HEROD THE GREAT: TYRANT OR STATESMAN OR ?

N.B. Included here are two preliminary chapters from my forthcoming book, *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Volume 3 The Maccabaean Revolt, the Hasmonaean Kingdom, and Herod the Great* (Bloomsbury T & T Clark). As will be evident, the chapters are not finalized, and I'm still working on them.

There is a lot of material here, including background in Roman history, which few will have time to read in detail. However, the section headings will serve as a guide to help you focus on those aspects that are most interesting to you. The most important section in my view is "The Assessment of Herod's Reign" (p. 48ff). Happy reading!

Lester Grabbe

CHAPTER
END OF THE HASMONAEAN KINGDOM
AND THE BEGINNING OF ROMAN DOMINATION (67-40 CE)

The death of Alexandra Salome marked a watershed in Hasmonaean rule. The accession of her two sons was the beginning of the end: their rivalry rapidly led to Roman domination of the region. It was probably inevitable that Rome would conquer the region about this time, but there seems no doubt that Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II hastened the process in their struggle for the leadership of Judah.

The Roman Republic in the First Century BCE
to the Roman Civil War (100-49 BCE)

E. Baltrusch (2011) *Caesar und Pompeius*; ***CAH***[1], vol. 10 (1934) *The Augustan Empire, 44 B.C.-A.D. 70*; ***CAH***[2], **; **M. Cary and H. H. Scullard** (1975) *A History of Rome*; **M. H. Crawford** (1978) *The Roman Republic*; **M. Gelzer** (1968) *Caesar: Politician and Statesman*; **Ibid**. (2005) *Pompeius: Lebensbild eines Römers*; **T. Holland** (2003) *Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic*; **C. Meier** (1995) *Caesar*; **N. Rosenstein** (2012) *Rome and the Mediterranean 290 to 146 BC*; **H. H. Scullard** (1982) *From the Gracchi to Nero*; R. Seager (2002) *Pompey the Great: A Political Biography*; **C. Steel** (2013) *The End of the Roman Republic 146 to 44 BC*; **H. Swain and M. E. Davies** (2010) *Aspects of Roman History, 82 BC–AD 14*; **E. Will** (1982) *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique (323-30 av. J.-C.): Tome II*.

Rome continued to triumph abroad through its military might and other facilities. Yet the weaknesses of the Roman Republican system of government had already begun to show up soon after the Third Punic War (**ck 5/4.1.2**).
The Roman Civil War is usually dated from 49/50** BCE to 31 BCE, from the breakout of open war between Julius Caesar and Pompey to the triumph of Octavian over Mark Antony. Yet this was only the last episode in what had been almost a century of civil unrest in Rome, beginning with **
The widening cracks led finally to collapse not long after Pompey's conquest of the East. Because piracy had become a real headache for the entire Mediterranean area, the Senate finally decided to do something and commissioned Pompey to deal with it. He was voted ** powers. **Expand**

While Pompey was fighting in the Greek areas, the political scene in Rome was dominated by such individuals as Julius Caesar, Crassus, and Cicero. A major issue was the bad feelings between the Knights (*equites*) and the Senate which Cicero was trying to mediate. Pompey's return to Rome from the east was followed shortly afterward in 60 with the formation of what is often called the First Triumvirate between Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar (thought by Cicero and others to be the main cause of the Civil War a decade later [**??ref**).

Caesar was elected consul for the first time in 59 BCE and secured command of all Gaul and Illyricum. After he took up his post, political infighting seemed to be presaging a major breach between the triumvirs; however, the triumvirate was renewed in a conference at Luca in 55, only to break up in 54 when Crassus was killed in a foolish attack on Parthian territory. Also, the personal bond between Caesar and Pompey was severed when Pompey's wife (Caesar's daughter) died. The stage was now set for confrontation between the two. Caesar's war in Gaul had been a **triumph**. Now, with his many military successes, it became clear that Caesar's imminent return to Rome could provoke physical conflict with Pompey. Thus, a motion was passed by the Senate in late 50 that both individuals should give up their military commands. When extremists among the conservatives refused to accept this, Pompey was called on to come to the rescue of the Republic. Not surprisingly, Caesar was not ready to accept Pompey as the dominant politician and tried to negotiate a more satisfactory solution. Finally, the Senate issued an ultimatum to Caesar: his response was the famous crossing of the Rubicon river which initiated the Civil War in early 49 BCE.

Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II (67-63 BCE)

K. Atkinson (2014) ; **E. Da*browa** (2010) ;

War 1.6.1-7.7 §§120-58; *Ant*. 14.1.1-4.5 §§1-79.

According to *Ant*. 14.1.2 §4 (cf. *War* 1.6.1 §120) Hyrcanus took the throne in the 177 Olympiad when Q. Hortensias and Q. Metellus Creticus were Roman consuls. That would be 70-69 BCE, two or three years before Alexandra died. In spite of this, Aristobulus was not ready to accept Hyrcanus as king and declared war on his brother as soon a their mother was in her grave. They met in battle near Jericho, and Aristobulus quickly attacked and defeated Hyrcanus, who took refuge in the akra. Using Aristobulus's family as a bargaining chip, he arranged a deal in which he was permitted to live unharmed as a private citizen while the rulership went to his brother. Although such is not made explicit at this point in the narrative, statements elsewhere indicate that Aristobulus also obtained the office of high priest (*Ant*. 14.6.1 §97; 20.10.4 §§243-44).

At this juncture Josephus introduces a character by the name of Antipater whom he identifies as an Idumaean (but see §**), whose father Antipas had been appointed governor of Idumaea by Alexander Jannaeus. Antipater stirred up the leading Jews against Aristobulus. After a time, he also persuaded Hyrcanus that he had made a mistake in giving up the kingship and indeed was in danger of being executed by Aristobulus. Receiving a guarantee of safety from the Nabataean ruler Aretas III in Petra, Hyrcanus fled to the Arab. Hyrcanus promised to return to Aretas twelve cities that Jannaeus had allegedly taken from Nabataea. He thus managed to obtain the aid of an army (allegedly of 50,000) under Aretas, and attacked Aristobulus, defeated him, and besieged him in Jerusalem to which he had fled. This was apparently at Passover time (*Ant*. 14.2.1-2 §§21, 25). The outcome of the siege was still in the balance when the Romans intervened.

The Roman general Pompey had been fighting against the Armenians. The Armenian king Tigranes surrendered in 66 BCE. Pompey then sent his lieutenant Scaurus to Syria. As soon as he arrived in Damascus, Scaurus heard of the Jewish civil war and marched south. Delegates from both the sons of Alexandra met him with bribes, but Scaurus sided with Aristobulus (who supposedly gave the larger bribe) and forced Aretas to raise the siege. Scaurus returned to Damascus, but shortly afterward Aristobulus defeated Hyrcanus in battle at a place called Papyron (Antipater's brother fell in the battle). This was the way things stood until Pompey himself arrived in Syria where he was entreated by both sides. Also appearing was a delegation from 'the Jewish nation' (τῶν ’Ιουδαίων . . . τὸ ἔθνος) [*Ant*. 14** §**]; Diodorus [40.4] says this was more than 200 of the leading men), asking that Judaea be allowed to continue as a theocracy without the high priest also acting as a king. After hearing the different sides, Pompey delayed a decision, saying he first needed to deal with the Nabataeans. This was too much for Aristobulus (who had presented a large bribe to Pompey), and he set off for Judaea. Taking this as an insult, Pompey followed after him with a large force and caught up with him at the fortress of Alexandrium**eion??**. At first the two leaders negotiated, then Pompey ordered Aristobulus to give up his fortresses. Aristobulus reluctantly sent instructions to the various commanders as required by Pompey but then himself withdrew to Jerusalem and prepared for war.

Pompey marched after him immediately, before he had time for much preparation. Aristobulus realized the folly of resistence and met Pompey on the last leg of his march, between Jericho and Jerusalem, promising money as well as

entry into Jerusalem. Aristobulus's followers had a different idea, however, and shut the city against the Romans. The people of the city were divided between the supporters of Aristobulus and those of Hyrcanus. The former withdrew into the temple, cutting the bridge to the upper city, while the latter opened the gates to Pompey. The siege of the temple lasted three months, apparently until about mid-summer (on details of the fall of Jerusalem, see §1.**). The Romans were assisted by Hyrcanus and his followers. They also took advantage of the sabbath to advance their siege works since the Jews would not fight if not directly attacked. During this time and even in the final assault when many were being killed, the priests continued their sacrificial duties. When the Romans finally broke through, many of the defenders were slaughtered by their fellow Jews who were adherents of Hyrcanus. Supposedly, 12,000 Jews died. Pompey and others of the Romans entered the temple area and even went inside the Holy of Holies. This may have been partly out of curiosity but also to demonstrate that the Romans were now in charge; however, the temple itself was respected: neither the vessels nor the temple treasure was touched, and the temple itself was cleansed and the cult resumed the next day at Pompey's command.

Thus, Judaea as an independent kingdom came to an end. Although it was to be a 'friendly kingdom' (essentially a vassal kingdom—§**.**) of Rome for many years under Herod the Great and Agrippa I, it was not again to be a sovereign nation for another two millennia. The territory gained by successive Hasmonaean rulers was taken away to leave only the area which roughly made up the province of Judah under the Babylonians and Persians. Although Hyrcanus was restored to the high priesthood, he did not have the title of king, and a heavy tribute was imposed on the country.

Pompey's Settlement in Judaea and the Region

D. C. Braund (1983) 'Gabinius, Caesar, and the *publicani* of Judaea', *Klio* 65: 241-44; **A.H. M. Jones** (1971) *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*; **B. Kanael** (1956) 'The Partition of Judea by Gabinius', *IEJ* 6: 98-106; **D. Magie** (1950) *Roman Rule in Asia Minor, to the End of the Third Century after Christ*; **A. Momigliano** (1934) 'Richerche sull' organizzazione della Giudea sotto il dominio romano (63 a. C.-70 d. C.)', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, Classe di Lettere 3: 183-221, 347-96; **A. N. Sherwin-White** (1984)

Roman Foreign Policy in the East, l68 B.C. to A.D. 1: 226-34; **E. M. Smallwood** (1967) 'Gabinius' Organisation of Palestine', *JJS* 18: 89-92; **R. S. Williams** (1978) 'The Role of Amicitia in the Career of A. Gabinius (Cos. 58)', *Phoenix* 32: 195-210.

From its position as an independent state, with considerable territory, resources, and even prestige, Judaea had an ignominious fall. After his conquest, Pompey went about reorganizing the administration of the various areas in what is known as his notorious 'settlement of the East' (Magie 1950: 1.268-78). Of the conquered territories, most lost out in some way, but none more so than Judaea. Once more a province, Judaea was not attached to Syria as might have been the case but was allowed to maintain a separate identity with her own rule. Also, Hyrcanus retained the office of high priest which included some civil authority, but the country itself was reduced essentially to the old boundaries of Judah as they had been in Persian times, and a Roman governor was appointed (cf. Jones 1971: 256-59). On the other hand, the conquered Hellenistic cities gained: they were restored to their old constitutions for the most part, though for many of them this came about in practical terms only later under Gabinius: on the coast: Dora, Strato's Tower, Apollonia, Joppa, Azotus, Anthedon, Gaza, Raphia, Ascalon; in the interior and Transjordan: Marisa (in Idumaea), Samaria, Scythopolis, Arethusa, Jamnia, Abila, Hippus, Gadara, Pella, and Dium. A number of these cities in the interior were grouped together with others which had not been under Jewish rule to form the league known as the Decapolis (including ***).

Pompey's settlement may have seemed very unfortunate from the Jewish point of view at the time, but it was mild compared to the drastic further reorganization which came about under Gabinius. The significance of this further division is not explained by Josephus (*War*. 1.8.5 §§170; *Ant*. 14.5.4 §91), but it has usually been interpreted as a way of bringing the potentially rebellious province to heel by a process of divide and conquer (Schalit **: 30-33; *WHJP*: 7.39-43). The continual rebellions led by Aristobulus and his sons (§**) clearly had a good deal of popular support. Instead of quietly shouldering the yoke of Roman rule, Judaea looked to be a continuing problem. Something had to be done, and the solution was that which had already worked in Macedonia. From the conqueror's point of view it was effective, though its consequences for the conquered could eventually be disastrous, bringing economic ruin by commercial isolation of the various parts of the country.

