

Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea

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I

Herod the Great, proclaimed king of the Jews by the Roman senate in 40 B.C., on the nomination of Antony and Octavian, entered effectively into his kingship three years later, after he had with Roman military help ousted Antigonus, the last Hasmonaean ruler of the Jews, who had reigned as priest-king during those three years with the support of the Parthian invaders of Syria and Judaea. For the next thirty-four years Herod governed his kingdom with a firm hand, maintaining throughout unfaltering loyalty to Rome, no matter who might be the representative of Roman power in the Near East from time to time. Until the battle of Actium (31 B.C.) he enjoyed friendly relations with Antony, which even Cleopatra's covetous designs on Judaea could not altogether cloud. After Actium, Octavian (henceforth known as the Emperor Augustus) recognized that Herod could be as loyal and useful to him as he had been to Antony, and confirmed him in his kingship: The Herodian dynasty, indeed, provided a notable justification of the Roman policy of governing certain national groups indirectly through native princes rather than directly through provincial governors. The native prince attracted most of the odium which would otherwise have been directed against Rome, and the Roman Empire enjoyed the benefits of the arrangement.

In order to establish some colourable title to his kingship over the Jews, Herod at the beginning of his reign married the Hasmonaean princess Mariamme: This match did nothing to improve Herod's public image in Judaea, but it did mean that his children by Mariamme, having Hasmonaean blood in their veins, enjoyed the good will of the Jews as their father did not. Two of these children who bore the good Hasmonaean names Aristobulus and Alexander, were at an

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early age nominated by Herod as his heirs. Their mother was executed by her insanely jealous husband when they were young boys (29 B.C.), but they themselves received an education such as befitted crown princes. In due course, however, they in their turn fell victims to Herod's suspicion, and were executed in 7 B.C.

Herod's suspicion against these two sons was not unnaturally fomented by their elder half-brother Antipater, Herod's son by his first wife Doris, whom he had put away thirty years previously in order to marry Mariamme. Now that the sons of Mariamme were out of the way, Antipater realized his ambitions and stepped into their place as heir to the throne; indeed, he was practically co-opted by his father as joint king along with him.¹

But Herod's jealousy was soon directed in turn against Antipater, whom he suspected (rightly or wrongly) of plotting against his life. Antipater was therefore deprived of his status as crown prince in favour of one of his half-brothers—Herod, son of the second Mariamme (daughter of the high priest Simon Boethus, whom Herod married in 23 B.C. in place of the first Mariamme). But in 5 B.C. this son also fell from grace, his mother was divorced and his

¹ Josephus, *Ant.* xvii 3.

grandfather deposed from the high-priesthood.² Herod's youngest son, Antipas, was now named heir to the throne.³ Antipas was Herod's son by a secondary wife, a Samaritan woman named Malthake: Herod had an elder son by Malthake, Archelaus by name, but he passed him over at this stage because his mind had been poisoned against him by Antipater.

By this time Herod was in the grip of his last illness, which ended with his death in March, 4 B.C. Four or five days before his death he gave orders for the execution of Antipater, and appears to have changed his mind once more about the succession, for in his last will and testament his kingdom was divided between three of his sons. Antipas was to rule Galilee and Peraea as tetrarch, his full brother Archelaus was to receive Judaea (including Samaria and Idumaea) along with the title king, while Philip, Herod's son by yet another wife (Cleopatra of Jerusalem) was nominated tetrarch of the territory which Herod had received from Augustus east and north-east of the Lake of Galilee.⁴

Herod's will could not take effect until its provisions were ratified by Augustus. Antipas and Archelaus; and later Philip, made their way to Rome to see that their claims were properly represented to the emperor. Antipas, indeed, angled for the kingship in rivalry to

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his brother Archelaus, and was supported by several members of the royal family and others—not so much, says Josephus, because they loved Antipas as because they hated Archelaus.⁵

While the brothers were pressing their suits in Rome, Malthake, the mother of Archelaus and Antipas, who was with them there, died.⁶ At the same time there were many attempts at revolt throughout Palestine, in Jerusalem and elsewhere. In Galilee, for example, an insurgent named Judas (whose father Hezekiah had been executed by Herod forty years previously) raided the palace at Sepphoris and seized the armoury. This rising was put down by Varus, imperial legate of Syria, who marched south with two legions to pacify the troubled areas of Palestine.

Augustus, after listening to representations from various quarters, including a deputation from Judaea which asked for the abolition of Herodian rule in favour of a Roman governor⁷ (an odd request in the light of later events), ratified the general terms of Herod's will, except that he bade Archelaus content himself with the title ethnarch instead of king. Archelaus's nine years' ethnarchate of Judaea proved intolerably oppressive—he had all his father's personal defects with but few of his administrative and diplomatic gifts—and in A.D. 6 he was deposed. Judaea (with Samaria and Idumaea) was reduced to the status of a third-class Roman province, governed by a prefect or procurator⁸ of equestrian rank, appointed by the emperor. Philip ruled his tetrarchy in the north-east without untoward incident for thirty-seven years,

² Josephus, *Ant.* xvii 78.

³ Josephus, *BJ* i 646, ii 20; *Ant.* xvii 146, 224.

⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* xvii 188 ff.

⁵ *Ant.* xvii 227.

⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* xvii 219; 225, 250.

⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* xvii 314.

⁸ The title of such a governor in the period before Claudius was *praefectus*, not *procurator*; cf. A. N. SHERWIN-WHITE, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, 1963, pp. 6 ff. On the fragmentary Latin inscription found at Caesarea in June 1961, where Pilate is mentioned, he is designated *praefectus*.

until his death in A.D. 34. Antipas, with whom we are at present concerned, governed Galilee and Peraea ably in the interests of Rome for forty-two years; and might have done so longer had it not been for circumstances over which he had but little control.

II

How well Antipas served Rome's interests may be gauged in part from the absence of revolt or open unrest on any scale in the two areas of his tetrarchy during those years. The troubles which beset Judaea when it became a Roman province in A.D. 6 do not seem to have affected Galilee or Peraea, even though Judas, who led the revolt in Judaea at this time, was in some sense a Galilaean, according to both Luke and Josephus.⁹ (Whether he is to be identified with the Judas who staged the rising at Sepphoris nine years earlier is uncertain.)

Although Antipas received no higher title than tetrarch throughout

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the whole of his public career, his own subjects informally called him 'king', especially (no doubt) when they spoke Aramaic, in which *malka* is a term with a wider range of meaning than Latin *rex* or even Greek βασιλεύς. This looser usage is reflected in the Gospel of Mark who (followed to some extent by Matthew) speaks of him as 'King Herod';¹⁰ to the accurate Luke, as to Josephus, he is 'Herod the tetrarch'.

Antipas was the ablest of Herod's sons. Like his father, he was a patron of Hellenistic culture and a great builder. His chief building enterprise was the city of Tiberias on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee, which he named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 22). It was mainly a Gentile city; since it was built on the site of a cemetery, Antipas's Jewish subjects reckoned it unclean. But Jewish scruples were overcome later, and Tiberias became a famous seat of rabbinical learning. Before the end of the first century, the lake on which it stood came to be called after it—the Lake of Tiberias.¹¹ Antipas also rebuilt Sepphoris, which had been destroyed in the fighting that followed the revolt of 4 B.C., and renamed it in honour of Augustus. In his Transjordanian territory he rebuilt Beth-ramptha (Beth-haram of the Old Testament),¹² which had been burned by insurgents in 4 B.C., and fortified it, as an outpost against the Nabataean kingdom, calling it first Livias (after the Empress Livia) and then Julias (after Princess Julia). There was some debatable land between Peraea and the Nabataean kingdom which was liable to be a bone of contention between the two realms,¹³ and a time came in Antipas's career when he needed all the fortification he could have against the Nabataeans.

Early in his reign he married a daughter of the Nabataean king Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40), but after living with her for twenty years or more he transferred his affections from her to another lady. Once, on a journey to Rome, he lodged with his brother Herod (son of the

⁹ Cf. Acts v 37; Josephus, *BJ* ii 118; *Ant.* xx 102. According to *Ant.* xviii 4 Judas belonged to the city of Gamala in Gaulanitis, east of the Jordan. The term 'Galilaean' as applied to him may have a political and not a merely geographical connotation.

¹⁰ Mark vi 14, 22, 25, 26, 27; Matt. xiv 9. But in Matt. xiv 1 he is called 'Herod the tetrarch', as regularly by Luke (Luke iii 19; ix 7; Acts xiii 1) and Josephus (e.g. *Ant.* xviii 102, 109, 122).

¹¹ It is so called in John vi 1; xxi 1.

¹² Josh. xiii 27.

¹³ Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii 113.

second Mariamme), who had married his niece Herodias (daughter of Aristobulus, Herod the Great's son by the first Mariamme). Antipas fell in love with Herodias and proposed marriage to her; she accepted the proposal on condition that he divorced the Nabataean princess. But the Nabataean princess forestalled them; getting wind of what was afoot she arranged to have her residence moved to the Peraean palace-fortress of Machaerus, near the Nabataean frontier, and from there she seized an opportunity of crossing into her father's territory.¹⁴ Aretas was naturally incensed at the

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insult offered to his daughter, and waited for a favourable opportunity to take his revenge on Antipas.

With the Nabataean princess out of the way, Herodias came to live with Antipas as his wife. Josephus asserts, and the Evangelists imply, that her first husband was still alive when she married Antipas. The Slavonic text of Josephus, indeed, suggests that he was now dead,¹⁵ but this text (misinterpreting the language of Mark vi 17)¹⁶ confuses her first husband with Philip the tetrarch, and has no claim on our credence. However, even if her first husband had died before she married Antipas, the marriage would still have been offensive in Jewish eyes. Marriage between an uncle and his niece was tolerated by the Pharisaic interpretation of the law (though not by the Essene interpretation),¹⁷ but marriage between a man and his deceased brother's widow was forbidden, except in the special case of the levirate marriage where the deceased brother had left no child to perpetuate his name¹⁸ and Herodias and her first husband did have at least one child, Salome. Antipas's brother Archelaus had caused great scandal several years before when he married Glaphyra, who had formerly been the wife of his half-brother Alexander, executed by Herod in 7 B.C.¹⁹

But Antipas aggravated his offence by marrying his brother's wife before her first husband's death. It may have been with reference to this incident that Jesus declared that if a woman 'divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery'.²⁰ It was not open for a woman to divorce her husband by Jewish law, but it was possible by Roman law, and the Herods were Roman citizens. In any case, the ladies of the Herod family were a law to themselves; over fifty years earlier Salome, sister of Herod the Great, divorced her Idumaean husband Costobar, 'not following her country's law', says Josephus, 'but acting on her own authority'.²¹

III

¹⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* xviii 109-112.

