

Syrian king, Seleucus IV Philopator, plays the part of Ptolemy. Not only the same order of events but even the same words and expressions are found in both places.⁹⁸ The fact of Ptolemy Philopator's visit to Jerusalem, nevertheless, is decidedly within the bounds of possibility, and there are no grounds for assuming that the king did not do in relation to the Jews what he did everywhere else. Jerusalem was quite well known as a religious center of importance, and if Philopator visited the city, he certainly did there what every Greek king would have done in his place, namely, sacrificed to the local god and behaved favorably toward the priests. If then the author of *III Maccabees* selected Philopator in order to describe a thorough anti-Semite, we have to seek the reason, not in historical events connected with Palestine, but in the general motive of the book, which was written in Egypt and was influenced by events connected with that country.⁹⁹

Antiochus evacuated Coele-Syria, but his defeat did not cause him to despair; he waited at a distance for an opportune moment to test his powers afresh. Events in Egypt prepared the ground for him. In 204 Ptolemy IV Philopator died and Ptolemy V Epiphanes, a child of five, ascended the throne.¹⁰⁰ The power passed to the king's guardians, and when their rule was unsuccessful, there began a growing popular ferment among the Egyptians, especially among the citizens of Alexandria. Antiochus exploited these disturbances to carry out his designs; in 201 he invaded Coele-Syria, and obtained possession of the whole country without much difficulty, only Gaza maintaining its alliance with the Ptolemies and closing its gates before him (Polyb. XVI, 40, 1ff.; *ib.* XVIII, 2).

Of the happenings of the subsequent years our sources have preserved only fragmentary information which does not add up to a complete picture. So far as we can judge, the Ptolemaic general Scopas succeeded in reconquering the whole of Palestine in 200, but the encounter with Antiochus in the north of the country, near Panion, ended in his decisive defeat. Scopas fled with the remnants of his army and was besieged in Sidon; Ptolemy's attempt to bring aid to him was unsuccessful and the city was captured by Antiochus. Following this, in the years 199-8, Antiochus captured all the fortified cities of Coele-Syria, and the Egyptians evacuated the country, this time for good, so that it passed decisively under the rule of the Seleucids.¹⁰¹

Just as we do not know the details of the events during the conquest of the country as a whole, so we are without details on the individual fate of Judaea and Jerusalem. The capture of Jerusalem by Antiochus in 201 was carried out, apparently, without resistance on the part of the Jews.¹⁰² The succeeding year, during the winter months, the city was taken by Scopas, on the evidence of Polybius (in *Jos. Ant.* XII, 135), and that author again witnesses (*ib.* 136) that Jerusalem passed into Antiochus' hands after the victory of Panion, when he had overrun Batanea, Samaria, Abila and Gadara. From this brief information it is impossible to decide what the orientation of the Jews was in these stormy years, or if they had any permanent orientation at all. On this question other sources come to our aid, in part contemporary (Antiochus' letter to Ptolemy, his official, to be treated in detail later), in part late (Jerome's commentary on the Book of Daniel). Jerome states one general fact, that "when Antiochus the Great and Ptolemy's generals were at grips, the land of Judah was drawn in two opposite directions, some supporting Antiochus and some Ptolemy."¹⁰³ This statement, even if it is only the result of general considerations, without particular support in the sources, is precisely to the point, for this is the fate of a small country situated between two great powers, that it leans now in one direction, now in the other.

Further material is supplied by Jerome, when he says in his account of the conquest of Judaea by Scopas and his retreat to Egypt, that "he took with him the heads of Ptolemy's party."¹⁰⁴ This information is not as accurate as it might be: Judaea was conquered by Scopas before the battle of Panion, that is, in the year 200, while his retreat into Egypt took place only after Sidon had fallen into the hands of Antiochus, when Scopas was not in Jerusalem; it is to be assumed, therefore, that the heads of the pro-Ptolemaic party in Jerusalem were interned in Egypt not by him, but by other Ptolemaic commanders who were in charge of the occupied city.¹⁰⁵ From Antiochus' letter to Ptolemy we know that a Ptolemaic garrison remained in the citadel of Jerusalem until Antiochus appeared before the town (evidently in 198) and that the Jews helped Antiochus to expel Ptolemy's men from it (*Ant.* XII, 138). From this we learn that the Ptolemaic party controlled Jerusalem as long as Ptolemy's generals held power in Judaea, but that when their power began to collapse as a result of the defeat at Panion and the fall of Sidon, the Seleucid faction prevailed and cooperated with Antiochus as he drew