

VI

THE JEWS UNDER THE ROMANS

(63-4 B.C.)

1. *Roman measures and Jewish revolts*

As a result of Pompey's conquest the Hasmonaean kingdom became part of the Roman province of Syria, of which Scarus was governor. This whole area, comprising the western part of the former Seleucid empire, was of the utmost importance to the Romans, not least because it formed a strategic line of defence against the ever-present menace of Parthian invasion from the east. To take the fullest advantage of its strategic position, however, it was necessary to guarantee the unity of the country and to put its control in the hands of the central government. For this purpose certain sweeping administrative reforms were carried through. Whole areas which had been added by conquest to the Hasmonaean kingdom were 'liberated' and placed under the authority of the governor of Syria. These included the city and land of Samaria, a number of Hellenistic cities on the coastal plain, and several others, including Pella and Scythopolis, in Transjordan and the Jordan valley area, which were now incorporated in the territory known as the Decapolis (or 'ten cities'). Territory under Jewish control was thus reduced to Judaea itself together with the districts of Galilee in the north, Idumaea in the south, and 'Peraea' on the east side of Jordan. Over this territory Pompey set up Hyrcanus II as High Priest and ethnarch, but withheld from him the title of king. He was no longer ruler of a kingdom but High Priest of a religious community with its centre of worship in Jerusalem. Hyrcanus was personally responsible to the Roman governor, to whom his people had to pay annual tribute (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. iv. 4; *War* I. vii. 6).

The country remained at peace for six years, until in 57 B.C. an attempt was made by Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, who had escaped on his way to Rome, to gain the mastery over his uncle Hyrcanus. Collecting an army he captured the fortresses at Alexandreion, Hyrcania, and Machaerus. The recently appointed governor of Syria, Gabinius, at once took action; with the help of Mark Antony he defeated Alexander near Jerusalem and caused him to withdraw to Alexandreion, where he surrendered. Alexander was set free, but the fortresses he had taken were demolished (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. v. 2-4; *War* I. viii. 1-5). Gabinius, as a consequence of Alexander's revolt, now carried out further administrative changes which strengthened still more the central government's control over Jewish affairs. Their territory was divided up into five independent districts directly responsible to the provincial governor in matters of government and taxation.

This tightening of control, however, did not prevent still further outbreaks. The Jews as a whole were unhappy about recent government moves and about the continuing High Priesthood of Hyrcanus. This general restlessness was a signal for Aristobulus and his son Antigonos, who had by this time also escaped from the Romans, to raise the standard of revolt (56 B.C.). The rising, however, was short-lived. Forced to withdraw to the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea, they surrendered. Aristobulus was carried off to Rome a second time, though Antigonos was set free (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. vi. 1; *War* I. viii. 6). Within a few months of these events, during the absence of Gabinius in Egypt, Antigonos' brother Alexander again took up arms. On his return from Egypt Gabinius, whose army had been helpfully supplied with grain by Antipater, now requested his further help in trying to win over the Jews to a more favourable frame of mind. When these attempts failed, he advanced to meet Alexander's army and routed it near Mount Tabor on the southern border of Galilee. Gabinius then proceeded to Jerusalem, where, says Josephus, 'he reorganized the government in accordance with Antipater's wishes' (*Antiquities* xiv. vi. 3-4; cf. *War* I. viii. 7).

Shortly afterwards (54 B.C.) Gabinius' place in Syria was taken by Crassus, who dealt with the Jews much more severely than his predecessor had done. To finance his projected campaign against the Parthians he ransacked the Jerusalem Temple and stole the treasures which Pompey some years before had left intact. The following year he was defeated in battle by the Parthians near Carrhae and was killed a short time later. From 53 to 51 B.C. Syrian affairs were in the hands of Cassius, who, after the death of Crassus, sought to stem the advance of the Parthians eastwards. Like his predecessor he was favourably impressed by Antipater. It was at his instigation, for example, that he put down a popular rising in Galilee (51 B.C.), selling thirty thousand of his captives into slavery and putting to death one of the ringleaders named Peitholaus, who represented the cause of Aristobulus and his sons against the High Priest Hyrcanus (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. vii. 1-3; *War* i. viii. 8-9).

