

§ 14 ANTIGONUS (40–37 B.C.)

Sources

Jos. Ant. xiv 14–16 (370–491); *B.J.* i 14–18 (274–375).

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Antigonus, or according to coin evidence, Mattathias, his Hebrew name, achieved through the favour of the Parthians the position for which his father and brother had struggled in vain. Like his ancestors from the time of Aristobulus I, he now also styled himself on his coins 'King' and 'High Priest'—*ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΟΥ* (rev.) / *מתתיה הכהן הגדול* (cbv.).¹

Herod's hopes rested simply and solely on Roman help. Without going to Petra—for the Nabataean prince Malchus had begged him not to visit him—he proceeded to Alexandria and took ship for Rome, although the autumn storms had already begun. After perils of many sorts, he reached Rome by way of Rhodes and Brundisium and immediately brought his complaint before Antonius.² Whatever was lacking in favour, Herod was able to obtain by bribes. And so it came about that, after Octavian had also given his consent, he was declared king of Judaea at a formal session of the Senate. The appointment was celebrated with a sacrifice on the Capitol and a banquet given by Antonius.³

1. Cf. on the coins of Antigonus Eckhel III, pp. 480–1; Mionnet V, pp. 563 f.; de Saulcy, *Recherches*, pp. 109–13; Madden, *History of the Jewish Coinage*, pp. 76–9; *id.*, *Coins of the Jews*, pp. 99–103; A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins* (1947), pp. 17–18; Y. Meshorer, *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period* (1967), pp. 60–3. One coin, Meshorer, *op. cit.*, no. 30, has a longer title—*מתתיה [ה] כהן הגדול ותבר היהודים*

2. *Ant.* xiv 14, 1–3 (370–80); *B.J.* i 14, 1–3 (271–81).

3. *Ant.* xiv 14, 4–5 (381–93); *B.J.* i 14, 4 (282–5). Cf. Appian, *B.C.* v 75/319 (see p. 251 above). The nomination took place in 40 B.C., in the consulship of Cn. Domitius Calvinus and C. Asinius Pollio, *Ant.* xiv 14, 5 (389), but in any case fairly near the end of the year, for it was already late autumn when Herod took ship at Alexandria, *Ant.* xiv 14, 2 (376); *B.J.* i 14, 2 (279). The statement of Josephus that the nomination occurred in the 184th Olympiad, *Ant.* xiv 14, 5 (389), is strictly incorrect, for it had ended in the summer of 40 B.C. Other evidence

From nomination to actual possession was another and more difficult step. For the time being, the Parthians and their protégé Antigonus were still in occupation of the land. The former were admittedly expelled from Syria in 39 B.C. by Ventidius, the legate of Antonius (see pp. 251-2 above), but Ventidius merely exacted a heavy tribute from Antigonus, and for the rest left him unmolested. A similar policy was pursued, after the departure of Ventidius, by Silo, his second in command.⁴

Such was the situation when Herod landed at Ptolemais in 39 B.C. He quickly assembled an army, and since, on the orders of Antonius, Ventidius and Silo now supported him, he soon made progress. First, Joppa fell into his hands, and then Masada, where his family had been besieged. With his success the number of his followers also increased, and he could set about besieging Jerusalem. But he did nothing about it for the time being because Silo's Roman troops, which should have supported him, adopted a troublesome attitude and had to be dismissed to winter quarters.⁵

In the spring of 38 B.C. the Parthians renewed their invasion of Syria. While Ventidius and Silo engaged them, Herod attempted to subjugate the land completely to himself and purge it of its numerous desperadoes. Galilee, in particular, sheltered vast hordes of brigands in inaccessible caves. But he managed to capture even these by letting his soldiers down in huge boxes (*λαβρακες*) from the tops of the cliffs and thus enabling them to enter the caves.⁶

on the movement of the Triumvirs shows that it will have been towards the end of 40 B.C. (the last time, as Josephus's narrative requires, that Antonius and Octavian were in Rome together towards the end of a year); see MRR II, pp. 379-40 and cf. 386-7. The argument of W. E. Filmer, 'The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great', *JThSt* 17 (1966), pp. 283-98, on p. 285 that the formal appointment dates to 39 B.C., has no weight whatever, relying as it does solely on a resumptive reference to client kings appointed by Antonius, in App. B.C. v 75/319.

4. *Ant.* xiv 14, 6 (392-3); *B.J.* i 15, 2 (288-9); Dio xlviii 41, 1-6.

5. *Ant.* xiv 15, 1-3 (394-412); *B.J.* i 15, 3-6 (290-302).

