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'Hellenistic Foundations' in Palestine

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Abstract

This paper reviews royal Ptolemaic and Seleucid policy concerning the 'foundation' of Palestinian urban centres against the background of their archaeological, social and political history. Consequently, it makes a distinction between founding as the establishment of a settlement where none previously existed, and founding as a formal step in which an existing settlement is accorded with recognized administrative status.

Given the historical and epigraphic sources at hand we lack direct evidence on Ptolemaic and Seleucid foundations in Palestine and the common view relates to a change in the city name (and sometimes its administrative structure, that is, to a *polis* as evidencing foundation or refoundation. Although this idea is common in Hellenistic historiography, it dates back to Flavius Josephus, who was defending the antiquity of the nations of Palestine.[2]

1 I am indebted to Catharine Lorber for her valuable comments on numismatic-related issues; the responsibility for the ideas expressed below, however, is mine alone. Greek names, terms and places appear in Latin forms.

2 Cf. *Antiquities* I, 121: 'Of the nations some still preserve the names which were given them by their founders, some have changed them, while yet others have modified them to make them more intelligible to their neighbours. It is the Greeks who are responsible for this change of nomenclature; for when in after ages they rose to power, they appropriated even the glories of the past, embellishing the nations with names which they could understand and imposing on them forms of government, as though they were descended from themselves.' [trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray; edition Loeb]. In this respect cf. e.g. listings of refoundations, new foundations and foundations at or near major religious centres in Cohen 2006: 424–26 which on the one hand admits that in many of the listed settlements there is no extant evidence bearing on this question yet on the other gives no lucid interpretation on the meaning of the term in its Near Eastern context. Notwithstanding the above, Cohen defines 'new' as foundation built at a previously uninhabited site and confesses on relatively few firm attestations for new foundations. Moreover, Cohen adds that these sites were

Thus, for example, the fact that, in some of the Zenon Papyri of the year 259 BCE and of the year 258 BCE, the mention of the city as Ptolemaïs,[3] and not Acco/*ʿkh*, is taken by many historians as evidencing foundation. This epigraphic source accords with the royal coins of the city of Ptolemaïs that bear a ligatured monogram of the Greek letters ΠΤ,[4] as an abbreviation of the new name, and date from Ptolemy II's 25th regnal year,[5] that is 261/60 BCE (Svoronos 1904–08: No. 765).[6] Another example that relates to the same period of time is the site of Beth-Shean, which was renamed Scythopolis. A hoard of 20 silver *tetradrachms* of Ptolemy II (FitzGerald 1931: 51–56, Nos. 1–20), in which 11 coins are dated to Ptolemy II's 27th through 37th regnal years, i.e. 259/58–249/48

often near or adjacent to an older town. Hence, he concludes, that the relatively few firm attestations for new foundations undoubtedly reflect the fact that most of the Hellenistic colonies resulted from the refounding or renaming of older settlements for economic reasons (1995: 428).

3 Durand 1997; i.e. P. Cairo Zen. 1, 59004 – February–May 259 BCE; P. Cairo Zen. 1, 59008 (recto) – September–November 259 BCE (?); P. L. Bat. 20, 32 – 9 February 258 BCE; PSI 5, 495 – 30 November 258 BCE. The remainder that mention the city of Ptolemaïs, i.e. PSI 4, 406; PSI 6, 616; P. Lond. 7, 2022; P. Lond. 7, 2141 (a customary completion), bears no dating.

4 The term royal coins refer to issues that bear the portrait of the king, usually together with the name of the city (the mint), either abbreviated (the beginning of the name) or by monogram (control mark) of the mint (often a combination of the letters that make up the name of the city) and sometimes also the name of the king.

5 For the sake of our argument his first regnal year started in 285/84 BCE, although it is known that he inherited the throne only in 282 BCE but later backdated his regnal count to 285/84 BCE while he was co-regent with his father Ptolemy I. R. A. Hazzard attempted to demonstrate that the backdating occurred as early as 282 BCE in documents dated according to the Macedonian calendar, and in 267 BCE in documents dated according to the Egyptian calendar (1987).

