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Attitudes of Eastern Kings and Princes towards Rome in the Age of Civil War, 49–31 BC

Summary

This contribution deals with the behavior of kings and princes in the Roman province of Asia Minor and the Near East towards Rome during the civil wars of 49 to 31 BC. It examines to what extent the attitude of these rulers was typical of this period of political upheaval and violence. Drawing upon examples from earlier eras, this analysis shows how, to a large degree, the conduct of Anatolian and Near Eastern rulers towards Rome can be regarded as a continuation of their actions prior to 49 BC.

Keywords: Roman civil war; Judea; Asia minor; Octavian; Antony; Caesar; Flavius Josephus.

Der Beitrag behandelt das Verhalten der Könige und Fürsten in der römischen Provinz Asia Minor und dem Nahen Osten gegenüber Rom zur Zeit der Bürgerkriege von 49 bis 31 v. Chr. Es wird untersucht, bis zu welchem Grad die Haltung dieser Dynasten typisch für diese Periode des politischen Umbruchs und der Gewalt war. Unter Bezugnahme auf frühere Beispiele kann dargelegt werden, dass das Verhalten dieser anatolischen und nah-östlichen Herrscher Rom gegenüber als eine Fortführung ihrer Handlungen vor dem Jahr 49 angesehen werden kann.

Keywords: Römischer Bürgerkrieg; Judäa; Asia minor; Octavian; Antonius; Caesar; Flavius Josephus.

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I Introduction

The crossing of the Rubicon by Caesar in 49 BC is renowned for having set off a period of almost twenty years characterised by political strife among Rome's ruling elite and by intermittent eruptions of armed hostilities between opposing factions. With conflict and armed clashes prevalent in these two decades and with the emergence of extraordinary administrative institutions, such as the dictatorship and the Triumvirate, it is not remarkable that the functioning of Rome's political system underwent significant changes. The recruitment of provincial governors, for example, was from the onset of civil turmoil in 49 onwards, contrary to Republican custom, securely under the control of Caesar and later of the Triumvirs.¹ In certain years, even some of the annual magistracies were filled by nominees of Caesar or the Triumvirs.² Yet, however grave the contempt for Republican conventions, the civil discord did not merely have repercussions for the running of Rome's own administrative institutions. The effects of the internal conflicts were experienced far beyond the boundaries of Rome and Italy. In need of sufficient supplies and funds for the maintenance of their military forces, Brutus, Cassius, Antony and other Roman officials resorted to the financial exaction and taxation of cities and other local communities in the eastern provinces, as well as of kingdoms and principalities in the eastern Mediterranean.³ From that perspective, these commanders considered the eastern dynasts to be a part of Rome's empire, and as such not exempt from the payment of tribute or other demands of financial or even military support. The question is, yet, how these rulers deemed their own position in relation to Rome in these years of civil unrest. What was the conduct and demeanour of kings and princes in Asia Minor and the Near East towards Rome in the period from 49 until 31? To what extent was the attitude of these dynasts, whose territories flanked Parthia to the west and Rome's provinces to the east, influenced by Rome's internal political problems and as such typical for this period of civil war and inter-factional violence, which to a large extent took place in their own front garden? A comprehensive study dealing with these issues has not yet been published. This paper aims to contribute towards filling this lacuna by comparing the political behaviour of kingdoms and principalities towards Rome in the era of civil war from 49 until 31 with the way in which they dealt with Rome before this period.

1 For the evidence during the Triumvirate, see Millar 2002, 242–244. For the period from 49 until 44, see Brunt 1988, 499.

2 References to the selection of some city magistrates by Caesar can be found in: Suet. *Iul.* 41.2; cf. 76.2; Cass. Dio 42.20.4; 42.51.3; 43.14.5; 43.47.1; 43.51.3; Cic. *Phil.* 7.16. On Caesar's role in the recruitment of magistrates, see Butler and Cary 1982, 98–99; 138–139; Frei-Stolba 1967, 38–76; Millar 2002, 244–245 and Frei-Stolba 1967, 80–83 provide us

with the evidence of nominations to magistracies made by the Triumvirs.

