

JACK FINEGAN

# Light from the Ancient Past

*The Archaeological Background of the  
Hebrew-Christian Religion, Volume 2*



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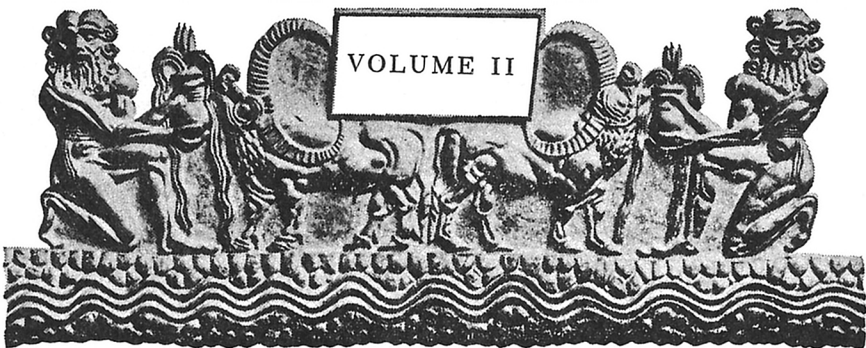
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*VOLUME II*

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LIGHT FROM  
THE ANCIENT PAST  
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of  
Judaism and Christianity

By JACK FINEGAN

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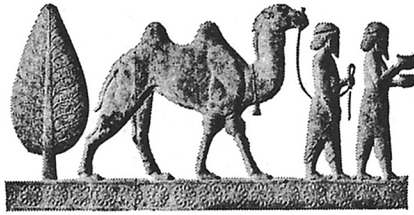
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
JESSE COBB CALDWELL  
AND  
HANS LIETZMANN



# Preface



**T**HE purpose of this book is to give a connected account of the archeological background of Judaism and Christianity. Within the last century and a half and largely within the past few decades, oriental archeology has pioneered a new past, in which are revealed more extensive vistas and higher cultures than hitherto were imagined. The account which can now be given of the rise of civilization in the Middle East, of the development of art, and of the formulation of ethical, philosophical, and religious ideas is of fascinating interest in itself. It is also of great significance for an understanding of Judaism and Christianity, both of which in their origin and earlier history were integral parts of that ancient world. To see that world come vividly and startlingly alive is to find biblical and early Christian history invested with a fresh sense of reality and interest. There are, moreover, many points at which biblical records and archeological discoveries are in direct contact, and increasingly in the later centuries there are many archeological remains which are primary historical monuments of Judaism and Christianity. A knowledge of these facts is now indispensable to all serious study of the Bible, and the proper utilization of the abundant new archeological materials may even be said to constitute one of the most important tasks in that study.

The presentation of this archeological background in the present book is in the form of a continuous account extending, in round numbers, from 5000 B.C. to A.D. 500. After an introduction dealing with the nature of archeological work in general, the narrative begins with the rise of civilization in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where the origins of the people of Israel traditionally are located and where antecedents of their mythology and law are found. Then the development of culture in the valley of the



## PREFACE

Nile is sketched, and the Exodus of the Israelites and their use of Egyptian materials in the Psalms and Proverbs are considered. Moving to Palestine, the "bridge" between these two ancient homes of empire, archeological findings are summarized, illuminating both Canaanite and Israelite times. Then the later Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires are described, upon whose imperial policies the fate and future of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah depended. With the world at last under Roman domination, the cities of Palestine are pictured as they were in the time of Jesus, and afterward a glimpse is obtained of the chief places in which the work of the apostle Paul was done. In view of the great importance of the writings collected in the New Testament, a study is made of ancient writing materials and practices and of the transmission of the text to the present time. Then the Roman catacombs are investigated, together with their art and inscriptions, and a brief account is given of characteristic early Christian sarcophagi. Finally, the development of distinctive places of Christian assembly is indicated and the basilicas of Constantinian times are described—basilicas whose successors were the Byzantine churches of the East and the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals of the West. With the clear emergence of the Christian community, centered in the place where the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, our story comes to an end.

In the earlier part of the narrative it is the broader background of the general history and civilization which is most illuminated by archeology and to which the major part of the portrayal is devoted. In the later part not only is the general history relatively simpler and more generally known, but there are also many more monuments of Judaism and Christianity themselves. Therefore in the course of the book a steadily diminishing amount of space is apportioned to the general history and a steadily increasing amount given to the specifically biblical and early Christian materials.

In order to give a more vivid sense of direct contact with the living past, frequent quotations are made from the ancient sources, and numerous photographs are presented of actual places and objects. Many of the sites are ones which I have visited and many of the objects are ones which I have studied in the museums of Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Cairo, and Jerusalem. An extensive literature has been consulted and all references cited, both ancient and modern, have been taken from personally used sources. The full title and date of each book are given

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upon its first appearance, with the exception of those works for which abbreviations are employed and which appear on pages xxxv-xxxvii. The maps and plans were prepared in detail by myself, and executed and lettered by Mr. William Lane Jones.

