-56; Bickerman, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* XXXII, 253-54.
104 I Maccabees 13.41.
Jews of Alexandria is true and belongs in 145/4, the end result saw Ptolemy VIII desisting from anti-Jewish measures. Cleopatra II in 142 did break with her hated husband, and Galaistes, a Greek commander who had served Ptolemy VI, did come from abroad and try to rally rebels around a supposed son of Ptolemy VI. However, no evidence involves either Cleopatra II or Jews in Galaistes’ effort; indeed, we are not even told that Galaistes landed in Egypt. Ptolemy VIII’s sole difficulties in holding the loyalty of his army were financial. With the help of a wealthy friend he paid the soldiers and kept firm hold of the Ptolemaic empire. Under such circumstances it would not have been safe for Onias IV to circulate his propaganda against Ptolemy VIII, and the Jews, then unmolested, would not have paid it any heed.

Cleopatra II’s name reappears in the date-formulas of Ptolemaic documents in 139, clearly showing that some sort of accommodation had been worked out between her and Ptolemy VIII. The period which followed, down to 132, again was unpropitious for the publication of a work like that of Onias IV. Cleopatra II herself had made peace with the false "benefactor couple," and the Jews were unmolested.

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106 J. Ap. ii. 5. 50-55. Our only source for the events is Josephus’ propagandistic reply to Apion’s anti-Jewish propaganda. Neither Apion nor Josephus in such polemics was much concerned about precise chronology. Josephus first reports that the Jewish commanders Onias and Dositheus ended a war between the Alexandrians and Cleopatra II and thus saved the Alexandrians from annihilation. The war can hardly be other than the rebellion of the Alexandrians against Cleopatra which followed the death of Ptolemy VI in 145 (Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1725-26). Then Josephus quotes Apion’s charge, that Onias “thereafter” marched on Alexandria. How long thereafter? Josephus’ reply, that Onias was then protecting the interests of Cleopatra II and of her sons by Ptolemy VI, assumes that the march occurred shortly thereafter, but Josephus himself has just said that Onias and Dositheus had saved the Alexandrians from a disastrous war by ending it. Apion’s "thereafter" might refer to a march by Onias on Alexandria during Cleopatra II’s coup against Ptolemy VIII in 131. Then, indeed, Ptolemy VIII fled, not daring to face the forces fighting for Cleopatra II, as suggested at J. Ap. ii. 5. 53; and after his victory Ptolemy VIII proceeded against his non-Jewish opponents with brutality equal to that against the Jews in Josephus’ story (ibid.). See Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1729-32. If Josephus’ story of the foiled massacre belongs to the 120’s, we are left to infer the dangers faced by the Jews in the 140’s at the hands of Ptolemy VIII from other sources: from Onias IV’s steadfast support of Cleopatra II and from Bickerman’s interpretation of II Maccabees 1. 1-8; see above, n. 103.

107 See Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1728.

108 Ibid.
However, Antiochus VII brought the Hasmonaean prince John Hyrcanus and Judaea back under Seleucid domination after a protracted siege of Jerusalem; the campaign probably lasted from 134 or 133 to 132 or 131.\textsuperscript{109} Thereupon, Onias IV's case for Jewish collaboration with the Ptolemies became stronger: perhaps God's sentence upon the Jews condemning them to foreign rule still had some time to run.\textsuperscript{110}