In the year 49 B.C. the growing rivalry between Pompey and Julius Caesar finally burst into civil war, and soon Caesar found himself master of Rome. In the light of these events Pompey's forces in Syria withdrew eastwards, leaving Antipater and his supporters in a precarious position. Caesar now decided to release Aristobulus and send him to Syria as his champion; before this plan could be implemented, however, Aristobulus was poisoned by Pompey's supporters, and the following year his son Alexander was beheaded on the express orders of Pompey himself. Antipater now decided upon a bold policy. When Pompey was defeated the following year at the battle of Pharsalus and afterwards assassinated, he and Hyrcanus determined to change sides and come out openly in support of Caesar. Their bold move was accepted, and soon Antipater was able to express his friendship in a practical way. During Caesar's campaign in Egypt he went to the help of his armies in a difficult situation; Hyrcanus on his part also showed his willingness to help, by urging the Jews in Egypt to take Caesar's side. Despite the plea of Aristobulus' remaining son Antigonus that he had a right to the High Priesthood rather than

Hyrcanus, Caesar responded to the proffered friendship of Antipater and Hyrcanus and rewarded them handsomely for their loyal help. The five administrative districts established by Gabinius were now abolished, and Judaea was once more united under the leadership of Hyrcanus, whom Caesar now confirmed in the hereditary office of High Priest, and appointed ethnarch, also with hereditary rights. Thus Hyrcanus received back that political authority which Gabinius had taken away from him. He and his descendants, moreover, were now named as 'allies' and 'friends' of Rome. Antipater was likewise honoured by being appointed procurator of Judaea and being given Roman citizenship with exemption from taxes. No Roman troops were to be billeted in Judaea during the winter months and no money was to be required from the people for this purpose. Permission was given to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The strategic seaport of Joppa was restored to the Jews together with certain other places, including a number of villages in the plain of Jezreel. Josephus further records that the Jews of the Dispersion—in Alexandria and Asia Minor—likewise received generous preferential treatment, being granted complete freedom in the exercise of their religion (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. viii. 1-5, x. 1-7; *War* i. ix. 1-x. 3). Having received such remarkable concessions it is hardly surprising that the Jews, above all people, mourned the death of Caesar when a few years later he fell by the hands of his assassins.

The events of these days are reflected in an important book, the so-called Psalms of Solomon,¹ written about the middle of the first century B.C. These Psalms, eighteen in all, are generally taken to represent the religious outlook of 'quietist' Pharisaism at this time. Most scholars identify the invader, referred to in Ps. Sol. 2 and 8, with Pompey, and find in the book a commentary on the years 63-48 B.C., i.e. the period between Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and his death. Of greatest significance are Ps. Sol. 17 and 18, where the writer looks away from the faded glories of the Hasmonaean House to the splendour of the messianic age and the glory of the Davidic

¹ See pp. 291 ff.

Messiah. God's anointed one would purge Jerusalem and establish his eternal kingdom; the humble poor of Israel would enter into their inheritance and the nations would come from the ends of the earth to see his glory.

2. *The rise of Herod and the reign of Antigonus*

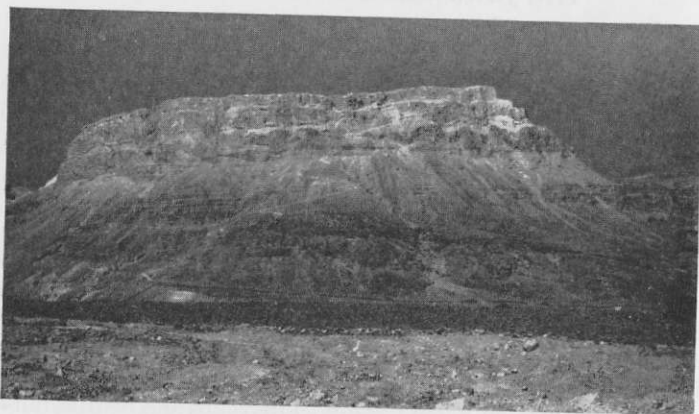
It is quite clear from the events which followed Caesar's decree that the real power in Judaea lay in the hands not of Hyrcanus but of Antipater, who took advantage of the weakness and indolence of his companion to establish his own authority. In particular he appointed his elder son Phasael governor of Jerusalem, with jurisdiction over Judaea and Peraea, and his younger son Herod governor of Galilee (47-46 B.C.). The latter soon made his presence felt by capturing a brigand-chief named Ezekias, who had been troubling Galilee, and putting him to death together with many of his men. Hyrcanus was jealous of the reputation Herod was building up for himself, and the aristocratic families and other members of the supreme Council (to which Josephus now gives the name 'Sanhedrin') were furious because he had thus taken matters into his own hands. Hyrcanus was prevailed upon to summon Herod to appear before the Sanhedrin. This he did, but when Herod appeared in Jerusalem it was with the moral backing of the governor of Syria, Sextus Caesar, and with the military backing of a strongly armed bodyguard! In such circumstances Hyrcanus and the Sanhedrin had little option but to pronounce his acquittal. Herod, however, interpreted these proceedings as a personal insult, and within a short time appeared before Jerusalem with a considerable army, determined to assert his authority. Only the earnest pleading of his father Antipater turned him aside from his purpose. Herod then returned to Galilee, satisfied that he had at least terrified the Jerusalem aristocracy with a display of his power. During these events Sextus Caesar appointed him governor of Coele-Syria and Samaria (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. ix. 1-5; *War* i. x. 4-9).

