

# 11. Judah Under Roman Rule



# Meanwhile Back In Rome (I)



By the end of the Punic wars (against Carthage), Rome controlled Italy, and the East coast of the Adriatic Sea having defeated Illyrian raiders. They held Western North Africa and parts of Spain formerly governed by the Carthaginians. They also held land in Asia Minor formerly owned by the Seleucid Syrians who were allies of Carthage. Judah remained under Seleucid control. Ptolemaic Egypt was free.



# Meanwhile Back In Rome (III)



By 53 BCE, most of the lands around the Mediterranean were either governed by Rome or were allied to Rome. The Romans could begin to call the Mediterranean “Mare Nostrum” (Our Sea). Though allied with Rome, Judah technically remained an independent kingdom. That status was to soon change. Parthia remained outside the sphere of Roman influence and would become an enemy

# Just How Did Rome Come to Dominate Judah ?

- By 64 BCE, the Roman Army had managed to defeat yet another enemy, Mithradates of Pontus putting them ever closer to Judah. The Kingdom of the Seleucid Syria was in disarray due to its constant civil wars. The Roman General, Pompey, put an end to the Seleucid Empire. Rome became Judah's next-door neighbor
- Aristobulus II appealed to Judah's ally, Rome, to settle Judah's internal dispute regarding who should be king. Pompey responded He rescued Aristobulus II but named his brother Hyrcanus II as the rightful High Priest and Ethnarch (but did not name him King). **A Roman General had named the temporal and religious leader of an allegedly independent kingdom of Judah**
- Civil war broke out again in Rome between the Senate (Pompey's loyalty) and Julius Caesar. Caesar defeated Pompey. The new proconsul in Syria divided the Hasmonean Kingdom into three regions; Galilee, Judea and Samaria. Five regional councils (a synedrion is a regional council, the origin of the word Sanhedrin) were established



Note: The fact that the words *synagogue* and *Sanhedrin* are of Greek origin show the influence of Hellenism on Jewish life at this time. These 5 lesser synedria are not to be identified with the Great Synedrion (Sanhedrin) in Jerusalem, the "Supreme Court" of the lesser synedria

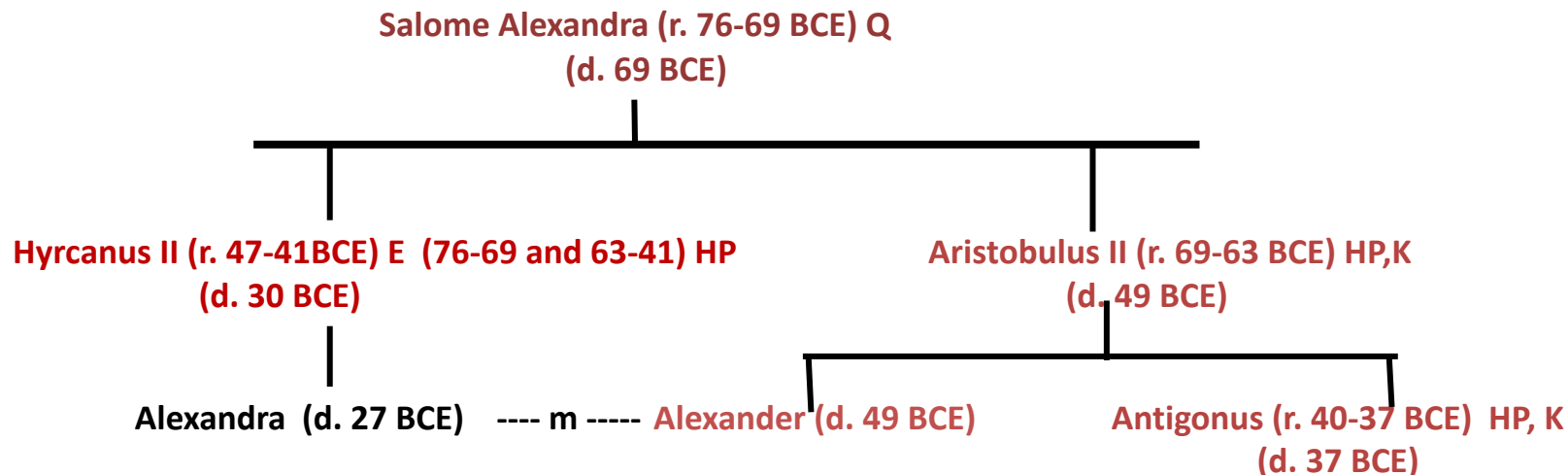
# Did the Roman Dominance End the Hasmonean Feud?