¹⁵ In an insertion following *BJ* ii 168, plainly contradicting *Ant.* xviii 136.

¹⁶ Mark, followed by Matthew (xiv 3), calls Herodias's former husband Philip, but does not identify him with Philip the tetrarch.

¹⁷ In CD v 8-11 'the builders of the wall' are condemned because they permit such marriages; it is argued that while such marriages are not explicitly forbidden in the Law they are implicitly forbidden by the prohibition of marriage between a man and his mother's sister (Lev. xviii 13).

¹⁸ Deut. xxv 5 ff.

¹⁹ *Ant.* xvii 341, 349-353. After her first husband's death Glaphyra married Juba, king of Libya; when this marriage was dissolved, Archelaus divorced his wife Mariamme in order to marry her.

²⁰ Mark x 12. Cf. F. C. BURKITT, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, 1967, pp. 98 ff.

²¹ *Ant.* xv 259 ff.

Whether the words of Jesus refer directly to Herodias or not, there is no ambiguity about the words of John the Baptist. According to Mark, he told Antipas plainly that he had no right to marry his brother's wife.²² This is corroborated by Luke, with his independent and fuller information about the Herod family: Antipas, he tells us, having been rebuked by John 'over the affair of his brother's wife Herodias and for his other misdeeds, crowned them all by shutting John up in prison'.²³

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Josephus also records Antipas's imprisonment and execution of John, though he does not mention John's denunciation of the marriage. According to him, John

was a good man, who exhorted the Jews to practise virtue, to be just one to another and pious towards God, and to come together by baptism.²⁴ Baptism, he taught, was acceptable to God provided that they underwent it not to procure remission of certain sins but to effect bodily cleansing when the soul had already been purified by righteousness. When the others gathered round John, greatly moved as they listened to his words, Herod was afraid that his great persuasive power over men might lead to a rising, for they seemed ready to follow John in everything. Accordingly he thought the best course was to arrest him and put him to death before he caused a riot, rather than wait until a revolt broke out and then have to repent of permitting such trouble to arise. Because of this suspicion on Herod's part, John was sent in chains to the fortress of Machaerus... and there put to death.²⁵

The reference by Josephus to John's baptismal doctrine has had fresh light cast on it in recent years in the religious texts from Qumran.²⁶ According to Mark, although Antipas imprisoned John, he was reluctant to proceed to severer measures against him because he stood in awe of this Elijah-like figure. He looked on John as 'a good and holy man; so he kept him in custody. He liked to listen to him, although the listening left him greatly perplexed'.²⁷ "But Herodias felt no such awe; she was bent on having John's head for his denunciation of her marriage, and an opportunity came around for her to gratify her spite—and perhaps, also to give her a sense of security, for could she ever feel her status secure while this influential preacher was persuading people that her marriage was null and void?

Mark has preserved for us the colourful story of Antipas's birthday party which had John's execution as its sequel.

Herod on his birthday gave a banquet to his chief officials and commanders and the leading men of Galilee. Her daughter came in and danced, and so delighted Herod and his guests that the king said to the girl, 'Ask what you like and I will give it you'. And he swore an oath to her: 'Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the Baptist'. The girl hastened back at once to the king with her request: 'I want you to give me here and now, on a dish, the head of John the Baptist'. The king was greatly distressed, but out of regard for his oath and for his guests he could not bring himself to refuse her. So the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. The soldier went off

²² Mark vi 18; cf. Matt. xiv 4.

²³ Luke iii 20.

²⁴ Gk. βαπτισμῶ συνιέναι, i.e. to form a baptismal community.

²⁵ *Ant.* xviii 117-119.

²⁶ E.g. 1QS iii 3 ff.; cf. M. BLACK, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 1961, p. 96.

²⁷ Mark vi 20.

and beheaded him in the prison, brought the head on a dish, and gave it to the girl; and she gave it to her mother.²⁸

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Mark does not say where the party was held. The *prima facie* impression usually received from his account is that it was held in: the same place where John was held, prisoner, since Herodias's dancing daughter asks for John's head at once (ἐξουτῆς) and receives it on a plate (ἐπὶ πίννακι), evidently while the party is still going on. The party would in that case have been held in the palace at Machaerus, where Josephus says John was imprisoned. And Josephus is certainly right in this last respect; John was active in Peraea and the lower Jordan valley, but not (so far as we know) in Galilee.

But a further impression received from Mark's account is that the party was held in Galilee: it was attended by Antipas's chief officials and commanders—his magnates and chiliarchs—and the leading men of *Galilee*. No mention is made of the leading men of Peraea, whose presence might have been expected at a birthday party in Machaerus. On the whole it seems most likely that the party was held at Tiberias,²⁹ and that the impression we get that John's head was delivered to the girl on a plate while the guests were still present is due to the vividness with which Mark's tale is told.