After the death of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. the government of

Syria came into the hands of Cassius, who had already served in this capacity during the years 53-51 B.C. He won for himself the hatred of the Jews by exacting from them large sums of money for the support of his army. Their bitterest hatred, however, was reserved for Antipater, who once more changed sides and placed his services, together with those of his son Herod, at the disposal of Cassius, offering to collect the required payments from the Jews. For this service Herod was confirmed in his office as governor of Coele-Syria. Antipater was much less fortunate, however, for he was poisoned (43 B.C.) at the instigation of a rival named Malichus, who was himself shortly afterwards put to death by Herod (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. xi. 2-6; *War* i. xi. 1-8).

A short time later, when Cassius left Syria to join Brutus, outbursts of violence took place in Judaea and in Galilee in which Antigonus was involved. Herod defeated the rebels in battle and banished Antigonus from the country. Hyrcanus was grateful to Herod for this act, for, although he distrusted him, his most dangerous rival was Antigonus himself. Herod at this time won for himself an even more favourable position by becoming engaged to Mariamne, daughter of Antigonus' brother Alexander and of Hyrcanus' daughter Alexandra. But the time had come for Herod, like his father before him, to change sides. In 42 B.C. Cassius and Brutus were defeated at the battle of Philippi by Antony and Octavian. Control of Syria thereafter passed into the hands of Mark Antony, whose goodwill Herod and Phasael at once sought to win. Despite charges brought against him by the Jews, Herod won the approval of Antony who now appointed him and his brother joint tetrarchs, with control over the administration of Judaea. During these proceedings Hyrcanus had stood up for Herod and Phasael; but now he found himself deprived once more of all political power (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. xi. 7-xii. 2, xiii. 1; *War* i. xii. 1-5).

In 40 B.C. Antigonus, who had been biding his time awaiting further opportunity to assert himself, made another determined attempt to win back the throne, with the help of the Parthians



The impressive rocky plateau of Masada where Herod built a palace fortress for the members of his family. Situated near the desolate western shore of the Dead Sea about 10 miles south of En-gedi, it is famous for the stand taken there by the Zealots in the War with Rome, A.D. 66-73. Josephus reports that of its 960 occupants only 7 women and children survived. All the others, rather than surrender, slew one another by mutual consent. Masada has now been excavated by the Government of Israel.

whose support he enlisted in return for suitable bribes. Hyrcanus and Phasaël were taken prisoner and subsequently handed over to Antigonus. Antigonus thereupon cut off Hyrcanus' ears, thus making him unfit to hold the High Priestly office (cf. Lev. 21¹⁷ ff.), before handing him back to the Parthians, who carried him off to Babylon. Phasaël decided to commit suicide by dashing his head against a rock. The way was now open for Antigonus to realize his great ambition. With the full backing of the Parthians he assumed leadership of the nation as both High Priest and King. Coins struck during his three years' reign (40-37 B.C.) show on the obverse side the inscription, 'King Antigonus' (in Greek), and on the reverse side, 'Mattathias the High Priest and the Community of the Jews' (in Hebrew, with the Hebrew form of his name. Cf. *Antiquities* xiv. xiii. 1-10; *War* I. xiii. 1-11).

Meanwhile Herod, barely escaping capture himself, escorted

his family to the fortress of Masada on the western shores of the Dead Sea and then fled for refuge to the Arab city of Petra. Meeting there with a cold reception, he left for Alexandria and from there set sail for Rome, where after a perilous voyage he was received favourably by Antony and Octavian. As a result of Antony's special pleading and with the approval of Octavian, the Roman Senate to Herod's utter astonishment unanimously elected him King of Judaea (39 B.C.). To be appointed king, however, was one thing; to take possession of his kingdom was another. But Herod was a resolute as well as a ruthless man. Back in Syria the Roman governor Ventidius had driven out the Parthians, but had left Antigonus in possession of his throne on payment of substantial tribute. Herod now landed in Ptolemais, collected an army, captured Joppa, removed his family from the fortress of Masada, where they were undergoing a siege, and advanced against Jerusalem. He was unable, however, to press home his advantage because of lack of support from the available Roman forces, and so withdrew into Galilee, where he spent some months clearing the land of robbers and putting down insurrection. Shortly afterwards, however, having received from Antony a pledge of Roman support, he made himself master of Galilee and then of the whole country. With the passing of winter he laid siege to Jerusalem, helped by the Roman army. Jerusalem fell and a great massacre followed, in which Herod had to buy off his Roman allies with substantial gifts of money. Antigonus was beheaded, and with his death the dwindling influence of the Hasmonaean House came to an end. Herod, who during the siege of Jerusalem had strengthened his position by marrying Mariamne, to whom he had been betrothed for five years, now took possession of his kingdom (37 B.C.) (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. xiv. 1-xvi. 4; *War* I. xiv. 1-xviii. 3).

