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### Sources for *The Maccabee Queen* –*Antiquities of the Jews*

The primary sources for the play *The Maccabee Queen* are two works by Josephus, originally written in Greek in the first century of the common era: *The Wars of the Jews* (aka *The Jewish War*) and *Antiquities of the Jews*, which tell somewhat different versions of the same stories.

For more about Josephus, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus>.

The following excerpt has been edited to delete extraneous material and some footnotes and to add a few parentheticals. Incidents and people mentioned or portrayed in the play have been highlighted. Footnotes were added by the author of the play.

Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*  
William Whiston, A.M., Ed

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0146>

[171] At this time there were three sects among the Jews, who had different opinions concerning human actions; the one was called the sect of the Pharisees, another the sect of the Sadducees, and the other the sect of the Essens. Now for the Pharisees, they say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and some of them are in our own power, and that they are liable to fate, but are not caused by fate. But the sect of the Essens affirm, that fate governs all things, and that nothing befalls men but what is according to its determination. And for the Sadducees, they take away fate, and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal; but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly. However, I have given a more exact account of these opinions in the second book of the Jewish War.

[skipped]

[228] Now he [Simon Maccabee] was the ruler of the Jews in all eight years; but at a feast came to his end. It was caused by the treachery of his son-in-law Ptolemy, who caught also his wife, and two of his sons, and kept them in bonds. He also sent some to kill John the third son, whose name was Hyrcanus<sup>1</sup>; but the young man perceiving them coming, he avoided the danger he was in from them, <sup>1</sup> and made haste into the city [Jerusalem], as relying on the good-will of the multitude, because of the benefits they

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<sup>1</sup> "John Hyrcanus" is Johanan Hyrcanus in the play. LD.

had received from his father, and because of the hatred the same multitude bare to Ptolemy; so that when Ptolemy was endeavoring to enter the city by another gate, they drove him away, as having already admitted Hyrcanus.

HYRCANUS RECEIVES THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD, AND EJECTS PTOLEMY OUT OF THE COUNTRY. ANTIOCHUS MAKES WAR AGAINST HYRCANUS AND AFTERWARDS MAKES A LEAGUE WITH HIM.

[230] SO Ptolemy retired to one of the fortresses that was above Jericho, which was called Dagon. But Hyrcanus having taken the high priesthood that had been his father's before, and in the first place propitiated God by sacrifices, he then made an expedition against Ptolemy; and when he made his attacks upon the place, in other points he was too hard for him, but was rendered weaker than he, by the commiseration he had for his mother and brethren, and by that only; for Ptolemy brought them upon the wall, and tormented them in the sight of all, and threatened that he would throw them down headlong, unless Hyrcanus would leave off the siege. And as he thought that so far as he relaxed as to the siege and taking of the place, so much favor did he show to those that were dearest to him by preventing their misery, his zeal about it was cooled. However, his mother spread out her hands, and begged of him that he would not grow remiss on her account, but indulge his indignation so much the more, and that he would do his utmost to take the place quickly, in order to get their enemy under his power, and then to avenge upon him what he had done to those that were dearest to himself; for that death would be to her sweet, though with torment, if that enemy of theirs might but be brought to punishment for his wicked dealings to them. Now when his mother said so, he resolved to take the fortress immediately; but when he saw her beaten, and torn to pieces, his courage failed him, and he could not but sympathize with what his mother suffered, and was thereby overcome. And as the siege was drawn out into length by this means, that year on which the Jews used to rest came on; for the Jews observe this rest every seventh year, as they do every seventh day; so that Ptolemy being for this cause released from the war, he slew the brethren of Hyrcanus, and his mother; and when he had so done, he fled to Zeno, who was called Cotylas, who was then the tyrant of the city Philadelphia.

[skipped]

[254] BUT when Hyrcanus heard of the death of Antiochus, he presently made an expedition against the cities of Syria, hoping to find them destitute of fighting men, and of such as were able to defend them. However, it was not till the sixth month that he took Medaba, and that not without the greatest distress of his army. After this he took Samega, and the neighboring places; and besides these, Shechem and Gerizzim, and the nation of the Cutheans, who dwelt at the temple which resembled that temple which was at Jerusalem, and which Alexander permitted Sanballat, the general of his army, to build for the sake of Manasseh, who was son-in-law to Jaddua the high priest, as we have formerly related; which temple was now deserted two hundred years after it was

built. Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.<sup>2</sup>

[skipped]

[284] Now it happened at this time, that not only those Jews who were at Jerusalem and in Judea were in prosperity, but also those of them that were at Alexandria<sup>3</sup>, and in Egypt and Cyprus; for Cleopatra the queen was at variance with her son Ptolemy, who was called Lathyrus, and appointed for her generals Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of that Onias who built the temple in the prefecture of Heliopolis, like to that at Jerusalem, as we have elsewhere related. Cleopatra intrusted these men with her army, and did nothing without their advice, as Strabo of Cappadocia attests, when he saith thus, "Now the greater part, both those that came to Cyprus with us, and those that were sent afterward thither, revolted to Ptolemy immediately; only those that were called Onias's party, being Jews, continued faithful, because their countrymen Chelcias and Ananias were in chief favor with the queen." These are the words of Strabo.

[288] However, this prosperous state of affairs moved the Jews to envy Hyrcanus; but they that were the worst disposed to him were the Pharisees, who were one of the sects of the Jews, as we have informed you already. These have so great a power over the multitude, that when they say any thing against the king, or against the high priest, they are presently believed. Now Hyrcanus was a disciple of theirs, and greatly beloved by them. And when he once invited them to a feast, and entertained them very kindly, when he saw them in a good humor, he began to say to them, that they knew he was desirous to be a righteous man, and to do all things whereby he might please God, which was the profession of the Pharisees also. However, he desired, that if they observed him offending in any point, and going out of the right way, they would call him back and correct him. On which occasion they attested to his being entirely virtuous; with which commendation he was well pleased. But still there was one of his guests

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<sup>2</sup> Herod the Great was an Idumean, and his family became Jewish at this time. Herod is believed to have been born at Marissa (modern Maresha and Beit Guvrin). LD.