At this very time, events in the Ptolemaic empire brought about a situation which exactly fits Onias IV's propaganda. In 132/1 Ptolemy VIII began to stress his own identification with Ptolemy III and the identification of his wife Cleopatra III with Berenice II. There is good reason to believe that at least in part Ptolemy VIII did so in order to reassert the Ptolemaic claims to Syria and Palestine\textsuperscript{111} once firmly held by Ptolemy III. These Ptolemaic claims included Judaea. In the same year, in April or May of 131, a new civil war broke out between Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III on the one side and Cleopatra II on the other.\textsuperscript{112} From the outset of the struggle Cleopatra II took as her cult-epithet "Thea Philometor Soteira," thereby stressing her identification both with her dead husband Ptolemy VI Philometor, a benefactor of the Jews, and with the early origins of the Ptolemaic dynasty ("Soter" was the cult-epithet of Ptolemy I).\textsuperscript{113} Onias IV surely wished to rally Jews to the cause of Cleopatra II. It would take considerable effort at this time to persuade Jews that their interests lay with the Ptolemaic dynasty as represented by Cleopatra II. Jews had been scared by Ptolemy VIII in the 140's and had seen even pro-Jewish Cleopatra II join forces with him in a coalition government. If God still willed that the Jews should be subjected to a foreign empire, perhaps that empire was that of the Seleucids, whose king, Antiochus VII, had spared Jerusalem and shown respect to the God of Israel.\textsuperscript{114} Hence, well might Onias circulate propaganda to Jews, stressing (1) Onias' links through his kinsmen to the real benefactor couple, Ptolemy III and Berenice II; (2) the merits of Ptolemy VI Philometor and his widow Cleopatra II as opposed to the "false benefactor couple"; and (3) the benevolence of the Ptolemies as against the wickedness of the Seleucids.

There is a firm terminus ante quem beyond which Onias IV's propaganda would have been absolutely useless: early in 129 Cleopatra

\textsuperscript{109}J. AJ xiii. 8. 2-3. 236-48; Ralph Marcus, 

\textsuperscript{110}Cf. Daniel 9.4-24.

\textsuperscript{111}Otto and Bengtson, pp. 47-56, 76-87.

\textsuperscript{112}Volkmann, \textit{RE}, XXIII, 1729-31.

\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Ibid.}, col. 1730.

\textsuperscript{114}J. AJ xiii. 8. 2-3. 242-48; Diodorus xxxiv. i.
II herself was so hard pressed that she, the Ptolemaic queen, betrayed the Ptolemaic cause and sought the aid of her son-in-law, the reigning Seleucid Demetrius II, by offering him rule over Egypt. In that same year, 129, John Hyrcanus and Judaea had become free of Seleucid domination with the death in battle of Antiochus VII. Even Ptolemy VIII was backing a Seleucid pretender, Alexander Zabinas. No longer could Onias present to the Jews the spectacle of the righteous Ptolemies as opposed to the wicked Seleucids. Jews in Judaea again could think of a policy independent of foreign empires, and Jews in the Ptolemaic empire had reason to desert the cause of Cleopatra II as Ptolemy VIII increasingly won the upper hand. Thus, long before Cleopatra II became reconciled in 124 to her enemies Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III, it had already become impossible to write the propaganda of Onias IV. We may confidently date Onias' work between the outbreak of the civil war in April or May, 131, and Cleopatra II's offer to Demetrius II in 129.

We turn now to Josephus' use of Onias' work. Josephus' pro-Hasmonaean bias is the key to solving all the remaining problems concerning the strange way in which Josephus presents the stories of the Tobiads.

The supporters of the Zadokite-Oniad line of high priests could claim that the upstart Hasmonaens, whatever their virtues, had no right to ignore the legitimacy of the earlier dynasty: just before being deposed by the wicked Seleucid kings, the Zadokite-Oniad line had produced the great figures, Simon II the Just and Onias III. Josephus' account removes great Zadokite-Oniad priests from the period of the rise of the Hasmonaens. Discounting the evidence of Ben Sira and of other Jewish traditions, Josephus asserts that Simon I, of the early third century B.C., was Simon the Just, and with the help of Onias IV leaves Simon II as an ephemeral supporter of wicked Tobiads. Onias III in fact was high priest for an extended period under Seleucus IV, was held to have merited a divine miracle, and later lost his life for a sacred cause. Discounting the evidence for these facts, Josephus reduces Onias III to a nonentity.