3. *The reign of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.)*

Herod the Great was a man of overpowering personality who contrived to be 'everything to all men' and was prepared

to use every means to gain his own ends. By religion he was a Jew, by race an Idumaeon,¹ by cultural sympathies a Greek, and by political allegiance a Roman. To his inferiors he was utterly ruthless; to the members of his own family he could behave in a most cruel manner; to his superiors he adopted a cunning policy of 'playing along with' whichever ruler at that moment found himself in power, and, like his father before him, was ready to change sides at a moment's notice in order to realize his ambitions.

Home affairs and foreign policy (37-25 B.C.). In 37 B.C., when he came to the throne, his kingdom was confined to Judaea, Idumaea, Peraea, and Galilee together with the port of Joppa and villages in the plain of Jezreel. Any plans he may have had for consolidation and expansion of this territory suffered a serious set-back in 34 B.C. when Antony transferred to Cleopatra the coastal cities of Phoenicia and Philistia as well as the most fertile part of his kingdom in the region of Jericho, which she proceeded to lease to him for a rent of two hundred talents! On Cleopatra's death, however, in 30 B.C. these were all restored to him by Octavian, and in subsequent years he gradually gained possession of the whole of Palestine apart from the independent cities of the Decapolis and the coastal strip to the north of Caesarea (cf. *Antiquities* xv. vii. 3, x. 1). It speaks highly for his powers of diplomacy that he was able to maintain this extensive kingdom intact until the time of his death.

Herod enjoyed the official title *rex socius* or 'confederate king'. As such he was a vassal king; nevertheless he was a real king, responsible not to the governor of Syria but directly to Caesar and the Roman Senate. Apart from certain restrictions on the issuing of his own coinage he was given full authority within his kingdom and shared all the rights of Roman citizenship. It was not customary for a *rex socius* to appoint his own successor, but in the case of Herod this honour was conferred in the year 22 B.C., only to be withdrawn at a later date when he forfeited the friendship of the Emperor. In the

¹ So Josephus tells us; cf. p. 76 above.

matter of foreign policy he was expected to comply with certain well-defined requirements. For example, he had no right to conclude a treaty with another state or wage war on his own account; moreover, he was under obligation to assist Rome in time of war with men and money, and was responsible for the defence of its frontiers, which in his case meant in particular the border between his own kingdom and those of the Nabataean Arabs to the south and the Parthians to the east.

Despite his endeavours to please he failed to win the confidence and trust of his subjects. The Greeks, for example, were not at all happy about being ruled by a Jew; and the Jews were even less happy, for, if Josephus is right, he was an Idumaeon by birth even though his religion was Jewish. In particular, the Jewish aristocracy, both priestly and lay, made it perfectly clear that where they were concerned he was altogether unacceptable. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of his first acts was to despoil the well-to-do of much silver and gold, and to attack the leading members of Antigonos' party, forty-five of whom he put to death. The money thus acquired was used as gifts for Antony and his friends (cf. *Antiquities* xv. i. 2). As his reign advanced the old hereditary aristocracy gave place to a new aristocracy of service, consisting of men who had received their wealth and position from the King, with the result that his policy of administration assumed the nature of a strongly centralized bureaucracy, run on distinctly Hellenistic lines. By these means he dealt a death-blow at the power of the Sanhedrin, which ceased to have any real influence during his reign. Its powers were limited to strictly religious matters, matters of a political character being dealt with by a secular royal Council set up by the King, also on Hellenistic lines.

His attitude to the Pharisees, however, was much more favourable, for he could not forget that it was two of their number, Shemaiah and Pollio (Abtalion), who persuaded their fellow citizens to open the gates to him during his siege of Jerusalem. The fact that they did this not out of any love for Herod but because they saw in him God's instrument of judgement did not alter his attitude towards them. That they

chose to adopt a quietist attitude and devote themselves to religious rather than to political affairs suited his purposes admirably; besides this, with them on his side he had a much better chance of winning the approval of the common people. He thus tried every means to appease them and to win their confidence by respecting their religious prejudices, by observing their ritual laws, and even by excusing them from taking an oath of allegiance to his royal person, a concession which the Essenes also shared (cf. *Antiquities* xv. x. 4). One important, if incidental, result of this policy was that during his reign there was a considerable increase in genuine piety among the common people. Despite his obvious desire to please, however, the Pharisees remained suspicious and aloof.

To placate the people still further Herod, near the beginning of his reign, brought back the former High Priest Hyrcanus from Babylon, even offering to share the throne with him. His subsequent treatment of the High-Priestly office, however, soon undid any good he had done in this way. Hyrcanus, because of his mutilated ears, could not serve as High Priest, nor could Herod himself, by reason of his lineage. He thus decided to degrade the office as much as possible by breaking the hereditary principle on which it had been based and by abolishing its lifelong tenure. From now on the High Priest was to be appointed by the King and would be permitted to hold office only so long as it pleased the King. Thus during the period of his reign no fewer than seven High Priests were appointed and then removed from office (cf. *Antiquities* xv. iii. 1, 3, ix. 3, xvii. vi. 4, etc.). The natural successor to Hyrcanus was the young Aristobulus (III), son of Hyrcanus' daughter Alexandra (i.e. Herod's mother-in-law). Herod, however, passed him over and appointed an obscure priest from Babylon named Ananel (cf. *Antiquities* xv. ii. 4). Alexandra took this as a gross insult and appealed to Cleopatra to use her influence with Antony on behalf of her son. Aristobulus' sister Mariamne (Herod's wife) also used her persuasion on her husband, with the result that Ananel was deposed and the sixteen-years-old Aristobulus set up in his place (36 B.C.).