<sup>3</sup> In this period, it's believed that as much as one third of the population of Alexandria was Jewish. S. Rappoport, *History of Egypt*, vol. 11 ("There were at this time about a million of Jews in Egypt. In Alexandria they seem to have been about one-third of the population, as they formed the majority in two wards out of the five into which the city was divided.") <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17331/17331-h/v11a.htm>. For more on the history of Jews in Egypt, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Egypt). LD.

there, whose name was Eleazar<sup>4</sup>, a man of an ill temper, and delighting in seditious practices. This man said, "Since thou desirest to know the truth, if thou wilt be righteous in earnest, lay down the high priesthood, and content thyself with the civil government of the people," And when he desired to know for what cause he ought to lay down the high priesthood, the other replied, "We have heard it from old men, that thy mother had been a captive under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. "This story was false, and Hyrcanus was provoked against him; and all the Pharisees had a very great indignation against him."<sup>5</sup>

[293] Now there was one Jonathan<sup>6</sup>, a very great friend of Hyrcanus's, but of the sect of the Sadducees, whose notions are quite contrary to those of the Pharisees. He told Hyrcanus that Eleazar had cast such a reproach upon him, according to the common sentiments of all the Pharisees, and that this would be made manifest if he would but ask them the question, What punishment they thought this man deserved? for that he might depend upon it, that the reproach was not laid on him with their approbation, if they were for punishing him as his crime deserved. So the Pharisees made answer, that he deserved stripes and bonds, but that it did not seem right to punish reproaches with death. And indeed the Pharisees, even upon other occasions, are not apt to be severe in punishments. At this gentle sentence, Hyrcanus was very angry, and thought that this man reproached him by their approbation. It was this Jonathan who chiefly irritated him, and influenced him so far, that he made him leave the party of the Pharisees, and abolish the decrees they had imposed on the people, and to punish those that observed them. From this source arose that hatred which he and his sons met with from the multitude: but of these matters we shall speak hereafter. What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers. And concerning these things it is that great disputes and differences have arisen among them, while the Sadducees are able to persuade none but the rich, and have not the populace obsequious to them, but the

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<sup>4</sup> This is the source for the name of the character of Eleazar in the play. The character of Eleazar also has some of the characteristics of the historical character Diogenes in Josephus's version of these events in *The Jewish War*, and also is based on the Sadducee Jonathan, as in the footnote below. The (unseen) character who makes the charge about Alexander's mother is called Judah in the play.

<sup>5</sup> In the play, this charge about his mother is made about Alexander, rather than about his father Johanan Hyrcanus. This is based on the version of this story that appears in the Talmud.

<sup>6</sup> The Sadducee Jonathan is another source for the character of Eleazar in the play.

Pharisees have the multitude on their side. But about these two sects, and that of the Essens, I have treated accurately in the second book of Jewish affairs.

[299] But when Hyrcanus had put an end to this sedition, he after that lived happily, and administered the government in the best manner for thirty-one years, and then died, <sup>4</sup> leaving behind him five sons. He was esteemed by God worthy of three of the greatest privileges, - the government of his nation, the dignity of the high priesthood, and prophecy; for God was with him, and enabled him to know futurities; and to foretell this in particular, that, as to his two eldest sons, he foretold that they would not long continue in the government of public affairs<sup>7</sup>; whose unhappy catastrophe will be worth our description, that we may thence learn how very much they were inferior to their father's happiness.

Here ends the high priesthood, and the life of this excellent person John Hyrcanus, and together with him the holy theocracy, or Divine government of the Jewish nation, and its concomitant oracle by Urim. Now follows the profane and tyrannical Jewish monarchy, first of the Asamoneans or Maccabees, and then of Herod the Great, the Idumean, till the coming of the Messiah. See the note on Antiq. B. III. ch. 8. sect. 9. Hear Strabo's testimony on this occasion, B. XVI. p. 761, 762: "Those," says he, "that succeeded Moses continued for some time in earnest, both in righteous actions and in piety; but after a while there were others that took upon them the high priesthood, at first superstitious and afterward tyrannical persons. Such a prophet was Moses and those that succeeded him, beginning in a way not to be blamed, but changing for the worse. And when it openly appeared that the government was become tyrannical, Alexander was the first that set up himself for a king instead of a priest; and his sons were Hyrcanus and Aristobulus." All in agreement with Josephus, excepting this, that Strabo omits the first king, Aristobulus, who reigning but a single year, seems hardly to have come to his knowledge. Nor indeed does Aristobulus, the son of Alexander, pretend that the name of king was taken before his father Alexander took it himself, Antiq. B. XIV. ch. 3. sect. 2. See also ch. 12. sect. I, which favor Strabo also. And indeed, if we may judge from the very different characters of the Egyptian Jews under high priests, and of the Palestine Jews under kings, in the two next centuries, we may well suppose that the Divine Shechinah was removed into Egypt, and that the worshippers at the temple of Onias were better men than those at the temple of Jerusalem.

HOW ARISTOBULUS, WHEN HE HAD TAKEN THE GOVERNMENT FIRST OF ALL PUT A DIADEM ON HIS HEAD, AND WAS MOST BARBAROUSLY CRUEL TO HIS MOTHER AND HIS BRETHREN; AND HOW, AFTER HE HAD SLAIN ANTIGONUS, HE HIMSELF DIED.

[301] NOW when their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son Aristobulus, intending to change the government into a kingdom, for so he resolved to do, first of all put a diadem on his head, four hundred eighty and one years and three months after the

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<sup>7</sup> The play starts at this point.

people had been delivered from the Babylonish slavery, and were returned to their own country again. This Aristobulus loved his next brother Antigonus, and treated him as his equal; but the others he held in bonds. He also cast his mother into prison, because she disputed the government with him; for Hyrcanus had left her to be mistress of all. He also proceeded to that degree of barbarity, as to kill her in prison with hunger; nay, he was alienated from his brother Antigonus by calumnies, and added him to the rest whom he slew; yet he seemed to have an affection for him, and made him above the rest a partner with him in the kingdom. Those calumnies he at first did not give credit to, partly because he loved him, and so did not give heed to what was said against him, and partly because he thought the reproaches were derived from the envy of the relaters. But when Antigonus was once returned from the army, and that feast was then at hand when they make tabernacles to [the honor of God,] it happened that Aristobulus was fallen sick, and that Antigonus went up most splendidly adorned, and with his soldiers about him in their armor, to the temple to celebrate the feast, and to put up many prayers for the recovery of his brother, when some wicked persons<sup>8</sup>, who had a great mind to raise a difference between the brethren, made use of this opportunity of the pompous appearance of Antigonus, and of the great actions which he had done, and went to the king, and spitefully aggravated the pompous show of his at the feast, and pretended that all these circumstances were not like those of a private person; that these actions were indications of an affectation of royal authority; and that his coming with a strong body of men must be with an intention to kill him; and that his way of reasoning was this: That it was a silly thing in him, while it was in his power to reign himself, to look upon it as a great favor that he was honored with a lower dignity by his brother.