In the writing I thought often of Dean Jesse Cobb Caldwell of the College of the Bible, Drake University, who taught me the importance of history, and of Professor Dr. Hans Lietzmann of Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Berlin, who instructed me in early Christian archeology, and I have dedicated the book to their memory. In the publication I was also very grateful to Mr. Datus C. Smith, Jr., former Director of Princeton University Press, for his deep understanding, constant interest, and many courtesies.

In the present second edition the structure of the book remains the same but the results of many new excavations and further studies are incorporated. Among other things there is reference to fresh work or publication relative to Jarmo, Matarrah, Samarra, Baghouz, Tepe Gawra, Eridu, Lagash, Nippur, Saqqara, Amarna, Kawa, Abu Usba, Yarmuk, Jericho, Abu Ghosh, Abu Matar, Khirbet el-Bitar, Hebron, Dotha, Nebo, Gilgal, Ai, Gibeon, Hazor, Megiddo, Ugarit, Shiloh, Tell en-Nasbeh, Shechem, Tirzah, Dibon, Nimrod, Herculaneum, and Rome; to new studies on the Habiru; to newly discovered documents including extensive Sumerian literature, the law codes of Ur-Nammu, Eshnunna, and Lipit-Ishtar, Egyptian execration texts, Babylonian chronicles, the Dead Sea scrolls, and the Nessana and other papyri; to new translations of ancient sources; and to recent researches in Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and biblical chronology. The literature dealt with extends up to January 1, 1959. Mention may also be made of my own articles on Christian Archaeology in *The Encyclopedia Americana*; on Baalbek, Babylon, Behistun Rock, Cuneiform, Jerusalem, Layard, Sir Austen Henry, Near Eastern Architecture, Nineveh, Persepolis, Petra, Ras Shamra, Tyre, and Ur in *Collier's Encyclopedia*; on Christian Archaeology in the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, An Extension of the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*; and on Achaia, Adramyttium, Adria, Agora, Amphipolis, Appian Way, Areopagus, Athens, Berea, Beroea, Cenchreae, Corinth, Dalmatia, Elymais, Ephesus, Fair Havens, Forum of Appius, Illyricum, Italy, Lasea, Macedonia, Melita, Neapolis, Nicopolis, Philippi, Puteoli, Rhegium, Spain, Syracuse, Thessalonica, and Three Taverns in the forthcoming *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*; and Research Abstracts

PREFACE

in Archeology in *The Journal of Bible and Religion* in October 1947 and following years. For their kindness and efficiency in everything concerned with the publishing of the present revised edition it is a pleasure to thank Mr. Herbert S. Bailey, Jr., Director and Editor, and Miss Harriet Anderson of Princeton University Press.