6. *Ant.* xiv 15, 5 (420-30); *B.J.* i 16, 4 (309-13). According to *Ant.* xiv 15, 4 (415) and *B.J.* i 16, 2 (305), these caves were in the neighbourhood of Arbela. Josephus frequently mentions them elsewhere; *Ant.* xii 11, 1 (421); *Vita* 37 (188). The description he gives in *Ant.* xiv 15, 5 (420-30) = *B.J.* i 16, 4 (309-13) agrees accurately with the caves still situated in the neighbourhood of Khirbet Irbid (Arbed) not far from the Lake of Gennesaret and north-west of Tiberias. Accordingly, there can be no doubt that Irbid is identical with Arbela, and that the caves there are those described by Josephus. The form Arbela occurs five times in Josephus (cf. A. Schalit, *Namenswörterbuch* s.v. "Αρβηλα), add to this 1 Mac. 9:2 and the Rabbinic אַרְבֵּל. The place with the ancient synagogue (Carmoly, *Itinéraires* (1847), pp. 131, 259) is certainly our Arbel = Irbid (cf. vol. II, § 27); in other cases, also, this is probably what is meant (Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 219). The transition from *l* to *d* is certainly surprising, but not without

Meanwhile, the Parthians were once more defeated by Ventidius (9 June 38 B.C.), who then turned against Antiochus of Commagene and besieged him in Samosata, his capital. During the siege, Antonius himself arrived before Samosata. Herod could not lose this opportunity of speaking to his patron, for he had good reason to complain of the support given him till then. He therefore went to Samosata to pay his respects to Antonius, who received him very graciously, and, as the surrender of Samosata took place soon afterwards, instructed Sosius, the successor of Ventidius, to lend Herod powerful assistance.⁷

In Palestine things had gone badly during Herod's absence. His brother, Joseph, to whom he had transferred supreme command, had been attacked by an army of Antigonus and fallen in the battle, whereupon Antigonus had ordered his head to be struck off. As a result, the Galileans too had risen against Herod, and had drowned his followers in the Lake of Gennesaret.⁸

Herod heard about all this when he was in Antioch, and hastened to avenge his brother's death. Galilee was subdued without difficulty. Near Jericho he encountered the army of Antigonus, but seems to have not risked any decisive engagement. It was only when Antigonus divided his army and sent part of it under Pappus to Samaria that Herod sought him out. They met at Isana. Pappus attacked first, but was completely defeated by Herod and thrown into the city, where all those unable to escape were cut to pieces. Pappus himself met his death at this time. The whole of Palestine, with the exception of the capital, thus fell into Herod's hands. And only the advent of winter prevented him from starting an immediate siege of Jerusalem.⁹

In the spring of 37 B.C., as soon as the season permitted, Herod camped before the capital and commenced siege operations. When these were in progress, he left the army for a short time and went to Samaria to celebrate his marriage with Mariamme, a granddaughter

parallel; cf. Aram. אַרְבֵּל and אַרְבֵּל (Kautzsch, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, p. 63; Kampffmeyer, *ZDPV* 15 (1892), pp. 32 f.; Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* (1967), p. 111). On Arbela generally, see Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine* II, p. 398; Guérin, *Galilée* I, pp. 198-203; *The Survey of Western Palestine, Memoirs of Conder and Kitchener* I, pp. 409-11. Cf. Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, p. 249.

7. *Ant.* xiv 15, 7-9 (434-47); *B.J.* i 16, 6-7 (317-22).

8. *Ant.* xiv 15, 10 (448-50); *B.J.* i 17, 1-2 (323-7).

9. *Ant.* xiv 15, 11-13 (451-64); *B.J.* i 17, 3-8 (328-44). Instead of *ISANA*, *Ant.* xiv 15, 12 (458), *B.J.* i 17, 5 (334) has *KANA*, which is probably only a corruption of the text. The context indicates that the place lay either in the south of Samaria, or in the north of Judaea; for Pappus was sent to Samaria, but Herod fell in with him as he was coming from Jericho. Accordingly our Isana is undoubtedly identical with אַרְבֵּל, which is mentioned with Bethel in 2 Chr. 13:19 (in *Jos. Ant.* viii 11, 3 (284) *Ἰσῶν*). W. F. Albright in *BASOR* 9 (1923), p. 7 identifies Isana with Burj el-Isāneh, about twenty miles north of Jerusalem on the Nablus road; cf. Abel, *Géog. Pal.* II, p. 364.

of Hyrcanus, to whom he had already been engaged for five years from 42 B.C., see *Ant.* xiv 12, 1 (300); *B.J.* i 12, 3 (241).¹⁰