Following this there was at first a show of friendship between Herod and Alexandra, but soon his suspicions were aroused that she was attempting to overthrow the government, and so he had her put under house-arrest. The discovery soon afterwards of her plan for her son and herself to escape to Cleopatra in Egypt in two coffins convinced him all the more of her guilt. Jealousy was added to suspicion when, at the Feast of Pentecost, the young High Priest was given a resounding welcome by the people. Shortly afterwards the King decided upon drastic action. At a reception in Jericho his young men, who had been bathing with Aristobulus, held him under the water until he drowned (cf. *Antiquities* xv. iii. 3). The report of this 'accident' was conveyed to Alexandra, who, from now onwards, sought revenge on her son-in-law Herod.

Once more Alexandra appealed to Cleopatra, with the result that Herod was summoned to appear before Antony. Realizing that he might never return from his interview, he committed Alexandra and his wife Mariamne to the watchful care of his uncle Joseph, who was also the husband of his sister Salome. His secret orders were that Mariamne, whom he loved dearly, should be killed if he himself were sentenced to death. He could not bear the thought of her belonging to anyone else, least of all to Antony who, he suspected, already had designs upon her. When a false report of Herod's death reached Jerusalem, Alexandra put her plans into operation to ensure the royal succession for her family, whilst Joseph divulged to Mariamne Herod's secret orders about her own fate. When Herod returned home safe and well, his mother Cypros and his sister Salome acquainted Herod with Alexandra's plans and insinuated that Mariamne's relations with Joseph left much to be desired. As a result he put Alexandra under arrest and executed Joseph without trial, sparing only his wife Mariamne (35 or 34 B.C.).

Within a few years Herod found himself involved in a crisis of much bigger dimensions. In 32 B.C. civil war broke out between Antony and Octavian, resulting in Octavian's victory at the battle of Actium the following year. It was fortunate for Herod

that, prior to this victory, he had been sent at the instigation of Cleopatra and against his own will to fight the Nabataean Arabs, and so had not been directly involved in the war against Octavian. He now resolved on a bold plan—to go to Rhodes in person and throw himself on the mercy of Octavian. Before doing so, however, he decided to safeguard his position at home. Alexandra and Mariamne were again placed under observation, and express instructions given to their guards, another Joseph and Sohemus, to put them to death should he himself not return.¹ More drastic treatment, however, was reserved for the aged Hyrcanus, the only surviving rival claimant to the throne. On the orders of Herod he was brought before the Sanhedrin on a trumped-up charge of treason, duly sentenced, and executed (cf. *Antiquities* xv. vi. 2).

Herod was now ready to present himself before Octavian. With great boldness he confessed his former loyalty to Antony and now pledged his friendship to his rival. Octavian, duly impressed, accepted his offer and confirmed him on the throne, confident that in this audacious and ruthless man he had a ruler who could keep his own people in order and form a strong bulwark on his eastern frontier. Meanwhile, Antony and Cleopatra both having died by their own hands, Octavian transferred Cleopatra's possessions in Palestine to Herod, adding to them extensive territories in Samaria and in the land east of the Jordan, so that his kingdom from now onwards was almost comparable with that of Alexander Jannaeus.

On his return to Judaea in 29 B.C. Herod was again caught up in the domestic intrigues and jealousies that were to play such a big part in his later life. As on the previous occasion, his suspicions were aroused against Mariamne and her guard Sohemus. Further provoked by the insinuations of Salome that his wife intended to poison him, he had Mariamne and her supposed lover put to death. The death of Mariamne was to haunt him for the rest of his days. The following year Alex-

¹ The circumstances recorded here are suspiciously like those in the earlier story. The two accounts as given by Josephus reveal a certain confusion.

andra suffered a like fate for taking part in yet another plot against her son-in-law. Finally, three years later, in 25 B.C., his series of executions was brought to a close by the dispatch of one Castobarus, the second husband of Salome, for harbouring 'the sons of Babas', the only survivors of the Hasmonaeon family, who were put to death with him. Although Herod was now as deeply hated by the Jews as he ever had been, his position from this point was never again seriously challenged (cf. *Antiquities* xv. vii. 10).