[307] Aristobulus yielded to these imputations, but took care both that his brother should not suspect him, and that he himself might not run the hazard of his own safety; so he ordered his guards to lie in a certain place that was under ground, and dark; (he himself then lying sick in the tower which was called Antonia;) and he commanded them, that in case Antigonus came in to him unarmed, they should not touch any body, but if armed, they should kill him; yet did he send to Antigonus, and desired that he would come unarmed; but the queen<sup>9</sup>, and those that joined with her in the plot against Antigonus, persuaded the messenger to tell him the direct contrary: how his brother had heard that he had made himself a fine suit of armor for war, and desired him to come to him in that armor, that he might see how fine it was. So Antigonus suspecting no treachery, but depending on the good-will of his brother, came to Aristobulus armed, as he used to be, with his entire armor, in order to show it to him; but when he was come to a place which was called Strato's Tower, where the passage happened to be exceeding dark, the guards slew him; which death of his demonstrates that nothing is stronger than envy and calumny, and that nothing does more certainly divide the good-

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<sup>8</sup> The "wicked persons" are represented by Eleazar in the play. LD.

<sup>9</sup> This is out of character for Alexandra and contrary to everything else that's reported about her. Eleazar is the instigator of this event in the play.

will and natural affections of men than those passions. But here one may take occasion to wonder at one Judas, who was of the sect of the Essens, and who never missed the truth in his predictions; for this man, when he saw Antigonus passing by the temple, cried out to his companions and friends, who abode with him as his scholars, in order to learn the art of foretelling things to come?" That it was good for him to die now, since he had spoken falsely about Antigonus, who is still alive, and I see him passing by, although he had foretold he should die at the place called Strato's Tower that very day, while yet the place is six hundred furlongs off, where he had foretold he should be slain; and still this day is a great part of it already past, so that he was in danger of proving a false prophet." As he was saying this, and that in a melancholy mood, the news came that Antigonus was slain in a place under ground, which itself was called also Strato's Tower, or of the same name with that Cesarea<sup>10</sup> which is seated at the sea. This event put the prophet into a great disorder.

[314] But Aristobulus repented immediately of this slaughter of his brother; on which account his disease increased upon him, and he was disturbed in his mind, upon the guilt of such wickedness, insomuch that his entrails were corrupted by his intolerable pain, and he vomited blood: at which time one of the servants that attended upon him, and was carrying his blood away, did, by Divine Providence, as I cannot but suppose, slip down, and shed part of his blood at the very place where there were spots of Antigonus's blood, there slain, still remaining; and when there was a cry made by the spectators, as if the servant had on purpose shed the blood on that place, Aristobulus heard it, and inquired what the matter was; and as they did not answer him, he was the more earnest to know what it was, it being natural to men to suspect that what is thus concealed is very bad: so upon his threatening, and forcing them by terrors to speak, they at length told him the truth; whereupon he shed many tears, in that disorder of mind which arose from his consciousness of what he had done, and gave a deep groan, and said, "I am not therefore, I perceive, to be concealed from God, in the impious and horrid crimes I have been guilty of; but a sudden punishment is coming upon me for the shedding the blood of my relations. And now, O thou most impudent body of mine, how long wilt thou retain a soul that ought to die, in order to appease the ghosts of my brother and my mother? Why dost thou not give it all up at once? And why do I deliver up my blood drop by drop to those whom I have so wickedly murdered?" In saying which last words he died, having reigned a year. He was called a lover of the Grecians; and had conferred many benefits on his own country, and made war against Iturea<sup>11</sup>, and added a great part of it to Judea, and compelled the inhabitants, if they would continue in that country, to be circumcised, and to live according to the Jewish laws. He was naturally a man of candor, and of great modesty, as Strabo bears witness, in the name of Timagenes; who says thus: "This man was a person of candor, and very serviceable to the Jews; for he added a country to them, and obtained a part of the

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<sup>10</sup> This is the city later built by Herod the Great.

<sup>11</sup> Iturea was apparently north of the Galilee, in the region of Mount Lebanon. In the play, Antigonus refers to armor he got from a dead Iturean.

nation of the Itureans for them, and bound them to them by the bond of the circumcision of their genitals."

HOW ALEXANDER WHEN HE HAD TAKEN THE GOVERNMENT MADE AN EXPEDITION AGAINST PTOLEMAIS, AND THEN RAISED THE SIEGE OUT OF FEAR OF PTOLEMY LATHYRUS; AND HOW PTOLEMY MADE WAR AGAINST HIM, BECAUSE HE HAD SENT TO CLEOPATRA TO PERSUADE HER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST PTOLEMY, AND YET PRETENDED TO BE IN FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM, WHEN HE BEAT THE JEWS IN THE BATTLE.

[320] WHEN Aristobulus was dead, his wife Salome, who, by the Greeks, was called Alexandra, let his brethren out of prison, (for Aristobulus had kept them in bonds, as we have said already,) and made Alexander Janneus king, who was the superior in age and in moderation. This child happened to be hated by his father as soon as he was born, and could never be permitted to come into his father's sight till he died. The occasion of which hatred is thus reported: when Hyrcanus chiefly loved the two eldest of his sons, Antigonus and Aristobutus, God appeared to him in his sleep, of whom he inquired which of his sons should be his successor. Upon God's representing to him the countenance of Alexander, he was grieved that he was to be the heir of all his goods, and suffered him to be brought up in Galilee. However, God did not deceive Hyrcanus; for after the death of Aristobulus, he certainly took the kingdom; and one of his brethren<sup>12</sup>, who affected the kingdom, he slew; and the other<sup>13</sup>, who chose to live a private and quiet life, he had in esteem.

