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ARCHELAUS, SON OF HEROD

BUT hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judaea in the room of Herod his father, he [Joseph] was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth' (Matthew ii, 22-3).

As Nazareth was subject to another son of the same Herod, it seems that Archelaus had a worse reputation than his brothers, and that this fact induced St Joseph to avoid his land. It is unlikely that Archelaus ever knew that his evil name had prevented him from numbering the Saviour of the world among his subjects, the one thing for which he is still remembered. I have tried to set forth briefly here the few other facts that can be gathered about him.¹

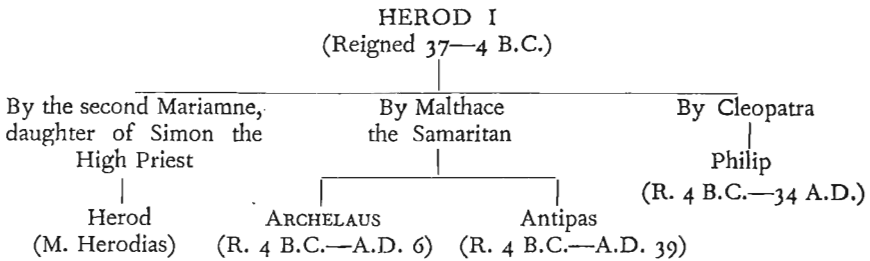
Archelaus was born about 23 B.C.² His mother was Malthace, a woman of Samaritan birth, one of the five or six wives whom Herod I kept simultaneously during his later years, taking advantage of the Jewish custom of polygamy, a custom which under European influence had by this time almost passed out of use. Archelaus had three half-brothers who were considerably senior to himself, and therefore during his boyhood he had little prospect of succeeding to his father's throne. But his three brothers perished just before Archelaus reached manhood: all three were put to death by their father for real or imaginary plots against his life. Josephus, the Jewish priest and historian, has left us a terrible and detailed picture (mainly true, as it seems) of life in Herod's family and in his harem. It was an inferno of jealousy, suspicion, calumny, and intrigue. One brother, helped by a fiendish aunt, poisoned Herod's mind against the two others and caused their execution in 7 B.C. The slanderer was then destroyed by the same arts as he had used, and his execution was one of Herod's last acts before his own death in the spring of 4 B.C.

These tragedies opened a possibility of royal power to the group of sons who came next in age. These were four in number: Herod, Archelaus, Antipas and Philip. All seem to have been born between 25 and 20 B.C., but there is no certainty about their relative ages. Archelaus and Antipas were certainly full brothers, born of the same mother, and it is also certain that Herod and Philip were half-brothers

¹ The full story of Herod and his family can be read in Josephus's vivid account in his two works, *The Jewish War*, Books I and II, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books XVI to XX (several English translations—the best is in the Loeb series, still incomplete). Among modern works, there are full and scholarly accounts in Schuerer's *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ* (English trans.) and (more recently) A. H. M. Jones: *The Herods of Judaea* (1938)—the latter is rather too favourable to the Herodian family. There are two important German works, still untranslated: Walter Otto's *Herodes* (1913) and Willrich's *Das Haus des Herodes* (1929).

² Otto, *Herodes*, 165.

to the preceding and to one another. Probably Philip was the youngest of the four, but the order of the three others cannot be absolutely fixed. It is more likely, but not certain, that Archelaus was senior to Antipas,¹ and there is a slight probability that Herod was the eldest of the four. Therefore the order usually followed in tables is (as given below): Herod, Archelaus, Antipas, Philip.



Archelaus could have had little to do with the events leading to the deaths of his elder brothers. He was too young and moreover he was living at Rome for several years, probably from about the age of twelve to eighteen, together with his half-brother Philip. It was the custom for dependent kings to send their sons to be educated in Rome: they lived in the house of some senator, and associated with the sons of other senators. If not engaged in very serious study, they at least learnt the Latin language, Roman manners, something of Roman political and military traditions, and something also perhaps of religious apathy or scepticism or pagan superstition.

