

The World of the Herods

Volume 1 of the International Conference
The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans
held at the British Museum, 17–19 April 2001

Edited by Nikos Kokkinos

Alte Geschichte

Oriens et Occidens 14

Franz Steiner Verlag

The World of the Herods

ORIENS ET OCCIDENS

Studien zu antiken Kulturkontakten
und ihrem Nachleben

Herausgegeben von
Josef Wiesehöfer

in Zusammenarbeit mit Pierre Briant,
Amélie Kuhrt, Fergus Millar und
Robert Rollinger

Band 14



Nikos Kokkinos (Ed.)

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Τῇ μνήμῃ φιλλάτῳ καθηγητῇ
Ἱερεμία Οὐαρδάμανι
ἀποβιώσαντα αἰεὶ διδασκομένῳ
τῇ ιη΄ Νοεμβρίου ,β΄

Dedication to Jerry Vardaman

I remember once you told me, that on your tombstone
I should inscribe in Greek
not that you “died laughing”
(like the old man in the *Mary Poppins* movie,
whose laughter had the effect of lifting him off the ground),
but that you “died learning”.
I am writing this here,
missing our times in learning while laughing.

Nikos

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PREFACE

No international conference on *The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans* can ever be easily organised, given the magnitude of the subject in bringing together in one (as it ought to be) two consequential worlds, and given the political divisions of today. I would be lying if I said that at no point during the two-and-a-half years (1998–2001) which the conference was in preparation did I feel overwhelmed by the circumstances or even occasionally wished that I had not got involved in the first place. But persistence and enthusiasm for the idea between my colleagues (Dinos Politis and Sam Moorehead) and myself made the event finally possible. Our aim was to gather a significant number of Near Eastern experts on the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods to exchange wisdom. It seemed fit in its diversity that three scholars working in or close to the British Museum, two of whom ethnically Greek, all of whom specialising on the archaeology and ancient history of Israel and Jordan, were to attempt to unite on British soil colleagues from the Jewish and Arab lands in a celebration of historical knowledge.

Our first, and rather usual, worry was the raising of funds. Then came the selection of speakers. Later a cloud appeared on the horizon with the political events of October 2000, when certain promises for significant support failed to materialise. We had further the misfortune to lose two of our distinguished speakers – one sadly passing away in mid-November, and another being declared unwell in mid-March. Still our efforts reached momentum in April 2001, enjoying, by general admission, a very successful three days. It was a large conference and the first international one to be held in the Clore Education Centre which is part of the newly-built Great Court of the British Museum. For all these, including acknowledgements, a glimpse will be given below in a selection of transcripts from the first day of the conference.

The next task was that of publication: two volumes were agreed, one for the Herods and one for the Nabataeans. Several publishers had shown interest but decisions had to be taken concerning selection of the contributions and timing of submission, not to mention finance for the editing of the work. At the conference, Glen Bowersock had in a way prepared me for what could lie ahead. It was during the time when I tried to take a photograph of myself between what I called ‘the two pillars’ of Near Eastern Graeco-Roman studies, Fergus Millar and Glen Bowersock, if only my wife’s camera had not suddenly jammed! A memorable opportunity was lost. Glen reminded me of his and John Strugnell’s ‘International Symposium on Arabia in Antiquity’ (15–17 December 1972), with papers from an array of important scholars of a ‘vanished age’, which was never published. I soon began experiencing various problems and delays, and soon in the background of the shocking event of “9/11” or 11 September 2001. An original, would-be submission of the whole manuscript in 2003 did not work out on the selective terms for one volume set by a publisher, and another had to be sought. Meanwhile, contributions from scholars

who had tried to participate in the conference, but for which unfortunately no space had originally been found, could now be considered.

On the bright side financial support for the academic editing revealed itself in the form of a scholarship, for which special thanks must be extended to the Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, as much as to the referees Mark Geller and Amélie Kuhrt, both of University College London. Also in 2004 a new publisher, Franz Steiner, stepped in to secure the future of the work in print. All problems at this stage looked as if they had been solved. Yet, there was still more trouble in the horizon. Personal, serious illness kept me totally away from work for the following two years and I am lucky to be back. It was only with the help, initially of Walter Loeb (who revised the English for a few papers which needed it most) and then of David Jacobson (who worked with me particularly on the collection of several papers from Israel and on the gathering and ordering of all of the illustrations), that the work could finally be submitted to Stuttgart late in 2006. David has also provided moral and material support in difficult health circumstances, and much is owed to him for his persistence to see the conference papers through to the press.

From the original programme of the conference (concerning the Herodian part) some papers could not be included here. First, the papers read by William Horbury, Israel Shatzman and Yoram Tsafrir were never received in written form – thus only the abstracts are to be found in the Appendix. The abstract of Jerry Vardaman is also included, as a memorial, since he passed away five months before the conference. The fact that his view on the surviving Herodian inscriptions differed markedly from that expressed by Rudolph Haensch in his replacement paper “Inscriptions and the History of the Herods”, made it inappropriate for the latter to appear in the present collection under the circumstances. There were also other considerations for exclusion, as Haensch’s paper seemed more suitable to a planned, future volume on Herodian epigraphy. The paper delivered by Walter Loeb, “Medical Aspects of Herod’s Death”, in replacement of a would-be paper by Hannah Cotton on papyri from the Herodian period, was decided to be published in a medical journal. Concerning the central issue put forward by Loeb, see meanwhile N. Kokkinos, “Herod’s Horrid Death”, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28:2 (March/April 2002), 28–35, 62. Also, the paper delivered on the first day by Alla Kushnir-Stein, “The Coinage of Agrippa II”, was not the one mentioned on the conference programme (“Coins of the Herodian Dynasty: The State of Research”), and it is the latter which is included here. The former subsequently appeared in *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002), 123–131. Finally, there was also a special presentation of “The Warren Silver Cup” by Dyfri Williams and Susan Walker, for which no written paper was submitted as it was thought to be peripheral to the present collection.

From the papers offered to be read in the conference (concerning the Herodian part) for which no time could be found, some were promised to be considered for inclusion in the present volume – that is to say given the possibility that a few of the original contributors might fail to submit in time, which in fact turned out to be the case. The papers of Ehud Netzer, Joseph Patrich, Vassilios Tzaferis & John Wilson, and Andrew Overman *et al.*, thus rightly found their way here. Two other papers also qualified, from contributors who have sadly passed away since, making the editing

process a difficult task. The paper of Yizhar Hirschfeld (died 16/11/2006) has been included, although only with half of the intended illustrations, as final files never arrived. The paper of Avner Raban (died 11/2/2004), “Sebastos – The Royal Harbour of Herod the Great”, was in need of extra work which unfortunately could not be done in time. At least a mention of it in this preface can be made in Avner’s memory.