Mr. Sherwin-White finds in Mark's description of the party a neat display of the style maintained by the petty princes of the Syro-Palestinian area at this time. The magnates (μεγιστῶνες) would be the inner circle of Antipas's government; the chiliarchs fit the scale of his tetrarchy: 'His hosts are only at battalion strength. Since the Roman term *speculator*³⁰ appears in the continuation of this account of Herod's administration, everything in this sketch is in focus. It shows the court and establishment of a petty Jewish prince under strong Roman influence'.³¹

One problem remains: the identity of the dancing girl. It is usually inferred from the story that, while she was Herodias's daughter, she was not her daughter by Antipas. The only daughter of Herodias otherwise known to us is Salome, her daughter by her first husband, who married her grand-uncle Philip the tetrarch.³² The dancing girl of Mark's narrative has therefore been popularly identified with Salome. But was she Salome? Herodias herself was at least thirty-five years old at the time (since her father was put to death in 7 B.C.) If both she and her daughter, like other ladies of the Herod family, married about the age of sixteen, then Salome could well have been in her later teens; and already the wife of Philip the tetrarch, by

²⁸ Mark vi 21-28.

²⁹ W. M. CHRISTIE, *Palestine Calling*, 1939, pp. 45 ff., suggests that the party was held in a palace on the same site as the ruin called Qasr Bint el-Malik near Tiberias. He may be right in this, but not in his further suggestion that this, and not Machaerus, was the place of John's imprisonment. He appeals to the statement found in all the printed editions of Josephus, *Ant.* xviii 112, that Machaerus was subject to Aretas at the time of his daughter's flight from Antipas (εἰς τὸν Μαχαιροῦντα τότε [τὸν τῷ Bekker] πατρὶ αὐτῆς ὑποτελῆ); but the manuscript tradition (εἰς τὸν Μαχαιροῦντα τῷ τε πατρὶ αὐτῆς ὑποτελεῖ) does not make this statement (cf. E. SCHÜRER, *G.J.V.* i⁴, p. 436, n. 20).

³⁰ Gk. σπεκουλάτωρ, translated 'a soldier of the guard' (Mark vi 27); it appears also as a loanword in Rabbinical Hebrew, *spiqłator* ('executioner').

³¹ *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, p. 137.

³² Josephus, *Ant.* viii 137, where we are also told that on Philip's death in A.D. 34 (about five years after the present incident), she married her first cousin Aristobulus, son of Herod of Chalcis, to whom she bore three sons.

the time of the Baptist's death. But Mark pictures a little girl (καράσιον), a girl young and naïve enough to run and ask her mother how she

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should respond to the tetrarch's generous offer, a girl therefore (considering the precocity of the ladies of that family) not more than twelve years old, and perhaps considerably younger than that. We may have to think of a princess not elsewhere mentioned—conceivably, as one reading of Mark vi 22 suggests,³³ a daughter of Antipas and Herodias, whose own name was likewise Herodias.

The objection that a princess of the blood royal would not have danced at Antipas's birthday party for the delectation of the host and his guests need not be taken seriously. It is not suggested that there was any impropriety about the dance; the fantasy that it was the dance of the seven veils' has no basis in our primary documents. The ladies of the Herod family could certainly be counted upon to act unconventionally, but they could always be counted upon to remember what the family dignity demanded.

The terms in which Antipas swore his lavish oath to the girl are similar to those of the offer which the Emperor Gaius made to Herod Agrippa at a sumptuous feast to which Agrippa had invited him the offer to which Agrippa responded by asking Gaius to give up his idea of having a statue of himself erected in the Jerusalem temple.³⁴ In both stories the fact that the promise was made in the hearing of so many witnesses is emphasized. To enumerate the circumstances in which a man might be absolved from the performance of a rash oath is beside the point here; it was not a religious regard for his oath that made Antipas keep it, but the fact that he had sworn it in such absolute terms before his distinguished guests. Had he broken it—above all, had he broken it in order to save the life of John the Baptist—he would have lost face in their estimation to a degree which he was not disposed to tolerate.³⁵

It is unlikely that Mark's account depends on anything like direct eyewitness testimony. It had simply come to be known that John's execution was somehow a sequel to Antipas's birthday party in that year (A.D. 29). Luke, who knows more about the Herod family than any other New Testament writer, is content in this connexion to, record that Antipas imprisoned John and beheaded him,³⁶ but he omits the story of the birthday party.

IV

Luke's accurate and relatively abundant knowledge about the Herod family may be due to his acquaintance with certain people who had fairly close contact with the family. He mentions Joanna.

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³³ The most generally accepted reading is τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος where αὐτῆς, reflects the anticipatory pronominal suffix in the Aramaic substratum ('Herodias's daughter'); in terms of manuscript evidence, however, τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος ('his daughter Herodias') has weightier support.

³⁴ *Ant.* xviii 289 ff.

³⁵ J. D. M. DERRETT, 'Herod's Oath and the Baptist's Head', *Biblische Zeitschrift*, N.F. ix, 1965; pp. 49 ff., 233 ff.

