

Roman Campaigns in Judea

Explanation

Rome became involved in affairs in Judea at the request of Maccabean ambassadors who sought protection from one of Rome's enemies, Seleucid Syria. After Rome became the dominant power in the Near East, Romans were compelled to maintain peace in the region by settling frequent dynastic disputes and civil conflicts in Judea among the Maccabean heirs. After one of these sought to overthrow the legitimate High Priest by introducing Parthian armies into Roman territory, Herod came to power as Rome's loyal client, ruling as king over the Jews.

Although Rome maintained no troops in Judea until A.D. 6, when the first Roman governor was accompanied by a six-hundred-man bodyguard, hatred of the Herods intensified resentment against Rome among fanatical elements of the Jewish populace, Zealots and Sicarii, who for over a century engaged in guerrilla and open warfare against both Roman and Jewish authorities until their final destruction and dispersion.

Chart 5-4 provides information about each of the campaigns Rome was forced to undertake in Judea, either to settle dynastic civil conflict or to repress Zealot insurrection.

References

- Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism* (New York: Touchstone, 1970).
John F. Hall, "The Roman Province of Judea," *MWNT*, 319–36.

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CAMPAIGN	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	COMMANDER	RESULT
Pompey's Disposition of Judea	63 B.C.	Maccabean dynastic dispute, Aristobolus versus his brother Hyrcanus	Pompey the Great, Roman proconsul with extraordinary <i>imperium</i> over the Roman East	Judea brought into Roman sphere as a protectorate under Hyrcanus, withdrawal of Roman troops
Gabinius' Resolution of Civil Conflict	55 B.C.	Revolt by Alexander, son of Aristobolus, against his uncle, Hyrcanus	Aulus Gabinius, governor of Syria	Confirmation of Hyrcanus's reign, withdrawal of Roman troops
Antony's Expulsion of Parthians from Judea	40 B.C.	Antigonus, son of Aristobolus, made ruler of Judea with deposition of his great-uncle, Hyrcanus, by the Parthians	C. Sosius, legate of Marc Antony, with Herod	Herod proclaimed King of Judea by the Roman Senate
Jewish Revolt	A.D. 66	Zealots seize Jerusalem and overthrow the Sanhedrin, murdering Jews, Greeks, and Romans	Cestius Gallus	Zealots defeat Gallus, and legion XII (Fulminata) sent from Syria to restore order
Jewish War	A.D. 66–68	The revolt of 66 had developed into a full-scale war	Flavius Vespasianus	The Roman campaign is postponed as Vespasian becomes involved in the A.D. 68 contest for succeeding Nero and emerges from the civil war as emperor
Siege of Jerusalem	A.D. 70	Rome resumes the postponed war in Judea	Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian	Jerusalem invested and order restored in Judea
Masada	A.D. 73	Zealot raids on Jewish towns from mountain strongholds occasion their final destruction	Flavius Silva	Destruction of Masada and other bases of Zealot guerrilla bands
Bar Kochba Rebellion	A.D. 132	Final rebellion of Zealot factions of Jews	Sextus Minucius Iulius Severus	Destruction of Zealots, dispersion of large numbers of Jews, reconstitution of Judea as the Roman province of Palestine