

Agatharchides Sabbath Sources

Josephus, AJ 12	
How Ptolemy son of Lagos, having captured Jerusalem and Judea with cunning and deceit, led many settlers (or: exiled many) from it to Egypt.	(list of contents) Ὡς Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Λάγου δόλω καὶ ἀπάτη παραλαβὼν τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πολλοὺς ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰς Αἴγυπτον μετώκισεν.
Therefore after Alexander the king of the Makedonians dissolved the hegemony of the Persians and established the affairs of Judea in the aforementioned fashion, he reached the end of his life.	(1) Ἀλέξανδρος μὲν οὖν ὁ τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλεὺς καταλύσας τὴν Περσῶν ἡγεμονίαν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν τὸν προειρημένον καταστησάμενος τρόπον τελευτᾷ τὸν βίον.
And after the rule was transferred to (the hands of) many, Antigonos becomes master of Asia, Seleukos of Babylon and the peoples there, Lysimachos picked out the Hellespontos, while Kassandros held Makedonia, and Ptolemy son of Lagos had taken Egypt.	(2) μεταπεσοῦσης δ' εἰς πολλοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς Ἀντίγονος μὲν τῆς Ἀσίας ἐπικρατεῖ, Σέλευκος δὲ Βαβυλῶνος καὶ τῶν κείθι ἐθνῶν, Λυσίμαχος τε τὸν Ἑλλάσποντον διεῖπεν, τὴν δὲ Μακεδονίαν εἶχεν Κάσσανδρος, Πτολεμαῖος δὲ ὁ Λάγου τὴν Αἴγυπτον εἰλήφει.
And as they were fighting and rivaling each other over their private (areas of) rule, it happened that frequent and great wars took place, and the cities suffered evil and lost many of their inhabitants in the struggle; so that also all of Syria suffered at the hands of Ptolemy son of Lagos, then called Savior, the opposite of (what was implied) by his name.	(3) στασιαζόντων δὲ τούτων καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους φιλοτιμουμένων ὑπὲρ τῆς ἰδίας ἀρχῆς πολέμους τε συνεχεῖς καὶ μακροὺς συνέβη γίνεσθαι καὶ τὰς πόλεις κακοπαθεῖν καὶ πολλοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσιν ἀποβάλλειν τῶν οἰκητόρων, ὡς καὶ τὴν Συρίαν ἅπασαν ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Λάγου τότε Σωτῆρος χρηματίζοντος τάναντία παθεῖν αὐτοῦ τῇ ἐπικλήσει.
And he captured also Jerusalem using cunning and deceit. For having come up to the city on the Sabbath(s) as if to sacrifice, and as the Judeans were not defending themselves against him, for they suspected nothing hostile, and as they happened to be in rest and relaxation (or: sluggishness and laziness) because of the lack of suspicion and the day, he became master of the city without toil, and ruled it harshly.	(4) κατέσχε δὲ οὕτως καὶ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα δόλω καὶ ἀπάτη χρησάμενος· ἐλθὼν γὰρ σαββάτοις εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὡς θύσων, μήτε τῶν Ἰουδαίων αὐτὸν ἀμυνομένων, οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑπενόουν πολέμιον, καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀνύποπτον καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐν ἀργίᾳ καὶ ῥαθυμίᾳ τυγχανόντων, ἀπόνως ἐγκρατῆς γίνεταί τῆς πόλεως καὶ πικρῶς ἤρχεν αὐτῆς.
And a witness to this story is Agatharchides of Knidos, he who wrote the deeds of the	(5) μαρτυρεῖ δὲ τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ καὶ Ἀγαθαρχίδης ὁ Κνίδιος ὁ τὰς τῶν διαδόχων