In terms of style, annotation in this collection followed the hybrid version of the British-Harvard bibliographical systems, as used for example in N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (Sheffield 1998) – where more detailed bibliography and most of the abbreviations can also be found. This allows the use of notes (as in the British system), freeing the text from lengthy modern references, and employs the style of referring to author, date and page number (as in the Harvard system) within these notes. Abbreviations of classical journals adopted the standard listing in the latest volume of the *Année Philologique*, while archaeological journals not listed there followed the list published in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 104 (2000), 10–24. Classical, biblical, rabbinical and patristic references have basically being incorporated into the main text, or placed in the notes if too numerous. Although there may be no total consistency, classical references followed the abbreviations in the Loeb Classical Library. Biblical references largely adopted the abbreviations listed in the introduction to the latest edition of the Nestlé-Aland *The Greek New Testament*. Rabbinical references used the standard abbreviations of *m.* (for the Mishna), *t.* (for the Tosefta), *b.* (for the Babylonian Talmud) etc., followed by the tractates as listed in Danby’s *The Mishnah*. Latin words have been italicised. Greek and Hebrew transliterated and italicised, with the exception of long texts or inscriptions. Ancient names of places and people in their English spelling followed the index of *SVM* (i.e. vol. 1 of Schürer’s *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, revised by Vermes & Millar), and where necessary the latest edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The spellings of modern sites tried to adopt the *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*.

Finally this brief preface would be the poorer without a few of the preliminary words spoken on the first day of the conference at the British Museum, which might convey a taste of the truly magnificent atmosphere:

From the Introduction by the Organisers

(Nikos Kokkinos, Konstantinos Politis, T. Sam N. Moorhead)

It is to be regretted that this conference is set against the back-drop of unrest in the Near East which has kept a number of people away. However, it is still reassuring to know that so many of us who love the region in its diversity are able to come together to celebrate two major aspects of its cultural past. The Herodian and Nabataean cultures co-existed at a time when the Near East was also undergoing great political change. That we can discuss such a charged period as a united body with objective detachment, yet passionate interest, speaks volumes for academic independence at the beginning of the Third Millennium.

The selection of speakers has been particularly difficult, since only 40 could be chosen from a list of 300 ‘published’ scholars. We have tried to find a balance with people of different age, race, and gender, and have been keen to enable new faces to appear on the platform. We can only apologise to those who wished to speak but who could not be fitted into the programme and we are grateful to those who still decided to come. For various reasons the programme has had to be revised repeatedly... There has been a great deal of interest amongst publishers regarding the publication of proceedings, and we hope to secure a final agreement very soon...

There was no major source of funding for this conference at the outset, and throughout we have had to earn every required expense. Our plight has been made easier by generous grants from the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Karim Rida Said Foundation, The Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies and The Kress Foundation (with the kind assistance from Sue Devine of the American Friends of the British Museum). However, we will still be fortunate if our costs are covered by the end of the proceedings.

This conference has been almost three years in the making and fulfils our ambition to bring so many of you together. Heartfelt thanks should be extended to all speakers, chairpersons, and staff who have helped at the British Museum... We hope that you all have an enjoyable conference...

Welcome by the Director of the British Museum
(Robert Anderson)

On behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, I would like to welcome you all to the Clore Education Centre, made possible by the new Great Court development which opened by the Queen in December 2000. We hope that you will enjoy the new facilities at the museum while you are here.

It is a pleasure to see so many people from all over the world. There are large contingents of speakers and delegates from Israel and Jordan, Europe and North America. Many important international institutions are represented: universities, museums, antiquity departments and theological colleges. Furthermore, it is good to see a large number of people from the United Kingdom who will be able to benefit from the fruits of so many scholars’ research in the field of Herodian and Nabataean history and archaeology.

Neither the Herodian dynasty nor the Nabataeans present the historian with an easy challenge. Mystery and enigma shroud both, but we hope that this conference will shed more light on these fascinating peoples. I have no doubt that we shall leave so much better informed than when we arrived.

A Word of Welcome
(Nikos Kokkinos)

Ladies and Gentlemen – I am taking my turn here to welcome everyone. We have been looking forward to this special meeting and it is a relief to see all of you together. Apart from our distinguished speakers and chairpersons (about 50 in number), there are many distinguished scholars among the rest of the delegates (nearly 200).

Although it will not be possible for me to welcome everyone individually from this position, looking at the list it is necessary to mention at least a few: Professor Per Bilde from Denmark (expert on Josephus); Professor Sean Freyne from Ireland (expert on Galilee); Professor Maurice Sartre from France (expert on Syria); and my extremely warm welcome to Professor Mary Smallwood from Scotland (expert on the Jews under Roman Rule). Many thanks for coming.

In giving thanks for help with the organisation, apart from the various bodies and individuals mentioned in the acknowledgements of our booklet, we must here single out one person: Mr Sam Moorhead of the Education Department. Without Sam this conference would not have taken place. I am very grateful.

The programme has changed many times, twice due to circumstances which I must note. First, the sad loss of our colleague and friend Professor Jerry Vardaman, for whom I shall talk before the lecture on epigraphy at 12:00 o'clock, has forced a replacement which is kindly being offered by Dr Rudolf Haensch. Second, we have been informed that Professor Hannah Cotton has been taken ill in Israel and felt unable to fly. Her replacement, on a very short notice, Dr Walter Loebel, will be talking to us not about papyri of the Herodian period but about an equally interesting subject that of Herodian medicine (so to speak).

This gathering, for me in particular, is 'a dream come true'. Although the conference has been about two-and-a-half years in the making, I had been planning the Herodian part in my mind for about two-and-a-half decades. It was in the mid-70s when I bought a copy of a monumental guide, the first volume of 'the revised Schürer', by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar. Something clicked inside me. At this time, living in Greece, not only could I not follow the heavy scholarship displayed in the thick footnotes of every page, but I needed a dictionary to understand most of the English. I began dreaming of the day that I would be able to tackle this book in depth – hopefully travel to England, hopefully get a university degree there, hopefully meet Fergus Millar, hopefully ask him to allow me to write my own doctoral thesis on the Herods under his supervision, hopefully succeed in publishing it, and then hopefully organise an international conference on the subject to wrap things up. It took much longer, and it was much harder, than I had anticipated, but every step in this dream became a reality.

To open this conference, very appropriately, we have the Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford – a person whose name is now synonymous with the study of the Near East in the Graeco-Roman period. A person for whom a deservedly, lengthy introduction is absolutely unnecessary once you simply mention his name: Fergus Millar.

Jerry Vardaman
(Nikos Kokkinos)

At this point of the conference in the original programme we would have had a lecture by Professor Jerry Vardaman of the Cobb Institute of Archaeology in Mississippi, with the title "Recovery and Study of Herodian Inscriptions since the 17th Century". Unfortunately this lecture was not to be (see now abstract in the appendix of this volume).

In the morning of 18th November 2000, I received a message from Mr John Tingle, Jerry Vardaman's son-in-law, which I shall read to you here:

Dear Friend of Jerry Vardaman: It is my sad task to tell you that Jerry Vardaman died this morning of a massive heart attack at his home in Starkville, Mississippi. Although my mother-in-law called 911, Professor Vardaman died before emergency personnel could reach him. Please remember our family in your prayers.