6 The city of Ptolemaïs minted 'monogrammed' royal coins even earlier, but these coins are undated, and customarily assigned to Ptolemy II's first series which dates to 273–268 BCE (Svoronos 1904–08: Col. 108, No. 764, Pl. 25, 1). A. Davesne demonstrated however that Svoronos' No. 764 is an obverse die-linked of Svoronos' No. 365, i.e. a *tetradrachm* that shares the same upper monogram but has the letter -A- below, instead of the circled ligatured ΠΤ monogram. Davesne thus argued that in the context of this die link, this circled ligatured ΠΤ does not seem to be a mintmark for Ptolemaïs. It probably reflects the personal name of a moneyer (by the name of Ptolemaios). Davesne included these two varieties in a larger series that he attributed to Cyprus, perhaps Citium. He dated Svoronos' Nos. 365 and 764 between 265/64 and 260/59 BCE and his whole system of dating was based on the assumption that circulating *tetradrachms* lost weight at a regular rate, and that the dated *tetradrachms* of the Syro-Phoenician mints could provide a benchmark for dating the coin age of other mints (Davesne and Le Rider 1989: 213 [at Nos. 5081–85], 283). This is an ambitious but obviously speculative theory, and it can produce some problematic results. Consequently, it is difficult to rely on Davesne's chronology; even if Svoronos' No.764 is justifiably removed from the output of the mint of the city of Ptolemaïs, we can safely assume that under Ptolemy II it was operated from his 25th year, i.e. 261/60 BCE, based on the dated series of silver *tetradrachms* with the reverse legend ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ (Svoronos 1904–08: Nos. 765–84), rather than ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (ibid.: No. 764). In fact, the city of Ptolemaïs continued to mint 'monogrammed' royal coins under Ptolemy III, IV and V (?). For a historical coverage of Hellenistic Ptolemaïs cf. Cohen 2006: 213–21.

BCE, may provide evidence that intense Hellenistic re-occupation of the site, namely Tell el-Ḥutzen, began under Ptolemy II's third regnal decade (as suggested by Fuks 1983: 44–53).[7] The recently published Rhodian amphorae stamped handles recovered from A. Mazar's excavations of Tell el-Ḥutzen (mostly from Area P), lend support to such a conclusion (Ariel 2006: 596–97). Two other examples that may relate to the same period of time are the site of Beth Yeraḥ, located on the southern shore of the sea of Galilee, which was renamed Philoteria, apparently after Ptolemy II's sister,[8] and the site of Rabat-Ammon, which was renamed Philadephia, after Ptolemy II's pseudonym, which may have occurred during his life or after his death. Interestingly, in the case of Rabat-Ammon, both the Zenon papyri (Durand 1997),[9] and Polybius (V, 71, 4), that is in the contexts of the Fourth Syrian War (221–217 BCE), relate to the site as Rabat-Ammon. In the same manner, one may assume that Joppa/*ypy* was 'founded' anew, under Ptolemy II's 25th regnal year, in 261/60 BCE, when the city struck gold *octodrachms*, silver *tetradrachms* and bronze coins with a ligatured monogram of the Greek letters ΙΟΠ, that denotes the city's new name, Iopé (Svoronos 1904–08: No. 795, Nos. 818–20 [undated bronze coins]). We may even further suggest that other minting cities under the Ptolemies were 'founded' anew. These are Gaza/*ʿzh* like Iopé, under Ptolemy II's 25th regnal year onwards, in 261/60 BCE, when the city struck gold *octodrachms*, silver *tetradrachms* and bronze coins which differ from those of Iopé by the ligatured monogram of the Greek letters ΓΑ – for Gaza (Svoronos 1904–08: No. 822 [silver *tetradrachm*], Nos. 834–38 [undated bronze coins]).[10] Ashkelon/Ascalon, under Ptolemy IV's

7 It should be noted however that Fuks relates the foundation of Scythopolis, Ptolemaïs, Philoteria and Philadelphia to the contexts of the Second Syria War (260–253 BCE). In the case of Scythopolis, Fuks sees Flavius Josephus' account on the refusal of the people of Scythopolis to pay their taxes to the tax collector Joseph the son of Tobias (*Antiquities* XII, 182–83), in the 240s BCE, as evidencing a *terminus ad quem* for the site foundation (1983: 47–51). Be that as it may, Josephus' diachronic use of 'Scythopolis' cannot be taken as evidencing the site name in the time of Joseph the son of Tobias.

8 Indeed, it is only in Polybius V, 70, 3–5, and in the contexts of Antiochus III's invasion of Coele Syria during the Fourth Syrian War (218 BCE), that the city is referred to as 'Philoteria', where 'Scythopolis' is mentioned as well; see in this respect the discussion of Cohen 2006: 273–74, 290–99.

9 I.e. PSI 6, 616, which is not dated but generally fixed to the years 261–252 BCE, mentions ἐν Ραββαταμμάνοις, that is Rabbatammana (see also Cohen 2006: 268–72).

10 In fact, the cities of Iopé and Gaza minted 'monogrammed' royal coins under Ptolemy II and III, while Iopé has also minted under Ptolemy V. It should be noted that Svoronos' Nos. 794 and 821 refer to coins of Iopé and Gaza of Ptolemy II's 23rd regnal year; however Otto Mørkholm reattributed these coins to Ptolemy III (1980). One should bear in mind that Iopé and Gaza are not proper new names but 'Greek-sounded' modifications of the original Semitic names; the mere fact that these cities served as royal Ptolemaic mints does not necessarily imply that they were refounded