<p>Successors, reproaching us for superstition, since because of it we lost freedom, saying so:</p>	<p>πράξεις συγγραψάμενος, ὄνειδίζων ἡμῖν δεισιδαιμονίαν ὡς δι' αὐτὴν ἀποβαλοῦσι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, λέγων οὕτως·</p>
<p>There is a people called 'of the Ioudaioi', who having a strong and big city – Jerusalem – despised it when it was (besieged?) by Ptolemy, unwilling to take up arms; but through an ill-timed superstition they submitted to a harsh despot.</p>	<p>(6) ἔστιν ἔθνος Ἰουδαίων λεγόμενον, οἳ πόλιν ὄχυράν καὶ μεγάλην ἔχοντες Ἱεροσόλυμα ταύτην ὑπερεῖδον ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίῳ γενομένην ὄπλα λαβεῖν οὐ θελήσαντες, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἄκαιρον δεισιδαιμονίαν χαλεπὸν ὑπέμειναν ἔχειν δεσπότην.</p>
<p>Therefore Agatharchides gave these things as his opinion about our people. But Ptolemy, having taken many captives from hilly Judea and from the places around Jerusalem and from Samaritis and from those in Garizim, led all of them to Egypt and settled them.</p>	<p>(7) Ἀγαθαρχίδης μὲν οὖν ταῦτα περὶ τοῦ ἔθνους ἡμῶν ἀπεφώνησεν. ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος πολλοὺς αἰχμαλώτους λαβὼν ἀπὸ τε τῆς ὄρεινῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τῶν περὶ Ἱεροσόλυμα τόπων καὶ τῆς Σαμαρείτιδος καὶ τῶν ἐν Γαριζεῖν, κατώκισεν ἅπαντας εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἀγαγών.</p>
<p>And having taken notice that those who were from Jerusalem were the most steadfast concerning the oath keepings and the guarantees, from the things which they answered Alexander when he sent to them after overcoming Darius in battle, having distributed many of them to the guard-posts and made them <i>isopolitai</i> to the Makedonians in Alexandria he took oaths from them, so that they continue to keep the faith with the progeny of the one who put them (at the guard-posts? In the position of trust?)</p>	<p>(8) ἐπεγνωκῶς δὲ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων περὶ τε τὴν τῶν ὄρκων φυλακὴν καὶ τὰς πίστεις βεβαιοτάτους ὑπάρχοντας ἐξ ὧν ἀπεκρίναντο Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πρεσβευσασμένῳ πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ τὸ κρατῆσαι Δαρείου τῆ μάχῃ, πολλοὺς αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ φρούρια καταλοχίσας καὶ τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ποιήσας ἰσοπολίτας ὄρκους ἔλαβεν παρ' αὐτῶν, ὅπως τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τοῦ παραθεμένου τὴν πίστιν διαφυλάξωσιν.</p>
<p>And not a few of the other Jews came to Egypt (of their free will), as both the goodness of the places and the <i>philotimia</i> of Ptolemy summoned them.</p>	<p>(9) οὐκ ὀλίγοι δ' οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων Ἰουδαίων (ἐκουσίως) εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον παρεγίνοντο τῆς τε ἀρετῆς τῶν τόπων αὐτοὺς καὶ τῆς τοῦ Πτολεμαίου φιλοτιμίας προκαλουμένης.</p>

