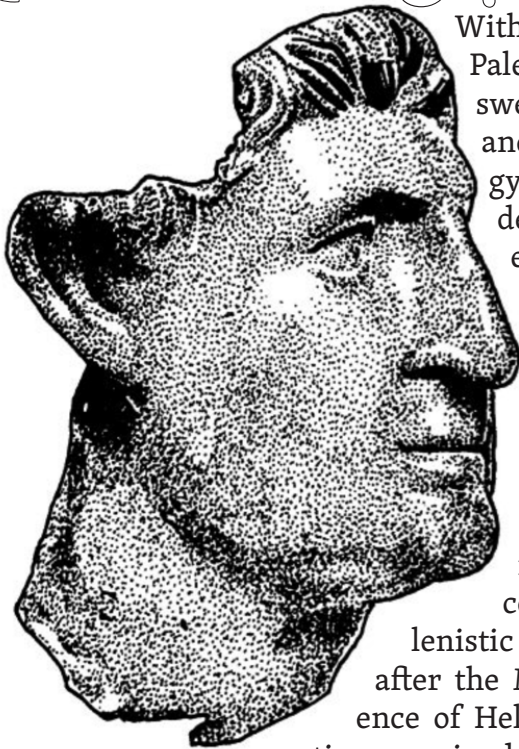


# ISAIAH



With Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine in 332 B.C., Hellenistic culture swept into Israel, including Greek games and competitions. As a result, arenas and gymnasiums began to appear in Israel. A descendant of one of Alexander's generals, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who reigned over Palestine (175-164 B.C.), even had a gymnasium built in Jerusalem. Apparently many Jews, including some priests, participated in the events held there (see 1 Macc. 1:14; 2 Macc. 4:9). For many Jews the spectacle of a gymnasium in Jerusalem was repulsive (not least because athletes competed in the nude). Although Hel-

lenistic games became less prevalent in Israel after the Maccabean revolt (167 B.C.), the presence of Hellenistic culture and athletic competition remained in Israel. Herod the Great (47-4 B.C.)

built, among other things, a stadium and hippodrome in Caesarea, a theater in Jerusalem, and possibly a hippodrome in Jericho. By the first century, Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora, and of course Gentiles throughout the Mediterranean world, were familiar with competitive games.



←The open area (palaestra) of the gymnasium at Pompeii with gladiators' rooms to the left.

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