115 Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1731.  
117 Volkmann, RE, XXIII, 1731.  
118 Ibid., cols. 1732-34.  
119 See above, n. 15.  
120 AJ xii. 2. 5. 43; 4. 1. 157-58; 10. 224-25, 229.  
121 II Maccabees, 3. 4. 1-38.  
122 AJ xii. 4. 10. 225; 5. 1. 237-38.
Josephus wrote at a time when both Simon I and Simon II were little more than names, but Onias III figured prominently both in the work of Onias IV and in the Maccabean history of Jason of Cyrene. How did Josephus manage to eliminate Onias III as a religiously important figure? Though the narrative of the repulse of Heliodorus as presented by Jason of Cyrene might in itself be unassailable, Josephus perceived that it drew on Onias' work. Attacking Onias' work in the manner of a nineteenth-century German "scientific" critic, Josephus found it to be a very systematic distortion of history for the purposes of Zadokite-Oniad propaganda. By removing the "distortions," Josephus found he could produce the pro-Hasmonaean "truth." An earlier pro-Hasmonaean writer could have produced his "corrected" version of Onias' work, but no evidence suggests that the "scientific critic" was other than Josephus himself.

Josephus found strange historical errors in Onias' original narrative. When Joseph the Tobiad became tax-farmer, both king and queen of the Ptolemaic empire drew revenues in their own right from Syria and Palestine. Josephus could not see how that could be the situation, unless the queen held her rights as part of her dowry. The only Ptolemaic queen who was even reported to have received such a dowry was Cleopatra I.123 Josephus may have known that the report was suspect as Ptolemaic propaganda, but Onias IV, the author of the work lying before him, was a loyal servant of the Ptolemies, who could not have written contrary to the claims of the dynasty. There was nothing to make Josephus consider the possibility that the Ptolemies claimed Syria and Palestine de jure, on the basis of a dowry which had never been conveyed de facto. Hence, Josephus assumed that Onias placed his narrative in the reign of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I. If Josephus at all noticed the occurrence of "Euergetes," the cult-epithet of Ptolemy III, he took it to be the common noun, "benefactor."124

As soon as Josephus could place the beginning of Joseph the Tobiad's career as tax-farmer in the 190's, several stories involving Zadokite-Oniad high priests immediately roused his suspicions. Onias IV reported that a miraculous apparition, through the merit of Onias III, delivered the temple from Heliodorus, the minister of Seleucus IV. Unlike Onias IV, Josephus believed that the temple in Jerusalem was under the direct protection of God; God did not need to be prompted by any human merit, and Onias III in any case was undistinguished. In another story probably known to Josephus, a suspiciously similar apparition in answer to the prayers of the high priest Simon II

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123Polybius xxviii. 20. 9 and see above, n. 5.
delivered the temple from Ptolemy IV.\textsuperscript{125} On studying Onias IV's narrative, Josephus found reason to consider all such "Oniad propaganda" a tissue of lies.

At \textit{AJ} xii. 4. 1. 159 Josephus reproduces the crucial passage from Onias IV's work: the dangerous threats of Ptolemy against Judaea, provoked by Onias II's failure to pay tribute "did not at all discountenance" (\textit{edysõpeï...ouden}) Onias II. Jason of Cyrene's narrative, partly derived from the work of Onias IV, goes to great lengths to portray how Heliodorus' threats \textit{discountenanced} Onias III (Second Maccabees 2.16-17, 21). Josephus could read of both episodes in his copy of the work of Onias IV. Of the earlier episode, Onias IV told how at the dark moment for the Jews, surprisingly though not miraculously, the cleverness of Joseph the Tobiad came to the rescue. Of the later episode, Onias IV told how at the dark moment for the Jews the miraculous apparition came to the rescue. On Josephus' chronology, the events, if real, were separated by only a few years. The similarity of the two events, so close together in time, was incredible to Josephus. He could easily see that Onias IV told of both for the purposes of Oniad propaganda. Josephus knew that even in propaganda there could be some truth. It was not difficult to decide which of the two events to condemn as a propagandistic fabrication. Surely not the earlier one: Joseph the Tobiad stood outside the direct line of the high-priestly dynasty and the Oniad priest involved was contemptible. Surely Onias IV must have fabricated the later "doublet." The "doublet" glorified Onias IV's own father, compensated for the contemptible character of Onias II, and showed that real threats to the Jews and their temple come not from the Ptolemaic empire served by Onias IV but from the hated Seleucid empire. If there had been a miracle in the time of Seleucus IV, Daniel would have alluded to it in the prophesy at Dan. 11.20; but though Daniel mentions there the attempt to levy funds, he says nothing of a miracle. Josephus "saw clearly" what Onias IV had done: on the basis of events from the lifetime of Onias II, Onias IV had fabricated events for a laudatory account describing Onias III. To "correct" the "distortion," Josephus eliminated the "doublet."