Gabinius's solution was to divide the country into five administrative councils (*sunodoi*, *sunedria*), with centres at Jerusalem, Jericho, Amathus in Transjordan, Sepphoris in Galilee, and 'Gadara'. The identification of the last-named city is disputed: Kanael argues that it should logically be a city of Idumaea, perhaps a corruption of Adora (1956: 102-4), though this assumes that Idumaea was included in the territory left to Judaea which some scholars do not accept. Others would read 'Gazara' or Gezer (Schürer **: 1.**). As for the makeup of these councils, Josephus does not discuss them in detail, though he states that the country was once more an 'aristocracy' (*Ant*. 11.4.8 §111, probably meaning a theocracy, i.e., a political entity governed by the priesthood **[2/3.1]**), which pleased many Jews. Thus, the membership of the councils was presumably made up of individuals (many of priestly origin) willing to cooperate with Roman rule.

B. Kanael has argued against the explanation that it was a case of 'divide and rule'. Far from being an attempt to cow the Jews, it was meant as a way of unifying them behind Hyrcanus. Gabinius was planning to invade Parthia and needed a united Judaea. The five-fold division was a means of providing administrative centers because of the growing opposition to Hyrcanus and support for the sons of Aristobulus. One argument in support of Kanael's thesis is that the divisions of Gabinius seem to correspond basically to those under Herod's later rule. However, regardless of whose explanation is correct, Gabinius left his arrangements in effect for only a few years, perhaps because they were not succeeding. After a further revolt in 55 BCE, he more or less turned the administration over to Antipater: 'having gone to Jerusalem, Gabinius reorganized the government (πολιτείον) according to Antipater's wishes" (*War*. 1.8.7 §178; cf. *Ant*. 14.6.4 §103).

Judaea continued to pay tribute (§**7). It has often been argued (following Momigliano 1934: 187-89) that Gabinius took the process of tax collection out of the hands of the Roman tax farmers (*publicani*) and made them the responsibility of the Jews themselves. However, it now seems likely that the *publicani* were not removed until later, probably by a decree of Caesar about 47 BCE (Braund 1983). In any case, Gabinius seems to have shown a certain restraint in his administration and not to have robbed the province, for Josephus commends him: 'Gabinius had accomplished great and spendid works during his governorship' (*Ant*. 14.6.4 §104). This is a rather odd conclusion in light of the fact that when he returned to Rome,

Gabinius was charged with extorting 100 million drachmas from Syria! (Dio 66**; see next section [§**]).

Jews Under Roman Administration: Scaurus, Gabinius, Crassus, and Cassius

Josephus, *War*. 1.8.1-9 §§159-82; *Ant*. 14.5.1-7.3 §§80-122.

With his reorganization Pompey felt his work here was done. He turned the whole region over to Scaurus and made his way back to Rome, taking Aristobulus and his sons with him as captives (though one son Alexander escaped on the way). Pompey had been planning to inspect the Nabataean situation when interrupted by the events in Judaea. Now, Scaurus picked up the military moves that Pompey had not managed to complete. The main one of these was to get control of the Nabataeans. When he marched against Petra, however, his men lacked sufficient food. Antipater and Hyrcanus stepped in and provided grain and other provisions from Judaea. Scaurus then sent Antipater to negotiate with King Aretas I**, persuading him to pay 300 talents as tribute so that the Romans would leave him alone. (These are only two of the far-sighted actions that Antipater took, but it was characteristic of him that he benefitted so often from such opportunities.) In the meantime, Aristobulus's son Alexander had raised a small army and was threatening Hyrcanus by making raids on Judaea. Scaurus's term of office came to an end in 62?61? BCE. We know that two further governors came and went (though Josephus omits the information): Marcius Philippus (61-60 BCE) and Lentulus Marcellinus (59-58 BCE) (**Appian, *Syr*. 51; Cassius Dio 39.55.6; Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 43**).

Next, Gabinius, a former consul, was appointed governor (στρατηγός) of the region (57-** BCE). In contrast with Antipater's perspicuity, the shortsightedness of the Hasmonaeans was soon demonstrated in several attempts by Aristobulus and his son Alexander (and later Alexander's brother Antigonus) to lead revolts and re-establish their rule. By this time Alexander was trying to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem and refortify the city. When the Romans put a stop to this, Alexander raised a larger force (said to have been 10,000 heavy infantry and 1500 cavalry) and set up fortifications at Alexandrium/eion, Machaerus, and Hyrcania. Gabinias defeated them, not only with Roman troops (partly led by Mark Antony), but also a

Jewish force (including Antipater's picked troops) commanded by Malichus and Peitholaus. Alexander fled to Alexandreion**, where he was besieged and eventually surrendered, including all the fortresses. Hyrcanus could how take up his place as high priest in the temple. Garbinius rebuilt or repaired many cities damaged in the fighting, including Scythopolis, Samaria, Anthedon, Apollonia, Jamnia, Raphia, Marisa, 'Gamala' (probably Gezer), Azotus, Adora, and Gaza.

The **next year** Aristobulus himself, along with his son Antigonus, escaped from Rome and led a new rebellion. As a former priest-king he had no trouble in gaining a large following. Indeed, Peitholaus the 'legate' (*hupostratēgos*) of Jerusalem, who had earlier led Antipater's picked troops against Alexander (§**), deserted to him with a thousand men. Aristobulus intended to refortify Alexandrium, but Gabinius's army (under Sisenna, Antony, and Servilius) came against him too quickly. Aristobulus dismissed all his following who did not have the proper equipment but still alleged to have had 8000 armed troops to take a stand against the Romans, indicating the large following collected together in this short time. Unfortunately, the outcome was completely predictable, and Aristobulus retreated to Machaerus where he and Antigonus were taken prisoner and returned to Rome. The two sons (Alexander and Antigonus) were released by the Senate to return to Judaea, however, because Gabinius had promised this to their mother when negotiating to have the fortresses surrendered.

This soon proved to be a mistake because Alexander revolted a second time. The context of this revolt was an incident that landed Gabinius into trouble back in Rome (Dio **; Josephus, *War* 1.8.7 §§175-77). Ptolemy IX** had been deposed by his sister Berenice II** and wanted the throne back. The Roman Senate opposed this and was apparently backed by a Sibylline oracle. When Ptolemy promised a large sum of money to Gabinius, however, the latter decided to intervene in defiance of the Senate. He took an army to Egypt, with the assistance of Hyrcanus and Antipater, and restored Ptolemy **IX to the rule Egypt (who promptly executed his sister). While Gabinius was thus engaged in Egypt, Alexander took the opportunity to instigate another revolt. Antipater once again acted as mediator and managed to persuade many Jews to abandon their following of Alexander; nevertheless, the latter was still left with a large army (said to be 30,000, no doubt grossly exaggerated) with which he met the Romans near Mt. Tabor, but again it was to no avail.

Gabinius then proceeded to Jerusalem, organized the government according to Antipater's desires, and marched against the Nabataeans, defeating them. His governorship was now at an end, and he returned to Rome. Here, according to Cassius Dio (66****) he was charged with the extortion of 100 million drachmas from Syria but was acquitted, allegedly through bribery and influence. Lesser charges were brought, however, and he was found guilty and exiled (though only for a short time, again because of friends in high places).

The next governor of Judaea was Crassus (54-53 BCE), the triumvir, noted by Josephus only for robbing the temple of its gold (though curiously he says nothing about Gabinius's alleged extortions, noted above). Unlike Pompey who had not touched the temple treasure or precious vessels, Crassus made off with 2000 talents in money as well as the rest of the gold in the sanctuary. The purpose of this appropriation was to help pay for Crassus's ill-conceived expedition against Parthia where he met his death (53 BCE). He was succeeded by his quaester Cassius (53-51 BCE), who had survived the expedition against the Parthians. Cassius's main concern was to hold back the Parthians who were now pushing west as a result of their victory over Crassus. Josephus relates two things about Cassius: he took the city of Tarichaeae in Galilee and enslaved 30,000 Jews, and he executed the turncoat Peitholaus at the instigation of Antipater. The exact reason for the first action is not given, though one wonders whether it might not be related to the second, for Peitholaus's supposed crime was that he was trying to continue the revolt of Aristobulus by inciting his followers. Was the taking of Tarichaeae a part of the suppression of this revolt?

First Phase of the Roman Civil War: To the Death of Caesar (49-44 BCE)

[For biblography, see §**.**.]

With the Senate behind him and control of Italy and most of the Empire, Pompey may have seemed in a strong position. Caesar had only one legion and control of Gaul. However, Pompey was hampered by having only two legions in Italy, and they were legions which Caesar had loaned to him initially and thus of doubtful loyalty. Caesar quickly added further troops when he defeated the governor of Transalpine Gaul. Attempts at negotiation failed, and Pompey retreated to Greece, which left Caesar in control of Italy. Caesar's first task was to take Spain which he did quickly, though in the meantime the task force sent to Africa by him was

soundly defeated. Caesar returned to Rome where he was given a dictatorship which enabled him to enact certain necessary measures, but he then gave it up after holding it only 11 days.

When Caesar crossed to Greece early in 48, Pompey had assembled a large force of both troops and ships. The first engagements were indecisive, partly because Pompey could be resupplied by ships whereas Caesar had to find provisions by land. The decisive battle was at Pharsalus. Pompey was defeated but escaped to Egypt with a small company; however, was killed as soon as he landed by the men of Ptolemy XII. Caesar followed and spent the winter in Alexandria where Cleopatra VII, the sister of Ptolemy and joint ruler, became his mistress. At first Ptolemy supported Caesar but then turned against him. In the spring of 47 enough troops had joined Caesar to enable him to defeat Ptolemy and replace him with his younger brother Ptolemy XIII who now reigned jointly with Cleopatra. After a brief campaign in Asia Minor, Caesar returned to Rome in mid-47. (For events in Judah during the fight between Caesar and Pompey, see §** below.)

Caesar, now dictator a second time, still had Pompeian forces in Africa to deal with. The campaign against them was conducted in the winter and spring of 46, followed by one against Pompey's sons in Spain toward the end of the year. Caesar's return to Rome was his final one. After being elected consul (for the fifth time), along with Antony for the year 44, he was appointed dictator for life. A month later he was killed in a conspiracy which aimed for the restoration of the Republic, an impossible ideal.

Judah during the First Phase of the Roman Civil War: Julius Caesar (49-44 BCE)

[For bibliography, see §**.**.]

Josephus, *War*. 1.9.1-10.4 §§183-203; *Ant*. 14.7.4-9.1 §§123-57.

When the Roman Civil War began in 49 BCE, with Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and Caesar's and Pompey's opposing each other, Caesar released Aristobulus from prison with the intention of putting him at the head of two legions; the plan was thwarted, however, when adherents of Pompey poisoned him before he

even left Rome. Likewise, his son Alexander was executed by the proconsul of Syria Q. Metellius Scipio (49-48 BCE) in Antioch at Pompey's orders, but Antigonus and his two sisters were taken under the protection of Ptolemy, king of Calchis (*Ant*.14.7.4 §§126; *War* 1.9.2 §§185-86). Josephus says nothing about the activities of Antipater and Hyrcanus at this time; perhaps they wisely bided their time to see which way the war went. After Pompey's death in 48, though, Antipater quite decisively took the side of Caesar and distinguished himself in aiding Mithridates of Pergamum, the leader of the Roman forces, to capture Egypt. This was done by diplomacy in securing Arab and Syrian aid, and in persuading the Jews in the district of Onias to support Caesar and allow his army through, as well as by military prowess in which Antipater showed both outstanding personal bravery and strategic ability in battle. According to Josephus, Mithridates and Antipater commanded different wings of the army when they met the enemy at the 'Camp of the Jews' (*'Ιουδαίων στρατόπεδον: *War* 1.9.4 §§191-92; *Ant*. 14.8.2 §§133-36), and Mithridates even credited Antipater with winning the battle when reporting to Caesar (although Josephus no doubt exaggerates here, Antipater's military skill and personal courage certainly came to Roman attention). Apparently at this time, or probably earlier, Antipater was appointed governor (ἐπιμελητής) of the Jews (*Ant*. 14.8.1 §127).