third regnal year onwards, in 219/18 BCE, when the city struck silver *tetradrachms* with an abbreviation of the Greek letters ΑΣ – for Ascalon (Svoronos 1904–08: No. 1188; see also Seyrig 1950a: 5–6, No. 105), and similarly Dor was 'founded' anew, under Ptolemy V, for the city struck silver *tetradrachms*, with an abbreviation of the Greek letters Δω – for Dora (Svoronos 1904–08: No. 1262; see also Mørkholm 1981: 6). The fact that Jerusalem was virtually the only mint of the Ptolemaic kingdom to strike (royal) silver fractions on the Attic weight standard under Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II (Ronen 2003–06),[11] while the Lagid kings were promoting the use of bronze coinage with a similar range of values is of special interest.[12] Can we understand the numismatic evidence as a proof for the city's 'refoundation' in about 301 BCE? More interesting is the fact that Jerusalem was apparently deprived of minting rights once the coastal cities of Ptolemaïs, Iopé and Gaza were granted ones and reasons can only be speculated.[13]

Can the true meaning of 'foundation' in Ptolemaic Palestine be illuminated by the aid of other epigraphic evidence of royal nature? The problem is the scarcity of such finds and apart from an inscription from Iopé, dated to the time of Ptolemy IV, we do not have information. This

by Ptolemy II, as new foundations (and re-foundations) normally distinguished by new names, deriving from the ruling royal family: e.g. Ptolemaïs, Philadelphia, Arsinoë, Berenice and Philoteris/a under the Ptolemies; and Seleucia, Antiochia, Apamea and Laodicea under the Seleucids. However, given the case of Scythopolis whose name remains enigmatic, or Apollonia(-Arsuf) (which was probably originally named Arshoph after the Phoenician god Reshef) the idea that foundations and especially refoundations should not necessarily be defined by entirely new royal names cannot be rejected altogether. For a historical coverage of Hellenistic Gaza cf. Cohen 2006: 282–88.

11 After the Graeco-Macedonian conquest the weight standard of the provincial coinage of Judah changed, when the *gra* (*gerah*) and half-*gra* were replaced by fractions of the *obol* on the Attic weight standard with a modal weight of 0.19 g for the quarter-*obol*.

12 These issues show a clear Ptolemaic iconographic influence (e.g. Meshorer 2001: Nos. 29–35; Gitler and Lorber 2006: Group 5) and are dated from circa 301–261/60 BCE (Gitler and Lorber 2006). Recently it was suggested that the coins bearing the personal name *yḥzqyh hpḥh* (Meshorer 2001: Nos. 22–23), should be attributed to the period of the Diadochi (after 312 BCE) because of the use of an Attic weight standard apparent from these coins (Ronen 1998: 125); the considerably small number of specimens (31 coins) and consequently the unreliable statistic results, as well as the use of Achaemenid title provide doubts for this suggestion. Following Mildenberg (1979) who was of the opinion that *yḥzqyh*-type coins (without the Achaemenid title *pḥh* should date to the 'Macedonian period'; that is, to the period between 332 and 301 (namely Macedonian-Diadochi), Gitler and Lorber (2008) examined the weights of *yḥzqyh*-type coins (Meshorer 2001: Nos. 24–26). They found that, except for Meshorer's 2001: No. 25a, these coins are on the Judahite *šql/grh* standard. Gitler and Lorber dated however Meshorer's 2001: Nos. 14, 20–23, 25a, 27–28 to the 'Macedonian period' based on either statistically assumed Attic weight standards (Nos. 22–23, 25a, my reservations above) or stylistic, epigraphic considerations (Nos. 14, 21–22, 27–28) (2008: Table 1).

13 This seems to be the case only if one accepts Gitler and Lorber's (2006) revised chronology.

dedicatory inscription was rightfully attributed to a temple that was not discovered (or correctly identified) during the excavations. The inscription is conventionally dated by some scholars to the summer of 217 BCE (*SEG* 20, No. 467; Lupo 2003: 193–95; Tal 2008: 174), that is after the Battle of Raphia at which time Ptolemy IV may have visited the site. The fact that the inscription is carved on a marble slab, rock that is foreign to the Palestinian geological environment, may suggest that it bears a somewhat fixed formula that did not necessarily have religious or social meaning for the inhabitants of Iopé. In other words it does not contribute significantly to our understanding of the administrative status of Iopé under the Ptolemies.