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# List of Abbreviations

- AASOR *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research.*
- AB *The Art Bulletin.*
- ADAJ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.*
- AJA *American Journal of Archaeology.*
- AJP *The American Journal of Philology.*
- AJSL *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.*
- AJT *The American Journal of Theology.*
- ANEA James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures.* 1958.
- ANEP James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* 1954.
- ANET James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 2d ed. 1955.
- ANF Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., rev. by A. Cleveland Coxe, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325.* 10 vols. 1885-87.
- AO *Archiv für Orientforschung.*
- AP *Archiv für Papyrusforschung.*
- ARAB Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia.* 2 vols. 1926-27.
- ARE James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt.* 5 vols. 1906-07.
- AS *Assyriological Studies.* Oriental Institute.
- ASBACH Joseph C. Ayer, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History.* 1913.
- ASV *American Standard Version.*
- ATR *Anglican Theological Review.*
- AZKK *Die Antike, Zeitschrift für Kunst und Kultur des klassischen Altertums.*
- BA *The Biblical Archaeologist.*
- BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.*
- BDSM William H. Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline,* BASOR Supplementary Studies 10-12. 1951.
- BDSS Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls.* 1955.
- BJRL *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.*
- BML Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls.* 1958.
- CAH J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, M. P. Charlesworth and N. H. Baynes, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History.* 12 vols. and 5 vols. of plates, 1923-39.
- CALQ Frank M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies.* 1958.
- CAP R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books.* 2 vols. 1913.
- CBQ *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly.*
- CIG *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum.* 1828-77.
- DACL *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie.* 1924ff.
- DJD *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert.* I, *Qumran Cave I,* by D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik. 1955.
- DLO Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten, Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt.* 4th ed. 1923.
- DM *The Mishnah Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes,* by Herbert Danby. 1933.
- EB *The Encyclopaedia Britannica.* 14th ed. 24 vols. 1929.
- GBT Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Der babylonische Talmud.* 9 vols. 1899-1935.
- GCS *Die griechischen christlichen*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderterte.*
- GDSS Theodor H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation*. 1956.
- HDB James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols. 1898-1902.
- HERE James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. 12 vols. 1910-22.
- HFDMM W. H. P. Hatch, *Facsimiles and Descriptions of Minuscule Manuscripts of the New Testament*. 1951.
- HJ *The Hibbert Journal*.
- HPUM W. H. P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament*. 1939.
- HTR *The Harvard Theological Review*.
- HUCA *Hebrew Union College Annual*.
- ICC *The International Critical Commentary*.
- IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*.
- JANT M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*. 1942.
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*.
- JBR *The Journal of Bible and Religion*.
- JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*.
- JE Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 12 vols. 1901-05.
- JEA *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*.
- JHS *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*.
- JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*.
- JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.
- JPOS *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*.
- JQR *The Jewish Quarterly Review*.
- JR *The Journal of Religion*.
- JRAS *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- JSS *Journal of Semitic Studies*.
- JTS *The Journal of Theological Studies*.
- KAT J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*. 2 vols. 1908-15.
- KFTS Samuel N. Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer*. 1956.
- KJV *King James Version*.
- KPGÄ Friedrich K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor die Zeitwende*. 1953.
- KRAC Theodor Klauser, ed., *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. 1950ff.
- LCL *The Loeb Classical Library*.
- LLP Louise Ropes Loomis, *The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*, I, *To the Pontificate of Gregory I*. 1916.
- LXX The Septuagint. Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*. I, 4th ed. 1909; II, 3d ed. 1907; III, 3d ed. 1905. Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. 2 vols. 1935. *Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis editum*. 1931ff.
- MMVGT James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources*. 1949.
- MPG Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*.
- MPL Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*.
- MTAT Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Tell El-Amarna Tablets*. 2 vols. 1939.
- NGM *The National Geographic Magazine*.
- NPNF Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*. 14 vols. 1886-89.
- NPNF<sup>ss</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Church, Second Series. 14 vols. 1890-1900.
- NSH Samuel M. Jackson, ed., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. 12 vols. 1908-12.
- NTS *New Testament Studies*.
- OIC *Oriental Institute Communications*.
- OIP *Oriental Institute Publications*.
- OL *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*.
- OP *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.
- PATD Samuel B. Platner and Thomas Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. 1929.
- PBA *Proceedings of the British Academy*.
- PCAE Richard A. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*. SAOC 26, 1950.
- PCAM Ann Louise Perkins, *The Comparative Archeology of Early Mesopotamia*. SAOC 25, 1949.
- PDBC Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 75*. 3d ed. 1956.
- PEFA *Palestine Exploration Fund Annual*.
- PEFQS *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*.
- PEQ *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*.
- PWRE Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.
- QDAP *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*.
- RAAO *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*.
- RAC *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*.
- RB *Revue Biblique*.
- RBT Michael L. Rodkinson, *New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*. 10 (xx), vols. 1903, 1916.
- RHR *Revue de l'histoire des religions*.
- RSV *Revised Standard Version*.
- SAOC *Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization*. Oriental Institute.
- SBT I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (Soncino Press). 1935ff.
- SHJP Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*. 5 vols. 1896.
- SRK Paul Styger, *Die römischen Katakomben, archäologische Forschungen über den Ursprung und die Bedeutung der altchristlichen Grabstätten*. 1933.
- TL *Theologische Literaturzeitung*.
- TMN Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. 1951.
- TU *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*.
- TZ *Theologische Zeitschrift*.
- UMB *The University Museum Bulletin*.
- VT *Vetus Testamentum*.
- WCCK D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*. 1956.
- ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*.
- ZÄS *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*.
- ZAW *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*.
- ZDPV *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*.
- ZNW *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*.
- ZTK *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*.



*LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT PAST*





## V

# The Holy Land in the Time of Jesus



### 1. THE RISE OF ROME AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE, c.753 B.C.-A.D. 476

**I**N EARLY Christian times the Mediterranean world was ruled by Rome. Stone Age remains in the neighborhood of Rome attest the great antiquity of human settlement in that vicinity. The actual founding of the city was supposed, according to Roman traditions, to have occurred in 753 B.C., and that date was taken as the initial point in the usual chronological system which reckoned *ab urbe condita*, from the founded city.<sup>1</sup>

The early kings gave way in 509 B.C., according to the traditional chronology, to a republican form of government which endured until 27 B.C. Rome was the natural center of the Mediterranean, and her supremacy in the West was established indisputably by the defeat of Hannibal of Carthage in the battle of Zama in 202 B.C. In the East, Greece and western Asia Minor were conquered by the middle and end respectively of the second century B.C., but it remained for the

<sup>1</sup> In the A.U.C. era the year was originally reckoned as beginning with a festival which fell on April 21, but writers usually refer to the year as beginning when the consuls took office and, from A.U.C. 601 on, this was generally January 1. In the Julian calendar, of course, the year began on January 1. For the Roman and Christian calendars see Walter F. Wislicenus, *Der Kalender in gemeinverständlicher Darstellung*. 1905; Hans Lietzmann, *Zeitrechnung der römischen Kaiserzeit, des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit für die Jahre 1-2000 nach Christus*. 1934. For a table of parallel years of the Greek, Seleucid, Roman, and Christian eras see *SHJP* I, ii, pp.393-398.