3 On the financial demands made by Roman governors in the age of civil war to cities and local communities in Asia Minor and Syria, see among others: Magie 1950, 420–429; Huzar 1978, 149–152. *Ios. bell. Iud.* 1.220–222; *ant. Iud.* 272–276 and App. *civ.* 5.7 give some evidence for tribute imposed by Roman commanders on kingdoms and principalities in the eastern Mediterranean.

Such a comparative analysis will enable us to illuminate the extent to which the conduct and attitude of rulers in the eastern Mediterranean towards Rome has been subject to change as a result of these civil conflicts.

2 Rome as arbitrator in internal power conflicts

In the years from 49 until 31, Rome proved not to be the only power that experienced severe internal political discord and turmoil. Several kingdoms and principalities in the eastern Mediterranean were also – at least at some point within this time frame – confronted with a wide scale of domestic political crises ranging from succession disputes to inter-factional feuds.⁴ In order to settle these internal conflicts, it was not uncommon for the main parties at variance to seek support abroad. Alexandra, the mother of Herod's wife Mariamme, strove, for example, to mobilise Antony's support through Cleopatra in her attempt to persuade Herod in the mid-30s BC to depose his candidate for the High Priesthood, Hananel, and to nominate her son Aristobulus as a replacement.⁵ Herod eventually complied with the wishes of his mother-in-law, whether he had or had not been prompted by Antony to make that decision. Alexandra was apparently willing to bring a foreign power into a domestic political feud – in this particular case, by means of an indirect appeal to Antony who since the agreement reached at Brundisium in 40 held sway over the eastern Mediterranean. There is, however, also sufficient evidence of direct appeals made to Rome by eastern rulers in the age of civil wars from 49 until 31.

One of the earliest of such pleas that can be traced in the extant source material was made after Caesar had brought the Alexandrian campaign to a conclusion in the year 48. With peace and quiet returned to Egypt, Caesar left the Nile delta and travelled via Judaea and Syria to Asia Minor, where he was to fight the Pontic king Pharnaces who, in his effort to revive the kingdom of his predecessor Mithridates VI Eupator, had overrun large tracts of land in Anatolia in the previous years.⁶ On his way to take on arms against Pharnaces, Caesar was approached by the Galatian king Deiotarus, who had come to give account for his alliance with Pompey at Pharsalus in 48.⁷ Caesar heard

4 On the internal political conflicts in Galatia and Judaea, see below. In Parthia, Phraates IV had his brothers and several other aristocrats annihilated shortly after his assumption to power in 38 or 37 as a means to remove potential opponents to his position. See for a more elaborate account of these events: Debevoise 1938, 120–122; Sullivan 1990, 313–314; Wolski 1993, 141. In Egypt, Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra VII were engaged in a fierce armed conflict with one another in the first half of the 40s BC. For more details, see among others: Sullivan

1990, 248–259; Hölbl 2001, 232–237; Huß 2001, 714–722.

5 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 15.23–41. On Alexandra's appeal to Cleopatra, see among others: Abel 1952, 348–349; Schürer 1973, 297; Smallwood 1976, 64–65.

6 On Pharnaces' conquests, see: Magie 1950, 408–412; Hoben 1969, 17–25; Sherwin-White 1984, 299–300; Sullivan 1990, 156–158.