Some time in the course of 5 B.C., Archelaus and Philip were recalled from Rome by their father,² Archelaus being now about eighteen. He had then to watch the events leading to his eldest brother's death, and the last months of his father's life, full of bodily suffering and of bitter and savage thoughts. Herod died in March or April of 4 B.C. His last will named Archelaus as king over his whole kingdom, and Antipas and Philip as tetrarchs of large districts within that kingdom and subject to Archelaus. But the wills of client-kings must be ratified by the emperor before they become effective: the sons of such kings, if they succeeded their fathers, did so by favour, not by right. Subject to this condition, Archelaus was accepted as king by the army and people. But a crowd of country folk, who had assembled at Jerusalem for the approaching festival of the Pasch, demanded the redress of various grievances, and refused to leave the outer court of the Temple at Archelaus's order. He sent in a large force and expelled them with the

¹ Antipas precedes Archelaus in *Jos. War* 1, 562 and *Ant.* 17, 20. and Antipas, not Archelaus, was named as heir in Herod's second will (*Jos. War* 1, 646). Thackeray in his table places Antipas as senior to Archelaus (Loeb trans., Vol. II, app. 1).

² *Jos.*, *War* 1, 602, *Ant.* 17, 80.

loss of many lives, three thousand, it is said. The Pasch had to be celebrated without any concourse of the people.¹

Immediately after this, Archelaus sailed to Italy to ask for the confirmation of his father's will. In Rome it soon became clear that the will would be opposed. His brother Antipas (possibly his senior) whom Herod had appointed his heir in a previous will,² came forward to claim the crown, and was supported by their mother Malthace. His terrible aunt, Salome, who had incited Herod to murder his wife and sons, also travelled to Rome with a large party of relatives and friends, in order to scheme for a division of the kingdom into many small principalities, or, failing that, to support Antipas. Salome was a considerable actress: on previous visits to Rome she had simulated honesty and good-nature so perfectly that she had made a life-long friend of the emperor's wife Livia, a very different kind of woman from Salome.³ Not long afterwards a large deputation of Jews, mostly of the Pharisaic party as it seems, arrived in Rome to beg the emperor to terminate the domination of the Herodian family and to make Palestine subject to direct Roman rule. This threat to the whole family seems to have made the three Herodian factions draw closer together: Salome gave up her own scheme and decided to help Antipas.

Augustus gave a patient hearing to all the parties. Antipas's case was urged by Salome's son, who had some reputation as an orator. He pleaded that Archelaus, by allowing himself to be saluted as king, and by issuing orders to officials and troops, had forestalled the emperor's decision, and that he had been guilty of wanton savagery in his attack on the worshippers in the Temple. Archelaus's chief advocates were the two ablest ministers of his father, Ptolemaeus, the finance minister, and the cultured pagan Nicolaus of Damascus, a writer and diplomat. Nicolaus strongly argued that there was no good reason why Herod's will should be set aside, and affirmed that in his exercise of royal power at Jerusalem Archelaus had done no more than sheer necessity demanded. The fifty Jewish delegates were next heard. They complained bitterly of the tyrannical rule of Herod I: he had executed many leading Jews unjustly and confiscated their property; his taxation had been ruinous; the immense wealth thus gained had either been spent with insane vanity on his great buildings or lavished in gifts to pagan cities outside Palestine. Archelaus in the first weeks of his reign had shown that he was going to be as bloodthirsty as his father. They asked to be delivered from the whole Herodian family and joined to the province of Syria.

An interval elapsed before Augustus gave his decision. In the meantime alarming news came from Palestine. Practically the whole kingdom had risen in rebellion, not under one leader but under several, differing in aims and hostile to one another. The Roman officer, who

¹ *Jos., Ant.* 17, 206-18.

² *War* 1, 646.