³⁶ Luke ix 9.

the wife of one of Antipas's stewards, among the well-to-do women who supported Jesus and his disciples during their itinerant ministry;³⁷ more important in the present connexion is his reference to 'Manaen, σύντροφος of Herod the tetrarch', as one of the leading teachers and prophets in the church of Syrian Antioch about A.D. 47.³⁸ Whatever σύντροφος means here 'foster-brother' or, more generally, 'companion' or 'courtier—Luke., who is recorded as being himself an Antiochene,³⁹ must have found in Manaen a valuable informant on the contacts of Antipas and his relatives with the early Christian story.

One minor piece of information which Luke preserves is that on one occasion Jesus was warned by some friendly Pharisees to get out of Antipas's tetrarchy: 'You should leave this place and go on your way; Herod is out to kill you.' He replied: 'Go and tell that fox, "Listen: today and tomorrow I shall be casting out demons and working cures; on the third day I reach my goal." However, I must be on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, because it is unthinkable for a prophet to meet his death anywhere but in Jerusalem.'⁴⁰ This last remark may seem strange, in view of the recent beheading of John the Baptist, acknowledged by Jesus himself to be a prophet and more than a prophet, miles away, from Jerusalem and Judaea. But there is characteristic irony in Jesus' words: he knew himself immune from death until his work was done, and when his work was done, it would not be in Antipas's territory that he would die.

Nevertheless, that Antipas should threaten Jesus's life is not surprising. If John the Baptist's activity had caused him disquiet, the proclamation of a new kingdom by Jesus and his disciples must have been more disturbing. 'I beheaded John', said Antipas, 'but who is this?'⁴¹ He had solid ground for being disturbed and wishing to see this new prophet, for when Jesus sent the twelve apostles two by two through the towns and villages of Galilee, they apparently acted with more zeal than discretion as they announced the advent of the divine kingdom; and when they came back to Jesus to report on their mission, he immediately took them across to the east side of the Lake of Galilee, out of Antipas's jurisdiction.⁴² But they were followed there by crowds of excited Galileans in militant mood who tried to compel Jesus to become their king and lead them against Rome and Rome's allies. It was with much ado that Jesus convinced them that he was not minded to be the kind of king they

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wanted;⁴³ but more than enough had been done to excite Antipas's suspicions against him.

Nor is it surprising to find the 'Herodians' pursuing a hostile policy towards Jesus both in Galilee and in Jerusalem. Who precisely the Herodians were is a matter of some dispute, but the most reasonable view is that they were the political partisans of the Herod dynasty (especially of Antipas himself) who promoted the interests of the dynasty in Palestine and hoped to see the whole country brought back under the administration of one of its

³⁷ Luke viii 3.

³⁸ Acts xiii 1. It has been conjectured that he was the grandson of the Essene Manaen (Menahem) honoured by Herod the Great (*Ant.* xv 373 ff.).

³⁹ *Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Gospel of Luke.*

⁴⁰ Luke xiii 31-33.

⁴¹ Luke ix 9; cf. Mark vi 16.

⁴² Mark vi 7 ff., 30 ff. Cf. H. W. MONTEFIORE, 'Revolt in the Desert?' *NTS* viii, 1961-62, pp. 135 ff.

⁴³ John vi 14 ff.

members—and why not of Antipas himself?—as it had been in the days of Herod the Great. On two occasions Mark tells how Herodians and Pharisees cooperated in an unlikely coalition against Jesus;⁴⁴ it is in line with this that once, during a crossing of the Lake, he is said to have warned his disciples against ‘the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (or, of the Herodians)’.⁴⁵

However, neither Antipas nor his partisans succeeded in laying hands on Jesus; only once did Antipas have a brief opportunity of seeing him.

V

When Jesus was brought for trial before Pontius Pilate, prefect of Judaea, early in April, A.D. 30, his accusers alleged that he had stirred up disaffection against the authorities all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem.⁴⁶ Pilate asked them if that meant he was a Galilaean, and on being told that this was so, he sent him to Antipas, who was also resident in Jerusalem at that Passover season. Our only authority for this incident is Luke, who relates it in Part I of his history and refers to it again in Part II.⁴⁷ Here we may recognize a further token of Luke’s special access to information about the Herods, not least about Antipas. According to Luke, Pilate

asked if the man was a Galilaean, and on learning that he belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction he remitted the case to him, for Herod was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus he was greatly pleased; having heard about him, he had long been wanting to see him, and had been hoping to see some miracle performed by him. He questioned him at some length without getting any reply; but the chief priests and lawyers appeared and pressed the case against him vigorously. Then Herod and his troops treated him with contempt and ridicule, and sent him back to Pilate dressed in a gorgeous robe. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends: till then there had been a standing feud between them.⁴⁸

The question of ‘Herods jurisdiction’ has lately been discussed

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by Mr. Sherwin-White.⁴⁹ He refers to Mommsen’s discussion in his *Strafrecht*,⁵⁰ based on a text of Celsus belonging to the beginning of the second century A.D.: ‘non est dubium quin, cuiuscumque est prouvinciae homo in qui ex custodia producitur, cognoscere debeat in qui ei prouvinciae praeest in qua agitur’ (‘without doubt, whatever be the native province of a man who is brought forth from custody the trial must be conducted by the governor of the province in which the relevant actions are done’).⁵¹ Mommsen suggested that this practice replaced an earlier one in which an offender was sent back to his province of origin for trial after a preliminary examination: but this latter practice was rather an exceptional one, of which some

⁴⁴ Mark iii 6; xii 13.