7 *Bell. Alex.* 67; *Cic. Deiot.* 11; *Caes. civ.* 3.4; *App. civ.* 2.49; *Flor. epit.* 2.13.5; *Cass. Dio* 41.63.1.

the case and was willing to condone Deiotarus for having overplayed his hand.⁸ As a result of this amnesty, the future of his rule seemed to be safeguarded, were it not for the fact that his position “at that time as tetrarch of practically the whole of Gallograecia [i. e. Galatia, ed.] was disputed by all his fellow tetrarchs as inadmissible both by law and by tradition.”⁹ No longer did Deiotarus merely hold sway over the tetrarchy of the Tolistobogii, one of the three tribes that constituted Galatia. In addition to the grant of Armenia Minor by the Senate at some point in the years after Pompey’s reorganisation of Anatolia,¹⁰ Deiotarus had obtained the tetrarchy of the Trocmi in the eastern part of Galatia, around Tavium, after the death of its ruler Brogitarus towards the end of the 50s BC.¹¹ It was in particular the annexation of Trocmian territory that the fellow *tetrarchae*, to whom the *Bellum Alexandrinum* refers, will have frowned upon. Their identity cannot be determined with certainty. Nevertheless, it is not unthinkable that Castor Tarcodarius, chief of the remaining tribe of the Tectosages, and perhaps also his associate in power, Domnilaus, were two of the *tetrarchae* who are said to have challenged Deiotarus’ accumulation of power. They may even have advanced Caesar or have dispatched a delegation to him with requests to revert the imbalance in power at the same time as Deiotarus had approached Caesar in 47 before the war against Pharnaces.¹² Yet, in whatever way the grievances reached Caesar, it is clear that a decision regarding the quarrel between the Galatian rulers was postponed until after the campaign against Pharnaces.¹³ Following his victory over the enemy, Caesar travelled to Nicaea and dealt with the concerns of the Galatian princes. Despite the delivery of a speech in defence of Deiotarus by M. Iunius Brutus, the later conspirator against Caesar, the king came off badly. Although he was allowed to keep his royal title and received back some former Pontic territories along the coast of the Black Sea that he had lost to Pharnaces in previous

8 *Bell. Alex.* 68; Cass. Dio 43.63.1.

9 *Bell. Alex.* 67: ... *tetrarches Gallograeciae tum quidem paene totius, quod ei neque legibus neque moribus concessum esse ceteri tetrarchae contendebant* ... (transl. Loeb adapted).

10 The exact year in which the Senate conferred Armenia Minor upon Deiotarus is disputed. The majority of our sources merely mention this grant by the Senate without providing the reader with any indication concerning its date (*Cic. div.* 2.79; *Phil.* 2.94; *Bell. Alex.* 67). Magie 1950, 373–374; 1237–1238, n. 41 presumes that Armenia Minor had been given to Deiotarus by Pompey (based on Strab. 12.3.13 and Eutr. 6.14) and that this decision was later, in 59, ratified by the Senate. Hoben 1969, 69–70 holds the view that Deiotarus was granted Armenia Minor possibly in the year 59. Adcock 1937, 12–17 argues that the Senate conferred Arme-

nia Minor upon Brogitarus, tetrarch of the Trocmi and that this territory only came to Deiotarus upon the former’s death. Syme 1995, 140–141 purports that the Cappadocian king Ariobarzanes was given Armenia Minor by Pompey and that Deiotarus only received it after the death of the former. Stähelin 1907 states that Armenia Minor had not been part of the dominions granted by Pompey to Deiotarus. Instead, the latter would have annexed this territory soon after Pompey’s departure from the Near East. The Senate would have acknowledged this seizure.

11 *Bell. Alex.* 67–68; 78; *Cic. har.* 29; *Sest.* 56; *dom.* 129; Strab. 12.3.1; 12.3.13; 12.5.1–2; App. *Mithr.* 114; Eutr. 6.14; Stähelin 1907, 90; Magie 1950, 373–375, 1235–1237, n. 40–41; Sullivan 1990, 164–165; Mitchell 1993, 35.