Josephus would not have minded leaving Onias III as a mere name in the succession of high priests.\textsuperscript{126} However, he knew from Jason of Cyrene and perhaps from Onias IV that the Oniad high priest Jason

\textsuperscript{125}III Maccabees 1. 10-2. 24; I shall show elsewhere that III Maccabees is a refutation of the work of Onias IV, written not long after that work was published.

\textsuperscript{126}On the difficulties of Josephus' account of the death of Onias III (\textit{AJ} xii. 5. 1. 237), see my \textit{II Maccabees} pp. 219-220.
upon the failure of his coup at Jerusalem finally found refuge at Sparta, having gone there "because of the ties of kinship" (dia tén syngeneian) between the Spartans and the Jews. The only source Josephus knew from which Jason the Oniad could learn of the ties of kinship was the letter of the Spartan King Areus to a high priest Onias. As far as Josephus knew, Jason the Oniad was the first Jew to take note of the ties of kinship, later to be exploited by Josephus' own ancestor, Jonathan the Hasmonaean. Philhellenic Onias IV may very well have quoted the letter in his work, drawing its text from Oniad family archives, and may have correctly indicated that the recipient was Onias II, but see my I Maccabees, pp. 459-60. Josephus would not take such an assertion uncritically. Did Jason the Oniad and Jonathan the Hasmonaean act on the basis of a long neglected letter to Onias II or on the basis of a more recent letter to Onias III? Josephus himself cherished indications of amity and kinship between Jews and virtuous Greeks. It was incredible to him that a letter of Areus could have been unanswered and ignored for decades, especially since the text of Areus' letter invited the high priest to send back a reply with the letter-bearer. Unable or unwilling to check the chronology of the Spartan kings, Josephus jumped at the "most probable" assumption: Onias III was the recipient of the letter from Sparta. If Onias IV said it had come to Onias II, Josephus had no difficulty regarding the fact as one more piece of propagandistic "distortion." Josephus would think that Onias IV would strive to make the date of cordial and disinterested overtures of Greeks to Jews as early as possible, for then Onias IV could say that long experience in his family proved that such cordial relations could exist and that Jewish-Greek cooperation could last beyond the dire emergency faced by Onias IV's patroness, Cleopatra II. As Josephus probably saw it, Onias IV had attributed to Onias III a doublet of an event which occurred under Onias II and had attributed to Onias II the receipt of a letter sent to Onias III. By removing the "distortions," Josephus produced the narrative as we have it in AJ xii. Having proved to his own satisfaction that Onias' chronology was wrong, Josephus altered it. He set the beginning of Joseph's career in the reign of Ptolemy V (AJ xii. 4. 1-2. 154-60). He set the death of Onias II in the reign of Seleucus IV (AJ xii. 4. 10. 223-25). Old already at the outset of Joseph's career, Onias II may well have died in the reign of Seleucus II (died 225) or Seleucus III Soter (225-223). Did Josephus find such a note in Onias' work? It is hard to see how Onias IV could have connected

127 See II Maccabees 5.9 and above, n. 85.
128 Ibid.
129 J. Ap. i. 22. 162-204; ii. 38. 281-85.
Onias II's death with the reign of a third-century Seleucid rather than a Ptolemy, unless Onias IV did tell something of Onias II's pro-Seleucid plots.\textsuperscript{130} Perhaps he did. On the other hand, Onias IV himself may well have recorded the death of Joseph as occurring early in the reign of Seleucus IV, who then ruled Judaea. If Josephus was at all aware of the difficulties of his own chronology, he decided that he did not have the time to solve them. His readers might not notice them, and perhaps he himself could solve them in a later edition. Josephus and his readers lacked the advantage of having a standard era according to which the dates could be assigned and easily lined up for comparison in a table. It is possible that neither he nor they perceived the difficulties.

With more leisure than Josephus and unfettered by his presuppositions, we can now solve all the problems we found in Josephus' narrative:

1. To Josephus' source, Onias IV, the exploits of Joseph and Hyrcanus were matter for pride. They were indeed repugnant to Josephus' moral code, and as a partisan of the Hasmonaeans Josephus included the stories to blacken the reputation of the Zadokite-Oniad line.