Caesar rewarded Antipater and Hyrcanus for their usefulness. Hyrcanus was confirmed in the priesthood and Antipater given Roman citizenship and exemption from taxation. These honors were increased when Antigonas, Aristobulus's son, foolishly accused Antipater and Hyrcanus before Caesar: Antipater was made 'procurator' (*ἐπίτροπος) of Judaea. Although only mentioned in a decree, Hyrcanus was apparently also raised to ethnarch of Judah by Caesar (*Ant*. 14.10.2 §190, but he seems to have been called 'king' by the Jews themselves [*War*. 1.10.4 §§202-3; 1.10.9 §214; *Ant*. 14.8.5 §§148, 151; 14.9.1 §157; 14.9.3 §165; 14.9.4 §§168, 172]). Permission was also given to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem which had been in ruins since Pompey's siege. Caesar supposedly commanded that these honours were to be recorded in the Roman Capitol, according to Josephus, yet the decree that he quotes was apparently one relating to Hyrcanus's grandfather John Hyrcanus (*Ant*. 14.8.5 §§144-48; see further at §**.**).

Next Phase of the Roman Civil War:
Octavian and Antony (44-40 BCE)

R. Alston (2015) *Rome's Revolution: Death of the Republic and Birth of the Empire*; **J. Bleicken** (2015) *Augustus: The Biography*; **W. Eck** (2007) *The Age of Augustus*; **M. Goodman** (1997) *The Roman World 44 BC – AD 180*; **A. Goldsworthy** (2014) *Augustus: From Revolutionary to Emperor*; **B. Levick** (2010) *Augustus: Image and Substance*; **F. Millar and E. Segal** (eds) (1984) *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*; **J. S. Richardson** (2012) *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14*.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar, Antony as consul led the opposition to the conspirators. They had sufficient support to prevent any immediate retribution, but Antony skillfully manipulated public opinion against them by publishing Caesar's will and by his funeral oration. Thus, two of the most important conspirators Brutus and Cassius were forced to quit Rome, leaving Antony basically in charge. He had been joined by the young Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew, but Antony was bitter because Caesar's will had named Octavian his heir rather than Antony. This led Cicero and some others to look to Octavian as a possible champion. One of the parties to the conspiracy had been the governor of Cisalpine Gaul by the name of Decimus Brutus. When he refused to relinquish his territory to Antony, the latter besieged him. This gave Cicero the chance to persuade the Senate to send an army against Antony, with Octavian as one of the commanders.

Antony was defeated, but the Senate then made the mistake of snubbing Octavian. When he was refused a consulship, he marched on Rome to take the office by force. In the meantime Antony was joined by the former consul Lepidus, and the two of them took Cisalpine Gaul from Decimus Brutus. Things now rapidly turned against the Republicans. The amnesty against the murderers of Caesar was revoked. Octavian met with Antony and Lepidus in November 43 to form the Second Triumvirate, essentially a dictatorship of the three men. Death sentences were passed on several hundred Senators, including Cicero, and a large number of Knights. Brutus and Cassius had been awarded command of Asia Minor and Syria respectively before their amnesty had been revoked. Cassius had taken advantage of his position to collect tribute in Judaea to support the war effort (§**.**). Now he and Brutus joined forces and crossed to Greece where Octavian and Antony met them at Philippi. Defeated in two separate battles, both Cassius and Brutus committed suicide.

The Empire was now essentially divided between Octavian and Antony, though Lepidus was to have Africa if it was thought appropriate later. But there was friction between the two major leaders from the beginning. Antony went to the East to raise funds and organize the region, but when he returned to Italy in 40 BCE, he was refused admission, for which he blamed Octavian. Whatever the reason for the misunderstanding, what seemed like imminent war was averted with some difficulty. Instead, in October 40 Octavian and Antony agreed to the Treaty of Brundisium which gave Italy and the West to Octavian, with Antony having the East, and Lepidus Africa. It was just at this time that the Parthians overran Palestine and put Antigonus on the throne.

Relationship of Antipater and Hyrcanus

R. Laqueur (1920) *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (1920); **A. Schalit** (1962) 'Die frühchristliche Überlieferung über die Herkunft der Familie des Herodes', *ASTI* 1: 109-60; **Ibid**. (1969) *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk*;

Hyrcanus is often pictured as the tool of Antipater who was alleged to be the real head of state. For example, after Julius Caesar lift Palestine, Antipater went around the country counselling support of Hyrcanus and making threats against any who might be thinking of revolution (*War* 1.10.4 §§201-3; *Ant*. 14.9.1 §§156-57). In this way, he restored order by his own initiative and authority, even if it was in the name of Hyrcanus. R. Laqueur (1920) argued that Josephus gives two different pictures, with the *War* making Hyrcanus simply a titular head whereas the *Antiquities* showed him to be the one in charge with Antipater only doing his bidding (because Josephus was more anti-Herodean in the latter work). This thesis was very much opposed by Marcus who combated it in regular footnotes in his LCL translation of *Antiquities* 14 (pp. 500-1, 514, 531, 600-1). Nevertheless, although there are passages which do not support Laqueur's thesis (e.g., *War* 1.10.5 §207 and *Ant*. 14.9.2 §162 emphasize Antipater's continuing loyalty to, and even friendship for, Hyrcanus; also *Ant*. 14.6.3 §101; 14.11.4 §283), there are certainly others in the data which seem to agree with his conclusions (*War* 1.10.6 §§208-9; also *War* 1.8.7 §175 // *Ant*. 14.6.2 §99; *Ant*. 14.8.1 §127 // *War* 1.9.3 §§187-88; *Ant*. 14.8.1 §§131-32 // *War* 1.9.4 §190; cf. *Ant*. 14.8.5 §144 // *War* 1.10.3 §199). Laqueur may thus have a point about a certain

difference of approach in the two works, though he probably overpresses the evidence.

Laqueur argued that Hyrcanus was rather different from the description given by Josephus, viz., that Hyrcanus was a retiring individual who preferred a quiet life (*War* 1.5.1 §109; *Ant*. 13.16.1 §407); rather, Laqueur argued that he was much stronger and more ambitious than assumed (1920: 134-36). Schalit also disagrees in so far as Hyrcanus's actions are very much those of an ambitious individual, but evaluates his leadership capacity much as Josephus did (Schalit 1969: 15-17; ****WHJP**: 7.37-38). One can easily agree that Hyrcanus was ambitious but more difficult is the question whether he was as ineffectual as presented (*War* 1.5.1 §109; 1.10.4 §203; *Ant*. 13.16.1 §407; 14.9.2 §158) and whether Antipater was the real boss. Are we too much at the mercy of Josephus' own personal evaluation (which may ultimately come from Nicolaus of Damascus, anyway)? Yet whatever Hyrcanus' abilities, it seems he was no match for Antipater and especially Herod, but one must also admit that Herod was an exceptional individual.

Early Career of Herod

War 1.10.4–12.7 §§203-47; *Ant*. 14.9.2–13.2 §§158-329.

Ancestry of Herod

A. Schalit (1962) 'Die frühchristliche Überlieferung über die Herkunft der Familie des Herodes', *ASTI* 1: 109-60; **Ibid**. (1969) *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk*;

Josephus, the main source for the life of Herod, states that Herod's father Antipater was an Idumaean (*War* 1.6.2 §123; *Ant*. 14.1.3 §8). Thus, it is commonplace to state the Herod was only partially Jewish, or even that he was a foreigner ruling over Judaea (cf. *Ant*. 14.15.2 §403). Several points should be made about this:

1. Other traditions give a different ancestry for Herod, such as the Christian tradition that Antipater was from Ascalon (Justin Martyr, *Dial. Trypho* 52; Julius

Africanus, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 1.7.11). Granted, most scholars who deal with the subject consider this tradition as unlikely (Schalit 1962; Schalit 1969: 677), and Julius Africanus's statement that Antipater was a slave in Apollo's temple indeed looks like slander. On the other hand, Josephus writes, 'Nicolaus of Damascus, **to be sure**, says that his family was from the among the leading Jews who migrated from Babylon to Judaea. But he says these things to please his [Antipater's] son Herod' (*Ant*. 14.1.3 §9). Josephus' argument that Nicolaus said this only out of a desire to flatter Herod is a two-edged sword, since his own version could arise from a desire to slander the Herodean family. Also, it is difficult to see why Herod would be pleased to be linked with Babylonian Jews if this were not true. Why should Herod feel ashamed of Idumaean ancestry?

2. The Idumaean area was one of those forceably converted by John Hyrcanus (*Ant*. 13.9.1 §§257-58). Exactly why he was able to succeed in this is not stated, but one explanation is that there were already a good many Jews—or at least Jewish cultural and religious influence—in the area (§**.** ??3.6??). Thus, Herod's family could have been Jews who simply lived in the Idumaean area; certainly the indication is that at the very least they were Jewish converts.

3. Antipater is said to have married an 'Arabian' woman named Cypros (*War* 1.8.9 §181), though she is said to have been taken 'from among" (**παρά**(*para*) the Idumaeans (*Ant*.14.7.3 §§121). Whether she was Jewish by religion is not stated.

4. *Testament of Moses* 6.2-6, a passage normally interpreted as referring to Herod, accuses him among other things of being a non-priest. On the other hand, nothing is said about his being a foreigner or non-Jew.

5. Herod appears to have lived as a Jew (§**.**).

It seems to me that the arguments for Herod as a Jew are not negligible. But the many incidental details that tie him to Idumaea cannot be ignored, either. What is clear is that like a lot of Idumaeans, Herod lived as a Jew. If his family had been originally Jewish, they were evidently converts. Whatever else his identity might have included, it was certainly Jewish.

Governor of Galilee

A. Gilboa (1979-80) 'The Intervention of Sextus Julius Caesar, Governor of Syria, in the Affair of Herod's Trial," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 5: 185-94.

War. 1.10.4-14.4 §§203-85; *Ant*. 14.9.2-14.4 §§158-385.

Josephus explicityly states that Hyrcanus was indolent, which he says required Antipater to take charge of organizing the province (*War* 1.10.4 §203; *Ant*. 14.9.2 §158). This led Antipater to appoint Herod governor (στρατηγός) of Galilee while his older brother Phasael was placed over Jerusalem (c. 47 BCE). Herod was quite young (probably about 25, though only 15 according to *Ant*. 14.9.2 §158). Herod's energy and leadership ability were quickly demonstrated by one of his first acts which was to catch and execute Ezekias (Hezekiah) a bandit leader, along with many of his men. This earned him the favour of the Syrians in this area, because Ezekias had been a serious threat to them, and brought him to the attention of the Syrian governor Sextus Caesar. In attempting to emulate his younger brother by sound rule, Phasael gained the good will of the people of Jerusalem. Because of his own actions and those of his sons, Antipater himself was respected by the nation and allowed to exercise the authority which in name belonged to Hyrcanus (§**.** [see 2.3).]

Not surprisingly, opposition soon developed to the growing power of Antipater's family. Herod was singled out as a special target for attack. Although Hyrcanus's exact attitude at first was unclear, the constant criticism and lobbying by some of the leading Jews eventually goaded him into calling Herod to account before the Sanhedrin. The pretext was his execution of Ezekias without benefit of a trial first before the Sanhedrin. Herod's response was a model of sagacity: he complied but came with a body guard large enough to show that he was not intimidated but not so large as to imply a threat to Hyrcanus. The precise course of the trial is unclear because Josephus gives contradictory accounts which could be interpreted in three or four different ways. What does seem clear is that Sextus Caesar sided with Herod, sending instructions to Hyrcanus for the charges to be dropped, and that Herod decided to consult Sextus in Damascus. One reason for Sextus's intervention is probably that as Roman citizen Herod did not have to stand trial before a local court (Gilboa 1979-80). In any case, Sextus gave greater authority to Herod, making him governor of Coele-Syria and Samaria as well.