12 Stähelin 1907, 91–92.

13 *Bell. Alex.* 68.

years, he was stripped of his possessions in Armenia Minor and had to give up his claim over the tetrarchy of the Troceni. The outcome was that the territories in Armenia Minor passed to the Cappadocian king Ariobarzanes, and the domains formerly belonging to the Troceni were granted to Mithridates of Pergamum, who was a nephew to Brogitarus and had rendered support to Caesar in the Alexandrian campaigns.¹⁴ It is not unimaginable that this Mithridates had persuaded Caesar to implement these changes. Yet, due to a lack of any clear indications in our sources it is not possible to identify exactly who had made requests to Caesar to deal with Galatia's internal political problems. Evident is at least *that* Caesar was asked to solve a domestic power conflict.

In the period from 49 until 31, Caesar proved, however, not to be the only Roman representative in the eastern Mediterranean who was petitioned to intervene into an internal political crisis. Appeals were also made to Mark Antony during the period that he controlled the eastern Mediterranean. Antony was, for example, approached by several delegations from Judaea on his journey through Asia Minor and the Near East in the year following the defeat of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. The earliest of these embassies known to us would have come to him in Bithynia in 41. The historian Flavius Josephus informs us that it consisted of "Judaeans in authority" accusing Herod and his brother Phasael of holding the actual power in Judaea at the expense of Hyrcanus, who as High Priest and *ethnarch* functioned as the nominal leader of the Judaeans at that time.¹⁵ The way in which this asymmetry in power would have become manifest according to these Judaeans is, however, not clarified. The same opacity surrounds the aims that these influential Judaeans endeavoured to attain. Nevertheless, it is not unthinkable that they hoped for the removal of Herod and Phasael from the political stage altogether.¹⁶ If Herod and Phasael were still στρατηγοί over respectively Galilee and Jerusalem with the surrounding lands – positions which their father Antipater had allocated to them – then they would probably have asked Antony to discharge them from their offices.¹⁷ Yet, whatever Herod's and Phasael's exact role in Judaeans politics was, it is at least evident that the requests brought forward by the members of this embassy alarmed Herod to such an extent that he deemed it necessary to approach Antony personally and to offer him a bribe in the hope to convince him not to yield to the demands of the delegation. Herod was clearly worried to fall out of favour with the Romans. Regardless how legitimate his anxiety may have been, Antony eventually refused them a hearing.¹⁸ Whether Antony had come to this decision as a result of the alleged bribe or not, did probably not matter for Herod. He had accomplished his mission – for the time being at least.

14 *Bell. Alex.* 78; *Cic. Att.* 1.4.1.2; *Brut.* 21; *Phil.* 2.94; *div.* 1.27; 2.79; *Tac. dial.* 21; *Cass. Dio* 41.63.3; 42.48.3–4.

15 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.301–302; Ἰουδαίων οἱ ἐν τέλει. Cf. *bell. Iud.* 1.242; Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατοί.

16 Otto 1913, 21 takes a similar view.

17 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.158 and *bell. Iud.* 1.203 refer to the appointment of Phasael and Herod as στρατηγοί.

18 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.303; *bell. Iud.* 1.242.