³ *War* 1, 566.

had remained in the country to keep order, had rashly moved his troops into the great royal palace at Jerusalem in order to control the city. The people, who had assembled for Pentecost, were enraged at this incursion of pagans into their city, and took up arms. Risings quickly followed in various parts of the kingdom. Some were led by fanatics like Judas of Gamala, others by mere adventurers. All alike acted with great savagery and rapacity. The more law-abiding Jews could do little to restrain their countrymen. Only a few pagan cities like Samaria (Sebaste) were both loyal and active. Varus, the governor of Syria, had to bring a large Roman army in, and many ferocious battles were fought. The temple itself had to be stormed by the Romans and in this action the magnificent colonnade of marble and cedar, three-quarters of a mile in circumference, which completely enclosed the sacred buildings, was wholly or in great part destroyed by fire. The war lasted most of the summer of 4 B.C. but by the autumn all central Palestine had been subdued.

Before this result was attained, Augustus had given his decision. Archelaus was not made ruler over his father's whole kingdom, as Herod I had desired, but only over the central part of it (Judaea and Samaria). Antipas and Philip received the districts assigned them by their father, but were made independent of Archelaus and subject only to Rome, with the title of tetrarchs. Archelaus was to be entitled only ethnarch, but the title of king was reserved as a later possibility. Herod received no territory and spent his life as a private person. It was he that married Herodias who later divorced him in order to marry Antipas.

Archelaus added his father's name to his own, and his coins are inscribed *Herodes Archelaus*.¹ He never attained to the title of king. After a reign of nine years the emperor deposed him (in A.D. 6), confiscated all or most of his private property and ordered him to spend the rest of his life at the city of Vienne in the south of France. There he lived till his death in all probability. He could hardly have been more than thirty at the time of his disgrace. The events of his reign are very scantily recorded. Nicolaus, who left such a full history of his father's reign, seems to have said nothing about Archelaus's. After gaining him the succession, he probably ceased very soon to be his minister.

There seems to have been no further rebellion or grave disorder, but a Roman legion remained in the country for some time, perhaps throughout Archelaus's reign. At first at least it was stationed at or near Jerusalem.² This fact and the severity of Varus's measures helped no doubt to make Archelaus unpopular. Early in his reign a young Jew was persuaded by some of Archelaus's enemies to impersonate his dead brother Alexander, whom he closely resembled. Jewish colonies

¹ Madden, *Coins of the Jews*, 114 f.

² Jos., *Ant.* 17, 299.

both in Greece and Italy accepted the impostor with enthusiasm, but when he reached Rome, Augustus detected the fraud, and put to death the Jews who had instigated it.¹

In regard to the Jewish religion, Archelaus seems to have been neither better nor worse than his father. In deference to Jewish scruples, his coins are without any image of himself or the emperor, but he three times deposed a High Priest and appointed a new one,² and his second marriage (see below) was regarded as a still graver scandal. In character he seems to have been a less energetic and less clever replica of his father. Josephus says he was cruel and tyrannical,³ without giving any examples of either fault, and also implies that he was dissipated or a drunkard.⁴ It is in his favour rather than against him that he did not inherit his father's ruinous passion for building. He founded one town (Archelais) in the Jordan valley, and no doubt repaired much of the destruction caused during the year of revolt.

Josephus says he lost his kingdom by tyranny, but there are certain facts which make one suspect that he does not give the full story of Archelaus's fall. His account of all the three sons of Herod is indeed remarkably scrappy compared with those of Herod and of Agrippa, apparently because he now had to gather his own material instead of drawing on a full narrative by some other historian.

