How Judea Came Under Ptolemaic Control

323   Alexander died unexpectedly with an unborn child (a son) as his only legitimate heir. In a leadership compromise, Alexander's half-brother was made King of Macedon, while Perdiccas, Alexander's lead general, served as regent, splitting the Empire into a couple dozen satrapies to be governed by Alexander's generals – the "Diadochoi" ("Successors").

 Ptolemy, a childhood friend of Alexander (& possibly his illegitimate half-brother), received the Satrapy of Egypt. He evidently saw himself as the true inheritor of Alexander's empire. The first thing he did was to intercept Alexander's body on its way back to Macedonia, bringing it to Egypt for temporary safe-keeping. (It was apparently customary for the new king to officiate at the last king's funeral.)

321   Regent Perdiccas invaded Egypt & attempt to defeat Ptolemy. He failed and was soon murdered by two of his own men. The satrapies were redistributed by Antipater, the new regent. The Satrapy of Babylon went to Seleucus, Perdiccas' second-in-command.

320   Ptolemy took control of Syria, which included Judea & Samaria. Josephus complained that Ptolemy acted in opposition to his nickname – Soter (Savior) – by tricking the Jews into thinking that he only wanted to enter Jerusalem on a Sabbath in order to participate in the sacrificial ceremonies, but then actually seizing control of the city for himself, with his soldiers taking many Jews as slaves back to Egypt. <u>Antiquities</u> 12.1.1

315   Antigonus, a satrap from what is now central Turkey, wanted to rule the entire empire of Alexander. He pushed into Syria (Ptolemy's territory) & then into Mesopotamia, chasing Seleucus out of Babylon. Seleucus went to Ptolemy for assistance & they began to prosecute a long war against Antigonus, involving many of the other Diadochoi.

312   Ptolemy helped reinstate Seleucus as Satrap of Babylon. The Seleucid Era, a calendar system used within the books of the Maccabees, is dated from this event.

301   Antigonus (81 yrs) died from a javelin wound during the Battle of Ipsus. It was at this point that the singular empire of Alexander settled into four distinct empires.

This matches the visions in Daniel 7:6 & Daniel 8:5-8.

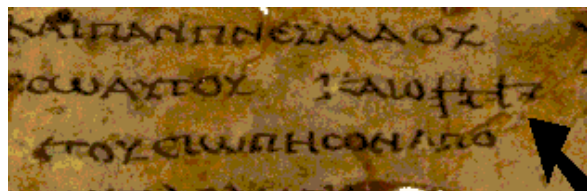**How The Septuagint (Greek Version Of The Old Testament) Came To Be**

289 Ptolemy I (Soter) declared his son Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) as his co-regent

280's The Library of Alexandria was opened under commission of Ptolemy I. Its stated mission, according to the first librarian, Demetrius Phalareus, was to collect every scroll in the entire world. (It was apparently standard procedure to make a copy for the owner & then keep the original.) Antiquities 12.2.1

283 Ptolemy I (84 yrs) died. Ptolemy II became sole King of Egypt.

c. 280 When asked by Ptolemy II to report on how many scrolls he had already collected for the Library of Alexandria, Demetrius told him about 200,000, but that he hoped to soon have over half a million. Antiquities 12.2.2

It was on this same occasion that Demetrius expressed the desire to add the entirety of Jewish Scripture to the library. However, he was concerned about the difficulty of having these Scriptures translated from Hebrew into Greek. Antiquities 12.2.2

Ptolemy II had a friend named Aristeus, who was particularly enamored with the Jewish people & their faith. He suggested that the best way to get Jewish assistance in translating their Scriptures into Greek was to free all the Jewish slaves taken by Ptolemy I's men nearly 40 years earlier. Ptolemy II agreed to reimburse all those who held Jewish slaves at 120 drachma per head for a total of 460 talents of silver (nearly $2 million of modern wages). Antiquities 12.2.3

Arrangements were then made with the High Priest Eleazar to have six trustworthy translators from each of the 12 Tribes (for a total of 72)[1] to come to Alexandria to produce a Greek translation. Ptolemy II was very impressed with the Hebrew Scripture scrolls they brought with them – they were made of very thin sheets of leather skillfully attached in long rolls & written upon with gold ink – as well as with the intellect of the translators themselves. Supposedly, the translation[2] process was completed in 72 days. Antiquities 12.2.4-15

Here's a scrap of a LXX dating from around the time of Christ. The arrow is pointing at the divine name, written in ancient Hebrew rather than Greek.

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[1] For some unknown reason many copies of Josephus & others have 70, rather than 72. It is for this reason that the Septuagint (Latin for "seventy"), a.k.a., the LXX (Roman designation for "70"), gets its traditional designation.

[2] Technically, much of the Septuagint is a paraphrase & sometimes includes parenthetical comments.