But before elaborating on the true meaning of foundation in the context of Hellenistic Palestine, let us first review the different views on Ptolemaic and Seleucid state policy towards urban settlements, since the founding of cities was one of the hallmarks of intentional imperial policy. However a distinction must be drawn between founding as the establishment of a settlement where none previously existed, and founding as a formal step in which an existing settlement is accorded with recognized administrative status. It was V. Tcherikover who defined the term *polis* in relation to Hellenistic Palestine as an autonomic city, which took upon itself Greek law and usually also a new name, and underwent a process of social/administrative Hellenization; that is, it established urban institutions, a *boule* and officials (of Greek/Athenian bureaucratic titles) appointed by the people (1963: 26, 86, 90). This definition was also adopted by many other scholars. In Tcherikover's opinion, the coastal cities became *poleis* under the Ptolemies. M. Avi-Yonah, who did not devote extensive discussion to the essence of the *poleis* in Palestine, saw Phoenician Hellenization as impacting both geographical and social spheres, and Phoenicia (a term that includes the Palestinian coast) as a bastion of Hellenization due to the independent past of its urban agglomerations as city-states (1978: 182–88 passim). This argument holds, of course, internal contradiction. According to M. Stern, the process continued for a number of generations, since clear information about the regime in those cities derives only from the second and first centuries BCE, namely under the Seleucids. Stern was also cautious about a link between the giving of a new name to a city and the establishment of a *polis* regime, at least in the case of Ptolemaïs (1991: 8). G. Fuks, in contrast, argues that the Ptolemies, whose rule was centralized, did not give the rights of the *polis* (that is, autonomy) to new and veteran cities, and that the change in their status in fact began only at the time of Seleucus IV, 187–175 BCE. This is because the government wanted the cities to have full control of their surrounding villages, and to make things easier for the central government. The cities however bought the rights of *polis* at full price, which was essential to the Seleucids, whose

economic situation was difficult (1983: 26–27, 36–39; 2001a: 25–26). F. Millar expressed a different opinion, rejecting the existence of *poleis* during the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods. Although he only discussed Phoenician urban centres, including those on the coast of Palestine, his arguments reflect his opinion regarding the rest of the country (1987: 129–33). Millar discerned clear evidence of the existence of cities with the status of *polis* only during the Roman period (1983: 63). He also adopted the approach of Kreissig, which saw an essential difference between the Greek *polis* and the Eastern, Asian *polis* and its modes of production, which devoted a central place to its economic aspect, that is private commerce and industry (1974: 1082–83). Millar's contention, that historical and epigraphic evidence do not clarify the status of Phoenician cities, contradicts, in Fuks' opinion, the numismatic finds. The minting of autonomous silver and bronze coins attest, according to Fuks that these cities were awarded the status of *polis* as early as the first half of the second century BCE (in Ptolemaïs) (1983: 36–39; 2001a: 26–27). There is, of course, a clear distinction between royal coins of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods and municipal (or civic) coins known as semi-autonomous and autonomous coins that were struck only under the Seleucids (on terminology, see above note 3). The term semi-autonomous coins normally refers to those of Ptolemaïs from the time of Antiochus IV, bearing his portrait on the obverse and a goddess holding a sceptre or a torch, on the reverse, alongside the inscription ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΔΙ – 'Of the Antiochs of Ptolemaïs' (Houghton and Spaer 1998: Nos. 1156–60). These coins' reflection of autonomy is not well-founded, since this formula does not necessarily imply autonomy. Autonomous coins on the other hand do not bear the portrait of the king or his name. Their iconographic motifs are often taken from coins of the period by adopting known motifs or are sometimes a reflection of the material, religious and artistic culture of the population group that minted them. Thus such municipal issues frequently attest to the cities' central political status. In fact, it is only in late second and early first centuries BCE that such Hellenistic coins are known to have existed; in Gaza and in Ascalon. Those of Gaza that bear the formula ΓΑΖΑΙΩΝ ΔΗΝΟΥ (i.e. ΔΗΜΟΥ) or ΔΗΜΟ[Υ ΓΑ]ΖΑΙΩΝ – 'Of the People of Gaza' or ΔΗΜΟΥ ΣΕΛ[ΕΥΚΕΩΝ] ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΓΑΖΗ – 'Of the People of Seleucia in Gaza' (Hill 1965: lxix–lxx, Pl. 15, 1–3) were dated by a few scholars to the time of Seleucus IV (e.g. Le Rider 1965: 410, note 1), based on the reasoning that sites named after Seleucus were 'founded' or 're-founded' in his days. In the case of Palestine where only one example of such a site is documented, that is Seleucia in the Golan heights (known in present-day as Khirbet Seleukie), Seleucus IV is preferred over Seleucus V who ruled for less than one year (cf. e.g. Tcherikover 1927: 70). In any case

dating these coins to the time of Seleucus IV seems arbitrary.[14] The coin-types of both Gaza and Ascalon who bear the formula ΓΑΖΗΣ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΑΣΥ[ΛΟΥ] – 'Of Holy Asylum Gaza' (Hill 1965: lxix–lxx, Pl. 15, 4–5) or ΑΣΚΑΛΩΝΙΤΩΝ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΙΕΡ[ΑΣ] ΑΣ[ΥΛΟΥ] – 'Of the People of Holy Asylum Ascalon' (Rosenberger 1984–85: No. 1) or ΙΕΡ ΑΣΥ (i.e. [τῆς] ἱερ(ᾶς) [καὶ] ἀσύ(λου) 'Of Holy Asylum' (Houghton 1983: Nos. 825–26), are evidence that both cities gained partial autonomy in the time of Antiochus VIII (see in this respect Rigsby 1996: 519–23). Some of the autonomous coins of Gaza bear a new urban calendar, which denotes the year the city received its autonomic standing (Kushnir-Stein 1995a; Hoover 2006; 2007a: 63–70).