It so happened that later during the year 41 two more embassies of influential Judaeans came to Antony in the hope to change his mind and to curry his favour in their dispute with Herod and Phasaël.¹⁹ The first of these deputations, comprising “the one hundred most powerful among the Judaeans”, would have approached Antony at Daphne near Antioch, whereas the second is said to have come to him in Tyre.²⁰ The exact details of the demands made by these two embassies remain, however, again unclear. It is only evident that the delegations did still not manage to win Antony for their cause. On the contrary, Antony appointed Herod and Phasaël as τετράρχαι over Judaea when the first of these two embassies approached him (at Daphne). All these aforementioned appeals made to Antony and Caesar thus demonstrate that the internal political conflicts between opposing factions within Judaea and Galatia in the 40s and 30s BC did not remain free from foreign intervention. In order to settle disputes, conflicting parties attempted to win the support of Rome or – more precisely – its representatives in the region. Such efforts to secure Roman assistance in an internal conflict were, however, not restricted to the period of Roman civil war. Well documented are for example the appeals that the Ptolemaic kings Ptolemy VI Philometor and his younger brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II had made in the 160s and 150s BC concerning the rule over Cyprus.²¹ Equally famous are the attempts made by two pretenders to the Cappadocian throne around the same time.²² Upon the death of king Ariarathes IV in 163, the Senate recognised another Ariarathes as his successor. His elder half-brother, Orophernes, disputed this decision and had Ariarathes expelled in 158. As a result of these developments, both princes turned to Rome and petitioned the Senate to mediate in the conflict. The Senate eventually chose to establish a co-regency over Cappadocia in which both brothers would participate. That this construction only lasted briefly until the expulsion of Orophernes by his half-brother is irrelevant for our present purpose. The demands made by the Egyptian and Cappadocian kings to Rome sufficiently demonstrate that the practice of eastern kings, dynasts and members of the aristocracy to request Roman assistance in the hope to settle internal political disputes was not typical of the period of Roman civil war. As early as the late third century BC, rulers from the eastern Mediterranean

19 On the embassy to Antony in Daphne, see: Ios. *ant. Iud.* 14.324–326 and *bell. Iud.* 1.243–245. On the embassy to Antony in Tyre, see Ios. *ant. Iud.* 14.327–329 and *bell. Iud.* 1.245. For more details on these deputations, see: Otto 1913, 21–23; Abel 1952, 324–326; Buchheim 1960, 64–65; Schalit 1969, 67–70; Schürer 1973, 278; Stern 1974, 217–219; Smallwood 1976, 50; Baumann 1983, 134; Richardson 1996, 122–124.

20 Ios. *ant. Iud.* 14.324: Ἰουδαίων ἑκατὸν οἱ δυνατώτατοι. Cf. *bell. Iud.* 1.243: οἱ ἐν τέλει Ἰουδαίων ἑκατὸν

ἄνδρες.

21 On the conflict between Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, see among others: Will 1967, 303–306; Gruen 1984, 692–708; Huß 2001, 544–589; Hölbl 2001, 183–192.

22 For more details on the conflict and the appeals made to Rome by two Cappadocian pretenders, see: Will 1967, 312–314; Gruen 1984, 582–583; Canali de Rossi 1997, 532–534; Ballesteros Pastor 2008, 46–48.

who were engaged in internal political conflicts, made attempts to marshal Roman support for themselves. That the opposing factions from Galatia and Judaea in the late 40s BC approached Caesar and Antony personally, whereas the Cappadocian rulers in the middle of the second century BC went to the Senate instead, is a distinction that does not need to bother us here. In the 160s and 150s BC a permanent Roman administration in the eastern Mediterranean had yet to be established, whereas by the late 40s BC Rome had firmly settled itself in Greece, Asia Minor and the Near East. The gradual extension of direct Roman rule into the East allowed kings and princes to approach a representative of Rome in the nearest province, instead of sending an embassy to Rome.

3 The exploitation of Rome's lack of consensus

The examples provided above of requests made to Rome by Anatolian and Near Eastern rulers demonstrate that some dynasts were willing to involve Rome into their internal conflicts. Standardised as this practice of seeking Roman support for the solution of domestic political problems may have been from the end of the third century BC onwards, help from Rome was, of course, not always guaranteed. Not all the pleas were deemed legitimate by the Roman Senate or by the Roman representative in the eastern Mediterranean; several of them were rejected. Thus, as we have seen, Antony ignored the requests of the influential Judaeans who approached him in Bithynia in 41 and Caesar did not deal with the complaints put forward against king Deiotarus before his campaign against Pharnaces. In the former case, Antony's refusal to give the delegates a hearing did, however, not put them off from showing their grievances to him on another two occasions, at Daphne and at Tyre. Apparently, the initiators of these embassies had a genuine expectation that their second and third deputation could make Antony change his mind; otherwise they would not have put the effort into it. Yet, as will become clear, not all kings, princes and members of the ruling elite whose initial requests for support in an internal conflict had been rejected by the Roman Senate or a Roman representative in the East decided to approach the same Roman institution or official once more in the hope that the first decision would be reviewed and the outcome would be different. Nor did all the dynasts and other members of the ruling class who experienced that the opposing faction had secured the support of the Senate or a specific Roman governor try to convince the Senate or the governor in question to revoke the promised support. Events that took place in the early 30s BC in Judaea show what other steps were taken in order to win Roman support.