The news were particularly shocking to me. Jerry was a remarkable colleague and good friend. We were currently in communication both concerning his paper for this conference (which he was eager to deliver), as well as looking ahead to a joint publication, a corpus of Herodian inscriptions, so far missing. I extended my deepest sympathy to the Vardaman family, and without delay I posted an obituary on the net (a version was published in the *BAIAS* 18, 115). I shall read it to you:

Professor Jerry Vardaman (born in 1927) was proud for many things including briefly: his studying for a period under W. F. Albright; his ThD (1958) and PhD (1974) from Baylor University on Herodian inscriptions; his work with M. Avi-Yonah at Caesarea-on-the-coast (1962); his publication on Herodeion (1964); his excavation in Machaerus (1968); and his work with A. Negev in Elusa (1980). He was particularly proud for having published the first report in English of the discovery of the Latin inscription of Pontius Pilate (in the *JBL* 1962), and for having himself excavated in the synagogue of Caesarea the first fragment of the Hebrew inscription mentioning 'Nazareth'. Vardaman was in love with his family (wife, two daughters and two grandchildren), and with all members of the Herodian family, as well as with his books (which he was capable of binding personally in leather), and his large collection of ancient coins. For those who knew him, he had a very big smile and was very quick to reply (in his southern US accent) using unfamiliar biblical passages, always in a most humorous way. He will sadly be absent from the Herodian-Nabataean Conference at the British Museum in April 2001, to which he had been invited to present a paper.

I shall also show a photograph of Jerry in which the smile I talked about is so evident. It was taken in the early 1980s, when he visited me at home to discuss the possibility of organising an international conference on the chronology of Jesus' life. The conference indeed took place in Mississippi on 16 December 1983, and resulted in the *Chronos, Kairos, Christos* volumes, which re-examined fundamentally the dating of Jesus.

Jerry Vardaman shared with me many details from the life of his teacher William Foxwell Albright. I would like to read you one incident which became example in Jerry's life. Jerry communicated this to me (16/4/2000) as a reply to a letter of mine in which I had severely criticised one of Jerry's theories. He calmly responded:

My old teacher Albright was the most brilliant man I ever knew – he knew 30 languages like a master – but he gained through experience the common touch, and refused to be blinded by pride. You could always go to him for help, and he never talked down to you. But in his youth he was not this way – even got in fights with some of his students. One of his greatest regrets, Nikos, was that on one occasion he upbraided a student so severely that the poor lad went out immediately and committed suicide. The sad experience so devastated the man that he never lost his patience with students again – he was always approachable and caring and wanted to see everybody make progress in the learning process. He could be severe in rejecting false opinions – but he gained from this sad chapter in his life a new respect for others that he carried with him to his grave.

Jerry certainly gained from Albright and we should all gain from Jerry.

I am very pleased to say that all the way from Mississippi we have with us today Vardaman's family – Alfalene, Carolyn, Celeste, Jonathan and Meredith... (The youngest daughter, Celeste, was then called up to add a few words to the memory of her father.)

Nikos Kokkinos
Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies
University College London
March 2007

INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE HERODIAN WORLD – PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Fergus Millar

Some years ago, I was standing on one of the upper levels of the Herodian palace at the north end of Masada when, quite unexpectedly, the then Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University appeared, along with a group of fellow lawyers taking a break from a case being heard in Tel-Aviv. Not wasting a moment in the never-ending struggle with how major projects could be designed and financed, he asked me two questions, to neither of which I could give any worthwhile answer. Who was the architect of the palace? (Not known). And how was it financed? (No precise answer is available, beyond calculations of Herod's – very considerable – revenues, and some evidence on the cost of others of his major projects).

The present volume, one of two deriving from an extremely successful double conference on the Herodians and the Nabataeans held at the British Museum in 2001, offers very real advances in the study, first, of how and from what sources we know the history of Herod's reign; and, second, in pushing forward our understanding of the physical evidence on the ground, from vast building-projects (like the Temple itself), several of which were even more ambitious than that at Masada, to new urban plans, to tombs, ossuaries and rural sites.

Six years have passed since the conference, and in many such cases one could reasonably feel that the editor or editors might have shown more drive and energy in bringing the results together. Not in this case, however, for the volume's appearance is on the contrary a tribute to the enormous courage, commitment and energy of Nikos Kokkinos in the face of the most profound of health problems in the intervening years.

In the full sense, an 'overview' of the Herodian world was not really possible in 2001, when I spoke briefly at the beginning of the conference, and remains unattainable now. Firstly, if we begin by looking at the kingdom 'from the inside', we lack extensive participants' or observers' reports, other than the priceless testimony of Nicolaus of Damascus as mediated by Josephus. Secondly, the epigraphic evidence for the reign is quite limited, and has never been collected as such. It is very important, however, that all that part of it which comes from within Judaea or the later Syria Palaestina will be collected in the major current project, led by Hannah Cotton and Werner Eck, for a *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaeae/Palaestinae*, bringing together all epigraphic texts, in all languages, from this area, from Alexander to Mahomet.

'Inscriptions' in this context will include ostraca, and amphora-fragments, and so the planned *Corpus* will incorporate those truly extraordinary finds from Masada

in the form of painted inscriptions in Latin on amphorae recording delivery of wine to 'Rex Herodes Iudaicus'.¹ As is now clear, gladiatorial games, the Imperial cult and the *opus reticulatum* found in the Herodian palace at Jericho were not the only imports from Italy.

What we still lack however from Herod's kingdom, or indeed from the domains of any of his sons or of his grandson, Agrippa I, or his great-grandson, Agrippa II, is any body of documentary texts on perishable materials, papyrus or parchment. It is paradoxical, given the now very substantial corpus of papyri and parchments from the Judaeen Desert, including Masada,² in Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean, that there should be nothing specifically Herodian. It is not only that there is nothing to match the considerable corpus of Nabataean inscriptions of the regal period, above all from Petra itself and from Medain Saleh, which also make it possible to date the spectacular monuments of Nabataean architecture.³ It is also that from the Nabataean kingdom we do at least have a group of legal documents on perishable materials, found in the Judaeen Desert, and written in the local dialect of Aramaic and in the Nabataean script, which shed valuable light on law, society and political structure. That they are included in Ada Yardeni's priceless two-volume *Textbook*, only serves to emphasise the absence of any parallels from the Herodian realm.⁴ In truth, we can not even be sure, if any such documents were to be discovered, whether they would be in Greek or Aramaic, or possibly even Hebrew. What we still lack, therefore, as evidence for the administration of the kingdom is any letters or decrees issued by Herod himself, or by higher officials, as we do equally legal documents embodying exchanges or contracts between his subjects. Nor can we confidently predict, if any such were discovered (and given the extensive range of perishable texts from Qumran and elsewhere, and the large corpus of public documents from Judaea in the period CE 70-135,⁵ there is no reason to regard such discoveries as impossible), what form they would take. In Nabataea, as we have seen, legal documents were written in Nabataean Aramaic. Meanwhile, however, within the Parthian Empire legal documents from Dura-Europos turn out to be in Greek.⁶ In third-century Osroene where (as in first-century Judaea) royal rule and Roman direct rule alternated, a complex pattern of interaction between Greek and Syriac is found.⁷

1 See Cotton & Geiger 1989, 140-58, nos. 804-816.

2 For all the Greek and Latin texts, on various materials, from Masada see Cotton & Geiger 1989*t*.

3 Nabataean Inscriptions are collected in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* II, nos. 157-3233, and see now also Healey 1993; for their relevance to the dating of Nabataean monuments, see McKenzie 2005.