If we are to accept Fuks' theory, that the right to strike autonomous coins is evidence that the transformation of a city to a *polis* was an intentional policy of the centralized Seleucid rule, then only very few of the urban settlements were formal or recognized as city-states (*poleis*), namely the coastal settlements of Ptolemaïs, Ascalon and Gaza.[15] The status of the other minting cities under the Seleucids remains unclear, as they minted royal coins intermittently, and under different Seleucid kings; for example, silver and bronze coins of Demetrias-by-the-Sea (probably Strato's Tower, i.e. present-day Caesarea) under Demetrius II (Hoover 2007b),[16] bronze coins of Samaria possibly under Antiochus IV (see below, note 17) and silver coins of Samaria possibly under Antiochus IX

14 It is worth noting that no extant coin can definitely be attributed to Seleucia in the Golan; see in this respect Imhoof-Blumer 1901–02: 140; and also Cohen 2006: 288–89.

15 In fact, only a few genuinely municipal coinages were struck by cities that were subject to the Seleucids. In the time of Seleucus I, Seleucia in Pieria produced a municipal bronze coinage alongside a royal bronze coinage in the name of the king (Newell 1941: 86–88). Antioch-on-the-Orontes began to strike its municipal bronze coinage while it was still under the rule of the Seleucids immediately after the death of Antiochus XI, during the second reign of Antiochus X, and this probably came to replace the royal Seleucid bronze series at Antioch (Hoover 2007c).

16 It was Henri Seyrig who after restoring the reading as ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΑΔΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΑΛΑΣΣΗΙ 'Of Demetrias-by-the-Sea' on an inscribed lead weight of half-*mna* at the museum of Beirut that bore the date ΘΝΡ (i.e. 154/53 BCE), consequently associated bronze coinage marked with the letters ΔΗ and civic era dates with a foundation in Phoenicia, based on the idea that the sign -L- which preceded the dates on the coins, was used only in those parts of the Seleucid realm which had formerly belonged to the Ptolemies (1950b: Fig. 4 for facsimile; cf. *Syria* 67 [1990], p. 511, Fig. 30B for photograph). More recently Kushnir-Stein (1995b; see also Lampinen 1999) endorsed Seyrig's reading and conclusions and suggested two periods for these coins, in the later second century BCE (undated bevel-edged municipal bronze issues of head of Zeus/cornucopia type, flanked by the letters Δ-Η on the reverse) and in the first century BCE under the Romans. She has also suggested that the site of Demetrias-by-the-Sea should be identified as a refoundation of Strato's Tower based on similarities in neighbouring Dora's and Demetrias' Roman issues (see Cohen 2006: 203 for other supporting evidence). Accordingly, Hoover (2007a) attributed dated silver *drachms* struck under Demetrius II's first reign (146–138 BCE) of uncertain 'southern mint' that bear the ligatured letters ΔΗ on their reverse (as well as die-linked obverse type) with Demetrias-by-the-Sea.

(Houghton 2000),[17] bronze coins of Jerusalem under Antiochus VII (Houghton and Spaer 1998: Nos. 2133–50),[18] and possibly bronze coins of Marisē under Antiochus VI and VII.[19] These autonomous coins were in almost exclusive use of the cities or their region and not outside them, and served to meet the needs of the local market only. It can therefore be assumed that municipal autonomous coins from the Hellenistic period do reflect a change in the status of a city – giving it the right to mint coins that are representing the urban authority, even perhaps a certain amount of judicial autonomy as well. However, they do not prove that the city adopted Greek laws and social order and, therefore, they do not reflect a city's foundation or refoundation, if we follow the line of reasoning stressed so far of a city's foundation or refoundation as a reflection of a *polis*.

17 That is undated *hemidrachms* and *obols* Antiochus portrait/Athena royal silver coin-type, flanked by the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕ ΑΝΤΙ ΦΙΛ. The attribution to Antiochus IX is secure, as it rests on the portrait and a reverse type specific to this king. Based on the provenance of these coins in the region of Samaria, and in keeping with the Persian-period tradition of low denomination silver coin minting in Samaria, it was suggested that they were minted during the reign of Antiochus IX (Houghton 2000). Such an attribution seems however too tentative.

18 Dan Barag has recently suggested that a certain Antiochus portrait/seated goddess undated royal bronze coin-type, flanked by the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ is dated to the days of Antiochus IV, and evidencing a royal issue of the city of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Maccabaean revolt before the city was taken by Judas Maccabaeus (circa 167–164 BCE), representing its transformation into a *polis* (2002), following *1 Macc.* 1.14; *2 Macc.* 4.9. Barag's argument is based on the distribution of the coins in Palestine and the attribution of the flan, fabric and iconographic content to a 'southern mint'. However, too few coins were actually found in Jerusalem and its close environs (see Barag's distribution list, 2002: 61–63), thus such an argument is highly theoretical. Many of the coins came from the region of Samaria and may point to a mint north of Jerusalem, possibly the city of Samaria itself (see in this respect Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 94–95; and Cohen 2006: 255–63 for Jerusalem Seleucid history).

