

## The Acts of A King 4Q248

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In the year 332 B.C.E., in the process of assembling the greatest empire the world had ever seen, Alexander the Great conquered the region of [Palestine](#). Within a short time, however, the young Macedonian died, and his remaining generals divided the empire among themselves. Naturally, this division did not occur entirely peacefully, as each of the generals jockeyed for the position of greatest power. It is in this context of war and the ebb and flow of power that the present scroll finds its most natural setting.

Alexander's general Ptolemy came to control Egypt, while, after various battles that shall not concern us here, another general, Seleucus, took power in [Syria](#). For the next decades, Palestine was ground between these upper and lower millstones as the two generals fought to control the region, regarded by each as crucial to the defense of his own realm. Eventually Ptolemy now styling himself king and bearing an appropriately grandiose name, Ptolemy T Soter (the Greek word for "savior") took control of Palestine more or less permanently. The Jews remained under aegis of Egypt for virtually all of the third century, only passing to the Syrian realm in the year 199/8 B.C.E.

Using biblical imagery and cast in the form of a prophecy, this scroll seems to be describing two of the four separate occasions on which Ptolemy I conquered Palestine. Which two of the four is uncertain, not only because of what has been lost from the scroll, but also because our knowledge of Ptolemy's campaigns is spotty and susceptible to various interpretations.

***The text begins with a picture of general conquest, apparently including the notion of God himself fighting on the side of the enemy forces (1. 5). Lines 2-4 draw their imagery from Deuteronomy 28.***

Frag. 1 2[ . . . ] Egypt and Zion ~and [ . . . ] 3[ . . . For it is a grim-fac]ed nation. Then they shall consume [the [fruit](#) of their livestock . . . ] 4[All-1 their [s]ons and daught[e]rs [shall be] besieged in [their [settlements](#)]

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. . . ] sand the LORD\* shall cause [His] spirit to pass through their settlements and [all of their land.. 1

***The focus now is on the return of the enemy forces, this time to conquer the "Temple city," Jerusalem. Line 9 is a paraphrase of conquest imagery found in Jeremiah 48:32.***

6[Then] he shall come to Egypt and sell her dust and [stones . . . He shall come] to the temple city and seize it, together with all its booty . . . ] 8He shall overthrow the nations and return to Egyp[t . . . ~ 9[The destroyer shall fall] upon the [vintage](#)]

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and the sum[mer fruits . . . And after] all these things, the [children](#) [of Israel] shall return [to the LORD . . . 1

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