4 Yardeni 2000, I, 265f. (Heb.); II, 85f. (Eng).

5 See Cotton, Cockle & Millar 1995, nos. 230-331, supplemented above all by Cotton & Yardeni 1997, and Yadin, Greefield, Yardeni & Levine 2002.

6 See Cotton, Cockle & Millar 1995, nos. 36-43, and Millar 1998, 486-7.

7 See Drijvers & Healey 1998, Appendix, and for related documents, in Greek, but many with Syriac subscriptions, from the Middle Euphrates in the third century, see Gascoü & Feissel 1995; 1997; 2001.

So, for the moment, there are limits on how far we can analyse the Herodian system ‘from within’, and in many respects the closest that we can come to a (retrospective) ‘worm’s-eye’ or ‘insider’s’ view is still that provided by the Gospels and Acts.

If we look outward, however, we can think, first, of Herod’s prominent role as a benefactor and builder in Greek cities, from Berytus to Nicopolis (respectively, a major Augustan colonial re-foundation and a new city foundation). Nicopolis is of particular importance as a Greek city founded by the Emperor to mark the battle of Actium, and as the site of remarkable examples of Augustan art and architecture.⁸ As for Berytus, we owe to Haensch 2006 an important re-reading and restoration of the Latin inscription of Agrippa II and Berenice, referring back to construction by their great-grandfather (*proavus*) Herod. Similarly, Herod acted as *agônothetês* of the Olympic Games. Given the current intense interest in the Greek festivals of the Roman period and in euergetism and architectural display and innovation, the literary and epigraphic record of Herod’s activities outside Judaea would deserve detailed reconsideration. Outside Judaea also, and in a different sense, we can compare the kingdom of Herod with other contemporary ‘client’ kingdoms (see Heinen, Tröster and Coskun 2005), for instance the Orontids of Commagene (for which see now Facella 2006), Juba of Mauretania (see Roller 2003) or the Bosporan kingdom, for which there is a more extensive and illuminating epigraphic record in Greek than for any other kingdom of the period (see Struve 1965). Amid much other new material, note especially Heinen 1998, on the inscription showing that King Aspurgos, just as Herod did on several occasions, had journeyed to Rome to pay his respects to the Emperor – and had been anxious about disorder at home during his absence.

Herod’s rule of course coincided with the last years of Cleopatra and the end of the Ptolemaic kingdom, with the first period of dominance by Imperator Caesar Divi filius (whom it is quite misleading to call ‘Octavian’, and who simply added the *cognomen* ‘Augustus’ in BCE 27) and with the formation of the major new Roman province of Egypt in 30 BC (see Capponi 2005 and now Bowman 2007). Meeting with Herod on Rhodes, and confirming his rule in Judaea was only one of a significant range of measures taken by Imperator Caesar between the victory of Actium and his return to Rome in 29 BCE (see Millar, 2000). Especially in relation to Egypt, and in the military sphere, there were illuminating episodes of interaction. For the fluidity of events and the transformation of power-relations in the second half of the first century BCE in the wider Mediterranean world, there is hardly any aspect so telling as the history of a corps of Gallic soldiers who entered the service of Julius Caesar after his conquest of Gaul in the 50’s, were granted by him to Cleopatra, presumably in 48/7, and were still in her service when she committed suicide in 30. Imperator Caesar, soon to be Augustus, transferred them to Herod. How they fared in Judaea, and what role they played there, is not recorded. But these Gauls (presumably reinforced by fresh recruits) were still there at Herod’s death to march in his great funeral procession from Jericho via Jerusalem to Herodium, see

8 See Chrysos (ed.) 1987, and, especially for major new finds, Zachos 2003. Much further evidence for Augustan art at Nicopolis awaits publication.

Kokkinos below.⁹ In return, forces from Herod took part in the campaign of the Prefect of Egypt, Aelius Gallus, into Arabia, probably in 27-25.

But perhaps the most important of all the external dimensions of the Herodian kingdom is its very close interconnection with the Emperor and his household and with the Augustan programme of renewal, glory, massive building-programmes and display. It remains a curiosity of modern treatments of the period that the angle of vision on the central exercise of power by Augustus, his family and his household which is provided by a long sequence of episodes recorded by Josephus which show interaction between the families and households of Emperor and King has been so little exploited. More broadly, it is remarkable that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no treatment of the wider Augustan regime, its provincial policy and its foreign relations, in which the mass of evidence – however novelistic much of it may be – provided by Josephus' account of Herod and his kingdom plays a major part.

This gap will be filled to a significant degree with the publication of the papers of a conference on 'Herod and Augustus' held at University College London in 2005. In the event serious ill-health meant that Nikos Kokkinos could not be present to take charge of proceedings, and his place was generously filled by David Jacobson. The papers, edited by Kokkinos and Jacobson, will be published soon by Brill, and with that the Augustan revolution will be seen from a new angle.¹⁰ The story of Herod, and of the Herodian rulers who followed him, still has much to tell us.

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9 Very untypically, those two great comic writers and illustrators, Uderzo and Goscinny, missed an opportunity here, in not producing a volume on *Asterix and the Massacre of the Innocents*.

10 See now also Günther 2007

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THE HERODIAN NARRATIVES OF JOSEPHUS¹

Tessa Rajak

My first point is a simple and an obvious one. Yet it still needs to be stated. Josephus supplies the only story line we have for Herod. No Josephus, no narrative of Herod's reign. We would have been left wondering who this minor, if long-lived, ruler was, whose pigs were deemed at Rome more likely to survive and so more fortunate than his offspring (Macrob., *Satur.* 2.4.11). Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's friend and, as we are told, daily associate (*Ant.* 17.99), who worked with and on behalf of the King and wrote a great deal for him, produced eye-witness reports of Herod, from birth to the posthumous contestation of his will. These accompanied Josephus all the way. But they have not survived, apart from what we find in Josephus. The same is true of others who covered the reign, or parts of it, notably Strabo in his lost Histories, who went down to somewhere in the thirties BCE.² Herod's Memoirs, if that is the right translation for the Greek word *hypomnēmata*, tantalisingly referred to once by Josephus (*Ant.* 15.174), are also lost. The writings of Ptolemy of Ascalon, much discussed by scholars of an earlier generation, may or may not have been a significant source.³

But we actually have Josephus twice: in the *Jewish War*, written in the 70s, more briefly and with a rather Roman orientation, and in the *Antiquities*, written in the 80's and 90's, often with an additional Jewish slant. So we have two faces of a two-faced monarch by a two-faced historian drawing on a source which was in itself double, since Nicolaus of Damascus narrated Herod's life both in an Autobiography and in his massive, 144 book *Universal History*.⁴ Josephus' two accounts repeat much of the same material and even display some precise verbal reduplication, as we shall see. Yet the overall impact of each is very different, and it is important for those who consult them to grasp the nature of the text they are dealing with. I shall try to define the differences in broad terms.