[324] When Alexander Janneus had settled the government in the manner that he judged best, he made an expedition against Ptolemais<sup>14</sup>; and having overcome the men in battle, he shut them up in the city, and sat round about it, and besieged it; for of the maritime cities there remained only Ptolemais and Gaza to be conquered, besides Strato's Tower and Dora, which were held by the tyrant Zoilus. Now while Antiochus Philometor, and Antiochus who was called Cyzicenus, were making war one against another, and destroying one another's armies, the people of Ptolemais could have no assistance from them; but when they were distressed with this siege, Zoilus, who possessed Strato's Tower and Dora, and maintained a legion of soldiers, and, on occasion of the contest between the kings, affected tyranny himself, came and brought some small assistance to the people of Ptolemais; nor indeed had the kings such a friendship for them, as that they should hope for any advantage from them. Both those kings were in the case of wrestlers, who finding themselves deficient in strength, and yet being ashamed to yield, put off the fight by laziness, and by lying still as long as they can. The only hope they had remaining was from the kings of Egypt, and from Ptolemy Lathyrus, who now held Cyprus, and who came to Cyprus when he was driven from the government of Egypt by Cleopatra his mother. So the people of Ptolemais sent to this

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<sup>12</sup> In the play, this is Alexander's brother Mattathias.

<sup>13</sup> In the play, this is Alexander's brother Absalom.

<sup>14</sup> Ptolemais is modern Acco.

Ptolemy Lathyrus, and desired him to come as a confederate, to deliver them, now they were in such danger, out of the hands of Alexander. And as the ambassadors gave him hopes, that if he would pass over into Syria, he would have the people of Gaza on the side of those of Ptolemais; as also they said, that Zoilus, and besides these the Sidonians, and many others, would assist them; so he was elevated at this, and got his fleet ready as soon as possible.

[330] But in this interval Demenetus, one that was of abilities to persuade men to do as he would have them, and a leader of the populace, made those of Ptolemais change their opinions; and said to them, that it was better to run the hazard of being subject to the Jews, than to admit of evident slavery by delivering themselves up to a master; and besides that, to have not only a war at present, but to expect a much greater war from Egypt; for that Cleopatra would not overlook an army raised by Ptolemy for himself out of the neighborhood, but would come against them with a great army of her own, and this because she was laboring to eject her son out of Cyprus also; that as for Ptolemy, if he fail of his hopes, he can still retire to Cyprus, but that they will be left in the greatest danger possible. Now Ptolemy, although he had heard of the change that was made in the people of Ptolemais, yet did he still go on with his voyage, and came to the country called Sycamine, and there set his army on shore. This army of his, in the whole horse and foot together, were about thirty thousand, with which he marched near to Ptolemais, and there pitched his camp. But when the people of Ptolemais neither received his ambassadors, nor would hear what they had to say, he was under a very great concern.

[334] But when Zoilus and the people of Gaza came to him, and desired his assistance, because their country was laid waste by the Jews, and by Alexander, Alexander raised the siege, for fear of Ptolemy: and when he had drawn off his army into his own country, he used a stratagem afterwards, by privately inviting Cleopatra to come against Ptolemy, but publicly pretending to desire a league of friendship and mutual assistance with him; and promising to give him four hundred talents of silver, he desired that, by way of requital, he would take off Zoilus the tyrant, and give his country to the Jews. And then indeed Ptolemy, with pleasure, made such a league of friendship with Alexander, and subdued Zoilus; but when he afterwards heard that he had privily sent to Cleopatra his mother, he broke the league with him, which yet he had confirmed with an oath, and fell upon him, and besieged Ptolemais, because it would not receive him. However, leaving his generals, with some part of his forces, to go on with the siege, he went himself immediately with the rest to lay Judea waste; and when Alexander understood this to be Ptolemy's intention, he also got together about fifty thousand soldiers out of his own country; nay, as some writers have said, eighty thousand <sup>1</sup> He then took his army, and went to meet Ptolemy; but Ptolemy fell upon Asochis, a city of Galilee, and took it by force on the sabbath day, and there he took about ten thousand slaves, and a great deal of other prey.

[338] He then tried to take Sepphoris<sup>15</sup>, which was a city not far from that which was destroyed, but lost many of his men; yet did he then go to fight with Alexander; which Alexander met him at the river Jordan, near a certain place called Saphoth, [not far from the river Jordan,] and pitched his camp near to the enemy. He had however eight thousand in the first rank, which he styled Hecatontomachi, having shields of brass. Those in the first rank of Ptolemy's soldiers also had shields covered with brass. But Ptolemy's soldiers in other respects were inferior to those of Alexander, and therefore were more fearful of running hazards; but Philostephanus, the camp-master, put great courage into them, and ordered them to pass the river, which was between their camps. Nor did Alexander think fit to hinder their passage over it; for he thought, that if the enemy had once gotten the river on their back, that he should the easier take them prisoners, when they could not flee out of the battle: in the beginning of which, the acts on both sides, with their hands, and with their alacrity, were alike, and a great slaughter was made by both the armies; but Alexander was superior, till Philostephanus opportunely brought up the auxiliaries, to help those that were giving way; but as there were no auxiliaries to afford help to that part of the Jews that gave way, it fell out that they fled, and those near them did no assist them, but fled along with them. However, Ptolemy's soldiers acted quite otherwise; for they followed the Jews, and killed them, till at length those that slew them pursued after them when they had made them all run away, and slew them so long, that their weapons of iron were blunted, and their hands quite tired with the slaughter; for the report was, that thirty thousand men were then slain. Timagenes says they were fifty thousand. As for the rest, they were part of them taken captives, and the other part ran away to their own country.

[345] After this victory, Ptolemy overran all the country; and when night came on, he abode in certain villages of Judea, which when he found full of women and children, he commanded his soldiers to strangle them, and to cut them in pieces, and then to cast them into boiling caldrons, and then to devour their limbs as sacrifices. This commandment was given, that such as fled from the battle, and came to them, might suppose their enemies were cannibals, and eat men's flesh, and might on that account be still more terrified at them upon such a sight. And both Strabo and Nicholaus [of Damascus] affirm, that they used these people after this manner, as I have already related. Ptolemy also took Ptolemais by force, as we have declared elsewhere.