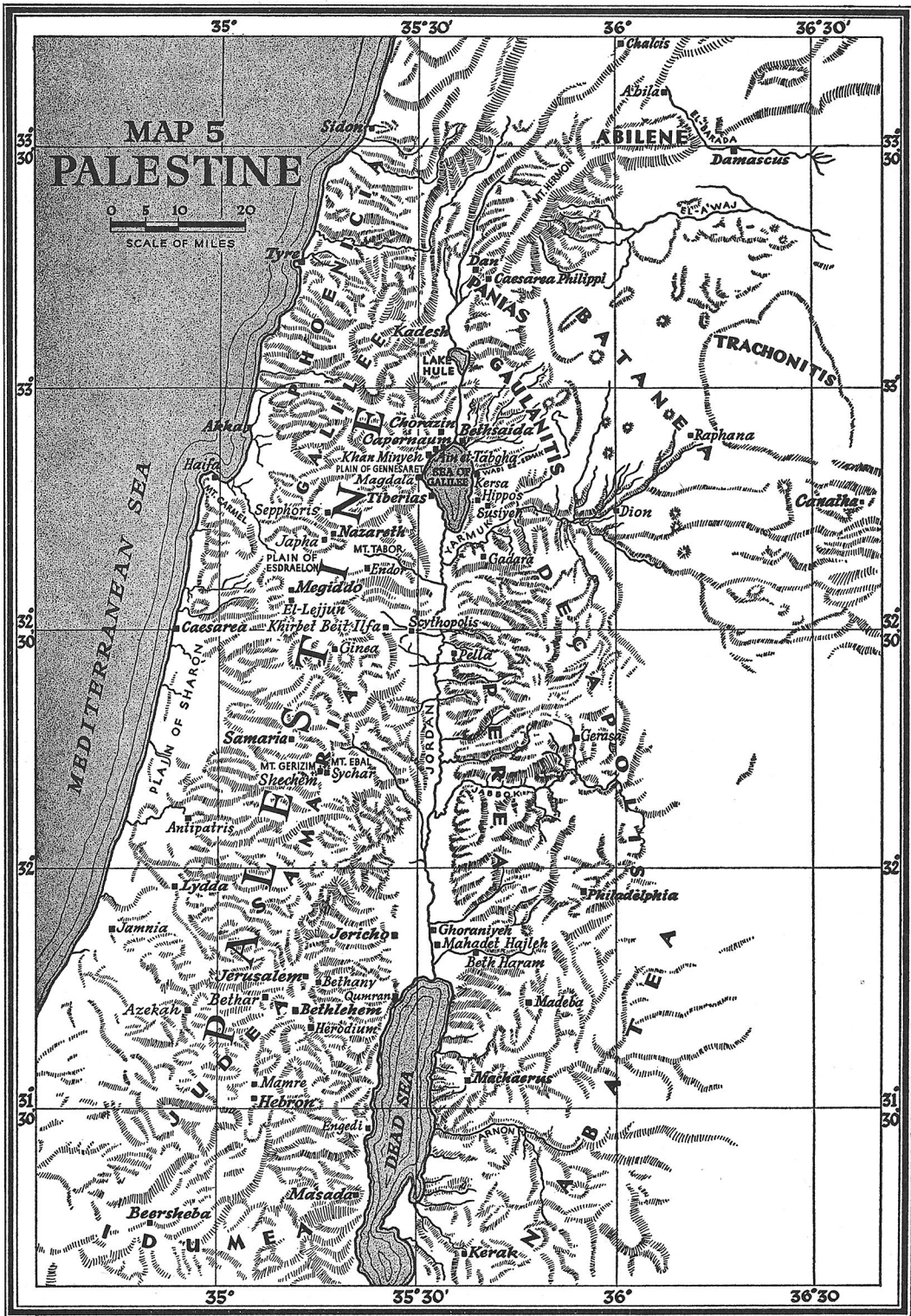
Roman general Pompey (106-48 B.C.), whose bust is shown in Fig. 98, to close the circle of empire around the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

The opposition to Rome in the East was headed by King Mithradates VI Eupator of Pontus, member of a dynasty which belonged to the highest Persian nobility, who warred with the Romans in Asia Minor for twenty-five years, and by his son-in-law King Tigranes of Armenia, member of a dynasty founded by Artaxias, a general of Antiochus III. Tigranes was for a time the most powerful ruler in western Asia, and used Antioch in Syria as one of his residential cities. The defeat of Mithradates and Tigranes by Pompey led to the consolidation of Roman power in the eastern Mediterranean, to the establishment of Syria as a Roman province, and to the inclusion of Palestine in the empire (cf. p. 246).

While Pompey was winning the East, Gaius Julius Caesar (c.102-44 B.C.) was rising to political importance in Rome. For a time the two men shared power, then faced each other in civil war. Pompey was defeated at Pharsalus in 48 B.C. and afterward was murdered in Egypt, whither he fled for refuge, while the last of his forces were crushed at Munda in Spain in 45 B.C. Thereafter Caesar was undisputed master of the Roman world, a glory which he enjoyed for only a brief six months before being assassinated on March 15, 44 B.C.

Two relatives of Julius Caesar were then the chief claimants to his empire. The first was Marcus Antonius, commonly called Mark Antony, who was related on his mother's side to Julius Caesar, and who was consul with Caesar in 44 B.C. The second was Gaius Octavius, whose grandmother was Caesar's sister, and who was adopted and made heir by Caesar, thereby acquiring the designation of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Associating himself with Cleopatra, the heiress of the Ptolemies in Egypt, Mark Antony was dominant in the East, while Octavian appropriated Italy and the West. The final trial of strength between the two rivals came in the naval battle of Actium (September 2, 31 B.C.), where Antony was decisively defeated. In the following year Alexandria was taken and Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

From 31 B.C. on, Octavian was the real master of the empire, and two years later the restoration of peace was marked by the closing of the doors of the temple of Janus for the first time in two hundred years. In recognition of Octavian's distinguished services to the state, the Roman Senate in 27 B.C. conferred upon him the title Augustus,



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meaning august or majestic. This appellation of dignity was borne by him as the first Roman emperor, and was adopted by all the later Caesars or emperors of Rome.