THE JEWISH WAR

The most remarkable thing is that a detailed Herod narrative exists in the *Jewish War* at all. To be sure, a respectable Greek history needs prefatory material, an appropri-

1 I owe thanks to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, where I was able to write this lecture in ideal circumstances, and to colleagues in the Jewish and Early Christian Hellenism group for their interest and help.

2 Stern 1974, 261–2.

3 Stern 1974, 355–6; Kokkinos 1998, 343–6.

4 Stern 1974, 227–32.

ate lead-in; and a history of the revolt of the Jews against Rome needs a lot of background explanation, if outsiders, often critical, are to understand it. But, in the *Jewish War*, one entire book out of seven is devoted to the political history of the period from Antiochus Epiphanes to the death of Herod, and to this can be added the first part of Book 2, where the hearings at Rome concerning Herod's will and Augustus' decisions about the disputed succession are narrated.

Why *this* introduction to the *Jewish War*, we may ask? It is true that Herod is the Jew best-known among Romans, so much a byword that the Sabbath can be called "Herod's Day" by one poet (Persius, *Sat.* 5.180).⁵ So one explanation may be, that if Josephus wished in his apologia for the Jews to represent them as well-integrated into the Roman system of connections and competition, and indeed crucial to this system, it was advantageous to highlight Herod. Moreover, this choice puts Josephus himself, as chronicler of those common interests, into the mainstream of Greco-Roman historians concerned with war, politics and diplomacy.

To put it crudely, Herod in the *Jewish War* emerges as more Roman than Jew. We recognise the man who imported Italian wine to his Masada palace rather than drinking the local product. For some, as for Doron Mendels, this is pretty close to the real Herod, whose Jewish aspect, in Mendels' account, was overshadowed by his Hellenistic-Roman *persona*.⁶ There is also, one might go so far as to suggest, little sign of the Hellenised Semitic culture in which Nikos Kokkinos has firmly located Herod.⁷ Huge stress is laid by Josephus upon Herod's loyalty to Antony and Antony's great affection for his friend – none of which seem to obviate the need for a spot of bribery (*War* 1.242). Even before Antony, Herod had been a great friend, *philos*, of Cassius (1.221). But Herod's friendships reach their climax in the famous epigram in which Josephus tells us that what meant most to Herod was his standing as Augustus' second best friend after Agrippa and equally as Agrippa's after Augustus (*War* 1.400). From this, according to Josephus, Herod advanced to the highest *eudaimonia*, a state of complete blessedness and contentment.

Herod's rise to power is in effect constructed, in Josephus, as an item in the Roman civil wars. Antony's role is highlighted and warmly praised, along with Herod's unflagging loyalty and signal services. This only adds to the suspense and fascination of the famous meeting with Octavian at Rhodes in 30 BCE, where Herod is shown adroitly transferring that same loyalty, on which he still congratulates himself, to the victor of Actium, conqueror of his friend.

Josephus is well aware that the stakes were high at Rome in the literary contest to demonise Cleopatra as the wicked eastern temptress threatening Rome, even 100 years after her death, and he is not embarrassed to include in Herod's Rhodes oration the priceless words "I told him [Octavian] the one remedy for his crisis – the death of Cleopatra" (*War* 1.389). We have already been reminded that this is the lady who "after killing off her own family one after another, till not a single relative remained, was now thirsting for the blood of foreigners" (*War* 1.360). The *Antiquities* account

5 Interpretations of this obscure phrase are the subject of Horbury's investigation (1991).

6 Mendels 1992, 212–7.

7 Kokkinos 1998.

(15.88–103) admittedly adds all sorts of further twists and details, such as that Antony was under the influence not only of sex but of drugs, *pharmaka*. This version also expands upon the story of Cleopatra's nefarious dealings with Herod in 33 BCE in order to acquire his territory: she not only desires to kill Herod but tries repeatedly to go to bed with him, not only to forward her plot to kill him, but because it was "in her nature to indulge in such pleasures without concealment" (15.97). Herod gave her gifts and sent her packing. But the summary in the *War* already gives the reader plenty to relish.

The overall structure of the Herodian narrative in the *Jewish War* is particularly worthy of attention. What stands out is that this account is extraordinarily detailed on Herod's rise to power and seizure of control; in other words, it is a display of the personal politics that characterised the Roman Empire, encompassing both Rome itself and the Greek East. This part of the story is told on a scale pretty much the same as in the *Antiquities* version, where however almost three entire books are devoted to Herod's reign as a whole. As a consequence, the reign itself is actually quite sketchily treated in the first book of the *War*, especially if we take into account the amount of space occupied (here as in the *Antiquities*) by the high drama of court intrigues, cliff-hanging domestic disasters and intense personal tragedies.

The material in the *War* version shows, I suggest, clear signs of an arrangement by topics in the biographical style of a work such as Suetonius' lives of the Caesars; this is a feature which may well be an inheritance from Nicolaus of Damascus, himself an exponent of the biographical art. Indeed the disproportionately lengthy accession narrative may have paralleled that in the Augustus biography, which will have been a model of how to rewrite a career burdened with discreditable and bloody beginnings. After Octavian's personal confirmation of Herod's position (*War* 1.392), sealed by a banquet given by Herod for Octavian at Ptolemais (Acco), we have an account of the changing limits of the kingdom – which Octavian had allegedly found sadly inadequate on marching through it (*War* 1.395). There follows Herod's building programme at home and abroad – Sebaste, Paneion, Jericho, and a special description of the wonders of the new harbour of Caesarea (*War* 1.408–15), with attention given to the lavish founding games. We move to Herod's benefactions in the Greek provinces of the Roman Empire and the magnificence displayed in these – temples, streets, porticoes, festivals and financial subventions. A brief but overstated sketch of his physical and mental attributes comes next (*War* 1.429–30). The accomplishments are distinctly Roman: on one occasion he brought down forty wild beasts in a single day. This allows Josephus to move on to the tragic doings of court and family, which are for him the nemesis wrought by *tychê*, changes of fortune (*War* 1.431), recounted in an expanded concluding section.

The Judaism of Herod's kingdom according to the *War* is a pretty limited affair. The palace Herod built for himself in Jerusalem is, startlingly, said to be much more impressive than the Temple itself (*War* 1.402). While *eusebeia*, piety, is an attribute occasionally ascribed to Herod (for example in the lead-in to the account of the rebuilding of the Temple), nothing like this figures in Josephus' set-piece character sketch of the king, which is about the *aretê* displayed in hunting and fighting.

THE ANTIQUITIES

Here there is a more intricate structure, with the narrative punctuated by orations in both direct and indirect speech, some of them, especially in Books 16 and 17, rather long; and also by the intervention of three separate batches of documents concerning Roman authorisation of Jewish privileges around the empire. The latter transactions scarcely involve Herod directly, but he is shown to be behind the Jewish claims, and the outcome redounds to his credit and to that of his family, as protectors of the Jews worldwide.⁸

The accession story is along the same lines as that in the *War*, and indeed, to our surprise, there are some precise verbal duplications (for example in the account of the death of Antigonus, the last representative of the former ruling family: *War* 1.353–7; *Ant.* 15.5–9), where we have to suppose either that Josephus copied Nicolaus or that he copied himself, or that both copied an earlier record, such those *Memoirs* of Herod mentioned by Josephus. Close analysis could possibly tell us whether Josephus had the *War* in front of him when writing the *Antiquities*. After that, the two narratives resemble each other less, in spite of the presence of a great deal of common material. The Augustan dimension remains inescapable in the *Antiquities* too – indeed episodes concerning the *princeps*, briefly described in the *War*, are elaborated upon, from the early visit to Judaea, to the repeated attempt to settle the frequent succession crises of the latter part of the reign. The overall effect is however, not the same, because there is a different balance of ingredients. I shall pick out one important feature which marks off the *Antiquities* version, and that concerns Herod's role as the ruler of the Jews.