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<p>But that is enough of the testimonies of Hekataios. To those who wish to learn more there it is easy to find in his book. And I shall not hesitate to mention also Agatharchides, who had made mention of us in ridicule of our silliness – or so he thinks.</p>	<p>(205) ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν Ἑκαταίου μαρτυριῶν ἄλλις· τοῖς γὰρ βουλομένοις πλείω μαθεῖν τῷ βιβλίῳ ῥάδιόν ἐστιν ἐντυχεῖν. οὐκ ὀκνήσω δὲ καὶ τὸν ἐπ’ εὐηθείας διασυρμῶ, καθάπερ αὐτὸς οἶεται, μνήμην πεποιημένον ἡμῶν Ἀγαθαρχίδην ὀνομάσαι·</p>
<p>For in describing the affairs of Stratonike, in what manner she came to Syria from Makedonia, having left her own husband Demetrios, and after Seleukos did not want to marry her – this was what she wanted – when he made an expedition from Babylon she started a revolt in the area of Antiochia.</p>	<p>(206) διηγούμενος γὰρ τὰ περὶ Στρατονίκην, ὃν τρόπον ἦλθεν μὲν εἰς Συρίαν ἐκ Μακεδονίας καταλιποῦσα τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα Δημήτριον, Σελεύκου δὲ γαμεῖν αὐτὴν οὐ θελήσαντος, ὅπερ ἐκείνη προσεδόκησεν, ποιουμένου [δέ] τὴν ἀπὸ Βαβυλῶνος στρατείαν αὐτοῦ τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν ἐνεωτέρισεν.</p>
<p>Then as the king turned back, when she had fled to Seleukia after the capture of Antiochia, although it was easy for her to sail away, she was convinced by a foreboding dream, was captured and died.</p>	<p>(207) εἴθ’ ὡς ἀνέστρεψεν ὁ βασιλεύς, ἀλισκομένης τῆς Ἀντιοχείας εἰς Σελεύκειαν φυγοῦσα, παρὸν αὐτῇ ταχέως ἀποπλεῖν ἐνυπνίῳ κωλύοντι πεισθεῖσα ἐλήφθη καὶ ἀπέθανεν.</p>
<p>Having said these things first, and ridiculing Stratonike for her superstition, Agatharchides uses as an example that story about us, writing in the following manner:</p>	<p>(208) ταῦτα προειπὼν ὁ Ἀγαθαρχίδης καὶ ἐπισκώπτων τῇ Στρατονίκη τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν παραδείγματι χρῆται τῷ περὶ ἡμῶν λόγῳ καὶ γέγραφεν οὕτως·</p>
<p>Those called Iudaioi, inhabiting a city strongest of all (which the locals happen to call ‘Hierosolyma’) – being in the habit of being idle on the seventh day, so as not to carry (the) arms in these times, nor to engage in agriculture, not to perform any other public duty, but rather to pray in the temples stretching their hands until the evening –</p>	<p>(209) οἱ καλούμενοι Ἰουδαῖοι πόλιν οἰκοῦντες ὄχυρωτάτην πασῶν, ἣν καλεῖν Ἱεροσόλυμα συμβαίνει τοὺς ἐγγωρίους, ἀργεῖν εἰθισμένοι δι’ ἐβδόμης ἡμέρας καὶ μήτε τὰ ὄπλα βαστάζειν ἐν τοῖς εἰρημένοις χρόνοις μήτε γεωργίας ἄπτεσθαι μήτε ἄλλης ἐπιμελεῖσθαι λειτουργίας μηδεμιᾶς, ἀλλ’ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐκτετακότες τὰς χεῖρας εὐχεσθαι μέχρι τῆς ἐσπέρας,</p>
<p>when Ptolemy son of Lagos entered the city with the army, and since the people, instead of guarding the city persisted with the folly, the fatherland gained a mean despot, and the <i>nomos</i> was convicted as containing an inefficient (thoughtless? bad?) custom.</p>	<p>(210) εἰσιόντος εἰς τὴν πόλιν Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Λάγου μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀντὶ τοῦ φυλάττειν τὴν πόλιν διατηρούντων τὴν ἄνοιαν, ἣ μὲν πατρὶς εἰλήφει δεσπότην πικρόν, ὃ δὲ νόμος ἐξηλέγχθη φαῦλον ἔχων ἔθισμόν.</p>

<p>The result (or: event) has taught all the others except for these [<i>what it would mean</i>]¹ in such a case to flee to such dreams, or to handed-down conjectures about the law, whenever they are weak in human reasoning concerning difficult situations.</p>	<p>(211) τὸ δὲ συμβὰν πλὴν ἐκείνων τοὺς ἄλλους πάντας δεδίδαχε τήνικαῦτα φυγεῖν εἰς ἐνύπνια καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ νόμου παραδεδομένην ὑπόνοιαν, ἥνικα ἂν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις λογισμοῖς περὶ τῶν διαπορουμένων ἐξασθενήσωσιν.</p>
<p>And this thing appears to Agatharchides worthy of derision, but to those who examine well without ill-will it appears great and worthy of many praises, if some people always honor keeping the <i>nomoi</i> and piety towards god before salvation (i.e. safety) and fatherland.</p>	<p>(212) τοῦτο μὲν Ἀγαθαρχίδῃ καταγέλωτος ἄξιον δοκεῖ, τοῖς δὲ μὴ μετὰ δυσμενείας ἐξετάζουσι φαίνεται μέγα καὶ πολλῶν ἄξιον ἐγκωμίων, εἰ καὶ σωτηρίας καὶ πατρίδος ἀνθρωποὶ τινες νόμων φυλακὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς θεὸν εὐσέβειαν ἀεὶ προτιμῶσιν.</p>

¹ After Barclay 2007 120n715. Alternatively, after Bar-Kochva 2010 289n47: “The outcome taught all but those (the Jews) to flee to dreams and to the traditional interpretation concerning the law [*only*] whenever they are too weak in their human reasonings about problems.”