⁴⁵ Mark viii 15. Both readings are found; ‘Herodians’ has the support of P⁴⁵.

⁴⁶ Luke xxiii 5.

⁴⁷ Acts iv 27.

⁴⁸ Luke xxiii 6-12.

⁴⁹ *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, pp. 28 ff.

⁵⁰ T. Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht*, 1899, pp. 356 ff.

⁵¹ *Digesta Iuris Romani* 48.3.11.

cases were known in the second century, and which Celsus. considered could be justified only by special circumstances (*ex causa*). Twenty-seven years after the trial of Jesus, when Paul was sent to the procurator Felix at Caesarea, Felix asked which province he belonged to, but when he was told that he was a Cilician, he apparently made no move to refer the case to the legate of Syria-Cilicia, but dealt with it himself—and rightly so, since the main item in the charge against Paul, alleged violation of the sanctity of the Jerusalem temple, concerned Felix's province.⁵² (In this connexion we may note in passing that it is remarkable that alleged violation of the sanctity of the temple is not said to have figured in the charge against Jesus before Pilate, though it was raised in the earlier examination before the high priest.)⁵³

The probability is that Pilate was in no way bound to refer the case of Jesus to Antipas, but did so as a courteous gesture when he learned that some of the offences with which Jesus was charged had been committed in his home territory of Galilee. Antipas may have inherited, so far as his tetrarchy was concerned, some of the extraordinary rights of extradition conferred by Augustus on his father,⁵⁴ but such rights would have to be invoked before being granted. In any case, if Pilate's action was one of courtesy, Antipas appreciated the gesture, but. was wise enough not to presume upon it. He recognized the superior authority of Rome's representative, and sent Jesus back to Pilate, after trying in vain to make him do or say something worthy of the rumours of his activity which had come to his ears.

Antipas evidently allowed Pilate's courtesy to wipe out the sense of grievance which he had felt against the procurator for some time, probable ever since Pilate's troops had used unnecessary violence

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against some of Antipas's Galilaean subjects six months or a year earlier, during a pilgrimage-festival in Jerusalem when their blood was 'mixed with their sacrifices' in the temple court.⁵⁵ A permanent Roman garrison was stationed in the Antonia fortress, north-west of the temple area, overlooking the outer court and communicating with it by two flights of steps.⁵⁶ When anything like a riot threatened to break out in the temple precincts, troops from the garrison could quell it at once; something of the sort had probably taken place on this occasion. Pilate, for his part, may have borne a grudge against Antipas ever since the latter, with other members of his family, had intervened with the emperor against Pilate in the incident of the votive shields recorded by Philo.⁵⁷

The 'standing feud' between the two men was brought to an end by this exchange of courtesies, and Pilate could now support his own judgment that Jesus was guilty of no capital offence by claiming that Antipas had found no more evidence than he himself to support the charges brought against Jesus by his accusers.⁵⁸

⁵² Acts xviii 34 ff.

⁵³ Mark xiv 57 ff.

⁵⁴ Josephus, *BJ* i 474.

⁵⁵ Luke xiii 1.

⁵⁶ *BJ* v 243 ff.; Acts xxi 35, 40.

⁵⁷ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 300.

⁵⁸ Luke axiii 15. In 'Christ Before Herod', *JTS* x, 1909, pp. 321 ff. (reprinted in *The Bacchantes of Euripides and Other Essays*, 1910, pp. 335 ff.), A. W. VERRALL made an attempt—characteristically ingenious but characteristically unconvincing to argue that Antipas treated Jesus with respect, bestowing a royal robe on him in recognition of his messianic claims, and that he regarded the charge against him as of no account. Luke's

VI

Antipas's irate father-in-law waited until A.D. 36 to avenge the dishonour suffered by his daughter; in that year he seized the opportunity to invade Peraea and inflict a crushing defeat on Antipas's forces.⁵⁹ Josephus tells us that some Jews saw in this defeat the divine nemesis for Antipas's treatment of John the Baptist.⁶⁰ They may very well have done so, but it is unimaginative to conclude that John's execution must therefore have been more recent than the Evangelists indicate—about A.D. 35 rather than six years earlier. The Pharisees and many other Jews believed that the mills of God ground slowly: thus, when Pompey was assassinated in Egypt in 48 B.C., some people in Judaea remembered how he had sacrilegiously forced his way into the holy of holies in Jerusalem fifteen years before, and saw in his death a token of the divine-vengeance.⁶¹ At the time of Antipas's defeat by Aretas, John had been dead only half that number of years.

When news of Aretas's invasion of Peraea reached Rome, Tiberius ordered Lucius Vitellius, legate of Syria from A.D. 35 to 39, immediately to mount a punitive attack on Aretas for this act of aggression against one of Rome's allies. Vitellius made preparations accordingly, and set out from Ptolemais early in A.D. 37 with two legions and a number of auxiliary forces, intending to march on Petra, Aretas's

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capital. To avoid offending Jewish susceptibilities, he sent his troop, south along the maritime road, 'while he himself and Herod the tetrarch went up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, as an ancient festival of the Jews was at hand'.⁶² But on the fourth day after Vitellius's arrival at Jerusalem, he received news of the death of Tiberius. Since Tiberius died on March 16,⁶³ the festival in question would have, been Passover, which coincided in A.D. 37 with the full moon of April 17 or 18;⁶⁴ the news of the emperor's death thus took about five weeks to reach Jerusalem. News of such importance would be sent by the fastest means available; in this case, a distance of some two thousand miles was covered at a speed of about sixty miles a day.⁶⁵

narrative can be left to make its own impression. More generally; see J. BLINZLER, *Herodes Antipas and Jesus Christ*, 1947, and *The Trial of Jesus*, E.T., 1959, pp. 194 ff.