HOW ALEXANDER, UPON THE LEAGUE OF MUTUAL DEFENSE WHICH CLEOPATRA HAD AGREED WITH HIM, MADE AN EXPEDITION AGAINST COELESYRIA, AND UTTERLY OVERTHREW THE CITY OF GAZA; AND HOW HE SLEW MANY TEN THOUSANDS OF JEWS THAT REBELLED AGAINST HIM. ALSO CONCERNING ANTIOCHUS GRYPUS, SELEUCUS ANTIOCHUS CYZICEIUS, AND ANTIOCHUS PIUS, AND OTHERS.

[348] WHEN Cleopatra saw that her son was grown great, and laid Judea waste, without disturbance, and had gotten the city of Gaza under his power, she resolved no longer to

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<sup>15</sup> Sepphoris is modern Tzipori, and was later the capital of the Galilee. LD.

overlook what he did, when he was almost at her gates; and she concluded, that now he was so much stronger than before, he would be very desirous of the dominion over the Egyptians; but she immediately marched against him, with a fleet at sea and an army of foot on land, and made Chelcias and Ananias the Jews generals of her whole army, while she sent the greatest part of her riches, her grandchildren, and her testament, to the people of Cos.<sup>16</sup>

Cleopatra also ordered her son Alexander to sail with a great fleet to Phoenicia; and when that country had revolted, she came to Ptolemais; and because the people of Ptolemais did not receive her, she besieged the city; but Ptolemy went out of Syria, and made haste unto Egypt, supposing that he should find it destitute of an army, and soon take it, though he failed of his hopes. At this time Chelcias, one of Cleopatra's generals, happened to die in Celesyria, as he was in pursuit of Ptolemy.

[352] When Cleopatra heard of her son's attempt, and that his Egyptian expedition did not succeed according to his expectations, she sent thither part of her army, and drove him out of that country; so when he was returned out of Egypt again, he abode during the winter at Gaza, in which time Cleopatra took the garrison that was in Ptolemais by siege, as well as the city; and when Alexander came to her, he gave her presents, and such marks of respect as were but proper, since under the miseries he endured by Ptolemy he had no other refuge but her. Now there were some of her friends who persuaded her to seize Alexander, and to overrun and take possession of the country, and not to sit still and see such a multitude of brave Jews subject to one man. But Ananias's counsel was contrary to theirs, who said that she would do an unjust action if she deprived a man that was her ally of that authority which belonged to him, and this a man who is related to us; "for (said he) I would not have thee ignorant of this, that what in justice thou dost to him will make all us that are Jews to be thy enemies. This desire of Ananias Cleopatra complied with, and did no injury to Alexander, but made a league of mutual assistance with him at Scythopolis<sup>17</sup>, a city of Celesyria.

[356] So when Alexander was delivered from the fear he was in of Ptolemy, he presently made an expedition against Coelesyria. He also took Gadara, after a siege of ten months. He took also Areathus, a very strong fortress belonging to the inhabitants above Jordan, where Theodorus, the son of Zeno, had his chief treasure, and what he

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<sup>16</sup> 1 This city, or island, Cos, is not that remote island in the Aegean Sea, famous for the birth of the great Hippocrates, but a city or island of the same name adjoining to Egypt, mentioned both by Stephanus and Ptolemy, as Dr. Mizon informs us. Of which Cos, and the treasures there laid up by Cleopatra and the Jews, see Antiq. B. XIV. ch. 7, sect. 2. Whiston.

<sup>17</sup> Sycthopolis is modern Beit She'an. LD.

esteemed most precious. This Zeno fell unexpectedly upon the Jews, and slew ten thousand of them, and seized upon Alexander's baggage. Yet did not this misfortune terrify Alexander; but he made an expedition upon the maritime parts of the country, Raphia and Anthedon, (the name of which king Herod afterwards changed to Agrippias,) and took even that by force. But when Alexander saw that Ptolemy was retired from Gaza to Cyprus, and his mother Cleopatra was returned to Egypt, he grew angry at the people of Gaza, because they had invited Ptolemy to assist them, and besieged their city, and ravaged their country. But as Apollodotus, the general of the army of Gaza, fell upon the camp of the Jews by night, with two thousand foreign and ten thousand of his own forces, while the night lasted, those of Gaza prevailed, because the enemy was made to believe that it was Ptolemy who attacked them; but when day was come on, and that mistake was corrected, and the Jews knew the truth of the matter, they came back again, and fell upon those of Gaza, and slew of them about a thousand. But as those of Gaza stoutly resisted them, and would not yield for either their want of any thing, nor for the great multitude that were slain, (for they would rather suffer any hardship whatever than come under the power of their enemies,) Aretas, king of the Arabians, a person then very illustrious, encouraged them to go on with alacrity, and promised them that he would come to their assistance; but it happened that before he came Apollodotus was slain; for his brother Lysimachus envying him for the great reputation he had gained among the citizens, slew him, and got the army together, and delivered up the city to Alexander, who, when he came in at first, lay quiet, but afterward set his army upon the inhabitants of Gaza, and gave them leave to punish them; so some went one way, and some went another, and slew the inhabitants of Gaza; yet were not they of cowardly hearts, but opposed those that came to slay them, and slew as many of the Jews; and some of them, when they saw themselves deserted, burnt their own houses, that the enemy might get none of their spoils; nay, some of them, with their own hands, slew their children and their wives, having no other way but this of avoiding slavery for them; but the senators, who were in all five hundred, fled to Apollo's temple, (for this attack happened to be made as they were sitting,) whom Alexander slew; and when he had utterly overthrown their city, he returned to Jerusalem, having spent a year in that siege.