His policy of Hellenization and programme of building (25-13 B.C.). This story of plots and intrigues should not blind us to the fact that Herod's reign was a time of peace and prosperity for the nation as a whole. Despite his lavish expenditure on enormous building schemes and the expensive gifts he was constantly making to members of his own family and foreign dignitaries, he managed to keep his coffers full and, indeed, to increase steadily his royal revenue. He was a man of great business ability whose powers of planning and organization raised the country to a peak of prosperity. As examples of this we note especially a new scheme of irrigation he introduced to fertilize the lower Jordan valley, and a new city and port built on the site of Straton's Tower, whose excellent harbour encouraged profitable overseas trade, which he called Caesarea in honour of the Emperor.

In order to maintain this state of affairs he pursued three well-defined policies. One was to encourage good relations with Octavian and to promote that Hellenistic culture of which Rome was now champion; another was to cultivate the confidence and trust of his own people by, for example, reducing their burden of taxation (cf. *Antiquities* xv. x. 4, xvi. ii. 5) and avoiding offence to their religious scruples; the third was to suppress nationalism, which he regarded (not unjustifiably) as a menace to himself and to the security of the state. For this purpose, and as a defence against attacks from enemies outside, he maintained a standing army (composed largely of mercenaries), established military settlements on his northern and eastern borders, and erected a whole series of impregnable

fortresses, some of which he fashioned into palaces for the use of the members of his large family.

The erection of these fortresses was but one part of an enormous building programme undertaken by Herod, especially during the middle period of his reign. This included not only magnificent buildings but also entire cities, erected in the Hellenistic style. As a patron of the arts he initiated quinquennial games in honour of the Emperor, with their athletic and gladiatorial contests, and was known as a liberal supporter and 'perpetual manager' of the Olympic games (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. v. 3). In city after city he built theatres, stadiums, hippodromes, gymnasiums, public baths, colonnaded streets, market-places with elegant statues, and innumerable temples. In Jerusalem itself he built a hippodrome south of the Temple area, a theatre just outside the city wall, and an amphitheatre 'in the plain' a little farther beyond (cf. *Antiquities* xv. viii. 1). Outside his kingdom he dedicated altars, shrines, and temples to heathen deities, as also to his benefactor Octavian.

Within Palestine itself two cities in particular call for special mention. In 27 B.C. he began to restore the ancient city of Samaria, calling it Sebaste in honour of Octavian, who only a few months before had been honoured by the Senate with the title 'Augustus' (Greek, *Sebastos*). The old site was now greatly enlarged, fortified with strong walls and impressive gates, and decorated with beautiful colonnades and magnificent buildings, one of the most impressive being the great Temple of Augustus, the ruins of whose monumental flight of steps can be seen to this day (cf. *Antiquities* xv. viii. 5). The second city is Caesarea, formerly (as we have seen) a small township on the coast called Straton's Tower. On this spot he built a truly magnificent city with a costly artificial harbour, a theatre, an amphitheatre, and all the other appurtenances of Hellenistic culture (cf. *Antiquities* xv. ix. 6).

His most notable work, however, was reserved for the city of Jerusalem itself. Among the fine buildings he erected there were two most impressive palaces which served at the same time as strategic and powerful fortresses. During the time of his

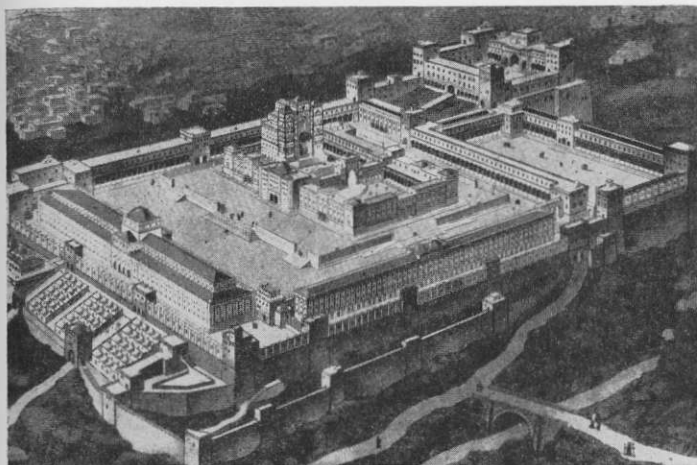


The north-west corner of the Temple area showing the site of the fortress Antonia on the left. This fortress, which occupied a commanding position overlooking the Temple, was built by Herod and named after his friend and patron Antony. It housed the Praetorium and the 'Pavement' mentioned in the New Testament (cf. John 18²⁸, 19¹³).

friendship with Antony he had erected a citadel near the site of the Hasmonaean 'Baris', overlooking the Temple at the north-west corner of the Temple area and connected with it by underground passages and two stairways. This he called the fortress of Antonia, after his friend and patron.¹ Its high walls and four impressive towers dominated all the precincts of the Temple even more effectively than the Baris and that other citadel, the Akra, had done (cf. *Antiquities* xv. viii. 8, xi. 4, 7). The second building, known as 'Herod's palace', built on the western side of the city, was begun in 23 B.C. (cf. *Antiquities* xv. ix. 3). This was a much larger edifice than the Antonia, having three towers called Hippius (after a friend), Phasael (after his brother), and Mariamne (after his wife), and containing magnificent royal suites. This building, which was on higher ground than the Antonia, dominated the city as effectively as that other citadel dominated the Temple area. But even these magnificent buildings paled into insignificance before another that was to be Herod's crowning glory, the reconstructed Temple (cf. *Antiquities* xv. xi. 2-3), which Josephus describes as 'the most notable of all the things achieved by him . . . great enough to assure his eternal remembrance' (*Antiquities* xv. xi. 1).