Archelaus's first wife was a certain Mariamne, of whom we know nothing. After reigning some years he paid a visit to King Archelaus of Cappadocia, who had long been the most important of all the client kings of the empire. He had been raised to kingly rank some forty years before by Mark Antony. His kingdom had been enlarged by Augustus and now covered most of the eastern portion of Asia Minor and stretched to the Mediterranean through western Cilicia. At his accession it had been a backward country but had made great progress since then. Moreover it guarded a stretch of important frontier between the Roman and Parthian empires. On a small island off the Cilician coast Archelaus had built a palace where he chiefly lived,⁵ and very likely it was here that the Jewish prince visited him. King Archelaus's daughter, Glaphyra, had, about 16 B.C., married Alexander, elder brother of the Jewish Archelaus, and had borne two sons to him. After Alexander's death she had married a certain Juba, probably a son of King Juba of Mauretania (Morocco).⁶ He too had died, and she had now returned to her father's kingdom. During his visit the Jewish Archelaus met her there, and, says Josephus: 'fell so passionately in love with her that

¹ *Ant.* 17, 324 f.

² *Ant.* 17, 339; 341; 18, 2.

³ *Ant.* 17, 342.

⁴ *Ant.* 17, 233-4.

⁵ Strabo, *Geography* 12, 2, 7 (C. 537).

⁶ Josephus says she married King Juba himself (*War* 2, 115, *Ant.* 17, 349). If so, the marriage must have been dissolved by divorce, not death, for the king lived till about A.D. 23. It seems more likely that she married a son, otherwise unknown.

he immediately divorced his wife Mariamne and married her'.¹ This passion may certainly have been a reality, in spite of the undoubted fact that Glaphyra could not be much less than ten years senior to her new husband. But it seems more likely that there were political motives for the marriage, and that it was meant to cement an alliance between the two Archelai, an alliance which, judging from other evidence, may have been anti-Roman in its object.

As Glaphyra had borne sons (one at least of whom still survived) to Archelaus's brother, his marriage was contrary to Jewish law, and antagonised the more devout of his subjects. This marriage, joined to his harsh government, says Josephus, induced the Jews to ask the emperor to remove him. A similar petition was sent, he says, by the Samaritans :² thus the two bodies usually opposed to one another combined against Archelaus. Their request was granted and Archelaus lost his ethnarchy.

Such is Josephus's story. Two short passages in other writers would lead us to suspect that he has not told us everything. The geographer Strabo, a contemporary of Archelaus, in a rather obscure passage, says that accusations were made to Rome against all the three brothers,³ and his words imply that the three were summoned to Rome, that all were declared guilty and sentenced to deposition, but that Antipas and Philip 'by much use of courtly arts' (i.e. by servility or bribery) managed with difficulty to retain their possessions. Dio Cassius, writing two centuries later, says that Archelaus, 'being confronted with accusations made by his brother' was sent into exile.⁴ At first sight these two writers seem to contradict one another, but they can be reconciled: we may suppose that all three brothers were accused, but that Antipas and Philip pleaded that, though guilty, they had been led astray by Archelaus the chief offender. Both statements have been neglected because of Josephus's silence, but this is not a conclusive objection and there may well be something in the story. It is worth considering.

What accusation may we suppose to have been brought against all the three brothers? It is not likely to have been that of misgovernment, for Josephus tells us elsewhere that Philip was a very beneficent prince.⁵ We hear nothing of any serious discord among themselves, such as Rome would take offence at. It seems most likely therefore that the charge was one of disloyalty to Rome, and that there was some foundation for it. Three such petty princes, not stimulated by fanaticism, would hardly have meddled with any schemes against Rome unless they had allies, and we may suspect therefore that they had at least toyed with

¹ *War* 2, 115.

² *War* 2, 111.

³ Strabo, *Geogr.* 16, 765.

⁴ Dio 55, 27. Both Otto (178-81) and Jones (p. 168) think there is some truth in Dio's statement. Otto also accepts Strabo's in a qualified sense.