Whether Herod was ordered to appear before the Sanhedrin a second time as Josephus states is problematic because of his other statements; however, it may be that Herod was intent on attacking Jerusalem with an army in revenge for his treatment; if so, he was dissuaded by the wiser counsel of Antipater and Phasael.

Death of Antipater

In 46 a supporter of Pompey named Caecilius Bassus assassinated Sextus Caesar and took control of the area. When Julius Caesar's forces arrived, Antipater and his sons aided them against Bassus in the siege of Apamea. Caesar sent Murcus to replace C. Antistius Vetus (**Dio 47.27) and lead the fight. After Julius's assassination in 44, Cassius came to take over the Roman forces in the area. The war with Bassus still continued. Cassius ended the struggle between Bassus and Murcus and enlisted the two generals and their forces behind himself. His next step was to impose tribute on the whole of Syria to raise funds for the coming war, including 700 talents of silver from Judaea, with responsibility for collecting from the different regions apportioned to various individuals. Herod was the first to produce his quota from Galilee (100 talents), winning Cassius's favour by this and other acts of friendship. Another Jewish leader Malichus gained his disfavour, however, and would have been executed had not Antipater intervened with a large gift to Cassius (alleged to be from Hyrcanus).

In 43 BCE Malichus rewarded Antipater by plotting against him. The exact reason is unclear: on one occasion (*War*. 1.11.3 §223) Josephus implies that it was to make way for his own ambition while in his other account (*Ant*. 14.11.3 §277) it is stated that Malichus wanted to secure Hyrcanus's rule. Malichus is said to have used Hyrcanus as a tool on several occasions and could have supported Hyrcanus with the ultimate intent of using him as a puppet (*War*. 1.11.7 §232; *Ant*. 14.11.6 §290), in which case he may simply have wanted to do what Antipater had been doing for years. Why he should be so ungrateful to Antipater is also not explained, though one must always be aware that Antipater's solicitude may have been greatly exaggerated in Josephus's source. It could be a straightforward case of ambition as Josephus implies. Such a charge is easy to make and hard to refute because it is plausible, but one wonders whether there is more to the incident than we are being told.

In 43** BCE Cassius and Murcus raised an army in Syria to support Cassius and Brutus against Caesar and Antony. They saw Herod as a valuable tool in their enterprise and made him governor (στρατηγός) of Syria. There is a bit of a problem because no other source mentions it, whereas Appian (*Civ*. 4.63) states that Cassius's nephew ** was over Syria. But Herod's exact position is somewhat vague (*War* ** has 'procurator' [ἐπιμελητής**] which is probably an exaggeration in any case), and he might not have been at the top of the hierarchy over the province. In any case, they apparently promised him that he would be king of Judaea after the war. Herod's older brother Phasael is not mentioned in this episode: Herod was clearly seen as the rising star.

Whatever the cause of Malichus' opposition to Antipater, one of his multiple plots eventually bore fruit, and he succeeded in poisoning him (apparently in 43 BCE), possibly out of alarm at Herod's rapid rise. Herod was persuaded by Phasael's argument that they should bide their time about taking revenge, lest a direct attack with soldiers be seen as starting a revolt. On the other hand, when Herod had to intervene in Samaria, to put down a sedition and civic quarrels, he returned with his troops at the time of a festival. But when Malichus tried to keep him and his troops out of Jerusalem, Herod simply ignored the message which came through Hyrcanus. He then wrote to Cassius for permission to get rid of Malichus, which Cassius was happy to give. Herod got his revenge when Malichus was in Tyre (after Cassius took Laodicea in 43 BCE) and had him executed for planning to return to Jerusalem and raise a revolt against the Romans while Cassius was preoccupied with his war against Anthony. It is interesting that Hyrcanus was present as a bystander and asked who gave the order; when told it was Cassius, he commended the execution of Malichus!

There were others with plans, as well. The international situation was such that several revolts broke out together. As soon as Cassius left Syria in 42 BCE, a Jewish general Helix attacked Phasael. Herod was in Damascus with the governor Fabius but was unable to help because of an illness; however, Phasael managed without his brother. Hyrcanus is said to have sided with Helix and to have turned a number of fortresses over to Malichus's brother, including Masada; these Herod retook as soon as he had recovered. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II, had been allowed to return to the area and was aided by Marion the ruler of Tyre. Herod led the campaign against them with considerable success: he not only defeated Antigonus but also Marion who had invaded Galilee. It was after this success that

Herod was publicly betrothed to Hyrcanus's granddaughter Mariamme. She would become his second wife, he having already married a Jewish woman named Dora.

Herod and Hyrcanus do not seem to have been particularly affected by their support of Cassius in the fight against Antony and Octavian. After Cassius's defeat and death, Antony came to take over rulership of the East (42 BCE). An embassy of leading Jews met him and accused Herod and Phasael of governing the country with Hyrcanus as a mere puppet. Antony ruled in favor of the two brothers, not only because of his personal regard for Herod but also allegedly because of a large bribe. The opposition did not cease, however, and two more delegations came before Antony with accusations. When the second of three made their charges, Antony asked Hyrcanus who were the better rulers of the nation, and the latter indicated Herod and Phasael (presumably, the choice was between the two brothers and the 'leading Jews' who made up the delegation). The result was that Antony made Herod and his brother tetrarchs while imprisoning a handful of their opponents. The last delegation was much larger, a thousand men, but now Antony was losing patience. Herod and Hyrcanus met the delegation and urged them to back down, for the sake of national peace and also their own safety, but they refused. Antony had had enough and sent troops who killed a large number of them. It must be recognized, however, that the size of the group and its attitude indicated the beginnings of a revolt.

Summary and Conclusions

With Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, it was a cruel blow to many Jews for their country to be returned to her previous borders and once again subordinate to another power. Yet it was more or less inevitable. In all its history, Israel had been able to thrive and maintain independence only when the imperial powers centred in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and later to the west were in decline. Solomon's rule—such as it was—flourished because it fell at a time when both Assyria and Egypt were in a trough. Israel's geographical position was such that it did not have the resources to build and maintain an empire but would always be squeezed between the great powers to the north and south. The independence achieved under the Hasmonaeans, while certainly an extraordinary achievement, could only be temporary. Josephus blames Hyrcanus and Aristobulus for the end of the Hasmonaean state because of their internecine warfare (*Ant*. 14.4.5 §77), but if it had not been that, it would have been something else: it was only a matter of time

until the country came under Roman domination. Those with vision would have seen this and made the best of the situation. The Hasmonaeans did not have this vision—the family of Antipater did. Hyrcanus prospered as long as he allowed Antipater to take the lead; Aristobulus and his family butted against the Roman wall until it broke them

The government of Judaea was restored to its position as a theocracy (rule by priests) in place of the monarchy which it had become under the Hasmonaeans. The country was again under foreign rule, with important social and economic consequences. The next 30 years were primarily shaped by the collapse of the Roman Republic and its civil wars, events in which Judaea and its leaders were heavily involved. Although Hyrcanus was the high priest (and later ethnarch) initially, it was Antipater and his offspring who dominated the next 70 years and more of Jewish history. Antipater's son Herod, outstanding for both his military and political skills, later rose to become the most important member of a remarkable family. The first years of Roman rule saw a series of governors (Scaurus, Gabinius, Crassus) until the defeat of the Pompeian forces by Julius Caesar in 48. At that time Antipater and Hyrcanus were rewarded by Caesar for their support. Cassius was in command of the region after Caesar's assassination until defeated and killed by the forces of Antony and Octavian in 42. Mark Antony now took charge of the region and controlled it for more than a decade until his own defeat by his erstwhile ally Octavian.

CHAPTER
HEROD THE GREAT
(40-4 BCE)

E. Baltrusch (2012) *Herodes: König im Heiligen Land—Eine Biographie*; **K. Fittschen and G. Foerster** (eds) (1996) *Judaea and the Greco-Roman World in the Time of Herod in the Light of Archaeological Evidence*; **L.-M. Günther** (ed.) (2009) *Herodes und Jerusalem*; **D. M. Jacobson and N. Kokkinos** (eds) (2009) *Herod and Augustus*; **A. Kasher** (2007) *King Herod: A Persecuted Persecutor*; **N. Kokkinos** (1998) *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse*; **T. Landau** (2006) *Out-Heroding Herod: Josephus, Rhetoric, and the Herod Narratives*; **P. Richardson** (1996) *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*; **S. Rocca** (2008a) *Herod's Judaea: A Mediterranean State in the Classical World* **A. Schalit** (1969) *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk*; **G. Vermes** (2014) *The True Herod*.

Although the previous chapter began to recount Herod's early career, it is the present chapter that gives the main part of his life and the most important of his achievements. Herod was an important participant in a significant period of Roman history and came into contact with some of the most important Romans of this period. It is vital to understand his actions in the context of the history of late Republican Rome and the beginning of the Roman Imperial period.

Last Phase of the Roman Civil War: Octavian and Antony (40-31 BCE)

R. Alston (2015) *Rome's Revolution: Death of the Republic and Birth of the Empire*; **J. Bleicken** (2015) *Augustus: The Biography*; **W. Eck** (2007) *The Age of Augustus*; **M. Goodman** (1997) *The Roman World 44 BC – AD 180*; **A. Goldsworthy** (2010) *Antony and Cleopatra*; **Ibid**. (2014) *Augustus: From Revolutionary to Emperor*; **B. Levick** (2010) *Augustus: Image and Substance*; **F. Millar and E. Segal** (eds) (1984) *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*; **J. S. Richardson** (2012) *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14*.

Now that his differences with Antony were temporaily sorted out by the treaty of Brundisium (about September 40 BCE), Octavian could turn to dealing with the pockets of Pompeian supporters still resisting the new regime. Pompey's son Sextus Pompeius had built up a power base in Sicily and Sardinia. Octavian asked for help from Antony, but this was not immediately forthcoming, so Octavian turned to his equestrian ally Marcus Agrippa. Nevertheless, the triumvirate of Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus was renewed in 37 for another four years. Sextus Pompeius was defeated in 36 by the combined forces of Octavian and Lepidus, but Lepidus then claimed Sicily for himself, Octavian removed him from the office of triumvir. Octavian and Antony had been the main rivals for some time, but Lepidus' removal made this all the more plain.

Antony's major task was to deal with the Parthians who had overrun Syria in 40 BCE. In 39 Antony pushed the Parthians back beyond the Euphrates. By this time he had become involved with Cleopatra, who had done away with her brother Ptolemy XIV to reign as sole ruler. In 37 he sent his wife Octavia (Octavian's sister) back to Italy, though not divorcing her, and openly acknowledged his children by Cleopatra. With her financial support he invaded Parthia in 36 in a disastrous campaign which cost him a third of his force. His successful invasion and capture of Armenia in 34 hardly made up for this.

Antony's involvement with Cleopatra was becoming a propaganda weapon for Octavian who was also strengthening his position by espousing traditional Italian values and customs. When Antony proclaimed Cleopatra's son Caesarion as Caesar's legitimate son and King of Kings, ruling jointly over Egypt with Cleopatra as Queen of Kings, it was an additional factor to make the powers in Rome question Antony's judgment. When the official triumviral powers lapsed in 33 BCE, Octavian laid aside his title, although Antony did not. In the developing crisis, Octavian largely had the support of Italy and the western povinces. A proclamation was issued removing Antony's powers and declaring war on Cleopatra.

The decisive battle was that at Actium in September 31 BCE. Although Antony seemed to have a strong fleet, the battle was quickly given up. Antony and Cleopatra sailed back to Alexandria with a few ships while most of the fleet came into Octavian's hands. It was another year before Octavian pursued Antony to Egypt since he had to deal with his veterans. At that time Antony, deserted by his

troops, committed suicide. Cleopatra was taken prisoner but also committed suicide in captivity. After a century of continual civil war, Rome was finally at peace again.

First Phase of Herod's Reign (40-30 BCE)

Sources: *War* 1.15.1-20.3 §§286-393; *Ant*. 14.14.5 §386—15.6.7 §195.