- An Idumean named Antipater was an advisor to Hyrcanus II. Antipater was, at least in name, Jewish because his parents had converted under the reign of John Hyrcanus. Antipater, the de facto ruler of Judea, given Hyrcanus II's ineptitude, allied himself with Pompey during the earlier war between Rome and Pontus. When the Romans won that war, the Jewish kingdom of Judah was considered a friend of Rome
- Hyrcanus II, officially both Ethnarch and High Priest, held power but in name only. Antipater was named governor of Idumea and so ran the everyday affairs of both lands, effectively making Idumea part of Judah. When the Roman civil war broke out, Antipater wisely shifted Judah's allegiance away from Pompey and to Caesar. Antipater aided Caesar in his later campaigns. For his help, Antipater was made a Roman citizen
- Aristobulus II and his son Alexander opposed Hyrcanus II and his regent Antipater. Both men were captured by the Proconsul Gabinius in 63 BCE. A man named Marc Antony led the cavalry unit that captured them. Both men managed to escape the Romans in 57 BCE
- The Romans regained custody of Aristobulus II and Alexander, his son. In 49 BCE, Aristobulus II was poisoned by the Romans and died. Alexander was beheaded. The Hasmonean family feud was almost over
- Hyrcanus II, now the only ruler in the line of the Hasmoneans, remained in authority in Judah even if his authority was more titular than real

## Did the Executions of Hyrcanus II's Rivals End Judah's Civil Wars?

- **Not Quite! Antipater's friendship with Rome made him unpopular among the non-Hellenized (Hebraeists??) portion of the Jewish people. Antipater also married a non-Jewish Nabataean woman, Cypros. This marriage, however, did bring the Nabateans in on the side of Hyrcanus II against his brother, Aristobulus II.**
- **Antipater named his son Phasael to be governor of Jerusalem. Another son, Herod, was named governor of Galilee**
- **In Rome, the civil war took another turn. Caesar was assassinated. Shortly after, Antipater, who had sided with Caesar, was mysteriously poisoned**
- **The Parthians (from a land once ruled by Cyrus and, later, by the Seleucids) attempted to take advantage of the turmoil in Rome and waged war against Roman Syria. Aristobulus II had a second son, Antigonus, who managed to survive the Roman wrath. The Parthians persuaded him to try to reclaim the throne from Hyrcanus II. The Hasmonean family feud was not yet settled.**
- **Antigonus entered Jerusalem and proclaimed himself king. In the Qumran texts, there was found a prohibition against anyone serving as High Priest who had a physical disability. Antigonus mutilated the ears of Hyrcanus II making him ineligible to retain the post of High Priest. It was reported that Antigonus bit off his uncle's ears. Antigonus claimed the title of both High Priest and King for himself. The Roman overlords were not pleased**

# Who Was The Last Hasmonean King In Jerusalem?



- Antigonus managed to hold onto his kingship for three years. Phasaël, a son of Antipater who had been named governor of Jerusalem by his father, was captured by Antigonus and took his own life. Herod, another son of Antipater, fled to Rome
- In Rome, the Senate proclaimed Herod to be “King of the Jews” but Herod had to win over the kingdom on his own. In 37 BCE, Herod defeated Antigonus and gained the kingdom. Herod then offered Antigonus the chance to retain the position of High Priest. Antigonus accepted and returned to the court at Jerusalem. Shortly after, Herod had him killed. Antigonus was the last ruler in Jerusalem with a direct link to the Hasmoneans. Another king would rule about 70 years later who would have Hasmonean blood in him. That king will be discussed in a later section.
- The Hasmonean family feud had finally come to an end. So, too, did the Hasmonean dynasty. The Hellenist and Roman Herodian dynasty had begun