In this account, the Jews are generally, even if not universally, “us” and not “them”, in contrast to the usage in the previous version of events. This stands out already in the pre-Herodian *Antiquities* narratives, where Pompey's seizure of Jerusalem on the Sabbath is described, and the Jews' observance of a fast is explained – in *War* 1.146 this is done in terms of what “the Jews do”, but in *Ant.* 14.64 it is in terms of “those days which *we* call the sabbath”.⁹

In keeping with this stance, the intervention of Divine Providence (*pronoia*) or else directly of God (*ho theos*), is frequently announced. Thus for example, during the struggle for power, Joseph, Herod's brother, is forestalled in his intention to escape Antigonus' siege of Masada by consciousness of divine providence in the rain which God causes to fall overnight and the consequent filling of the cisterns. As a result, Joseph goes out to meet and beat Antigonus (*Ant.* 14.391). The explanation is absent from the *War* account. In historiographical terms, the device is part of a regular pattern of interpretation in Josephus' very long later work, which binds together the very diverse material in that compendious creation; it is a notable feature of the rewritten Bible of the first books. At the same time, insistence on such formulae results in a distinctive religious consciousness being ascribed to Herod and his associates.

8 Kasher 1996.

9 See Horbury 1991.

The *Antiquities* account further declares itself as a portrait of a Jewish king through the presence of substantial extra content concerning religious figures, institutions, such as the sabbatical year, laws and customs. Attention is paid to Herod's often personally motivated interventions in the high priestly succession, from Ananel the Babylonian, through Simon whose daughter Mariamne (II) he married, to Matthias son of Theophilus, who had to be substituted by Joseph and then permanently replaced by Joazar as the consequence of an unfortunate dream about sexual intercourse (*Ant.* 17.166). It is true that the ostensible purpose in much of this is to exhibit a religious impropriety committed by Herod.¹⁰ Still the terms of reference in themselves establish expectations. They are a statement that it was appropriate to judge Herod in terms of his role as king of the Jews, and that this role transcended the merely political. That is something which we would not have understood from the *War* account alone. Again, Herod's new law, personally enforced, by which burglars were to be sold into slavery and deported, was not only cruel, according to Josephus, but went against the ancestral prohibition on enslaving Jews to foreigners (referring to Exodus 22.1–2), or for life, and was thus the behaviour of a tyrant and not of a king (*Ant.* 16.1–5). Herod's modern biographer Abraham Schalit suggested that what lies behind the episode is an excuse for Herod to round up political enemies.¹¹ Whatever the case, it is noteworthy that Josephus picks up on this internal measure and takes the trouble to explain its religious dimension.

Another example of Josephus judging Herod in Jewish terms occurs in the remarkable critique of the Roman games the historian sees fit to mount in connection with Herod's construction of an amphitheatre in Jerusalem, which he condemns as destructive of piety and embodying an un-Jewish cruelty (*Ant.* 15.274–5).

A certain just man, Samaias, predicted the future power of the young Herod when the latter appeared in purple before the Sanhedrin on a murder charge (*Ant.* 14.172–6).¹² Samaias is later described as a leading Pharisee who, together with his colleague, Pollio, and their pupils, refused to swear the oath of allegiance to Herod, but was still respectfully regarded (*Ant.* 15.367–70). The identification of these figures with Shemaiah and Avtalion, the fourth of the Talmudic scholarly pairings (*zugoth*), is widely accepted and attractive.¹³

In *Ant.* 15.371–9, Josephus then goes on immediately to recount Herod's special partiality for the Essene sect, oddly described as an affection greater than was appropriate in respect of those of merely human nature. With a laborious assertion of its relevance to a work of history, *tês historias genos*, Josephus explains this partiality with the story of the prophecies of Menaemus (Menahem) the Essene, who had not only correctly foreseen good fortune and eternal glory, but also acts of impiety by the King, such as would not escape God's wrath. Some years later Menaemus refused under pressure to predict the length of Herod's reign, but continued to be

10 This phenomenon has been studied by Fuks (2000), who calls it a “negative undercurrent”.

11 Schalit 1969, 200–1.

12 On the *Antiquities* construction of the trial of Herod in terms of Talmudic tradition and the conception there of his offence as one against the state, see D. R. Schwartz 1994, 231.

13 B. M. Lerner, *Enc. Jud.*, 14 (1972), sv. “Shemaiah”, col. 1374 and, by the same author, *Enc. Jud.*, 3 (1972), s.v. “Avtalyon”, coll. 990–1.

held in respect. Herod's final, repulsive illness is declared by those whose wisdom prompted them to speak out about such things, a punishment by God for his impiety (*Ant.* 17.170). With regard, then, to the character of Herod the Jew, we here receive what might fairly be called mixed messages as well as a clear sense of what might have been expected.

It can hardly be accidental that this Jewish material in Book 15 serves to set up the lengthy account of Herod's rebuilding at his own expense of the Temple of the Lord, that Temple which our fathers (as he puts it) built to the supreme God after the return to Babylon, as an improvement on the achievement of Solomon (*Ant.* 15.380–7). Josephus has already criticised Herod's temple building in pagan cities as departing from and distorting Jewish custom (*Ant.* 15.330), and he has Herod justify his actions as having been done under orders. Herod declares to the Romans that his purpose is to accord honour to them. The full account of the Jerusalem Temple follows, with the insistence that Herod believed the rebuilding to be the noblest of all his accomplishments, enough to make his memory live for ever (*Ant.* 15.381), in contrast to the preference for the palace in the earlier account. Apart from this authorial comment, in the elaborate speech which Josephus puts into the king's mouth, Herod tells the people that he has always been conscious of their needs and by God's will he has brought the Jewish *ethnos* to unprecedented prosperity (*Ant.* 15.384).

When it comes to the response of Herod in the face of the violent resistance which broke out to the golden effigy of an eagle erected over the entrance to the Temple near the end of his reign, it is striking that the king is made to insist that he had done more for the Jews with his magnificent reconstruction than had his Hasmonaean predecessors in the entire 125 years of their rule (*Ant.* 17.162). We learn too that the incitement to resistance was led by the two most acute and learned exegetes of the day, Judas son of Sariphaeus and Matthias son of Margalothus (*Ant.* 17.151) – it does not seem possible to identify them – who assert the supremacy of the Laws left behind by Moses as dictated and taught to him by God (*Ant.* 17.159). By contrast, the *Jewish War* (1.653) merely has the activists declare that their orders came from the *patrios nomos*, the ancestral law.