Jerusalem's lily/anchor royal bronze coin-type, flanked by the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ, and a Seleucid date (basically 132/31–131/30 BCE), were minted under Antiochus VII, and although attributed by some scholars to Ascalon (e.g. Meshorer 1981: 11), their current attribution to Jerusalem seems to be more accepted (Syon 2006; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 391–92). This can also be strengthened historically from *1 Macc.* 15.6 which explicitly says that Antiochus VII gave Simon, the high priest in Jerusalem, the right to coin money for local use.

19 Cf. Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 333, No. 2028 (Antiochus VI), head of Apollo/Tyche type, flanked by the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ, with vertically set controls marked ΗΔΑΜ or ΗΔ, that are attributed to Marisē based on 20 coins found during the excavations, and ibid.: 392–93, No. 2125 (Antiochus VII), diademed head/splayed double cornucopiae type, with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ, based on provenance in Israel and similarity in style and fabric to the previous type. Such attributions seems however too tentative, since the idea that considerable numbers of the same coin-type found in a site during excavations is evidencing products of a local mint is not necessarily true. It should be noted, however, that these coins were previously attributed to Gaza (e.g. Houghton and Spaer 1998: Nos. 2105–12), but this attribution is now questioned because of their provenance and due to the fact that they not bear a mintmark of Gaza or the sign of Marnas (cf. e.g. Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 333).

Therefore, we ought to ask, can the true meaning of 'foundation' in Seleucid Palestine be illuminated by the aid of other epigraphic evidence of royal nature? Although the material at hand is richer than Ptolemaic epigraphic evidence; we are still left with more questions than answers. Urban Greek titles may come to our aid; the most common found on epigraphic material is the title *agoranomos*, that is 'Who is in Charge of the *Agora*', and appears on lead weight, inscriptions and amphora handles (Tal 2006: 45–46, 311–14). Its earliest appearance is dated to the days of Antiochus IV, and comes from Marisē (Finkielsztejn 2004: 248). Like municipal autonomous coins, the production of local lead weights attest to the partial autonomy in a city's commercial life, and to date only weights that were found at Scythopolis and Marisē can be securely defined as products of these sites given their defined motifs (Tal 2006: 311–12). The several royal inscriptions do not contribute significantly to our understanding of the administrative status given their contents. The royal edicts refer to hierarchical structure and taxation system rather than to the status of the cities; for example the Hefzibah inscription documents nine letters exchanged between Antiochus III, Ptolemy the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and high priest, and other Seleucid officials, and reveals the hierarchic structure of the royal administration and the fact that the governor owned private lands that were leased to villages owned by the king, apparently in the eastern Jezreel valley (*SEG* 29, No. 1613). The recently published Heliodorus inscription (that came from Marisē) documents royal correspondence in three letters exchanged between Seleucus IV, Heliodorus and other Seleucid officials and contains an order by the king to appoint Olympiodorus in charge on the sanctuaries (namely high priest) of *Koilē Syria and Phoinikē* (Cotton and Wörrle 2007; Gera 2009). The Yavneh-Yam inscription documents an exchange of letters between Antiochus V and the Sidonian inhabitants of Yavneh-Yam who sought an exemption from taxes (*SEG* 41, No. 1556). Other royal inscriptions such as the one from Scythopolis (*SEG* 8, 33; Rowe 1930: 44, Fig. 9), Samaria (*SEG* 8, 96; Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 165–66, Plan 12) and Ptolemaïs (*SEG* 19, No. 904) are basically cultic and most probably belonged to temples; the one from Scythopolis lists priests of Olympian Zeus; the one from Samaria too lists priests of Olympian Zeus and a secretary (*grammateus*) apparently of a garrison stationed at the site; and the one from Ptolemaïs is a dedicatory inscription to either Antiochus VII or IX, made by the chief-secretary (*archi-grammateus*) of the military forces (Van't Dack et al. 1989: 124–27).[20] With this survey of

20 Cf. in this respect, Cohen's list of civic institutions and offices, 2006: 428–29 (under Phoenicia and Southern Syria).

epigraphic evidence in mind, we turn now to the silent material culture of both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule in Palestine.