⁵⁹ *Ant.* xviii 109 ff.

⁶⁰ *Ant.* xviii 116.

⁶¹ Cf. Psalms of Solomon ii 30 ff.

⁶² *Ant.* xviii 122. During this visit (presumably after the Passover ceremonies were concluded) Vitellius removed Jonathan the son of Annas from the high-priesthood and replaced him by his brother Theophilus.

⁶³ Tacitus, *Annals* vi 50.

⁶⁴ There was an intercalary Adar in this year.

⁶⁵ The death of Galba was known at Alexandria in 27 days (WILCKEN, *Griechische Ostraka*, i 802). Gaius's letter to Petronius bidding him commit suicide took three months to reach Syria, owing to stormy weather; the news of Gaius's death (on January 24, A.D. 41) arrived 27 days earlier (Josephus, *BJ* ii 203); we do not know how much later than Gaius's letter it was despatched. We have particularly detailed information about the arrival at Carnuntum on the Danube of news of Didius Julianus's successful bid for the imperial succession on March 29, A.D. 193; it arrived in time for Septimius Severus to be proclaimed emperor at Camuntum on April 9; having been carried 735 Roman miles within eleven days. On this see C. W. J. ELIOT, 'New Evidence for the Speed of the Roman Imperial Post', *The Phoenix* ix, 1955, pp. 76 ff.; see also W. M. RAMSAY, 'Roads and Travel', *HDB* v, 1909, pp. 375 E.; L. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, 1910, ii, p. 22; A. M. RAMSAY, 'The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post', *JBS* xv, 1925, pp. 60 ff. Whether news was carried by land or sea might make little difference in this regard, as the average speed of an ancient ship in normal conditions

As soon as Vitellius heard of Tiberius's death, he called off his expedition against Aretas. Tiberius might be solicitous for the welfare of his loyal client Antipas, but Vitellius may already have had reason to know that the new emperor did not share this solicitude. Besides, Vitellius had a personal grievance against Antipas, and had no great desire to pull the tetrarch's chestnuts out of the fire for him.

Tacitus, in the sixth book of his *Annals*, tells how in A.D. 35, at Vitellius's instigation, the subjects of Artabanus III, king of Parthia, rebelled against him and transferred their allegiance to Tiridates III. Artabanus was forced to take refuge in the Scythian border-lands. But not long after he staged a come-back, with the aid of Scythian allies, and Tiridates and his followers were forced to flee in their turn.⁶⁶

Josephus, in the eighteenth book of his *Antiquities*, summarizes this course of events, which is recorded more fully by Tacitus, and continues with a narrative which illustrates how useful Antipas could make himself to Rome:

When Tiberius heard of this, he decided to establish a treaty of friendship with Artabanus. Artabanus gladly welcomed the suggestion of a meeting with the representatives of Rome. He and Vitellius came together on the Euphrates; they met halfway along a bridge which had been thrown over the river, each attended by his guards. When they had discussed the terms of treaty, Herod the tetrarch entertained them at a banquet in a luxurious marquee erected in the middle of the bridge. Soon afterward Artabanus sent his son Darius as a hostage to Rome with many gifts, including a man seven cubits tall, a Jew by race, Eleazar by name, surnamed 'the giant' because of his height.

Then Vitellius returned to Antioch and Artabanus to Babylon. determined to be the first to report to the emperor the news about the hostages, so he sent couriers and wrote a letter so detailed that there was nothing for the legate to add. Vitellius had indeed also written a letter,

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but the emperor gave him to understand that he knew the whole story already, because Herod had given him full information. Vitellius was greatly annoyed, thinking that Herod had done him a greater injury than was actually the case; and he cherished a secret grudge against him until he had an opportunity of gratifying it after Gaius became emperor.⁶⁷

Indeed, according to Suetonius⁶⁸, and Dio Cassius,⁶⁹ Gaius had already become emperor when this treaty between Rome and Parthia was concluded. Tacitus says nothing about the treaty in his account of the principate of Tiberius; whether he dated it in the principate of Gaius must remain uncertain in view of the lacuna in his *Annals* at this point.

It might be thought that the treaty was concluded after the death of Tiberius, but before the news of his death reached Syria; this is excluded, however, by Josephus's account of

was between four and five knots; the imperial post by land could maintain an average of nearly five Roman miles an hour.

⁶⁶ Tacitus, *Annals* vi 31 ff.

⁶⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* xviii 101-105.

⁶⁸ Gaius, 14.

⁶⁹ *Hist.* lix 27.