Under the rule of Augustus (d. A.D. 14) and his successors, for two centuries the Mediterranean world as a whole enjoyed an internal peace, the *Pax Romana*, which it never before had had and which for so long a period it has never since possessed. The author of this outstanding achievement is portrayed in the statue shown in Fig. 99. This work of a master sculptor<sup>2</sup> was found near Prima Porta north of Rome in the ruins of the villa of Livia, the wife of Augustus; the statue is now in the Vatican. The emperor is represented in the prime of manhood and at the height of his power, and his features are delicate and refined. On his breastplate is carved in relief an allegory of empire. Beneath Caelus, the Sky, drives Sol, the Sun, in his four-horse chariot—symbol of the new order in all its splendor.

In the New Testament the birth of Jesus is dated in the reign of Augustus (Luke 2:1)<sup>3</sup> and the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus is placed in the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3:1).<sup>4</sup> The latter was

<sup>2</sup> Gerhart Rodenwaldt in *AZKK* 13 (1937), pp.160-163.

<sup>3</sup> In A.D. 533 the Roman monk Dionysius Exiguus suggested counting years no longer from the founding of Rome (cf. above p.247 n.1) but rather from the birth of Christ. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. c.200) stated (*Stromata*. I, xxi, 147; *ANF* II, p.333): "And our Lord was born in the twenty-eighth year, when first the census was ordered to be taken in the reign of Augustus." Octavian became emperor and received the title Augustus on January 16, A.U.C. 727. Counting A.U.C. 727 as his first year, his twenty-eighth year was A.U.C. 754, and this was taken as the year A.D. 1. Augustus died August 19, A.D. 14 (A.U.C. 767), having reigned forty-one years. Clement of Alexandria, however, in a paragraph preceding the quotation given above, attributed to him a reign of forty-six years, four months, and one day. Counting back exactly that far from August 19, A.D. 14 would bring one to a starting point of April 18, 33 B.C. Reckoned from that initial point, the twenty-eighth year of Augustus began on April 18, 6 B.C. At all events it is clear that Dionysius Exiguus was not entirely correct in the year selected for the beginning of the Christian era.

<sup>4</sup> Luke gives the date as "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." The more usual method of dating in this period was by indicating the honors accorded to the emperor and specifying the number of times he was invested with the tribunician power, designated consul, and acclaimed imperator (Carl H. Kraeling in *ATR* 24 [1942], p.344). When tribunician years were not stated, it was usually the custom in the first century A.D. to count the years of an emperor's reign from the death of his predecessor or the day on which he himself began to rule (W. M. Ramsay, *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* 1898, pp.133, 202). Augustus died August 19, A.D. 14; Tiberius was formally proclaimed emperor within less than one month on September 17 (H. Dessau, ed., *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*. II [1897], No. 150, pp.182f.; M. Cary, et al., eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 1949, pp.906f.). The first year of Tiberius began, accordingly, on August 19 or September 17, A.D. 14, and his fifteenth year began at the same time in A.D. 28. The appearing of John the Baptist and the inauguration of the public work of Jesus may be dated, therefore, with considerable

the successor of Augustus, and reigned from A.D. 14 to 37. The marble head of Tiberius shown in Fig. 100 is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and portrays him as yet a lad with fresh and pleasing features.<sup>5</sup>

probability in the fall of A.D. 28. For other ways of reckoning see Werner Foerster, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, II, *Das römische Weltreich zur Zeit des Neuen Testaments*. 1956, p.268, n.37.