The Parthians Take Palestine

In the spring of 40 BCE Pacorus, son of king Orodes II of Parthia, and the Parthian satrap Barzaphranes, led a Parthian invasion of Syria and Palestine. They were aided by the Roman turncoat Quintus Labienus Parthicus, who had been a supporter of Pompey. This invasion was the opportunity for the opponents of Herod. Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, once more planned to take over Judah, this time with Parthian aid. He apparently promised a thousand talents and 500 women to the Parthians to depose Hyrcanus and make him king, as well as to get rid of Herod and his entourage. Many Jews flocked to his banner. After a brief skirmish near Carmel, Antigonus was soon besieging some opponents in the palace in Jerusalem. Evidently, Phasael was not in Jerusalem at the time because he and Herod came to intervene in the siege. Large numbers on both sides were fighting in Jerusalem. It was basically a standoff until Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) when many from the countryside came to Jerusalem for the festival. Quite a few of these seem to have joined Antigonus at this time, though Herod beat off another concerted attack. This time the Parthians intervened in the person of Pacorus, a Parthian general (not the Parthian king's son), who claimed to be coming to Jerusalem help settle the fight. Phasael received him cordially and even agreed that he and Hyrcanus should go to discuss matters with the Parthian satrap Barzaphranes near Tyre, against the advice of Herod who remained in Jerusalem.

Herod's suspicions proved right, for Phasael and Hyrcanus were taken prisoner by the Parthians. The plan was to capture Herod as well, but already wary he received news of what had happened to Phasael and avoided the trap. Instead, he collected his family and followers and fled Jerusalem in the middle of the night to

Idumaea. He had to fight off not only his Parthian pursuers but also attacks from Jewish groups. At the side where he engaged one group of Jewish opponents, he later founded a city called Herodium (not the fortress). He left his immediate family with a guard in Masada and scattered the rest around the country, because of the number of refugees with him (about 9000, according to Josephus). He made his way to Petra with the thought of raising ransom money for his brother from king Malchus, but Malchus refused and ordered him out of his territory. Herod then pushed toward Egypt. It was on the way there that he received word of what had happened: the Parthians had given the throne to Aristobulus who had mutilated Hyrcanus's ears so he could no longer be high priest. Phasael had bravely committed suicide.

Herod hurried on to Alexandria and took a ship for Rome even though it was now the winter sailing season and thus a dangerous time to be on the seas. At Rome he was well received by Antony and Octavian, who were currently cooperating because of the recent treaty of Brundisium. They determined that the best way to oppose Antigonus and the Parthians was to make Herod king. According to Josephus (*Ant*. 14.14.5 §§386-87) Herod was not expecting to be given the kingship but was planning to propose itr for a grandson of Hyrcanus. So it was apparently in late 40 that Octavian and Antony presented Herod to the Senate, and he was declared king of Judaea.

Retaking of Jerusalem

After being declared king by the Senate, Herod had immediately returned to the East (about December 40 or January 39 BCE) and gathered an army to fight against Antigonus. In the meantime, his brother Joseph had been able to hold Masada against the enemy, partly because unexpected rain had provided them with needed water. Ventidius the Roman general in the area was supposed to be giving aid to Joseph but did nothing because of alleged bribery by Antigonus; instead, he left his subordinate Pupedius Silo with a body of troops encamped near Jerusalem, while he went off to chase the Parthians. Antigonus was able to suborn Silo as he had Ventidius.

By now it was well into 39 BCE. Galilee as a whole went over to Herod. Ostensibly, Ventidius and Silo had been ordered to aid him, but Ventidius was

occupied with local revolts caused by the Parthian invasion, and Silo had to be rescued by Herod from attacks by Jews. Before he could relieve Masada, however, he had to take Joppa which had turned against him. He then headed for Masada, where many local people supported him, and rescued his relatives. He also took the fortress of Oresa (or Rhesa). After securing Idumaea and sending his relatives to Samaria, he finally came against Jerusalem. Herod offered an amnesty to the defenders, but Antigonus rejected it. An attempt was made to thwart the siege by Silo who claimed that his men did not have enough food, but Herod quickly remedied the situation and, to insure secure supplies in the future, took Jericho and garrisoned it. Galilee, Idumaea, and Samaria were now firmly in Herod's hand, and he was able to winter his troops in these districts. Although it is difficult to assess Antigonus's strength, he evidently had areas of support in Palestine as well as a line of influence still to Silo. Herod did not rest even in the winter: he sent his brother Joseph with troops to occupy Idumaea. Herod himself took Sepphoris which had been in Antigonus's hands and then used the opportunity to go against certain 'brigands' (λῃστας) living in caves in the area near Arbela. Exactly who these were is not stated, though they seem to have had considerable strength and required a good deal of force and ingenuity to dislodge. Some of them may have been ordinary bandits, but others were probably opposition groups to Roman and Herodian rule (cf. *Ant*. 14.15.6 §§432-33). In fact, as soon as he had left, some Galileans revolted and killed the commander Herod had left in charge (see below). Although the context is not clear, it may have been some of the 'bandits' who promoted the revolt.

Herod now had Galilee under control and could pay his men and send them to their winter quarters. At this point, Silo's underhand dealings with Antigonus came back to haunt him. He had allowed Antigonus to winter some of his troops near Lydda, in exchange for the latter's provisioning Silo's own soldiers. Antigonus did supply them for a month but then suddenly stopped, instructing the local inhabitants to gather up all available provisions and take refuge in the hills, leaving the Roman soldiers to starve. Silo had no choice but to come cap in hand to Herod. The latter tasked his younger brother Pheroras with provisioning Silo's troops, which he did in abundance. Pheroras was also given the job of repairing and garrisoning trhe fortress at Alexandrium.

About this time (autumn 39 BCE) Antony went to Athens, which he made his home for a couple of years. In the meantime, Ventidius was fighting the Parthians

in Syria. He called for Silo and Herod to assist him as soon as things in Judaea were sorted out. Herod was glad to let Silo go to Ventidius immediately, while he attended to matters in his own kingdom. He first removed the brigands remaining in the caves. After putting his general Ptolemy in charge of the region, he went off to fight Antigonus. But opposition remained and succeeded in doing away with Ptolemy. Herord hastily returned, killing many of the rebels and ending the revolt. He fined the cities in the regiion a hundred talents for supporting the rebels.

The Parthians were defeated in the summer of 38 BCE. Antony had Ventidius send his commander Machaeras with two legions to help Herod; however, he only blundered and at one point even killed many of Herod's supporters. Herod was determined to go to Antony who was besieging Samosata on the Euphrates and complain. Machaeras managed to talk him out of the complaint, but Herod made his journey, anyway, to give help to Antony, leaving his brother Joseph in charge. With the siege won, Antony dispatched Sossius, his governor of Syria, with several legions to Herod's aid. As he was on his way back, however, Herod learned that his brother Joseph had foolishly taken to the field against some of Antigonus's forces, and his inexperienced troops had been massacred and himself killed. Immediately following this, Galilee and apparently Idumaea (the reading "Judaea" in *Ant*. 14.15.10 §450 seems to be an error) had revolted.

Herod had his revenge. He made a forced march through Mount Lebanon to Ptolemais, gaining reinforcements on the way. He first attacked in Galilee where he met considerable resistance, but when another Roman legion joined his forces, the enemy abandoned their position. Herod then moved on to Jericho. During this time the Roman commander Machaerus was fortifying a place called Gittha in southern Judaea, where Antigonus was fighting against him. Antigonus send his own general Pappus against Herod. Herod engaged Pappus near the village of Isana (Jeshanah) north of Jerusalem. In the battle Herod was himselof wounded by a javelin, but his forces were victorious. He cut off Pappus's head in revenge, because the latter had killed and beheaded his brother Joseph.

Herod now invested Jerusalem where Antigonus had holed up. After setting up the siege, Herod showed his contempt of Antigonus's military prowess by going off to Samaria to marry Mariamme. There were in effect two generals: Herod at the head of his own army and Sossius who had been sent by Antony in command of the Roman force. With the size of the besieging army (30,000 according to *Ant*.

14.16.1 §468), the outcome was quite predictable; nevertheless, the defenders fought ferociously. When the attackers finally broke through, none of the defenders was spared; indeed, the Jews of Herod's army were as determined to leave no living opponents as the Romans. Antigonus surrendered, however, and was taken prisoner. Herod had two concerns: one was to keep his non-Jewish troops from violating the temple; the other was to prevent wholesale looting of the city. He managed the latter only by promising generous gifts to all the officers and men from his own purse, a promise which he was quick to fulfil.

The exact length of the siege of Jerusalem and the time of its fall are uncertain. The siege had begun sometime in the spring of 37 BCE: according to *War* 1.18.2 §351 the city fell only in the fifth month of the siege; according to *Ant*. 14.16.4 §487, in the third. The statement that the city was conquered on the Day of Atonement exactly 27 years after its fall to Pompey seems stylized and rather suspicious; more likely, it was sometime in the summer of 37 (§1.**). Antigonus was executed by Antony in Antioch, thus bringing the Hasmonean kingly rule to an end. That Antigonus can be considered the last of the Hasmonean kings is indicated by his many coins which give his title in Hebrew as "Mattathias the high priest and the *hever* of the Jews" (מתתיה הכהן הגדל וחבר היהודים *mttyh hkhn hgdl whbr hyhwdym*) but in Greek as "king Anti(gonus)" (βασιλεως αντι [cf. §**.**]).

Troubles with Cleopatra

Up to this point, Josephus' two accounts have been very much parallel, with differences for the most part only slight ones of detail. Now, however, the *War* skips over the next six years very hastily to get to the battle of Actium. The *Antiquities* gives a quite detailed account but one permeated with anti-Herodian statement and innuendo, giving reason to suspect a source different from Nicolaus of Damascus in this section. Herod had a number of troubles caused by Cleopatra who not only wanted to take over control of Palestine but also seemed to have disliked Herod personally. Fortunately, Antony was well disposed toward Herod despite his infatuation with Cleopatra; this, along with skillful diplomacy on Herod's part, managed to keep his throne and kingdom for him even though certain territories were taken away.

Cleopatra's designs were not just on Judea but on Arabia and other territories as well. She was given an area in Coele-Syria by Antony when she first pressed him (*Ant*. 15.3.8 §79). Later, he added certain territories in Arabia and Jericho,

which Herod leased back from her, along with a large section of the coast of Palestine and Phoenicia (*Ant*. 15.4.1-2 §§94-96). Complicating matters was Herod's own domestic situation. Hyrcanus had been released by the Parthians and was invited to return to Judea by Herod. He could not be high priest now because of his mutilation, and Herod appointed Ananel from a priestly family in Babylon. This angered Hyrcanus' daughter Alexandra who thought that her own son Aristobulus should have been given the office. She appealed to Cleopatra to use her influence on Antony. Herod decided the best course of action was to accede on this and appointed Aristobulus who was only 17. When a year later Aristobulus was drowned while swimming at the palace in Jericho, Alexandra wrote to Cleopatra with an accusation of his murder against Herod. Cleopatra persuaded Antony to summon Herod to answer the charges, but Herod was cleared by Antony.

Actium: On the Losing Side

The year 31 BCE saw the final showdown between Antony and Octavian. According to Josephus, Herod was ready to aid Antony in any way possible but, fortunately for Herod, Antony did not feel he needed him at the battle of Actium. Instead, he sent him to fight the Arabs who were refusing to pay the tribute owed. (Josephus says that this was at Cleopatra's instigation since she thought she would gain, whichever one lost [*Ant*. 15.5.1 §110].) However, even though this scenario is widely accepted (e.g., *Schalit: 122), there is reason to be skeptical (*Kasher: 135-49). It seems very unlikely that Antony would have refused help if it had come. The fight with the Arabs (despite some difficulties) was rather convenient when we look at subsequent events: it made sure that Herod was otherwise engaged when the time came for the battle between Antony/Cleopatra and Octavian. A politician as astute as Herod could no doubt see what was coming, with the odds very much against Antony's succeeding. He also knew that if Antony was successful, Cleopatra's full fury might well have been unleashed on him. There are signs that already a year or two before Actium, he was preparing to take any steps needed to survive in the new order.