The wedding over, he returned to the camp. Sosius too now appeared before Jerusalem with a large army, and together he and Herod led the attack on the city from the north as Pompey had done. Here mighty ramparts were raised and the catapults began their work. Forty days after the start of the bombardment the first wall was taken, and a further fifteen days later, the second one also. But the inner court of the Temple and the upper city still remained in the hands of the besieged. Finally, these too were stormed, and the besiegers murdered whoever in the city fell into their hands. Antigonus himself dropped at the feet of Sosius and entreated him for mercy. Sosius made fun of him, called him 'Antigone' and had him clapped in irons. Herod's greatest preoccupation now was to be rid of his Roman allies as soon as possible, for murder and plundering in what was now his capital were against his interests. By means of lavish gifts he managed at last to induce Sosius and his troops to withdraw.¹¹ [Text continues on p. 286

10. *Ant.* xiv 15, 14 (467); *B.J.* i 17, 8 (344). Mariamme (*Μαριάμμη*, it should not be spelt *Μαριάμμη*) was a daughter of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus II, and Alexandra, a daughter of Hyrcanus II, *Ant.* xv 2, 5 (23). She was Herod's second wife. His first wife was Doris, from whom he had a son named Antipater, *Ant.* xiv 12, 1 (300).

11. *Ant.* xiv 16, 1-3 (468-86); *B.J.* i 17, 9 (345-6); 18, 1-3 (347-57); Dio xlix 22, 3-6; Seneca, *Suas.* ii 21, 'Sosio illi qui Iudaeos subegerat'; Tac. *Hist.* v 9 'Iudaeos C. Sosius subegit'. On Sosius's title 'Imperator' and his triumph *ex Iudaea*, see p. 252 above. The date of the conquest of Jerusalem is given differently in the two sources at our disposal. Dio xlix 22, 3-23, 1 puts it in the consulship of Claudius and Norbanus, 38 B.C., along with Antonius's actions up to the siege of Samosata. Josephus, on the other hand, says that it took place under the consuls M. Agrippa and Caninius Gallus, e.g. in 37 B.C., *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (487). Almost all more recent scholars follow him, and there can in fact be no question that the brief and summary account given by Dio is not to be compared with Josephus's narrative, which is full and detailed, and manifestly rests on very good sources. From this narrative it emerges without doubt that the conquest did not take place until 37 B.C. It is known that Pacorus was defeated by Ventidius on 9 June 38 B.C. After this, Ventidius turned against Antiochus of Commagene and besieged him in Samosata. It was not until the siege was in progress (cf. esp. Plut. *Ant.* 34), i.e. at the earliest in July 38 B.C., that Antonius arrived before Samosata. There he was visited by Herod, and when Samosata capitulated after a long siege (Plut., *Ant.* 34 τῆς δὲ πολιορκίας μήκος λαμβανούσης), and he himself returned to Athens, he left Sosius behind with orders to reinforce Herod, *Ant.* xiv 15, 8-9 (439-47). It must then already have been the autumn of 38 B.C. before Herod received this reinforcement, and Josephus's account leaves us in no doubt that a winter still intervened before the conquest of Jerusalem (*Ant.* xiv 15, 11 (453) πολλοῦ χειμῶνος καταρραγέντος, 15, 12 (461), χειμῶν ἐπέσχε βαθύς: after that 15, 14 (465) λήξαντος δὲ τοῦ χειμῶνος: and finally 16, 2 (473) θέρος τε γὰρ ἦν). Note also *Ant.* xiv 15, 14 (465), on the beginning of the siege—τρίτον δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦτο ἔτος ἦν ἐξ οὗ βασιλεὺς ἐν Ῥωμῇ ἀποδέδεκτο (40 B.C.). Therefore the capture of Jerusalem cannot have taken place earlier than the Summer of 37 B.C.