<sup>5</sup> The successors of Augustus and Tiberius in the Julio-Claudian line were Gaius (A.D. 37-41), generally known as Caligula, Claudius (41-54), and Nero (54-68). In 68 Galba, Otho, and Vitellius all claimed the throne, but the final winner in the struggle was Vespasian (69-79). The Flavian Dynasty which he founded included also Titus (79-81) and Domitian (81-96). The rulers who followed belonged to the house of Nerva and included Nerva (96-98), Trajan (98-117), and Hadrian (117-138). Then the Antonines came to the throne, including Antoninus Pius (138-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), and Commodus (180-192). The Severan house embraced Septimius Severus (193-211), Caracalla (211-217), Elagabalus (218-222), and Severus Alexander (222-235). The succeeding military emperors were Maximinus Thrax (235-238), Gordian III (238-244), Philip the Arab (244-249), Decius (249-251), Gallus (251-253), Valerian (253-260), and Gallienus (260-268). After Gallienus was murdered, Claudius II reigned briefly (268-270), but it remained for Aurelian (270-275) to restore unity. He was followed by Tacitus (275), Probus (276-282), Carus (282), Carinus and Numerian (283), and Diocletian (284-305). Diocletian reorganized the empire in 286 by entrusting the West to his friend Maximian while he retained the East for himself. This arrangement was modified further in 292 when the two Augusti each recognized a Caesar as a subordinate colleague. Thus Galerius Caesar was associated with Diocletian Augustus in the East and Constantius Chlorus Caesar with Maximian Augustus in the West. Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in 305, leaving Galerius and Constantius Chlorus as Augusti in control of the empire. Galerius was able to secure the promotion to the rank of Caesar of his faithful servant Flavius Valerius Severus and of his nephew Daia Maximinus, hoping thus on the death of Constantius Chlorus to become the sole master of the empire. Constantius Chlorus died in 306, but his soldiers continued to be loyal to Constantine, son of Constantius Chlorus and Helena. Maximian now reassumed the dignity which he had relinquished in 305, and with his son Maxentius brought the number of Roman rulers to six. In the struggle that followed, Maximian was killed in 310, and Maxentius was defeated by Constantine at the decisive battle of the Milvian bridge outside Rome in 312. Meanwhile in the East Licinius had become co-regent with Galerius and, upon the latter's death in 311, succeeded him on the throne. Constantine and Licinius now (313-323) exercised authority jointly as colleagues in the West and the East respectively, and Licinius married the sister of Constantine. The two rulers warred however in 314 and again in 323. In the second conflict Licinius was defeated, and in 324 was executed at Constantine's command. Thus Constantine the Great emerged as sole ruler of the Roman Empire (323-337). After Constantine, his three sons divided the empire, but Constantine II (337-340) died in civil war against his brother Constans (337-350) and the latter was slain by the usurper Magnentius. The remaining son Constantius (337-361) had received the East, and now upon defeating Magnentius again united the whole empire under one authority. He was followed by Julian the Apostate (361-363), and Jovian (363-364). In 364 the empire was divided again, Valentinian I (364-375) taking the West and Valens (364-378) the East. The later emperors in the West were Gratian (367-383) and Valentinian II (375-392), Theodosius I (394-395), Honorius (395-423), Joannes (424), Valentinian III (425-455), Maximus (455), Avitus (455-456), Majorian (457-461), Libius Severus (461-465), Anthemius (467-472), Olybrius (472), Glycerius (473), Julius Nepos (473-475), and Romulus Augustulus (475-476). The last named king was deposed by the Teutonic invaders in 476 and replaced by Odoacer as the first barbarian ruler of Italy. Thus the Roman Empire in the West came to an end. In the East the emperors who

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In connection with the birth and the public appearance of Jesus, Luke not only refers to the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, but also gives more detailed mention of a number of lesser governors and officials. The passages (Luke 2:1f.; 3:1f.) are as follows:

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachoritis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah.”

Elsewhere Luke dates the promise of the birth of John the Baptist “in the days of Herod, king of Judea” (1:5), and Matthew places the birth of Jesus “in the days of Herod the king” (2:1), this Herod being identified (2:22) as the father of Archelaus.<sup>6</sup> In order to explain these references to Syrian and Palestinian authorities and to give an understanding of the inner political situation in Palestine in the time

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followed Valens included Theodosius I the Great (379-395), who also ruled the West for a time, Arcadius (395-408), Theodosius II (408-450), Marcian (450-457), Leo I (457-474), Leo II (474), Zeno (474-491), Anastasius I (491-518), Justin I (518-527), Justinian I the Great (527-565), and a long line of further rulers who occupied the throne until Constantinople fell to the Crusaders in 1204 and became the seat of a Latin Empire. On the Roman emperors and Christianity see Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars, Historical Sketches*. 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Since Herod died in 4 B.C. the birth of Jesus must have been at least that early, and Matthew 2:16 suggests that it may have been as much as two years before that. The date of Herod's reign is fixed by the following facts. Josephus (*Ant.* xvii, viii, 1; *War.* i, xxxiii, 8) tells of the death of Herod and says that at that time he had reigned thirty-seven years. He died shortly before a Passover (*Ant.* xvii, ix, 3; *War.* ii, i, 3), and not long before his death there was an eclipse of the moon (*Ant.* xvii, vi, 4). This is the only eclipse of moon or sun mentioned by Josephus in any of his writings (William Whiston, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, p.514 n.), and must be the lunar eclipse which was seen in Palestine on the night of March 12/13, 4 B.C., no such phenomenon having taken place there in 3 or 2 B.C. It is also known that Archelaus was deposed in A.U.C. 759 in the tenth year of his reign, which leads back to A.U.C. 750 or 4 B.C. for his accession and the death of his father (*SHJF* i, i, p.465 n.165). Thus Herod died in the spring of 4 B.C. and his thirty-seven year reign was 40-4 B.C. In 7 B.C. there was a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, a phenomenon which occurs once in 805 years and was observed by Johannes Kepler in A.D. 1603. The planets passed each other on May 29, September 29, and December 4, 7 B.C., and in 6 B.C. Mars moved past them too, in February of that year forming with them a triangle in the evening sky, a configuration known as a massing of the planets. These unusual astronomical happenings took place in Pisces, the sign of the zodiac which ancient astrologers called the House of the Hebrews, and it has been thought that this was the “star” which the wise men saw. See the pamphlets, *The Star of Bethlehem*, published by the Adler Planetarium, Chicago; and *The Christmas Star*, published by the Morrison Planetarium, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco.