Archaeologically, in most of the urban settlements we are witness to the continuity of urban traditions from periods preceding the Hellenistic period. In some of them, new fortification systems were built during the Hellenistic period (Ptolemaïs, Iodefat/Iotapata, Dora, Samaria, Mt Gerizim, Iopé and Mareshah/Marisē), while in others (Shechem, Gezer/Gazera, Gaza[?] and Tel ʿIra) fortifications from periods preceding the Hellenistic period continued to exist after refurbishing. The construction techniques are not new to the period discussed, reflecting in the main earlier local building traditions, though some scholars tend to see their origin in Phoenicia (e.g. Stern 1992), and to a lesser extent in Greece (e.g. Sharon 1987). The preference for ashlar constructions in some of the urban settlements can be seen as socio-economic rather than cultural. The few extant city gates are divided between types of earlier (biblical period) tradition (as in Mt Gerizim and Gezer) and simple types with an entrance in a straight axis protected by a buttress (as in Dora), which are also known from periods preceding the Hellenistic period, but in military architecture. The dates of the fortification systems given by the excavators are divided between the fourth, third and second centuries BCE and thus cannot be interpreted as a sudden royal initiative (Macedonian, Diadochi, Ptolemaic or Seleucid). The few public and administrative buildings discovered show local building traditions. In some urban settlements public and administrative buildings have similar plans to those of domestic buildings (as in Iopé[?], Mt Gerizim and Marisē), that is a central courtyard surrounded by rows of rooms. A similar conclusion also arises from methodological analysis of the cult buildings in the period discussed. The few extant sites with a clear plan (Tel Dan, Mt Miṣpe Yamim, Ptolemaïs, Makhmish, Tel Mikhal, Lachish and Beersheba – some urban and some not) demonstrate the dominance of local building traditions, whether they are longitudinal or latitudinal in plan. A number of these were founded prior to the Hellenistic period (Tel Dan, Mt Miṣpe Yamim, Makhmish and Lachish[?]), and their core plan remained as it had been in the foundation phase; there was presumably no change either in the deity worshipped (Tal 2008). There are fewer extant examples of large residential buildings. The best example of the latter is the one found at Tel Anafa. This building, even though there are clear Greek influences mainly limited to the architectural decoration, is nevertheless similar in ground plan to the smaller domestic buildings. One can distinguish two types of domestic buildings: the first is the commonest type of the period, that is the central courtyard house; the second, which is much rarer, is termed the frontal courtyard house. Both originate from local Palestinian architecture, and they differ from their so-called 'Greek' counterparts for they lack the most characteristic

components of Greek houses, the *prostas* and the *pastas*. Each urban component found in the urban settlements of Hellenistic Palestine turns out to be an integral part of the environment, culture, and social and political background of the period discussed and those preceding it. A study of the archaeological remains in most of these urban sites reveals that the settlements – whether they continued in existence from the Persian period or were resettled in the Hellenistic period – were built according to local architectural principles.[21]

This is the place to note that the archaeological record from Hellenistic Palestine supports Millar's conclusions, since these urban settlements revealed no buildings in the Greek tradition for the use of the public (an agora, a basilical structure, etc.), for administration (*bouleuterion*),[22] for education (*gymnasium*),[23] or even for entertainment (theatre).[24] The status of all urban settlements in Palestine in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods was certainly not equal; only a few of them had mints (or the right to strike royal and municipal autonomous coins) and received more authority and greater room to manoeuvre than the others. Their conduct as *poleis* (in the light of modern historiographic research) is to be found in the Palestinian content of the term, which does not overlap the Classical, Greek term (Kreissig 1974; 1977). Since the urban settlements were subservient to

21 All the above was amply analysed and summarized by Tal 2006: 15–115, 323–35.

22 It was recently suggested that one of the structures excavated by B. Maisler and M. Stekelis in Beth Yeraḥ/Philoteria changed its nature from commercial (under the Ptolemies) to public (under the Seleucids), based on the idea that the newly established eight equidistant pilasters built in two rows served the city's *basilica* (Tepper 1999). However, given its considerable small internal dimensions (8.7 × 11.9 m), the irregularity of the width of its naves, and the hypothetical assumption that the structure was located in the city's centre, its 'basilical' characteristics are purely theoretical.

23 With two exceptions; the one is Jerusalem, where a *gymnasium* was operated as of 175 BCE (under Antiochus IV) according to *1 Macc.* 1.14; *2 Macc.* 4.9 and probably was dismantled in the contexts of Judas Maccabaeus' Temple purifications in 164 BCE; the other is an undated epigraphic evidence for a *gymnasiarch* (and, hence, a *gymnasium*) at Philadelpheia (cf. Gatier 1986: 2, 29). The short-lived *gymnasium* building in Jerusalem was taken by numerous scholars as evidencing Jerusalem's status as a proper *polis* – 'Antioch in Jerusalem', whose Greek institutions include also an *ephebeum*, i.e. an educational military-oriented union who qualifies youngsters, and allows them to become citizens (*demoi*) in a *polis* (cf. e.g. Tcherikover 1974: 146–55; Hengel 1974: 70–78; 2001: 16–28; see however Feldman 2006: 26–27, 77 for counter-arguments). This so-called Hellenized Jerusalemites (*2 Macc.* 4.13) were obviously confined to parts of the city's élites, by necessity or by choice (which I dare to say was mostly economical rather than cultural/social), yet vigorously invalidated by the majority of the Jerusalemites and Jews. The fact that we hear of no other *gymnasia* in historical and epigraphic writings on Hellenistic Palestine lend support to such a conclusion.