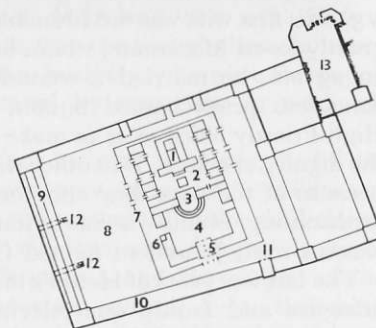
This work was begun in 20 B.C., the Temple proper being completed in eighteen months and the outer courts and porticoes in another eight years—indeed the process of building continued for a much longer period (cf. John 2²⁰) and was completed only in the time of the procurator Albinus (A.D. 62-65) a few years before it was destroyed in the Jewish War against the Romans. The old Temple area was doubled in size by means of embankments and flanking walls towering above the valleys far below. Around the whole area ran a continuous wall, with porticoes supported by gleaming white pillars, the one on the south side being of exceptional size and beauty (cf. *Antiquities* xv. xi. 5-7). In all this work, as in so many other respects, Herod was careful not to cause offence to his Jewish

¹ It is generally accepted that the Antonia contained the Praetorium and the 'Pavement' from which Jesus was led out to be crucified (cf. John 18²⁸, 19¹³).



DIVISIONS OF HEROD'S TEMPLE
(reconstruction according to the data of Josephus and the Mishnah)

- 1 Holy of Holies
- 2 Sacrificial Altar
- 3 Nicanor's Gate
- 4 Women's Court
- 5 Corinthian Gate
- 6 Treasury
- 7 Separation wall between Jews and Gentiles
- 8 Court of the Gentiles
- 9 Royal porch
- 10 Solomon's portico
- 11 Golden Gate
- 12 Underground entrances from the south
- 13 Antonia Fortress



A reconstruction of the magnificent Temple area built by Herod the Great. The complex of buildings in the centre contained the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, the altar of burnt offering, and the several Courts. The whole area was flanked by a continuous wall constructed with porticoes and supported by gleaming white pillars. The fortress Antonia can be seen in the top right hand corner and the Kidron Valley in the foreground.

subjects. For example, the stones to be used in the building were prepared beforehand by ten thousand workmen so that no noise should be heard there, a thousand of these workmen being priests specially trained as masons and carpenters for work on the most sacred parts of the building (cf. *Antiquities* xv. xi. 2). He was careful, moreover, never to enter the inner Temple himself. In strict observance of the second commandment he refrained from erecting statues in the Temple precincts and even from stamping images on his coins; he did, however, permit a replica of a Roman eagle to be set over the great gate of the Temple, which in due course was to lead to violent reaction on the part of certain Pharisees. In this and in many other ways Herod in fact gave ample cause for offence, despite all his efforts to the contrary.

Domestic trouble and death (13-4 B.C.). Herod was a man with many family connexions, which included ten wives, fifteen children, and innumerable grandchildren (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. i. 3). His first wife was the Idumaeen, Doris, and his second the greatly loved Mariamne, whom he caused to be put to death. In 23 B.C. he married a second Mariamne, daughter of a Jerusalem priest named Simon, whom he installed in the High-Priestly office so as to make his marriage more fitting to the dignity of a king. Two other wives are deserving of mention because of the part they and their children were to play in forthcoming events—a Samaritan named Malthace and a woman from Jerusalem named Cleopatra.

The last few years of Herod's life tell a sad story of domestic intrigues and family quarrels in which his jealousies and suspicions grew rapidly to the pitch of mania. Goaded on by his scheming sister Salome, he gave free rein to his vindictiveness. The trouble started with the return home in 17 B.C. of his two sons by the first Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, who five years before had been sent to Rome to be educated (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. i. 2). Proud of their royal descent through their Hasmonaeen mother, they behaved arrogantly towards the other members of the family, who were mere Idumaeans. Their aunt, Salome, reacted with slanderous allegations that