## HERODIAN AND ROMAN RULE

of Jesus, it is necessary now to tell briefly a complex and fascinating story which has its beginnings in the days of the Maccabean War.

### 2. THE TIME OF THE MACCABEES, c.168-63 B.C.

IT WAS an old priest Mattathias and his five sons who led the revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes (p. 246).<sup>1</sup> Of these sons, Judas, called Maccabeus, or the Hammer (165-161 B.C.), became the great general and gave his name to the struggle, while his brother Simon eventually ruled (142-135) as prince and high priest over a small independent kingdom. The dynasty thus founded was known as the Hasmonean, from Asamoneus the father of Mattathias.<sup>2</sup> In the succession of rulers Simon was followed by his son John Hyrcanus (135-104), and his grandson Aristobulus I (104-103), who assumed the title of king. Under the latter's brother, Alexander Janneus (103-76), the Jewish kingdom attained its greatest extent, reaching to limits practically the same as those of the kingdom of David. The title of king was stamped proudly in Hebrew and Greek upon the coins of Alexander Janneus.

But the sons of Janneus, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, quarreled for the throne and both appealed to the Romans for help. Pompey had already (64 B.C.) made Syria a Roman province and was near at hand in Damascus. When Aristobulus lost the confidence of the Romans and his adherents entrenched themselves in the temple, Pompey besieged Jerusalem. The city fell after three months (63 B.C.) and Pompey outraged the Jews by entering the Holy of Holies. Aristobulus II was taken prisoner to Rome, and the elder brother, Hyrcanus II (63-40 B.C.), was established as high priest and ethnarch. From that time on the Jews were subject to the Romans.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. PALESTINE UNDER HERODIAN AND ROMAN RULE, 63 B.C.-A.D. 70

WHEN Pompey was defeated and Julius Caesar was established as master in Rome, Hyrcanus II and his friend Antipater, the Idumean,

<sup>1</sup> The history of the Maccabean struggle is narrated in a generally trustworthy way in I Maccabees. For the history from here on through the wars with Rome see Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha*. 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *War*. I, i, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, I, vii, 4; *Ant.* xiv, iv. For Palestine in the Roman period see G. M. Fitzgerald in *PEQ* 1956, pp.38-48.



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attached themselves to Caesar's party and rendered him such services as to secure for Judea freedom both from taxes and from the obligation of military service. Antipater, who already, it seems, had attained the position of procurator of Judea,<sup>1</sup> was confirmed in this office by Caesar. He soon appointed his two sons, Phasael and Herod, governors of Jerusalem and Galilee respectively.

Phasael ended his life by suicide when Antigonus (40-37 B.C.), son of Aristobulus II and last of the Hasmonean rulers, captured Jerusalem with Parthian help. For Herod there was a greater future. In Rome he gained the favor of Mark Antony and Octavian, who at that time divided the Roman world between themselves, and was given by the Senate the rank of king of Judea (40 B.C.). By 37 B.C. Herod was able to besiege and take Jerusalem. Antigonus was beheaded by the Romans, and Herod assumed the Jewish crown, meanwhile having strengthened his claim by marrying the Hasmonean princess, Mariamne. When Mark Antony was defeated and Octavian emerged as the sole emperor of the Roman Empire, Herod knew how to continue in his favor and even to gain by imperial favor the doubling of his own territory.

### HEROD THE GREAT

Herod "the Great"<sup>2</sup> ruled for thirty-seven years (40-4 B.C.) with much energy and success, but was always hated by the Jews as a half-foreigner<sup>3</sup> and a friend of the Romans. Moreover, he had little real interest in Judaism and was instrumental in spreading Greek culture throughout the land. The love of Herod for pagan civilization was reflected in most of his numerous building activities.<sup>4</sup> Temples dedicated to pagan gods and emperor worship, halls and theaters in the Greek style, palaces, castles, and baths were constructed throughout the land. On the site of ancient Samaria he built a new city, named Sebaste, in honor of the Emperor Augustus.<sup>5</sup> On the coast, on the site of the ancient Straton's Tower, he built a new city and port which he named Caesarea and which later was to be the capital of the country.

<sup>1</sup> *Ant.* xiv, viii, 1.

<sup>2</sup> This title is applied once to Herod by Josephus, *Ant.* xviii, v, 4. See now Stewart Perowne, *The Life and Times of Herod the Great*. 1956.

<sup>3</sup> As an Idumean he was called a "half-Jew" by Josephus, *Ant.* xiv, xv, 2. The Idumeans, or Edomites, living in southern Palestine had been conquered and compelled to accept Judaism by John Hyrcanus (*Ant.* xiii, ix, 1).

<sup>4</sup> *War.* i, xxi.

<sup>5</sup> The Latin title Augustus was rendered in Greek by Σεβαστός. cf. Dio Cassius (A.D. c.150-c.235), *Roman History*. LIII, xvi, 8. tr. E. Cary, LCL (1914-27), vi, p.235.