24 Notwithstanding the above conclusion one should note, however, that Gadara (Transjordan) was the birthplace of renowned Greek intellectuals of the Late Hellenistic (Hasmonaean) and especially Early Roman period (see, e.g. Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 2, 29; cf. also Hengel 1974: 83–87; Geiger 1985). In addition, Josephus described Gadara, Gaza and Hippos as 'Hellenic *poleis*' (*Antiquities* XVII, 320, *War* II, 97) although in Early Roman period context.

the central government, the extent of their independence was certainly limited and subordinate to various procedures that did not allow city states complete autonomy. It should also be added that the roots of the Greek *poleis* and the reasons it came into being are fundamentally different from the roots of the major urban settlements that developed in the ancient Near East (de Polignac 1995).

In summary 'Hellenistic Foundations' in Palestine seem to have been in most cases a formal procedure in which an existing settlement is accorded with recognized administrative status and role or in other words 'refounded'. The fact that the minting authorities under the Ptolemies (Ptolemaïs, Dora, Iopé, Jerusalem, Ascalon and Gaza), were harboured in coastal centres (with the exception of Jerusalem, above), with an affluent Achaemenid past, most probably garrisoned with military forces,[25] may suggest that economically, royal Ptolemaic coins were in a sense auxiliary coins that met the immediate economic needs of its Ptolemaic rulers, and thus minted at a royal municipal minting authority (Jenkins 1967). In other words they formed part of a monetary inter-urban economy at its various levels; first and foremost the state/provincial level, i.e. a response to the needs of the government and the army, and second, at the level of the individual – the municipal/urban economy.

A similar conclusion may be drawn with regard to the royal Seleucid issues. Here, too, the minting authorities (Ptolemaïs, Demetrias-by-the-Sea, Samaria, Jerusalem, Asaclon and Gaza), were in most cases harboured coastal centres (with the exception of Jerusalem and Samaria, above), with affluent Achaemenid past, most probably garrisoned with military forces. However, the municipal (or civic) autonomous issues of Ascalon and the royal-municipal or semi-autonomous issues of Ptolemaïs during the reign of Antiochus IV, and their production continuance in Ptolemaïs, Ascalon and Gaza under later Seleucids kings in the second half of the second century BCE, highlights political and social aspects in the status of these cities, which received (or even purchased) a certain level of autonomy at various times in the later Seleucid period. The fact that the cities of Ptolemaïs, Ascalon and Gaza, are the only minting authorities to mint royal coins under both the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, suggest that the imperial administration of both the dynasts choose to invest in existing urban centres (founded in much earlier times) rather than in proper new foundations.

Only a few cases in Hellenistic Palestine can be defined as true

25 For Persian–Achaemenid archaeological remains cf. *NEAEHL* 1–5 passim, s.v. Akko, Ascalon, Dor, Gaza, Jaffa and Jerusalem. Evidence on military forces may also come from nearby fortresses as discovered in Ashdod (near Ascalon) Tel Michal (near Jaffa) and Shiqmona (near Dora) (cf. e.g. Tal 2005: 80, note 13).

Hellenistic 'foundation' that is the establishment of an urban settlement where none previously existed; surprisingly, all the Palestinian minting cities of either Ptolemaic or Seleucid rule, have had Achaemenid past, and urban foundations basically refer to military strongholds that in cases grew to become urban settlements per se already under the Seleucids; the sites of Scythopolis and Philoteria may provide an illustration to such a process, although both of these sites do not lack Achaemenid material culture altogether, their Hellenistic remains are archaeologically better documented than their Persian ones, and both probably did not mint coins under their Hellenistic rulers.[26] In the case of Demetrias-by-the-Sea (if identification with Strato's Tower is truly the case), Samaria and Jerusalem, not only did these sites have an Achaemenid past,[27] but coin minting was episodic, thus serving a certain economic (and to some extent political and social) need.

26 Other such examples may include other inland sites such as, Iotapata, Hippos and Gam(a)la, the latter became urban settlement rather under the Romans, cf. *NEAEHL* 5, s.v. Gamala, Hippos (Sussita), Yodfat.

27 With the possible exception of the site of Strato's Tower (Στράτονος Πύργος P. Cairo Zen. 1, 59004 – February–May 259 BCE; Durand 1997: 61–62), as there is a debate over the identification of the founder – Straton, namely one of the Straton/ʿAbdaštart kings of the Sidonian dynast (under the Achaemenids) (cf. e.g. Levine 1973; Roller 1992) or rather a general of one of the royal Ptolemies (cf. e.g. Raban 1992; Stieglitz 1996). Although hardly published or recorded in the site excavations, Persian-period pottery was found in a number of surveys in the central and northern parts of Roman Caesarea.

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