The Nabatean king at this time was Malichus I (3.6). Initially, Herod was successful until one of Cleopatra's generals unexpectedly intervened on the side of the Arabs and helped them to defeat the Jews. Herod was able to carry on the fight only by guerrilla tactics for a time. But after a large earthquake did considerable damage in Judah (spring of 31 BCE), the Arabs thought they could conquer the demoralized country. As it happened, the Judean army had not been very much

injured by the earthquake so that Herod was able to inflict a decisive defeat on the Arabs.

Antony's defeat at Actium in September 31 BCE left Herod on the losing side. The question was what action he should take. Typically, he made a bold stroke: sometime in the spring of 30 BCE he sailed to meet Octavian at Rhodes. Herod appeared before the Roman victor without his crown but otherwise with regal demeanor and candidly stated that he had supported Antony as a faithful ally and would have been at Actium if Antony had not given orders to the contrary. Now, he placed his crown before Caesar but would serve him just as staunchly as he had Antony if allowed to. There were probably a number of reasons why Octavian was happy to restore Herod's crown and confirm his rule, not least his past record and his administrative ability. Also, it was Octavian's policy to leave Antony's client rulers in power once they had acknowledged his sovereignty. Nevertheless, one suspects that Octavian admired in Herod's action the same courage and sheer guts that he himself possessed. Whatever one might think of Herod in other respects, he had what it took to be leader in a crisis.

Reign of Augustus (31 BCE–14 CE)

[For bibliography, see §**.**.]

The genius of Augustus' reign was that he acted as a constitutional monarch while maintaining the outward trappings of the Republic. Further, the machinery of government was so well designed that it was not only passed on in a smooth transition at his death but continued to work and keep the peace at home--for the most part--for another two centuries. He worked with the Senate and was careful to treat it with respect, but he also created it in his own image by taking the opportunity to weed out potential opposition in reducing the numbers and replacing vacancies with his supporters. He worked through the offices and powers voted to him by the Senate and even declined certain honors on occasion. Nevertheless, there was no question in all this that he was the head of government whose source of power was ultimately the legions under his command.

The first desire of the people was for peace, and the veterans wanted their rewards of discharge and land. So after taking Egypt in 30, Octavian did not attempt to invade Parthia as many undoubtedly expected. Instead, he returned to Rome and began the task of building a stable government in a welcome respite from

fighting. His military career was by no means at an end, and he spent many of the next four decades of rule away from Rome in different areas of the empire. But his greatest achievements were civil, governmental, and domestic, with most of the fighting on the frontiers being conducted by subordinates. He reduced the number of legions from 60 to 28, a number more or less retained under later rulers.

On his return to Rome in 29, he celebrated his triumph and began a program of public building. The treasury captured from Egypt was very helpful in financing all this, which was also useful in maintaining his popular support. He closed the temple of Janus which signified the return of peace. Now was the time for reform of the government which he began immediately, though it was to continue and develop throughout the rest of his life.

Things were sufficiently in progress that he was able to make a bold but calculated move in early 27 to renounce all his powers and offices before the Senate. The result was that the Senators would not hear of it. Finally, after a show of reluctance he accepted authority over the provinces of Spain, Gaul, and Syria, as well as remaining consul as he had each year up to then. Accepting administration over these provinces may have seemed rather less than the rule one associates with an emperor; however, most of the legions were stationed in these areas, and their commanders were Octavian's men. Thus, his carefully planned move was such that he could keep the forms of the Republic while maintaining his actual power of supreme ruler. An additional bonus was that the he was voted the name
Augustus, declared *princeps* or first citizen, and the sixth month was named August in his honor. This is referred to as the First Settlement.

Shortly after the First Settlement he left Rome for three years to conduct campaigns and other activities in Gaul and Spain. A conspiracy discovered shortly after his return showed that there were still those ready to challenge or oppose his authority, but he weathered these successfully. Then he became deathly ill and, since he thought he might not survive, made provision for Agrippa to succeed him. Fortunately, he recovered and had the chance to carry out his developments in full, but he decided to resign his consulship as another tactical move. This made way for others to hold the office and reduce the occasion for resentment at his being continually consul. Therefore, the Senate voted two new powers: his *imperium* would not cease to operate within the city boundary, and he was given the *maius imperium proconsulare* which gave him authority even over the governors of senatorial provinces. These powers meant that he could give command to any administrator or military official anywhere in the empire and expect to be obeyed.

Further, he was voted a tribunate without some of the restrictions normally inherent in the office. This so-called Second Settlement had thus conferred civil, provincial, and military authority practically without limit, which continued to be the basis of the rule of the emperors who succeeded him. Of course, the secret of his smooth governance lay in the tact and restraint with which he used these almost unlimited powers.

Marcus Agrippa was sent to the East in 23 where he began a friendship with Herod. Despite famine in Rome, which he dealt with without accepting a dictatorship, Augustus himself visited the East for three years (22-19 BCE). Augustus' organization and solidification of government was such that a celebration could be made in 17 proclaiming the new age which Augustus had founded. Agrippa was again in the East in 14, not long before his early death, where his friendship with Herod became a close one. Throughout most of his reign, Herod kept in close touch with Augustus and was able to maintain a good relationship with the emperor himself as well as other members of the family.

The Rest of Herod's Reign (30-4 BCE)

Sources: *War* 1.20.3-33.9 §§393-673; *Ant*. 15.6.7 §195—17.8.3 §199.

Octavian came through Palestine some months after confirming Herod in his kingship on his way to retaking Egypt (30 BCE). Herod not only entertained him and his troops lavishly but also made available ample provisions for the march across the desert; he was similarly unsparing in expense on Augustus' return from Egypt. The effect (no doubt intended by Herod) was for Augustus to conclude that he was being generous beyond his means and to reward him with additional territories. Throughout most of his reign Herod enjoyed the close friendship and confidence of Augustus and was honored with titles and other accouterments of status as well as further grants of territory.

The widening of Herod's kingdom took place over a decade or so (*War* 1.20.3-4 §§396-400; *Ant*. 15.7.3 §217; 15.10.1 §343; 15.10.3 §360). Initially in 30 BCE, Herod received back the territories taken away by Cleopatra, plus land southeast of the Sea of Galilee (Gadara, Hippo) and certain coastal cities (Gaza, Anthedon, Strato's Tower [Caesarea]). (He is also said to have received Samaria and Joppa at this time, but the former was probably already restored by Antony [Appian, *Bell. Civ*. 5.75.319] and the latter by Julius Caesar [*Ant*. 14.10.6 §202].)

Some years later (c. 23 BCE) he was awarded territories northeast of the Sea of Galilee (Trachonitis, Batanea, Auranitis), and finally (c. 20 BCE) land north of the Sea of Galilee, connecting Galilee with Trachonitis (including modern Huleh and Paneas [Caesarea-Philippi]). These gifts do not just represent Roman greatness of heart toward Herod. Judea was a frontier kingdom, and it was known that Herod would take great care for its security, thus also keeping a vital link in the Roman boundary safe from barbaric encroachment (see next section).

Administration under Herod

> **M. Avi-Yonah** (1966) M. *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests*, 86-101; **Ibid** (1974) 'Historical Geography of Palestine', *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 1.91-113; **D. Braund** (1984) *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of Client Kingship*.

Herod ruled as a client king (or friendly king) of Rome. There were a number of these during the late Republic and early Empire, especially as long as the boundaries of the Empire continued to be expanded (Braund 1984). Client kingship was useful to the Romans because the client kingdom served as a buffer to the areas not under Roman control and could be called upon to render military aid when needed. On the other hand, Rome did not have to expend valuable resources in administration and the posting of legions on a permanent basis, for the client kingdom took care of its own administration and defense of its borders under normal circumstances.

Herod began his reign with the much reduced state of Judah left after Pompey's redistribution of territory. In the early years of his rule Cleopatra gained some of his territory though allowing him to lease it back: the coastal cities and the oasis of Jericho (*War*. 1.18.5 §§361-62; *Ant*. 15.4.1-2 §§94-96). After the battle of Actium when he went over to Octavian, he was given Judah, Samaria, Idumea which he already governed; the return of the land appropriated by Cleopatra; and the Greek cities of Gadara, Hippus, Joppa, Gaza, Anthedon, and Strato's Tower (*War*. 1.20.3 §396; *Ant*. 15.7.3 §217), only Ascalon being kept back by Octavian. Later in 23 BCE Augustus added Trachonitis, Batanea, and Auranitis (*War*. 1.20.4 §398; *Ant*. 15.10.1 §§343-48); and in 20 BCE, Gaulanitis, Paneas, and the Ulatha region (*War*. 1.20.4 §400; *Ant*. 15.10.3 §360).

Thus, by the end of his reign Herod controlled a state reaching from southern Lebanon to the Negev and from the Mediterranean to the Transjordan. It was an area basically as large as that under Alexander Janneus and probably as large as anything Solomon had governed. The population was not homogenous but composed of Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, Syrians, and Arabs. The administration varied from area to area because of historical factors as well as pragmatic ones. The various sorts of administration are as follows:

1. Greek cities. These were supervised by a commissioner known as the *stratëgos* (*Ant*. 15.7.9 §254). Attached to Gaba, Heshbon, and perhaps Azotus were military colonies (cleruchies) administered much as they had been under Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule (see 4/3.1).

2. Jewish section of the kingdom. The old Hasmonean division into provinces (*meris*), subdivided into toparchies, with these in turn further subdivided into villages, was apparently maintained. All administrative officials were appointed directly by the king.

3. Jerusalem held a unique position. A Sanhedrin still existed in name, apparently, but we have no record of decisions made by it once Herod became king (cf. 7/3.2.3). When the king was himself not there, a *stratëgos* was responsible for affairs of state (*War*. 1.33.3 §652; 2.1.3 §8; *Ant*. 17.6.3 §156; 17.9.1-2 §§209-10).

Herod himself ruled as a typical Hellenistic monarch under Roman domination. He was the quintessential client king who was often in the company of the emperor, the emperor's family, and high Roman officials, whether in his own kingdom or in Rome or elsewhere. He traveled to Rome and other parts of the Eastern empire periodically. His children were educated in Rome. In addition to his own enormous internal building program, he also provided for a number of projects in various parts of the old Greek areas (4.9.2).

Magnificent Buildings

S. Applebaum (1989) 'The Beginnings of the Limes Palaestinae', *Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times*, 132-42; **M. Ben-Dor** (1986) 'Herod's Mighty Temple Mount', *BAR* 12/6 (Nov.-Dec. 1986) 40-49; **H. Geva** (1981) 'The "Tower of David'—Phasael or Hippicus?' *IEJ* 31: 57-65; **M. Gichon** (1967) 'Idumea and the Herodian Limes', *IEJ* 17: 27-42; **R. P. Goldschmidt-Lehmann** (1981) 'The Second (Herodian) Temple: Selected Bibliography', *Jerusalem Cathedra* 1: 336-59; **L. I. Levine** (1975) *Roman Caesarea*; **A. Lichtenberger** (1999) *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Großen*; **B. Mazar** (1978)

‘Herodian Jerusalem in the Light of the Excavations South and South-West of the Temple Mount’, *IEJ* 28: 230-37; **E. Netzer** (1975) ‘The Hasmonean and Herodian Winter Palaces at Jericho’, *IEJ* 25: 89-100; **Ibid**. (1977) ‘The Winter Palaces of the Judean Kings at Jericho at the End of the Second Temple Period’, *BASOR* 228: 1-13; **Ibid**. (1981) *Greater Herodium*; **Ibid**. (1999) *Die Paläste der Hasmonäer und Herodes’ des Großen*; **Ibid**. (2008) *The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder*; **E. Netzer, et al**. (1981) ‘Symposium: Herod’s Building Projects’, *Jerusalem Cathedra* 1: 48-80; **A. Raban** (ed.) (1989) *The Harbours of Caesarea Maritima, Vol. I: The Site and the Excavations*; **P. Richardson** (1985) ‘Religion and Architecture: A Study in Herod’s Piety, Power, Pomp and Pleasure’, *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 45: 3-29; **Ibid**. (1986) ‘Law and Piety in Herod’s Architecture’, *SR* 15: 347-60; **Ibid**. (2004) *Building Jewish in the Roman East*; **S. Rocca** (2008b) *The Forts of Judaea 168 BC–AD 73: From the Maccabees to the Fall of Masada*; **D. W. Roller** (1998) *The Building Program of Herod the Great*; **Y. Tsafrir** (1982) ‘The Desert Fortresses of Judaea in the Second Temple Period’, *Jerusalem Cathedra* 2: 120-45; **J. Wilkinson** (1975) ‘The Streets of Jerusalem’, *Levant* 7: 118-36; **Y. Yadin** (ed.) (1975) *Jerusalem Revealed*.