But the most magnificent single piece of building done by Herod was carried out in strict conformity with Jewish principles. This was the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem,<sup>6</sup> which was begun in 20/19 B.C. Only priests were allowed to build the temple proper, and Herod himself refrained from entering the inner temple, whose precincts should be trodden by none but priests. The temple proper was built in one year and six months, but other building work was long continued, and was finished only in the time of the procurator Albinus (A.D. 62-64), a few years before the temple's final destruction.

## THE SONS OF HEROD

A few days before his death in 4 B.C., the aged Herod rewrote his will providing for the division of his kingdom among his sons. Of the various sons of Herod's ten legal marriages several had perished in intrigues or had been put to death by their father's orders, including Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Mariamne (who also was slain), and Antipater, who was executed five days before Herod died. Three younger sons were to inherit the kingdom. Philip, the son of Cleopatra of Jerusalem, became tetrarch of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Batanea, and Pnias (Paneas), regions north and east of the Sea of Galilee and mostly inhabited by pagans.<sup>7</sup> Over this territory Philip reigned well for nearly forty years (4 B.C.-A.D. 34). At the sources of the Jordan he rebuilt the city of Pnias and gave it the name Caesarea in honor of the emperor.<sup>8</sup> To distinguish it from Caesarea on the coast<sup>9</sup> it was called Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27). Also he raised the village of Bethsaida, which was situated at the lake of Gennesareth, to the dignity of a city, both by the number of inhabitants it contained and by its size, and named it Julius after the daughter of the emperor.<sup>10</sup>

Herod Antipas, the younger son of Malthace, became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 B.C.-A.D. 39). He built a splendid capital for himself at a beautiful site in the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and named it Tiberias in honor of Tiberius who was then on the Roman throne. Antipas brought trouble upon himself through put-

<sup>6</sup> *War.* I, xxi, 1; *Ant.* xv, xi.

<sup>7</sup> *War.* I, xxxiii, 8; *Ant.* xvii, viii, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *War.* II, ix, 1; *Ant.* xviii, ii, 1.

<sup>9</sup> For coastal Caesarea, founded by Herod the Great in 22 B.C., see A. Reifenberg in *IEJ* 1 (1950-51), pp.20-32.

<sup>10</sup> *Ant.* xviii, ii, 1; cf. *War.* II, ix, 1. Julius was the daughter of Augustus, but was banished in 2 B.C. Since Philip hardly would have named a city for her after that event, Julius must have been built before 2 B.C.

ting away his first wife, the daughter of King Aretas of Nabatea, to marry Herodias, whom he alienated from his half-brother, Herod.<sup>11</sup> Thereafter Antipas was defeated in war by Aretas, and when he sought the king's title from Caligula was banished instead to Lyons in Gaul, whither Herodias followed him.

Archelaus, the older son of Malthace, received the principal part of Herod's territory—Judea, Samaria, and Idumea—and was intended by Herod to have the title of king but actually was given only that of ethnarch (4 B.C.-A.D. 6). Insurrection was spreading throughout the land, however, and the rule of Archelaus was violent and incompetent. When he was deposed and banished to Vienne in Gaul in A.D. 6, his territory was put directly under Roman rule.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE PROCURATORS AND LEGATES

Authority over the former dominions of Archelaus was placed in the hands of a governor of the equestrian order, whose title was that of procurator, and who could receive help in case of need from the legate who governed the province of Syria.<sup>13</sup> The residence of the

<sup>11</sup> Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod the Great, her father being Aristobulus, the son of Mariamne, who was executed in 7 B.C. Mark 6:17; Matthew 14:3 (contrast Luke 3:19) call Herodias the wife of Philip, meaning doubtless the tetrarch of Trachonitis. Josephus (*Ant.* xviii, v, 4) states that Herodias was married to Herod, the son of Herod the Great and the second Mariamne, the high priest's daughter. Also Josephus says that Herodias' daughter, Salome, was married to Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis. The relationships may have been confused in the Gospels, or it is barely possible that this Herod bore the surname Philip.

<sup>12</sup> *War.* ii, viii, 1; *Ant.* xvii, xiii; xviii, i, 1.

<sup>13</sup> In 27 B.C. Augustus divided the provinces of the Roman Empire into imperial and senatorial. (1) The imperial provinces, which the emperor continued to hold, were those which were most difficult to manage and which required the presence of a strong military force. They in turn were divided, with the exception of some which were administered by simple knights, into two classes: those administered by men who had been consuls, and those administered by men who had been praetors. The governors were nominated by the emperor, were directly responsible to him, and held office for a term the length of which depended on the emperor's pleasure. The governors of both consular and praetorian provinces were called *legati Augusti* (or *Caesaris pro praetore*). (2) The provinces which were given over to the senate were those which did not require the presence of an army but only of a small garrison sufficient for the purpose of maintaining order. They were also divided into those administered by men who had been consuls and those administered by men who had been praetors. The governors of the senatorial provinces were appointed for a year at a time, were responsible to the senate, and were called proconsuls. (3) Certain other possessions were regarded as domains of the emperor and were placed under governors of the equestrian order responsible to the emperor. Their title was that of praefect or procurator, and the title procurator soon became the prevailing one. Judea thus belonged to the third and more exceptional class of provinces. Dio, *Roman History.* liii, xii-xv; Strabo, *Geography.* xvii, iii, 25.