[365] About this very time Antiochus, who was called Grypus, died <sup>1</sup> His death was caused by Heracleon's treachery, when he had lived forty-five years, and had reigned twenty-nine. <sup>2</sup> His son Seleucus succeeded him in the kingdom, and made war with Antiochus, his father's brother, who was called Antiochus Cyzicenus, and beat him, and took him prisoner, and slew him. But after a while Antiochus, the son of Cyzicenus, who was called Pius, came to Aradus, and put the diadem on his own head, and made war with Seleucus, and beat him, and drove him out of all Syria. But when he fled out of Syria, he came to Mopsuestia again, and levied money upon them; but the people of Mopsuestin had indignation at what he did, and burnt down his palace, and slew him, together with his friends. But when Antiochus, the son of Cyzicenus, was king of Syria, Antiochus, <sup>3</sup> the brother of Seleucus, made war upon him, and was overcome, and destroyed, he and his army. After him, his brother Philip put on the diadem, and reigned

over some part of Syria; but Ptolemy Lathyrus sent for his fourth brother Demetrius, who was called Eucerus, from Cnidus, and made him king of Damascus. Both these brothers did Antiochus vehemently oppose, but presently died; for when he was come as an auxiliary to Laodice<sup>18</sup>, queen of the Gileadites, when she was making war against the Parthians, and he was fighting courageously, he fell, while Demetrius and Philip governed Syria, as hath been elsewhere related.

[372] As to Alexander, his own people were seditious against him; for at a festival<sup>19</sup> which was then celebrated, when he stood upon the altar, and was going to sacrifice, the nation rose upon him, and pelted him with citrons<sup>20</sup> [which they then had in their hands, because] the law of the Jews required that at the feast of tabernacles every one should have branches of the palm tree and citron tree<sup>21</sup>; which thing we have elsewhere related. They also reviled him, as derived from a captive, and so unworthy of his dignity and of sacrificing.<sup>22</sup> At this he was in a rage, and slew of them about six thousand. He also built a partition-wall of wood round the altar and the temple, as far as that partition within which it was only lawful for the priests to enter; and by this means he obstructed the multitude from coming at him. He also maintained foreigners of Pisidie and Cilicia; for as to the Syrians, he was at war with them, and so made no use of them. He also overcame the Arabians, such as the Moabites and Gileadites, and made them bring tribute. Moreover, he demolished Amathus, while Theodorus durst not fight with him; but as he had joined battle with Obedas, king of the Arabians, and fell into an ambush in the places that were rugged and difficult to be traveled over, he was thrown down into a deep valley, by the multitude of the camels at Gadurn, a village of Gilead, and hardly escaped with his life. From thence he fled to Jerusalem, where, besides his other ill success, the nation insulted him, and he fought against them for six years, and slew no fewer than fifty thousand of them. And when he desired that they would desist from their ill-will to him, they hated him so much the more, on account of what had already happened; and when he had asked them what he ought to do, they all cried out, that he ought to kill himself. They also sent to Demetrius Eucerus, and desired him to make a league of mutual defense with them.

HOW DEMETRIUS EUCERUS OVERCAME ALEXANDER AND YET IN A LITTLE TIME RETIRED OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR FEAR; AS ALSO HOW ALEXANDER SLEW MANY OF THE JEWS AND THEREBY GOT CLEAR OF HIS TROUBLES. CONCERNING THE DEATH OF DEMETRIUS.

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<sup>18</sup> Laodice is mentioned in the play as one of several queens who ruled at the time in her own right. LD.

<sup>19</sup> This is the festival of Sukkot. LD.

<sup>20</sup> These citrus fruits are called etrogs.

<sup>21</sup> This is called a lulav. LD.

<sup>22</sup> This is apparently based on the version of the story about Alexander's parentage that appears in the Talmud. Josephus also tells a similar story about Alexander's grandmother (the mother of his father, Johanan Hyrcanus). Thus, essentially the same story is told about both the father (Jonanan Hyrcanus) and the son (Alexander) being the product of the rape of their mother while in captivity.

[377] SO Demetrius came with an army, and took those that invited him, and pitched his camp near the city Shechem<sup>23</sup>; upon which Alexander, with his six thousand two hundred mercenaries, and about twenty thousand Jews, who were of his party, went against Demetrius, who had three thousand horsemen, and forty thousand footmen. Now there were great endeavors used on both sides, - Demetrius trying to bring off the mercenaries that were with Alexander, because they were Greeks, and Alexander trying to bring off the Jews that were with Demetrius. However, when neither of them could persuade them so to do, they came to a battle, and Demetrius was the conqueror; in which all Alexander's mercenaries were killed, when they had given demonstration of their fidelity and courage. A great number of Demetrius's soldiers were slain also.

[379] Now as Alexander fled to the mountains, six thousand of the Jews hereupon came together [from Demetrius] to him out of pity at the change of his fortune; upon which Demetrius was afraid, and retired out of the country; after which the Jews fought against Alexander, and being beaten, were slain in great numbers in the several battles which they had; and when he had shut up the most powerful of them in the city Bethome, he besieged them therein; and when he had taken the city, and gotten the men into his power, he brought them to Jerusalem, and did one of the most barbarous actions in the world to them; for as he was feasting with his concubines, in the sight of all the city, he ordered about eight hundred of them to be crucified; and while they were living, he ordered the throats of their children and wives to be cut before their eyes. This was indeed by way of revenge for the injuries they had done him; which punishment yet was of an inhuman nature, though we suppose that he had been never so much distressed, as indeed he had been, by his wars with them, for he had by their means come to the last degree of hazard, both of his life and of his kingdom, while they were not satisfied by themselves only to fight against him, but introduced foreigners also for the same purpose; nay, at length they reduced him to that degree of necessity, that he was forced to deliver back to the king of Arabia the land of Moab and Gilead, which he had subdued, and the places that were in them, that they might not join with them in the war against him, as they had done ten thousand other things that tended to affront and reproach him. However, this barbarity seems to have been without any necessity, on which account he bare the name of a Thracian among the Jews whereupon the soldiers that had fought against him, being about eight thousand in number, ran away by night, and continued fugitives all the time that Alexander lived; who being now freed from any further disturbance from them, reigned the rest of his time in the utmost tranquillity.

[skipped]

HOW ANTIOCHUS, WHO WAS CALLED DIONYSUS, AND AFTER HIM ARETAS MADE EXPEDITIONS INTO JUDEA; AS ALSO HOW ALEXANDER TOOK MANY CITIES AND THEN

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<sup>23</sup> Shechem is modern Nablus.