One of the major achievements of Herod’s rule was his building program which was spectacular even by Roman standards. There were two aspects to it, the civic/personal and the military/defensive, though some works had elements of both connected with them. The dating of these is not easy, partly because Josephus lists them all together in the *War* without any chronological framework. A rough chronological framework is given in the *Antiquities*, but the precise dates are not always clear even here. A further problem is that sometimes more than one date is given for the same project. His first project (though the *War* states that it was only in the 192nd Olympiad, c. 10-9 BCE) was the inauguration of tetrennial games in honor of Augustus, for which he built a theater and a large amphitheater (*Ant*. 15.8.1-2 §§267-79; *War*. 1.21.8 §415) in Jerusalem. There was also a hippodrome (*Ant*. 17.10.2 §255), though this was perhaps identical with the amphitheater. The decoration of the theater caused a disturbance among certain Jews who thought they included human images; Herod was able to defuse the tension by letting the individuals concerned see for themselves that this was not so.

The fortifications of the realm were naturally very important. His palace in the upper city of Jerusalem was comprised of two building called Caesareum and

Agrippeum after Augustus and Agrippa (*War*. 1.21.1 §402; *Ant*. 15.9.3 §318), while one of the protective towers was called Phasael after his brother who had been killed by the Parthians (*War*. 1.21.9 §418; *Ant*. 16.5.2 §144). To protect the temple he built the fortress called Antonia, after Mark Antony (*War*. 1.21.1 §401; *Ant*. 15.8.5 §292). South of Jerusalem he created the fortress of Herodium (named for himself) by artificially raising a hill to an even greater height (*War*. 1.21.10 §§419-21; *Ant*. 15.9.4 §§323-25). Near Jericho he constructed a fortress named Cypros after his mother (*War*. 1.21.9 §417; *Ant*. 16.5.2 §143). These all formed part of a fortification system on the border with Arabia which prefigured the *limes Palaestina* (Roman frontier defense system) of later centuries (Kasher: 152-56; Applebaum; Gichon; cf. Tsafrir). Included in this were the pre-existing fortresses of Masada, Macherus, and Alexandrium which Herod also strengthened and improved (*War*. 7.8.3-4 §§280-303; 7.6.2 §§171-77; *Ant*. 16.2.1 §13). Exactly why this was thought necessary, since the Nabateans were nominally Roman allies, is a question.

Next, probably about 27-25 BCE he rebuilt Samaria, renaming it Sebaste, the Greek equivalent of “Augustus” (*War*. 1.21.2 §403; *Ant*. 15.8.5 §§292-93, 296-98). On the coast the old city of Strato’s Tower was rebuilt with a magnificent man-made harbor and called Caesarea, again after Augustus (*War*. 1.21.5-7 §§408-14; *Ant*. 15.8.5 §293; 15.9.6 §§331-41). The work on this finished in Herod’s 28th year (c. 10-9 BCE), though it is said to have taken 10 years (*Ant*. 16.5.1 §136) or 12 (*Ant*. 15.9.6 §341). It was later to be the seat of the Roman government of Palestine. In addition to these works which also served as a part of the system of fortifications, Herod built a number of other sites which he named after Roman friends or family members. The village of Anthedon which had been destroyed in warfare was rebuilt under the name Agrippium (*War*. 1.21.8 §416) or Agrippias (*Ant*. 13.13.3 §357). North of Jericho, probably in last years of his reign, he built a city named Phasaelis after his brother (*War*. 1.21.9 §418; *Ant*. 16.5.2. §145). In the Plain of Sharon north of Joppa, a new town was founded with the name Antipatris after his father Antipater (*War*. 1.21.9 §417; *Ant*. 16.5.2 §§142-43).

One of the most important projects, and one which would have done most to endear him to the Jewish people, was the restoration and rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem (*War*. 1.21.1 §401; *Ant*. 15.9.1-7 §§380-425). In the *War* it is placed in his 15th year but in his 18th in the *Antiquities*. The care with which this was carried out and the enormous cost involved (apparently paid for by Herod himself) suggests that its alleged fame throughout the Roman empire was not exaggerated. The work of building could be done only by priests and had to be carried out in such a way as to maintain the dignity of the house and not disrupt the regular cultic services.

Conflicts with the Arabs

Marcus Agrippa was sent to Asia Minor in 14 BCE to place a king friendly to the Romans on the throne of Cappadocia. Herod persuaded him to visit Jerusalem for a magnificent welcome in the autumn of that year. Then, next spring Herod sailed to the Pontus to join him,
and they made a lengthy return journey by land together. The Jews of Ionia appealed to Herod for help with regard to certain local infringements on their practice of religion. He made representation to Agrippa about the matter and gained a hearing for the Jews' petition. The result was that Agrippa confirmed their traditional religious rights. In honor of his friendship with Agrippa and the accomplishments of the visit, Herod remitted a quarter of the taxes for one year. Unfortunately, Agrippa himself died only a year later in 12 BCE.

The next major event was a conflict with the Arabs which occurred near the end of Herod's reign in 10-9 BCE (*Ant*. 16.9.1-4 §§271-99; 16.10.8-9 §§335-55; only the last part is in the *War* 1.29.3 §§574-77). A group of men from the Trachonitis had traditionally supplemented their living by brigandage. When Herod took over rule, he put a stop to this so that they had to earn their living only by farming. This caused problems because the soil was poor and probably also because it went against their traditional way of life. While Herod was in Rome, a revolt developed which was quickly put down, but about 40 of the leaders fled to Arabia. Although the Arab king was Obodas II, the real power behind the throne was Syllaeus (*Ant*. 16.7.6 §220) who gave refuge to the brigands and allowed them to raid Judea and Coele-Syria from a secure base in Arabian territory. To add insult to injury, Syllaeus reneged on repayment of a loan from Herod to Obodas. Part of the problem may have been personal since Syllaeus had once been betrothed to Herod's sister Salome, but the marriage had been prevented by Herod's insistence that Syllaeus convert to Judaism (*Ant*. 16.7.6 §224-25; 17.1.1 §10).

Herod was unable to stop the raiders by normal methods and finally lost patience. He consulted with the Roman governors of Syria, Saturninus and Volumnius. They supported him and agreed that he would be justified in taking his army into Arabia, a serious offence for one Roman client king against another. Herod was wholly successful, destroying the brigand stronghold and capturing the defenders, though he was attacked by an Arab force and killed its commander in defending himself. On the diplomatic front, however, he was outwitted by Syllaeus who had set off for Rome before Herod's military actions. Putting his case before

Augustus, Syllaeus was able to convince him against Herod to the extent that the emperor would not even receive a delegation from Herod to give his side of the event. This was serious for Herod who had enjoyed Augustus' support and friendship up to this point.

Herod could do nothing but endure the raids and the general humiliation for a period of time. Then, Obodas died and Aretas IV took the throne. This action irritated Augustus whose permission should normally have been sought; on the other hand, it meant that the
Arabian camp was now divided. Herod tried once more to present his case by sending his assistant Nicolaus of Damascus. This time Augustus heard Herod's case and was persuaded by Nicolaus who not only was an effective orator but also had the support of Aretas' faction in his charges against Syllaeus. Augustus had Syllaeus executed and became reconciled with Herod; he was apparently even of a mind to add Arabia to Herod's domain but decided against it because of Herod's family troubles. So he confirmed Aretas on the throne though rebuking him for his boldness in taking the kingship without first receiving Roman confirmation. (We have Nicolaus' own account of this episode preserved in a fragment of his *Life*; see *GLAJJ*: 1.250-60.)

Family Quarrels and the Death of Herod

D. J. Ladouceur (1981) 'The Death of Herod the Great', *Classical Philology* 76: 25-34.

Most of the rest of Josephus' narrative about Herod (in both the *War* and the *Antiquities*) is taken up with the rather unedifying spectacle of family jealousies, hates, intrigues, and executions. The problem for the historian is how to evaluate this information. It is not the stuff of history but of soap opera. This does not mean that many of the events described did not take place, or even not occur much as recounted, but woven into the narrative is continual moral evaluation, assigning of motives, descriptions of states of mind, and general pseudo-psychoanalysis. To take this at face value--as many writers unfortunately have done--is to treat the stuff of romance as if it were straightforward history. Most of the data can be summarized fairly briefly, and lose nothing by conciseness. In some cases there is good reason to question the accounts because Josephus contradicts himself, but

even where he does not, one can only point out what is said without necessarily supposing that it represents a high degree of accuracy.

The first episode in this business was the execution of his wife Mariamme, the daughter of Hyrcanus. Two separate scenarios are given, dated several years apart, so that determining which (if either) is correct is not easy. According to the *War* (1.22.2-4 §§436-44), the other women of the household began intriguing against Mariamme, accusing her of adultery. Then, when Herod was away in 29 BCE, he entrusted her to his brother-in-law Joseph, leaving instructions that he was to slay her if he died since he could not bear the thought of her marrying another man. But Joseph told her of these instructions, and on Herod's return Mariamme confronted him with this information. He assumed that she could have gained access to it only if intimate with Joseph. Therefore, he had them both executed. A similar episode is found in the *Antiquities* (15.3.5-9 §§62-87), except that it is dated to Herod's trial before Antony (c. 34 BCE) and only Joseph was executed, not Mariamme. But a little later (*Ant*. 15.6.5 §§183-86; 15.7.1-4 §§202-34) a further similar incident is narrated, only the culpable man is Herod's Iturean servant Soemus. The time is about 29 BCE, and both Mariamme and Soemus are executed. Because of the great similarity, it seems likely that one of the accounts in the *Antiquities* is the doublet of the other, perhaps because Josephus had two versions of the same event. One might draw some significance from the fact that the time of Mariamme's execution is the same in both accounts even though the co-accused is different; however, it is not clear that Josephus is all that reliable on chronological matters when he departs from the framework of Nicolaus of Damascus, which he seems to be doing more in the *Antiquities* than in the *War*.

Intrigues among Herod's relatives also eventually led to the execution of Alexander and Aristobulus, Mariamme's two sons by Herod (*War*. 1.23.1-27.6 §§445-551). They received their education at Rome and were likely heirs to Herod's kingdom, but having returned to Judah (c. 18 BCE), they seem to have been very resentful about the treatment of their mother. The accounts in Josephus generally take the view that they were just rather bitter young men who spoke up when it would have been wiser to keep their mouths shut, rather than guilty of actual plots against Herod's life. A further complication was the question of their half brother Antipater, son of Herod's first wife Doris. Their indiscretions resulted in Herod's recalling Antipater from the exile to which he and his mother had been sent and showing him various favors. Once Antipater was present in court, rivalry was inevitable between the potential heirs, especially since Antipater was the firstborn even though not considered heir after Herod married Mariamme. According to

Josephus who is probably following Nicolaus' own bias here, Antipater was the main instigator of charges, rumors, and lies against the sons of Mariamme.

Events first came to a head about 12 BCE when Herod finally took Alexander (so *War*; *Antiquities* also includes Aristobulus) to be accused before Augustus in Rome. The outcome of this was a reconciliation of Herod and his son(s), even to the extent of their being declared joint heirs with Antipater when Herod returned to Jerusalem. The reports of plottings against Herod did not cease, however, and to make matters worse the actions of Alexander's wife also aroused the resentment of Herod's sister Salome. At one point three of Herod's personal servants who were eunuchs admitted to relations with Alexander and reported his intimate talk which suggested that he would be ruling instead of Herod before long. After further inquiries, Herod had Alexander imprisoned.

This time his father-in-law Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, managed to reconcile him with Herod. Finally, after several more years of continual suspicions, charges, and reports, Herod imprisoned Alexander and Aristobulus and wrote to Augustus for his permission to punish them. This was allowed, though only after a trial before the Roman governor of Syria and the leading rulers and aristocrats of the area. Herod got a condemnation and had his two sons executed about 6 BCE.