they were plotting to avenge themselves on Herod for the death of their mother (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. iii. 1). As a warning to his two sons Herod brought back from exile their stepbrother Antipater (son of his first wife Doris), whom he now sent to Rome with Agrippa to gain the favour of Augustus (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. iii. 3-4). During his absence his cause was ably supported by his mother Doris, his aunt Salome, and his uncle Pheroras, who continued slanderous attacks on the two brothers. As a result Herod was forced to take action and brought the young men before Augustus for judgement (12 B.C.). A reconciliation was effected, however, and Herod returned home with his two sons (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. iv. 2-4). There, before the Temple, he proclaimed Antipater as his heir and, failing him, the two sons of Mariamne (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. iv. 6). Petty feelings and intrigues continued, however, and members of the court were submitted to blackmail and torture. Alexander and Aristobulus were again charged with treason and summoned before Augustus (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. x. 1-7), who on this occasion allowed Herod to act as he thought best. Sentence of death was passed on the two brothers, who were thereupon taken to Sebaste and executed by strangling (7 B.C.) (cf. *Antiquities* xvi. xi. 1-7).

Antipater's troubles were not yet over, however, for he did not like the attention Herod was now paying to the children of Alexander and Aristobulus, and was afraid of the rival claims of his own half-brothers Archelaus and Antipas (sons of Malthace), Philip (son of Cleopatra), and Herod (son of the second Mariamne) (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. i. 1-3). Becoming suspicious of Antipater's growing impatience, Herod sent him to Rome (5 B.C.), naming him as heir-apparent and Herod as heir presumptive (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. iii. 2). During his absence a plot to poison the King was uncovered, in which Antipater, Doris, and the second Mariamne were all involved. When the unsuspecting Antipater returned home from Rome he was at once arrested, brought to trial, and condemned (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. v. 1-8). Herod now changed his will, naming Antipas (the younger son of Malthace) as his successor.

By this time the King had become seriously ill with a terrible disease, which caused him grievous bodily pain and finally brought him to a state of mental derangement. In spite of this severe handicap he forced himself to deal with a troublesome insurrection caused by certain Pharisees who on receiving a false report of his death, urged their pupils to pull down the golden eagle he had set up over the great gate of the Temple. Forty of them, together with two leading Rabbis named Judas and Matthias, were arrested and put on trial before the dying King. Judgement was passed; the ringleaders were burned alive and the others executed (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. vi. 1-3).

Meanwhile Herod's disease grew worse. A visit to the baths at Callirrhoe, on the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, did not have its desired effect and Herod returned to his palace in Jericho. At this point Josephus narrates an incident which is no doubt apocryphal. Herod, it is said, assembled the chief men of his kingdom and locked them in the hippodrome in Jericho, giving express orders to Salome that they were to be massacred as soon as he himself expired, so that the time of his death would be marked by national mourning (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. vi. 5)! In great physical and mental torment he made an unsuccessful attempt to take his own life, and then gave orders for the condemned Antipater, who lay in prison near by, to be killed and for his body to be buried without ceremony in the fortress of Hyrcania (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. vii. 1). With his own life fast ebbing away he again altered his will. Archelaus he appointed King of Judaea, Antipas tetrarch of Galilee and Transjordan, and Philip tetrarch of Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Paneas. Five days after Antipater's death, in the year 4 B.C., Herod himself died. His body, decked in all his royal regalia, was taken with elaborate ceremonial to its last resting-place in the fortress of Herodeion and there was buried (cf. *Antiquities* xvii. viii. 1-3).

VII

THE DISPERSION

I. *Its extent and causes*

THE term 'Dispersion' is generally used to describe the scattering and settlement of the Jews outside Palestine during the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods. This process, begun in early pre-exilic days, gained increasing momentum, especially from the beginning of the second century B.C., so that by the time of the Christian era there was hardly a country where the Jews were not to be found. About the middle of the second century B.C. the writer of the Sibylline Oracles, for example, can say of the Jewish people, 'Every land and every sea is filled with thee' (Bk. III, line 271). Barely a century later the geographer Strabo (64 B.C.-A.D. 24) states that in the time of Sulla (c. 85 B.C.) 'this people has already made its way into every city, and it is not easy to find any place in the habitable world which has not received this nation and in which it has not made its power felt' (cf. *Antiquities* xiv. vii. 2). Philo (died c. A.D. 50) likewise speaks of the widespread dispersal of his people, claiming that 'one country cannot support the Jews, because they are so numerous' (*Flaccus* vii. 45). Later still, towards the end of the first century A.D., Josephus asserts that 'there is not a people in the world which does not contain a portion of our race' (*War* II. xvi. 4, cf. VII. iii. 3; *Against Apion* II. 39 (282)). This is confirmed by two other important passages—1 Macc. 15¹⁶⁻²⁴ and Philo's *Embassy to Gaius* xxxvi. 281 f.—which specify the many places throughout Europe, Asia Minor, Babylonia, and beyond where Jewish communities were to be found. Further corroboration is given by the New Testament, which clearly indicates that by that time there was hardly a country or a city to which the Jews had not come (cf. John 7³⁵; Acts 2⁹⁻¹¹; James 1¹; 1 Peter 1¹).