RETURNED TO JERUSALEM, AND AFTER A SICKNESS OF THREE YEARS DIED; AND WHAT COUNSEL HE GAVE TO ALEXANDRA.

[skipped]

[393] But Alexander marched again to the city Dios, and took it; and then made an expedition against Essa, where was the best part of Zeno's treasures, and there he encompassed the place with three walls; and when he had taken the city by fighting, he marched to Golan and Seleucia; and when he had taken these cities, he, besides them, took that valley which is called The Valley of Antiochus, as also the fortress of Gamala. He also accused Demetrius, who was governor of those places, of many crimes, and turned him out; and after he had spent three years in this war, he returned to his own country, when the Jews joyfully received him upon this his good success.

[395] Now at this time the Jews were in possession of the following cities that had belonged to the Syrians, and Idumeans, and Phoenicians: At the sea-side, Strato's Tower, Apollonia, Joppa, Jamhis, Ashdod, Gaza, Anthedon, Raphia, and Rhinocolura; in the middle of the country, near to Idumea, Adorn, and Marissa; near the country of Samaria, Mount Carmel, and Mount Tabor, Scythopolis, and Gadara; of the country of Gaulonitis, Seleucia and Gabala; in the country of Moab, Heshbon, and Medaba, Lemba, and Oronas, Gelithon, Zorn, the valley of the Cilices, and Pollo; which last they utterly destroyed, because its inhabitants would not bear to change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews. The Jews also possessed others of the principal cities of Syria, which had been destroyed.

[398] After this, king Alexander, although he fell into a distemper by hard drinking, and had a quartan ague, which held him three years, yet would not leave off going out with his army, till he was quite spent with the labors he had undergone, and died in the bounds of Ragaba, a fortress beyond Jordan. But when his queen saw that he was ready to die, and had no longer any hopes of surviving, she came to him weeping and lamenting, and bewailed herself and her sons on the desolate condition they should be left in; and said to him, "To whom dost thou thus leave me and my children, who are destitute of all other supports, and this when thou knowest how much ill-will thy nation bears thee?" But he gave her the following advice: That she need but follow what he would suggest to her, in order to retain the kingdom securely, with her children: that she should conceal his death from the soldiers till she should have taken that place; after this she should go in triumph, as upon a victory, to Jerusalem, and put some of her authority into the hands of the Pharisees; for that they would commend her for the honor she had done them, and would reconcile the nation to her for he told her they had great authority among the Jews, both to do hurt to such as they hated, and to bring advantages to those to whom they were friendly disposed; for that they are then believed best of all by the multitude when they speak any severe thing against others, though it be only out of envy at them. And he said that it was by their means that he had incurred the displeasure of the nation, whom indeed he had injured. "Do thou,

therefore," said he, "when thou art come to Jerusalem, send for the leading men among them, and show them my body, and with great appearance of sincerity, give them leave to use it as they themselves please, whether they will dishonor the dead body by refusing it burial, as having severely suffered by my means, or whether in their anger they will offer any other injury to that body. Promise them also that thou wilt do nothing without them in the affairs of the kingdom. If thou dost but say this to them, I shall have the honor of a more glorious Funeral from them than thou couldst have made for me; and when it is in their power to abuse my dead body, they will do it no injury at all, and thou wilt rule in safety." So when he had given his wife this advice, he died, after he had reigned twenty-seven years, and lived fifty years within one.

HOW ALEXANDRA BY GAINING THE GOOD-WILL OF THE PHARISEES, RETAINED THE KINGDOM NINE YEARS, AND THEN, HAVING DONE MANY GLORIOUS ACTIONS DIED.

[405] SO Alexandra, when she had taken the fortress, acted as her husband had suggested to her, and spake to the Pharisees, and put all things into their power, both as to the dead body, and as to the affairs of the kingdom, and thereby pacified their anger against Alexander, and made them bear goodwill and friendship to him; who then came among the multitude, and made speeches to them, and laid before them the actions of Alexander, and told them that they had lost a righteous king; and by the commendation they gave him, they brought them to grieve, and to be in heaviness for him, so that he had a funeral more splendid than had any of the kings before him. Alexander left behind him two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but committed the kingdom to Alexandra. Now, as to these two sons, Hyrcanus was indeed unable to manage public affairs, and delighted rather in a quiet life; but the younger, Aristobulus, was an active and a bold man; and for this woman herself, Alexandra, she was loved by the multitude, because she seemed displeased at the offenses her husband had been guilty of.

[408] So she made Hyrcanus high priest, because he was the elder, but much more because he cared not to meddle with politics, and permitted the Pharisees to do every thing; to whom also she ordered the multitude to be obedient. She also restored again those practices which the Pharisees had introduced, according to the traditions of their forefathers, and which her father-in-law, Hyrcanus, had abrogated. So she had indeed the name of the regent, but the Pharisees had the authority; for it was they who restored such as had been banished, and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and, to say all at once, they differed in nothing from lords. However, the queen also took care of the affairs of the kingdom, and got together a great body of mercenary soldiers, and increased her own army to such a degree, that she became terrible to the neighboring tyrants, and took hostages of them: and the country was entirely at peace, excepting the Pharisees; for they disturbed the queen, and desired that she would kill those who persuaded Alexander to slay the eight hundred men; after which they cut the throat of one of them, Diogenes; and after him they did the same to several, one after another, till the men that were the most potent came into the palace, and Aristobulus with them, for he seemed to be displeased at what was done; and it appeared openly, that if he had

an opportunity, he would not permit his mother to go on so. These put the queen in mind what great dangers they had gone through, and great things they had done, whereby they had demonstrated the firmness of their fidelity to their master, insomuch that they had received the greatest marks of favor from him; and they begged of her, that she would not utterly blast their hopes, as it now happened, that when they had escaped the hazards that arose from their [open] enemies, they were to be cut off at home by their [private] enemies, like brute beasts, without any help whatsoever. They said also, that if their adversaries would be satisfied with those that had been slain already, they would take what had been done patiently, on account of their natural love to their governors; but if they must expect the same for the future also, they implored of her a dismissal from her service; for they could not bear to think of attempting any method for their deliverance without her, but would rather die willingly before the palace gate, in case she would not forgive them. And that it was a great shame, both for themselves and for the queen, that when they were neglected by her, they should come under the lash of her husband's enemies; for that Aretas, the Arabian king, and the monarchs, would give any reward, if they could get such men as foreign auxiliaries, to whom their very names, before their voices be heard, may perhaps be terrible; but if they could not obtain this their second request, and if she had determined to prefer the Pharisees before them, they still insisted that she would place them every one in her fortresses; for if some fatal demon hath a constant spite against Alexander's house, they would be willing to bear their part, and to live in a private station there.