Antipater is alleged by Josephus, probably following Nicolaus, to be not only the chief plotter against the two sons of Mariamme but also against Herod himself. Because of Nicolaus' anti-Antipater bias, it is difficult to know whether to give credence to this charge even though it is not by any means implausible. In any event, the family intrigues were supposed to have continued even after the executions. Some Pharisees also became involved and were executed by Herod when he found out about this (*Ant*. 17.2.4 §§41-44). Herod fell out with his brother Pheroras and exiled him to his tetrachy. Not long afterward, he died. His freedmen reported to Herod their suspicions that he had been poisoned. Investigation by Herod supposedly found evidence of this pointing ultimately at Antipater who happened to be in Rome at this time. Confirmation came in the alleged accusations of Antipater against Herod's other sons Archelaus and Philip. Herod recalled Antipater from Rome and imprisoned him. After his trial in which he was found guilty, messengers were sent to Augustus to obtain permission to carry out punishment.

By this time it was late 5 or early 4 BCE. Herod became seriously ill and steadily got worse. From the sequence of events in Josephus, it appears that the illness lasted only a few months though the precise progress of the disease is unclear. The description of it is horrendous but part or even much of this could be a

literary concoction; certainly one should be careful in taking the description at face value to the point of trying to determine the precise affliction as has sometimes been done (cf. Ladouceur). Herod's attempts to find a cure or even relief from the pain were unsuccessful.

On one occasion rumor had it that Herod was dead. Two religious teachers by the name of Matthias and Judas put their disciples up to removing the golden image of an eagle which Herod had placed over the temple gate. These two individuals and many of their followers were executed. While it is often alleged that they were Pharisees, Josephus nowhere states this but only describes them as learned in the Law, hardly an exclusive preserve of the Pharisees. An eclipse of the moon followed their execution, probably the one of March 4 BCE. Shortly after this Augustus' letter arrived which allowed Antipater's execution. Only a few days after having this was carried out, Herod himself died of his illness; he was near the age of 70. The time was shortly before Passover, i.e., late March or early April, 4 BCE (§**.**).

Assessment of Herod's Reign

> **W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison** (1988) *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*; **L. H. Feldman** (1984) *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)*; **R. T. France** (1979) 'Herod and the Children of Bethlehem', *NovT* 21: 98-120; **P. Richardson** (1986) 'Law and Piety in Herod's Architecture," *SR* 15 (1986) 347-60; **A. Schalit** (1969) 'A Clash of Ideologies: Palestine under the Seleucids and Romans', *The Crucible of Christianity,* 47-76.

Herod has been such a notorious and controversial figure that any evaluation of him is very difficult. In assessing his reign, one must ask, Against what standard? Other Greco-Roman despots? The Hasmonean rulers? Some golden ideal of kingship? Ancient views of Herod were generally negative and have gone a long way to shape the modern ones. Perhaps one of the views which has had most influence in later Christian history is the labeling of Herod as "slaughterer of the innocents":

According to Mat 2:16-18 Herod asked the Magi to tell him where the baby born king of the Jews was located. When they disregarded this, he is alleged to have slain all males of two years old and under in Bethlehem. Some histories and commentaries still take this at face value, but it is clearly a piece of legend, probably

Christian, though whether it was meant consciously to be anti-Herodian or only to demonstrate opposition to the Christ child seems uncertain. The legendary nature of the story is indicated by (a) the whole context of men from the east following a star; (b) the idea that Herod would have taken such a mission to find a new-born "king of the Jews" seriously; (c) the fact that Josephus, who has many distinctly anti-Herodian passages and even outright slander, says nothing about such a thing (e.g, the criticisms of Herod by a Jewish delegation before Augustus do not use such an example even though it would have been an unparalleled example of cruelty and despotic rule--*War*. 2.6.2 §§84-86; *Ant*. 17.11.2 §§304-10); (d) the fact that no other writer mentions what would surely be a point of interest to any Roman reader about this Jewish king; (e) the common motifs found in a variety of accounts of the birth of important religious figures. It has been argued that the origin of many of the motifs of this section of Matthew lie in the Moses haggadic traditions (Davies/Alison: 192-94, 264-66; *contra* France).

Modern scholarship has presented a mixed picture. To its credit there are those who have attempted to provide a positive side of the man, but probably the majority of accounts that one reads tend to take much of Josephus' assessment at face value (cf. the summary in Feldman: 278-87). Such views can be summed up by the title of S. Sandmel's book, *Herod: Profile of a Tyrant* (1967). The autocratic and even tyrannical aspect of Herod's rule can be taken for granted, but such is the nature of one-ruler states throughout history. The question is to what extent his rule should be characterized by the negative aspects and to what extent these are countered by other, more postive features. Schalit's study does attempt a revision of the negative view (*1969; cf. 1969). It would hardly be classified as a whitewash, but it does go a long way toward pointing out the positive features of Herod's rule which not only helped the Jews in many ways during his lifetime but paved the way for his descendents (such as Agrippa I and Agrippa II) to act as advocates for the Jewish people on a number of occasions.

One thing to keep in mind in any discussion is that the bulk of the accounts which have come down to us are either hostile or neutral; favorable portraits of Herod such as that by Nicolaus of Damascus have not survived intact. Jewish legend and tradition have been much along the lines of the rather biased picture of Josephus. In a tragic stereotype which probably owes much to Nicolaus, Josephus presents Herod as a man who had extraordinary good fortune in his rise to the throne and in his rule; countering this, as if a divine law, were the misfortunes which arose from his own family. There is undoubtedly truth in this binary opposition, but one must keep in mind that Josephus/Nicolaus is following a literary device which

may have forced conformity of some of the data to the scheme. Herod's problems within his own family occasioned the anecdote which ascribed the statement to Augustus, "I would rather be Herod's pig (Greek *hus*) than his son (Greek *huios*)" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.4.11). The ascription does not have to be correct to illustrate the tradition about Herod preserved in the non-Jewish world. But even if Augustus said such a thing, it could hardly have escaped his notice that he experienced similar troubles within his own family during his long reign. Thus, Herod was not the only capable ruler whose competence changed remarkably as he passed from the throne room into the living quarters.

As a Hellenistic monarch and a client-king under Rome, Herod was probably exceptional in his accomplishments and his generosity toward the general Hellenistic culture. His exercise of power was not particularly arbitrary by the standards of the time, nor were his exactions from his own people more burdensome than in other kingdoms. On the other hand, he respected the religious feelings in the Jewish areas of his territory. When once confronted by delegation which accused him of putting pagan images in the Jerusalem theater, he showed that this was a simple misunderstanding. His coinage was aniconic. He rebuilt the Jerusalem temple into one of the outstanding edifices of the Roman world. The only significant religious violation which some could point to was the golden eagle over the temple entrance.

Indeed, the point must be made that Herod considered himself a Jew, by all indications. It is common to label him a "foreigner" because sources such as Josephus identify him as an Idumean: "a half-Jew" (*Ant*. 14.15.2 §403). But apart from the question of descent, which is not an easy one (3.2), he regarded himself--and was regarded by the Romans, if the anecdotes are true--as a Jew. Notice the following considerations:

(1) His respect for Jewish customs. There are no examples of blatant disregard for them. Even in midst of a tirade about the introduction of "foreign" and "unlawful" customs by Herod, Josephus has then to admit that this did not really involve breach of Jewish law, as Herod himself demonstrated to his critics (*Ant*. 15.8.1-2 §§267-79).

(2) His coins with no human portraits on them (2.5).

(3) He requirement that a Nabatean convert to Judaism before he would marry his sister Salome to him (*Ant*. 16.7.6 §§221-25).

(4) The amount of money and interest he put into the Jerusalem temple.

(5) His fortress at Herodium, considered by many to have had a synagogue in it (though this identification is not accepted by everyone--8/3.3). Even his most

private quarters at Masada used no offensive motifs in the skillful decorations (cf. Richardson).

No one of these by itself is decisive; each one individually could be explained differently, but there is a certain cumulative effect. Unfortunately, the tendency is to judge Herod by an artificial standard because of prejudice against him. For example, no one seems to question the Jewish identity of Agrippa I, yet all his coins outside Judea have human portraits on them, whereas his grandfather Herod did not use human images on any of his coins. Why should the one be ignored for his benefit, while the positive side of the other is dismissed as mere politics? It has sometimes been alleged that Herod would not have been considered Jewish because his mother was not Jewish; however, this seems anachronistic since the matrilineal descent of Jewishness is a later development. In Herod's own time Jews seem to have regarded the ethnicity of the father the important factor (8/3.2).

On the economic side, it is often stated that he burdened his subjects with taxes. All rulers taxed their subjects, and this would always weigh more heavily on the poor and politically impotent, but there is no indication that Herod's taxes were greater than those of previous or later rulers (3.7). On the contrary, his rule probably relieved some of the burden since the indication is that the taxes placed by the Romans in the period between 63 and 40 was crushing, partly because of war expenses and partly because a good deal of territory was taken away from Jewish control. Under Herod most of this was regained; in addition, he opened up new land to cultivation in certain desolate regions. Also, it now seems clear that Herod did not pay regular tribute to the Romans (despite the assertion in many standard works that he did).

Further on the financial side, he was able to diffuse criticism at various times by acts of generosity to his own people: He prevented the soldiers from looting Jerusalem when it fell in 37 BCE by rewarding them from his own pocket (4.7.1). He relieved a famine at considerable expense to himself, which silenced his critics and established general good will even among many who were formerly hostile (*Ant*. 15.9.1-2 §§299-316). In honor of his meeting with Agrippa he rescinded a quarter of the taxes for the year 12 BCE, which is said to have won over his immediate audience of a large assembly consisting of the people of Jerusalem and many from the country (*Ant*. 16.2.5 §§64-65). The enormous expenses of the temple building supposedly came from his own coffers (*Ant*.15.11.1 §§380).

Yet one would hardly call him a benevolent monarch. He governed as absolute ruler and could be completely ruthless in suppressing opposition (*Ant*. 15.10.4 §§365-72). At the beginning of his rule he made the Sanhedrin completely

impotent--as far as any check on his activities is concerned--by executing a number of its members and cowing the rest (4.5.1; 7/3.2.3). Although it was subordinate to the Hasmonean rulers, it does seem to have functioned as a form of restraint on them, whereas it ceased to have any political function under Herod, as far as can be determined. But was he worse than other monarchs of the time--whether local potentates, monarchs of sizable kingdoms, or even the Roman emperor himself? Was he really any different from the Hasmonean rulers before him?

It is very difficult to judge public opinion in the days before scientific polls (and perhaps even since!). There were certainly those who detested him and his rule, but to extrapolate beyond that to say that he was unpopular with the Jews--as is so often done--is simply to go beyond our knowledge. We do not know that he was any more unpopular than, for example, Alexander Janneus. Some who were critical changed their minds, at least temporarily, according to statements in Josephus. Certain groups and individuals evidently benefited from his rule, not least the temple priests and personnel. Much of his contribution to building projects elsewhere in the Hellenistic world could have been primarily egocentric but would still help the reputation of the Jews who were often being criticized for their unusual customs at this time. And he was able to intercede on behalf of certain Jewish communities with the Roman authorities on occasion (e.g., *Ant*. 16.2.3-5 §§27-65). Any judgment on Herod must consider the positive as well as the negative. There lies the final question: Whatever his faults, was Herod's rule not preferable to that of direct Roman rule? Some thought not at the time of his death, but what about in the decades after 6 CE when Judea was once again a Roman province?

Summary and Conclusions

Under Antony and Octavian, Herod proved to be an extremely useful ally of the Romans and was declared king after the Parthian take-over of Palestine in 40. Only a few years after he had retaken Jerusalem and established his rule, the battle of Actium in 31 found Herod on the losing side. Nevertheless, he was confirmed in his kingship by Octavian and became close friends with the emperor and his family. Much of positive value can be seen in Herod's rule, when all considerations are taken into account, though the last part of his reign was clouded by sordid events within his family and his own reactions to them.