NICOLAUS OF DAMASCUS

I would not wish to doubt that Nicolaus stands squarely behind Josephus, as the supplier of the bulk of the later historian's information, and of the substance of some at least of the speeches, and probably of structural elements as well. Nicolaus appears regularly in the narrative as agent, intermediary and orator, especially in the later sections. That we find Josephus at pains to separate himself from Nicolaus shows, one might argue, not only that it is important to Josephus to do so but that it is rather difficult. It is telling that he takes such trouble over the matter. Thus, at *Ant.* 16.179–87, Josephus offers a sharp criticism of the *historiographos* for the way he had handled Herod's desecration of the Tomb of the Kings (David and Solomon). Nicolaus described the expensive marble monument built by the king at the entrance

after he had burgled the tomb and had found himself confronted by a miraculous flame. However, says Josephus, Nicolaus had omitted mention of Herod's personal violation of the inner sanctum because he knew this to be a serious religious offence.¹⁴ From this we can also learn, it seems to me, that Nicolaus' accounts of Herod, or some of them at least, were expected to have a Jewish readership. It is thus theoretically possible that some of the Jewish material in the *Antiquities*, of which we have seen a part, was already present in Nicolaus. Support for this hypothesis may come from Nikos Kokkinos' demonstration that it was Nicolaus who sought to equip Herod with a spurious Babylonian Jewish genealogy, ridiculed even by Josephus and probably largely ignored by most contemporaries.¹⁵

In any event, Josephus' assault on Nicolaus does not end there, and he next launches forth into an assault upon those strong prejudices, the *ira et studium* which allegedly dominated Nicolaus' entire *oeuvre*. The assault is not mitigated, but rather exacerbated by the critic's would-be forgiving conclusion:

Indeed Nicolas continues to write in this manner about other things. For since he lived in Herod's realm and was one of his associates he wrote to please him and to be of service to him, dwelling only on those things that redounded to his glory, and transforming his obviously unjust acts into the opposite or concealing them with the greatest care. For example, in his desire to give a colour of respectability to the putting to death of Mariamne and her sons, which had been so cruelly ordered by the king, Nicolas makes false charges of licentiousness against her and of treachery against the youths. And throughout his work he has been consistent in excessively praising the king for his just acts, and zealously apologizing for his unlawful ones. But, as I said, one may fully forgive him since what he produced was not a history for others but a work meant to help the king (Loeb translation).

INPUT FROM JOSEPHUS

Josephus may strive to distance himself from Nicolaus, but it is indisputable that he fulfils the role of transmitter. Yet he is a historian who functions well, as is now widely accepted, as a competent investigator and interpreter, capable of independence, initiative and innovation.¹⁶ He cannot be written off as a scissors-and-paste antiquarian (can any ancient writer?) Vis-à-vis Herod, Josephus' personal biography gave him a special and complicated standpoint. First, he had close ties with later Herods, as he was involved through much of his career with Agrippa II, Herod the Great's great-grandson. Josephus claims to have received from him 62 letters of approbation about his account of the Jewish revolt (*Life* 364–7). This dependence should not be ignored. At the same time, as we shall shortly see, however, the connection can be read in different ways and it is his own, very significant ancestors:

14 Or perhaps better "alleged desecration", since Fuks (2002) argues that the incident must be fictitious, given that the treasures would have been long gone.

15 Kokkinos 1998, 102.

16 See especially the still-valid vindication in Bilde 1988 of the "modern" approach to Josephus; and also Rajak (2002). Landau (2006) offers a new assessment of Josephus' distinctive authorial voice in both of his Herodian narratives, as expressed especially in the rhetorical crafting of speeches and the expression of emotion.

his maternal line as Hasmonaean (*Life* 1), and a scion of the ruling dynasty which Herod supplanted, married into, and later decimated, along with their supporters. Herod was threatened by Hasmonaean claimants throughout his reign. Josephus chooses to include in the synopsis of his history at the beginning of the *War* (1.19), the following item: “Herod son of Antipater bringing in Sosius brought Hasmonaean rule to an end.” And it is this same familial tie which Josephus invokes, in the sequel to the passage just quoted, to distinguish his writing from that of Nicolaus. The reader may feel however that Josephus’ claim (absent from the *War*), that his own ancestry guarantees him as more truthful and fair minded in respect of the earlier dynasty, in fact serves merely to expose a different partisanship (*Ant.* 16.187).

Besieged inside Jerusalem by Herod and the Roman general Sosius, Antigonus, the last, Parthian-backed Hasmonaean king, proclaimed his objections to Herod’s seizure of power: Herod did not belong to the royal family that had customarily ruled Judaea, but was an *idiotês*, a private citizen; as an Idumaean he was a mere half-Jew, and he was not a priest; there was an ample supply of Hasmonaeans around who did have all the right attributes (*Ant.* 14.403–4). Soon afterwards, Herod got Antony to execute Antigonus on account of precisely these fears (*Ant.* 14. 490–1). Josephus writes with regret:

And thus the rule of the Hasmonaean family came to an end after 126 years. This was a distinguished and famous dynasty because of both birth and the honour of the priesthood and also because of what the founders achieved for the nation. But they lost their royal power through internal dissension and it passed to Herod, son of Antipater, from a family of commoners and citizen stock, subjects of the kings.

Of broader significance, though perhaps less often considered in connection with Josephus’ portrayal of Herod, is the obvious fact that the interconnection of Judaea and Rome, which Herod epitomised, lies at the heart of Josephus’ own life and interests. Paradoxically, Herod, a king who purported to be Jewish, and was seen as such by the Roman elite, brought the Empire into Judaea, and Judaea to the Emperor’s attention, with far greater assiduity than ever direct rule under prefects or procurators did. Herod was a man who could hardly but be presented as one of history’s monsters; but we would expect Josephus, even so, to recognise the king’s contribution as formative in the relationship between the two nations, comparable to the historian’s own aspirations in a different era. Of course, by the time of the historian’s involvement in Judaeian politics, let alone his time of writing, things had moved on dramatically from Herod’s days. Herod would be interpreted in the light of the momentous developments of the succeeding century, particularly in the *Jewish War* account, written as it was in the aftermath of the great Jewish revolt against Rome. Some aspects of Herod’s role will have been reminiscent for Josephus of the kind of rapprochement with Rome that the Jewish ruling class of his day, himself included, had tried and failed to achieve. Yet at other times, Herod will have looked more like the precursor of the prefects and procurators. More than that, through the harshness of his regime he bore some real responsibility for the later disasters that befell Judaea, for it was this tyranny, imposed on Rome’s behalf, which first turned the Jews decidedly against the Romans. The Temple eagle episode, already mentioned, seems to epitomise things to come. The indignant scholars (*sophistai*) ob-

jected that this ornament contravened the Torah's prohibition on images and they encouraged their young followers to pull the eagle down and chop it up, amidst great commotion and subsequent bloodshed. But Herod, close to death, lying, unforgettably, on a couch in the amphitheatre of Jericho, declared the eagle's removal an act of sacrilege (*Ant.* 17.151–63). Again, it is indicative that the second Herodian item in the résumé which opens the *Jewish War* is the people's revolt after Herod's death, which Josephus specifically describes as happening in the time when Augustus was emperor and Quinctilius Varus in charge of the country (*War* 1.20).