So Otto, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 f.; A. D. Momigliano, *CAH X* p. 321; *PIR² H* 153; *MRR II*, pp. 397-8; Schalit, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-7, and Anhang IX. But there is one further problem. Josephus in *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (487) says that the conquest took place τῆς ἑορτῆς τῆς νηστείας, by which he appears to mean the Day of Atonement (10 Tishri = September/October). V. Lewin, T. H. Gardthausen, G. F. Unger and others accepted this. On the other hand, L. Herzfeld, 'Wann war die Eroberung Jerusalem's durch Pompejus, und wann die durch Herodes?', *MGWJ* 1855, pp. 109-15, attempted to show that the conquest must have taken place earlier, in the summer, on the following arguments. Herod began the siege as soon as the weather allowed (λήξαντος τοῦ χειμῶνος), probably in February therefore, at the latest in March. Consequently, although according to *B.J.* i 18, 2 (351) it lasted for five months, it can hardly have dragged on into October. The surrender must have rather have taken place some time in July 37 B.C. The ἑορτῆς τῆς νηστείας which Josephus found in his pagan sources must, as in the account of the conquest of the city by Pompey, once more have been not the Day of Atonement, but an ordinary Sabbath, for Dio again says that the city was taken ἐν τῇ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρᾳ (xlix 22, 5). Mention has still to be made of Josephus's statement that the capture took place τῷ τρίτῳ μηνί, *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (487). By this he does not in any case mean the third month of the Olympic year, for the Greek months were never numbered; he means either the third month of the Jewish calendar, or the third month of the siege. The first of these views is accepted by Graetz, *op. cit.* III, p. 195, who accordingly places the conquest in June 37 B.C. But this cannot be Josephus's meaning since at the same time he postpones the conquest to the Day of Atonement. It is therefore preferable to understand by 'the third month' the third month of the siege. The three months are then presumably to be reckoned from the beginning of the bombardment, *Ant.* xiv 16, 2 (473), and the five months of *B.J.* from the start of the erection of the earthworks, *Ant.* xiv 15, 14 (466). Cf. Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 113 f.

The opinion of C. E. Caspari, *Chronologisch-geographische Einleitung in das Leben Jesu Christi*, pp. 18 ff., that the conquest did not take place until 36 B.C., is revived by W. E. Filmer, 'The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great', *JThSt* n.s. 17 (1966), pp. 283-98, on pp. 285-91. The chronological correlations indicated above make it unacceptable, but the argument does serve to point to unsolved difficulties arising from Josephus's reference to a sabbatical year and from his statement that the conquest took place 27 years after that by Pompey (on both points see below). For further discussion of the date of Herod's capture of Jerusalem see W. Otto, *Herodes* (1913), p. 33, n. 2; R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (1920), pp. 211 f.; F. X. Kugler, *Von Moses bis Paul* (1922), pp. 418-22; S. Zeitlin, *Megillat Taanit as a Source for Jewish Chronology* (1922), pp. 20-7; Schalit, *op. cit.*, Anhang IX; W. Aly, *Strabon von Amaseia* (1957), pp. 166-8. Otto suggests that if the date τῆς ἑορτῆς τῆς νηστείας means the Day of Atonement, it may rest on a popular tradition, the aim of which was to discredit Herod by representing him as having invaded the city on a day of very great solemnity. Josephus also dates Herod's capture of Jerusalem in 'the hundred and eighty-fifth Olympiad'. This Olympiad ended on 30 June 37 B.C.; but it does not necessarily follow that the capture took place in the first half, and cannot have taken place in the second half of that year; see p. 281, n. 3 above. Schalit, *loc. cit.*, dismisses the expression τριτῷ μηνί in *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (487) as a repetition of xiv 4, 3 (66), and accepts the five months of *B.J.* i 18, 2 (351), but argues that τῆς ἑορτῆς τῆς νηστείας may refer to a day of public fasting during the siege.

Earlier, in *Ant.* xiv 16, 2 (475) Josephus relates that the Jews within the besieged city were distressed by famine and a lack of necessities, for a sabbatical year happened to fall at that time (τόν γὰρ ἑβδοματικὸν ἑνιαυτὸν συνέβη κατὰ ταῦτ' εἶναι). This presents a considerable difficulty since, see R. Marcus, *Josephus*

Thus, almost three years after his nomination, Herod came into actual possession of his sovereignty. Antigonus was taken by Sosius to Antioch, and there beheaded in conformity with Herod's wish and by order of Antonius. It was the first time that the Romans had executed such a sentence on a king.¹²

With this the rule of the Hasmoneans was ended for ever.

(Loeb) VI, p. 694, note a, there is good reason to conclude that the year 37 B.C. (Oct.)-36 B.C. and not the year 38 B.C. (Oct.)-37 B.C. was sabbatical. The statement in *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (488) that Herod took Jerusalem on the same day on which it was captured by Pompey twenty-seven years before, points according to some, e.g. von Gumpach, *Über den altjüdischen Kalender*, pp. 269-71 and Caspari, *Chron.-geographische Einleitung in das Leben Jesu Christi*, pp. 18 f., to 36 B.C., according to others, e.g. Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, no. 524, to 37 B.C., while yet others think that Josephus made a mistake in calculation and so has given here twenty-seven instead of twenty-six.

¹² *Ant.* xiv 16, 4 (487-91); xv 1, 2 (5-10). In (9-10) Josephus also quotes a passage from the lost *History* of Strabo (=FGrH 91 F 18), *B.J.* i 18, 3 (354-7); Dio xlix 22-6; Plut. *Ant.* 36.