⁵ *Ant.* 18, 107.

some anti-Roman design of King Archelaus of Cappadocia, a design in which Parthian support of some sort was probably involved. King Archelaus in his later years seems to have been disaffected to Rome for some reason. Some years earlier he had had to answer charges of misgovernment before Augustus ;¹ he had been acquitted, but kings do not remember such scenes with pleasure. He may have entered into some disloyal correspondence with the King of Parthia and may have drawn the Jewish princes into his plot. In that case the marriage of the ethnarch Archelaus and Glaphyra would be intended to bind the plotters more closely. The subsequent history of King Archelaus seems to give some plausibility to this theory. He was left alone in A.D. 6, perhaps because it was felt that the Pannonian revolt was sufficient trouble for the empire, but the next emperor, Tiberius, at the beginning of his reign manœuvred him into a visit to Rome, and brought him to trial for treason.² He apparently died before the end of the trial, but the evidence against him seems to have been grave, for his son was allowed to inherit only a small portion of his kingdom, most of which was made into a province.

Whatever the cause of his fall may be, Archelaus of Judaea was certainly deposed in A.D. 6 and banished to Vienne, where in all probability he spent the rest of his life. No sentence of exile passed by Augustus was ever reversed by Tiberius, as far as we know. It is usually thought that Archelaus did not live long after his banishment, but the evidence seems doubtful. Strabo, in his *Geography*, published at some date between A.D. 18 and 25, says of Archelaus: ἐν φυγῇ διετέλει (xvi, 765) which words have generally been translated: 'He continued in exile' and have therefore been taken to imply that he was dead when they were written. But the Greek tense is in fact not so precise, and the words may quite possibly mean: 'He has remained in exile'.³ Therefore no conclusion either way can be drawn from *these words*.⁴ The general likelihood is against so early a death. At the date when Strabo wrote, Archelaus would, if alive, be somewhere between forty and fifty. It is more likely on the whole that he lived on during most of the first half of the century.

In St Jerome's adaptation of Eusebius's guide-book to the sacred places of Palestine we find these words, added by St Jerome: 'Near Bethlehem there is also pointed out the tomb of Archelaus, once king of Judaea. This is situated at the beginning of the lane leading from

¹ Dio 57, 17.

² Tacitus, *Annales* 2, 42 ; Dio, 57, 17.

³ This use of the Greek imperfect tense to denote action going on up to the present time, though not common, is fully proved both in classical Greek and later literary Greek. See the examples given by Weymouth in *Theological Monthly* IV (1890), p. 32 f. to which many more could be added.

⁴ Willrich also doubts the usual inference from Strabo (*Haus des H.*, p. 188).

the main road to our monastery.¹ These words, written in the latter half of the fourth century, seem to be the only reference to such a tomb, and no remains which could be plausibly identified with it have been found. At the cross-roads mentioned by Jerome there stands in fact the so-called Tomb of Rachel, a modern structure, covering perhaps some ancient tomb or other monument of unknown origin. Its attribution to Rachel seems to date from the fourth century, and it has been suggested that this was the monument referred to by Jerome, that it was eventually assigned to Rachel by a confusion of the two names Rachel and Archelaus,² and that Jerome's words are a sort of protest against the mistake. But if Jerome had any definite evidence for the name of Archelaus (e.g., an epitaph) he would probably have made his protest more explicit. And he himself in other writings refers to the tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem, meaning apparently the site which is now so called. If Archelaus's body was actually embalmed and brought back to Palestine for burial (which was quite feasible) we should have expected it to have been laid in the great mausoleum of his family, at Herodium, about five miles south of Bethlehem. Still it is possible that he was buried in a separate tomb near to, or identical with, the Tomb of Rachel. But it must be noted that Archelaus was for centuries a common name, and the possibility remains that if St Jerome did see some half-obliterated epitaph, it may have belonged to some namesake of the ethnarch.

W. REES.

St Mary's, Cadogan St, London.

¹ *Onomasticon*, p. 45 in Klostermann's ed.

² By C. Clermont-Ganneau, in Vol. II, p. 134 f. of the *Recueil d'archéologie orientale* (1898). See also Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, 2, 425 and his article in *Révue Biblique*, 1946, p. 69 f.

CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL
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Thursday, 3rd January, 1952

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