[416] As these men said thus, and called upon Alexander's ghost for commiseration of those already slain, and those in danger of it, all the bystanders brake out into tears. But Aristobulus chiefly made manifest what were his sentiments, and used many reproachful expressions to his mother, [saying,] "Nay, indeed, the case is this, that they have been themselves the authors of their own calamities, who have permitted a woman who, against reason, was mad with ambition, to reign over them, when there were sons in the flower of their age fitter for it." **So Alexandra, not knowing what to do with any decency, committed the fortresses to them,** all but Hyrcania, and Alexandrium, and Macherus, where her principal treasures were. After a little while also, she sent her son Aristobulus with an army to Damascus against Ptolemy, who was called Menneus, who was such a bad neighbor to the city; but he did nothing considerable there, and so returned home.

[419] About this time news was brought that Tigranes, the king of Armenia, had made an irruption into Syria with five hundred thousand soldiers,<sup>24</sup> and was coming against

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<sup>24</sup> The number of five hundred thousand or even three hundred thousand, as one Greek copy, with the Latin copies, have it, for Tigranes's army, that came out of Armenia into Syria and Judea, seems much too large. We have had already several such extravagant numbers in Josephus's present copies, which are not

Judea. This news, as may well be supposed, terrified the queen and the nation. Accordingly, they sent him many and very valuable presents, as also ambassadors, and that as he was besieging Ptolemais; for Selene the queen<sup>25</sup>, the same that was also called Cleopatra, ruled then over Syria, who had persuaded the inhabitants to exclude Tigranes. So the Jewish ambassadors interceded with him, and entreated him that he would determine nothing that was severe about their queen or nation. He commended them for the respects they paid him at so great a distance, and gave them good hopes of his favor. But as soon as Ptolemais was taken, news came to Tigranes, that Lucullus, in his pursuit of Mithridates, could not light upon him, who was fled into Iberia, but was laying waste Armenia, and besieging its cities. Now when Tigranes knew this, he returned home.

[422] After this, when the queen was fallen into a dangerous distemper, Aristobulus resolved to attempt the seizing of the government; so he stole away secretly by night, with only one of his servants, and went to the fortresses, wherein his friends, that were such from the days of his father, were settled; for as he had been a great while displeased at his mother's conduct, so he was now much more afraid, lest, upon her death, their whole family should be under the power of the Pharisees; for he saw the inability of his brother, who was to succeed in the government; nor was any one conscious of what he was doing but only his wife, whom he left at Jerusalem with their children. He first of all came to Agaba, where was Galestes, one of the potent men before mentioned, and was received by him. When it was day, the queen perceived that Aristobulus was fled; and for some time she supposed that his departure was not in order to make any innovation; but when messengers came one after another with the news that he had secured the first place, the second place, and all the places, for as soon as one had begun they all submitted to his disposal, then it was that the queen and the nation were in the greatest disorder, for they were aware that it would not be long ere Aristobulus would be able to settle himself firmly in the government. What they were principally afraid of was this, that he would inflict punishment upon them for the mad treatment his house had had from them. So they resolved to take his wife and children into custody, and keep them in the fortress that was over the temple.<sup>26</sup> Now there was a mighty conflux of people that came to Aristobulus from all parts, insomuch that he had a kind of royal attendants about him; for in a little more than fifteen days he got twenty-two strong places, which gave him the opportunity of raising an army from Libanus and Trachonitis, and the monarchs; for men are easily led by the greater number, and easily submit to them. And besides this, that by affording him their assistance, when he could not expect it, they, as well as he, should have the advantages

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to he at all ascribed to him. Accordingly, I incline to Dr. Hudson's emendation here, which supposes them but forty thousand. Whiston.

<sup>25</sup> This Selene, not to be confused with the Cleopatra in the play (Cleopatra was a very common name at the time) is mentioned in the play as one of the women ruling in her own right.

<sup>26</sup> This incident is portrayed in the attached scene from the screenplay *Herod*.

that would come by his being king, because they had been the occasion of his gaining the kingdom. Now the eiders of the Jews, and Hyrcanus with them, went in unto the queen, and desired that she would give them her sentiments about the present posture of affairs, for that Aristobulus was in effect lord of almost all the kingdom, by possessing of so many strong holds, and that it was absurd for them to take any counsel by themselves, how ill soever she were, whilst she was alive, and that the danger would be upon them in no long time. But she bid them do what they thought proper to be done; that they had many circumstances in their favor still remaining, a nation in good heart, an army, and money in their several treasuries; for that she had small concern about public affairs now, when the strength of her body already failed her.

[430] Now a little while after she had said this to them, she died, when she had reigned nine years, and had in all lived seventy-three. A woman she was who showed no signs of the weakness of her sex, for she was sagacious to the greatest degree in her ambition of governing; and demonstrated by her doings at once, that her mind was fit for action, and that sometimes men themselves show the little understanding they have by the frequent mistakes they make in point of government; for she always preferred the present to futurity, and preferred the power of an imperious dominion above all things, and in comparison of that had no regard to what was good, or what was right. However, she brought the affairs of her house to such an unfortunate condition, that she was the occasion of the taking away that authority from it, and that in no long time afterward, which she had obtained by a vast number of hazards and misfortunes, and this out of a desire of what does not belong to a woman, and all by a compliance in her sentiments with those that bare ill-will to their family, and by leaving the administration destitute of a proper support of great men; and, indeed, her management during her administration while she was alive, was such as filled the palace after her death with calamities and disturbance. However, although this had been her way of governing, she preserved the nation in peace. And this is the conclusion of the affairs of, Alexandra.