2, 4, 6, 7, 11. Josephus assumed that Onias IV could not have failed to write according to the Ptolemaic point of view, and that the participation of the queen in farming out the taxes presupposed the marriage of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I. Josephus welcomed the chronology which resulted, since it allowed him to disprove Zadokite-Oniad claims to excellence and divine favor. Either he was unaware of the chronological difficulties of his own account, or he believed that they could be safely passed over in silence.

3. Josephus may have found in Onias' work the information that Samaritans had harassed the Jews during the high-priesthood of an Oniad when the Seleucids ruled Judaea. Whatever the source, for Josephus it served to refute the claims of supporters of the Zadokite-Oniad line that under the Seleucids the merit of an Oniad high priest had kept Jerusalem in perfect peace (Second Maccabees 3.1-3).

5. Josephus left to his secretaries the copying of the passages containing the name "Euergetes," failing to perceive the necessity of correcting them.

8. The preconceptions of both Onias IV and Josephus operated in succession to produce the strange story which mentions how Onias-Menelaus and the Tobiads curried favor with Antiochus IV yet omits any reference as to how Antiochus IV suppressed their enemies. The

\textsuperscript{130}See above, pp. 127-28 and nn. 13, 91.
first Hellenization of Jerusalem was carried through, apparently without resistance, by the high priest Jason the Oniad at the beginning of the reign of Antiochus IV.\textsuperscript{131} However, Onias IV wished to present an account in which his uncle Jason played no role in the Hellenization of Jerusalem. He jumped at the opportunity to suggest that the Hellenization was the work of Jason's violent political opponents, who thus purchased the favor of Antiochus IV when worsted at Jerusalem by Jason. He was glad to omit all reference to the disgraceful efforts of Jason and Onias-Menelaus to outbid one another for the high-priesthood.\textsuperscript{132} It was, indeed, true that Onias-Menelaus and his partisans brought ruin upon the Jews by getting Antiochus' aid in 169, when Jason had worsted them.\textsuperscript{133} Hence, Onias IV probably dated the first Hellenization of Jerusalem at the same time as Antiochus IV's sack of Jerusalem. If so, Onias' account did tell immediately how Antiochus IV suppressed the partisans of Jason.

Josephus was firmly convinced that the mass of Jews could not have allowed the introduction of Hellenic practices to Jerusalem without some resistance.\textsuperscript{134} Hence, he rejected the account of Jason of Cyrene which told of the peaceful voluntary Hellenization carried through by Jason the Oniad. Onias IV's account, as we have reconstructed it, placed the introduction of Hellenic practices at a time when Antiochus IV was not only intimidating the Jews but subjecting them to physical violence. Yet Josephus could not accept Onias IV's version, either, because he was firmly convinced that when Antiochus IV sacked Jerusalem he sacked a totally innocent city.\textsuperscript{135} Both Jason of Cyrene and Onias IV admit that Antiochus IV had reason to believe he was suppressing rebels against Onias-Menelaus, the man he himself had appointed high priest.\textsuperscript{136} Furthermore, Josephus knew that the reliable author of First Maccabees dated the Hellenization of Jerusalem well before the sack.\textsuperscript{137} Hence, Josephus separated the Hellenization from the sack. Perhaps he believed that Onias-Menelaus and the Tobiads had purchased Antiochus' moral support by offering to introduce Hellenic practices and that then Antiochus without physical violence intimidated the Jewish opposition, so that Onias-Menelaus and his partisans temporarily prevailed. With no other sources to help him,
Josephus decided silence was better than the expression of conjectures. His narrative went on to show that only later, out of sheer greed, Antiochus did sack Jerusalem and violently crush the opposition.  

9. Jason of Cyrene took over from Onias IV the mention of Hyrcanus’ deposits.

10. Except for the exaggerated figure for the Ptolemaic revenues, the stories of Joseph and Hyrcanus are entirely true.

\[138\] AJ xii. 5. 3-4. 246-50; see my I Maccabees, pp. 558-68.