THE BALANCE

The question for us is how far we may reasonably go in disentangling a Josephan view or views of Herod? Even Josephus' concern about Herod's violent usurpation of the throne of the Hasmonaeans may not be all it seems. Thus, the portentous remarks about the end of Antigonos serve in the first instance to accentuate a moment of unusual drama, a reigning monarch put to death, as stressed in a rare quotation by Josephus from Strabo's lost historical work.¹⁷ What is more, Josephus' words, quoted above, show him quite willing to blame the disaster on the Hasmonaean family's own degeneration into feuding. Earlier in *Antiquities*, we have read highly critical remarks about Queen Salome Alexandra (Shlomzion), the last stable ruler of the dynasty (76–67 BCE). In her obituary, which is dominated by an extraordinary obsession with gender, and written in a crabbed, would-be Thucydidean style (which is no doubt why the text has become somewhat garbled), Josephus seems to opine that the Queen's masculine hunger for power diverted her from the good and the just and led directly to her family's loss to its enemies of the sovereignty erstwhile so painfully acquired (*Ant.* 13.430–2). It is true, I suppose, that the latter event does appear to be a cause of some regret to Josephus. For the Herodian period itself, Daniel Schwartz examines in detail Josephus' willingness to criticise the feud among the Hasmonaeans and especially to blame the Hasmonaean Hyrcanus for the fall of the Jewish state. Nicolaus' judgment on Hyrcanus was, according to Schwartz, less critical overall than that of Josephus, and the vices of envy and resentment are imputed to Hyrcanus only at the stage when Herod moves against him.¹⁸

There are limits, then, to the effect of Josephus' personal Hasmonaean allegiance. When it comes to assessing his connection with the Herodian dynasty, a question mark hangs over his apparent dependence, during the 80s and 90s of the first century, upon Agrippa II, and equally over Agrippa's on Josephus as publicist during the latter part of this ruler's career. There were evidently ups and downs.¹⁹ The historian reveals in his *Life* that he became the sworn enemy of Agrippa's secretary, Justus of Tiberias; though admittedly he also claims that Justus at a certain point fell out of favour with his employer. Josephus could boast, in the discussion

17 On tragic and rhetorical aspects of Josephus, see Price & Ullman 2002 and Landau 2006.

18 D. R. Schwartz 1994.

19 On the complexities of Jewish politics in the 90s, highlighting the inadequacy of our evidence, see S. Schwartz 1990.

at *Ant.* 16.187, that he himself indisputably respected the truth more than he did the descendants of Herod, but he may seem to protest too much. The problem can perhaps be sidestepped for our purposes if we consider that, whether or not Josephus remained beholden to Agrippa, such an obligation need not have required his literary promotion of Herod the Great, since Agrippa and the other descendants may well have been obliged, over the preceding decades, to detach themselves from an ancestral memory which could not be adequately cleansed. In that case, Josephus' connections with the later Herodians would still be relevant to his image of Herod, but in a less obvious, and largely negative way. A comprehensive study of the reception of Herod in later thought and writing has not yet been undertaken. Evidently, the founder of their house could not quite manage to be another Augustus.

There are other, diverse currents in Josephus' narrative, some of which we have briefly described. Sometimes we may suspect him to be eager, or at to feel least duty-bound, to reflect posthumous Jewish resentment of Herod. On the other hand, as a writer, he could scarcely be expected to miss the opportunity to depict and dramatise the transformation of an arrogant ruler into a paranoid and murderous tyrant. This was a gift to any historian, and another reason to blacken the record. Yet there is praise as well, persisting even in the more negative portrait of *Antiquities*, and it is there, after all, that Herod is depicted as at least aspiring to be a fit king of the Jews as well as a player in the Roman imperial drama.

Finally, it is worth sounding a note of caution about the high profile which Josephus accords to Rome, and in particular to the Roman Emperor; this we found to be specially prominent in the *Jewish War*, but it is visible in both of the Josephan Herod narratives. For we can hardly forget that the Roman interest was possessed in even greater measure by Josephus' main source. Nicolaus was the author not only of Herod's biography (through his *Universal History* and his *Autobiography* as far as we know) but also of a biography of Augustus; he was even more of an Augustan writer than Josephus was a Flavian one. Nicolaus participated personally in that momentous Rhodes meeting between Herod and Octavian. From Josephus we learn that Nicolaus also spoke several times during Herod's reign on the king's behalf to Augustus. And yet, it must be allowed that Josephus made a decision to take Nicolaus' Roman material on board: he could have constructed his narrative otherwise.

Josephus has had to face a double charge. His portrayal has been accused not only of being derivative and unoriginal but also of a variety of biases and a resulting hopeless inconsistency; these biases are closely associated by critics with the supposed heavy dependence on the source-material, for example by Seth Schwartz.²⁰ Scholars who have approached head-on the question of how pro- or anti-Herod Josephus was at different stages of his writing career have found it especially difficult to reach a fixed conclusion as to what is going on in the text. That may be, I would submit, because the question itself is not well-conceived: about Herod, just as about Augustus, one was bound to be ambivalent. At the same time, there are scholars who have analysed Josephus' Herodian narratives simply as a concatenation of sources, notably D. R. Schwartz in a number of studies which have brought stri-

20 S. Schwartz 1990, 120.

king, if still debatable results.²¹ But it is one thing to pick away at the seams, another to figure out where the results leave our assessment of Josephus. It is interesting, by contrast, to see Josephus' inconsistencies applauded by Nikos Kokkinos, even if mainly on the basis of the extra historical information embedded in this untidiness.²²

I have shown, I hope, something of the tensions inherent in our writer's multi-layered vision of Herod and the systematic difficulties of interpreting them. I have proposed that some of Josephus himself is recoverable there, as well as something of the interests of his sources. There is much more work to be done. And I hope I have made it clear too that the effort to understand what is going on in Josephus' Herod narratives is worthwhile and important for the modern historian. Apart from Josephus' status as our only source, there is the recurring matter of the interaction between Nicolaus and Josephus, a confrontation between two great writers each with their own kind of consuming interest in Herod, now accessible to us only by deduction from the pages of Josephus. There is much more at stake than a recondite question of source criticism.

I suppose one might settle for that. But I think we can be less grudging in acknowledging our historian. The material available to Josephus was extensive. Whatever he may have appropriated from Nicolaus, or indeed from Herod's memoirs, the choices are necessarily his. The combination is his. The writing in each of the two accounts has a distinctive texture; the discourse is recognizably Josephan. Overarching devices such as dramatic irony are not absent. It is hardly surprising that, for a personality as huge and controversial as Herod, Josephus received a multiplicity of images of a sometimes contradictory character. By reshaping as well as reflecting them, Josephus has *made* our Herod, or rather our Herods.

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21 For observations on the justification and methodology of this kind of source criticism in relation to a later Herodian, see D. R. Schwartz 1982; 1990, xii–xv, 31–7, 176–82; and 1994.

22 Kokkinos 1998, 102, n. 63.

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