Tiberius's receiving the letter from Antipas. Another solution might be to suppose that Josephus's story really relates to an earlier meeting between Vitellius and Tiridates⁷⁰ and that he was mistaken in referring it to the treaty-making encounter between Vitellius and Artabanus. But in a matter where Josephus's personal interests were not engaged, and in a context where the circumstantial details so strongly favour his account of the affair, there is no reason for doubting his accuracy. Dr. E. Mary Smallwood has argued,⁷¹ with a high measure of probability, that Josephus's whole section here on Parthia, including the conference on the Euphrates, belongs chronologically before his account of Vitellius's earlier visit to Jerusalem (following his despatch of Pilate to Rome), which she shows to have taken place towards the end of A.D. 36 rather than, as Josephus has it,⁷² at the Passover of that year.

VII

The accession of Gaius marked the beginning of the end for Antipas. This was due mainly to the hostility of his nephew Agrippa, and partly to the unwisdom of his wife Herodias. Vitellius also found occasion now to satisfy his grudge against Antipas.

Agrippa was Herodias's brother; they were children of the ill-fated Aristobulus. Shortly, after his father's death, the boy Agrippa was sent to be educated at Rome. His mother Berenice was a bosom friend of Antonia, widow of the elder Drusus; Agrippa himself became very friendly with her son Claudius (the future emperor), with the younger Drusus (son of Tiberius) and with other members of the imperial family. He became so heavily involved in debt, however,

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that he incurred the disapproval of Tiberius, and when his protector Drusus died in A.D. 23 he had to retire to Idumaea. But when his sister Herodias came to live with their uncle Antipas as his second wife, she used her influence on Agrippa's behalf and procured for him a home, a pension and an official position (ἀγαρονόμος) at Tiberias. Soon, however, he quarrelled with his uncle, and betook himself to Antioch, to Flaccus, legate of Syria. He quarrelled with Flaccus in turn, and went back to Rome, having paid off his old debts by incurring new ones elsewhere. He now tried to sow suspicion in Tiberius's mind against Antipas, but the old princeps knew his faithful servant too well to listen to such calumnies.⁷³ Agrippa was appointed guardian of Tiberius's grandson, Tiberius Gemellus (son of the younger Drusus), and formed a close friendship with Tiberius's grand-nephew Gaius, who was to succeed him as emperor. An imprudent remark which he made about the succession came to Tiberius's hearing, and he spent the last six months of Tiberius's reign in prison.

With the death of Tiberius he experienced a swift reversal of fortune: Gaius released him from prison, recompensed him with a golden chain equal in weight to the iron chain with which he had been fettered, and gave him the territory over which his uncle Philip had ruled as tetrarch until his death in A.D. 34. On Philip's death his tetrarchy had been added to the province of Syria, but now it was bestowed on Agrippa, together with the more northerly territory which

⁷⁰ Tacitus, *Annals* vi 37 ff.

⁷¹ E. M. SMALLWOOD, 'The Date of the Dismissal of Pontius Pilate from Judaea', *JJS* v, 1954, pp. 12 ff. For a dating of the treaty some months later see A. GARZETTI, 'La data dell' incontro all' Eufrate di Artabano III e L. Vitellio legato di Siria', *Studi A. Calderini e R. Paribeni* I, 1956, pp. 211 ff., summarized by L. H. FELDMAN, *Studies in Judaica* i, 1963, p. 43.

⁷² Josephus, *Ant.* xviii 90 ff.

⁷³ *BJ* ii 178.

had formerly been the tetrarchy of Lysanias.⁷⁴ With these territories Gaius conferred on Agrippa the title of king.

His sister Herodias now urged her husband Antipas to ask Gaius to raise his title from tetrarch to king. For over forty years Antipas had ruled Galilee and Peraea in Rome's interests, incurring the ill-will of his neighbours by acting as the emperor's faithful agent and informer in that part of the world. It would be but a small requital for such long and thankless service rendered to Rome if Antipas were now, at the end of his days, to receive the royal style. If the new emperor had so readily bestowed this style on his spendthrift boon-companion Agrippa, surely he would recognize Antipas's more solid claim to equal honour.

So Herodias argued; but Antipas, who was not called 'that fox' for nothing, told her that it was wisest to leave well alone. But she persisted, and at last he was persuaded against his better judgment to set out for Rome to present his request. It proved to be his undoing

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Instead of receiving what he asked for, he lost what he already had. For Agrippa sent a letter to poison Gaius's mind against him Antipas, said this letter, had been confederate with Sejanus before Sejanus fell from power in A.D. 31, and he was now plotting with Artabanus of Parthia against Rome. Moreover, in his arsenal at Tiberias Antipas had armour sufficient for seventy thousand men.

When Antipas appeared before Gaius at Baiae, Gaius was reading Agrippa's letter. He looked up and asked Antipas if this was true about the armour in the arsenal. Antipas could not deny it. He was sentenced on the spot to exile at Lyons in Gaul; his property and territory were confiscated and handed over to Agrippa (A.D. 39).

But as for Herodias, the emperor told her that he proposed to treat her as the sister of his friend Agrippa and not as the wife of his enemy Antipas; she could retain her property and continue to live in the style to which she was accustomed. But the Herodian ladies had the qualities of their defects. Herodias tossed her head and said, 'No, thank you; I'll go into exile with my husband.'⁷⁵

This she did; and in exile Antipas and Herodias together disappear from history.

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⁷⁴ *Ant.* xviii 237, xx 138; cf. Luke iii 1.

⁷⁵ *Ant.* xviii 240 ff.