After Herod had been granted the kingship over Judaea by the Roman Senate in the year 40, his enemy, the Parthian candidate on the Judaeans throne Antigonus, did not approach the Senate or the two most powerful supporters of Herod's nomination,

Antony and Octavian, in an attempt to nullify the appointment of Herod.²³ Antigonus was probably aware that due to his collaboration with the Parthians, who had overrun the Levant and parts of Asia Minor in the same year, he would not have any chance to win the favour of the Senate or the two Triumvirs.²⁴ Yet, as long as the Parthians held absolute sway over Syria and certain parts of Asia Minor, any Roman acknowledgment of his position would be redundant. The political situation in the eastern Mediterranean changed, however, swiftly in the following year. Roman troops led by the newly appointed legate Publius Ventidius Bassus, who possessed a proconsular *imperium*, reversed the Parthian invasion and managed to oust the hostile armies from Asia Minor and Syria.²⁵ With the expulsion of the Parthian forces, Antigonus could no longer count on Parthia's support. The future of his position depended entirely on Rome and the attitude of the Roman governors and commanders in the East. In order to forestall his own deposition, Antigonus appears, therefore, to have resorted to offering bribes to Roman commanders in the region. That such inducements seem to have been accepted, can be inferred from Josephus' account of Ventidius' brief march into Judaea in the year 39:

κάν τούτω Βεντίδιος ὁ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγὸς πεμφθεὶς ἐκ Συρίας ὥστε Πάρθους ἀνείργειν μετ' ἐκείνους εἰς Ἰουδαίαν παρέβαλε, τῷ λόγῳ μὲν Ἰωσήφῳ συμμαχήσω, τὸ δ' ὄλον ἦν αὐτῷ στρατήγημα χρήματα παρ' Ἀντιγόνου λαβεῖν· ἔγγιστα γοῦν Ἱεροσολύμων στρατοπεδευσάμενος ἀποχρώντως ἠργυρίσατο τὸν Ἀντίγονον. καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀνεχώρησε σὺν τῇ πλείονι δυνάμει, ἵνα δὲ μὴ κατὰ φῶρον γένηται τὸ λῆμμα, Σίλωνα μετὰ μέρους τινὸς τῶν στρατιωτῶν κατέλιπε, ὃν καὶ αὐτὸν ἐθεράπευεν Ἀντίγονος, ὅπως μὴδὲν ἐνοχλοῖη, προσδοκῶν καὶ πάλιν αὐτῷ Πάρθους ἐπαμνεῖν ... Βεντίδιος μὲν οὖν ἐτύγχανε τὰς ταραχὰς τὰς διὰ Πάρθους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν οὔσας καθιστάμενος, Σίλῳ δ' ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ χρήμασιν ὑπ' Ἀντιγόνου διεφθαρμένος. (Ios. *ant. Iud.* 14.392–393, 395)²⁶

Meanwhile Ventidius, the Roman general sent from Syria to keep back the Parthians, after disposing of them, made a side-march into Judaea, ostensibly to give aid to Joseph, but in reality the whole business was a device to obtain money from Antigonus; at any rate he encamped very near Jerusalem and extorted from Antigonus as much money as he wanted. Then he himself withdrew with the greater part of his force; but in order that his extortion might

23 On the grant of kingship to Herod in Rome, see: Ios. *ant. Iud.* 14.379–389; *bell. Iud.* 1.281–285; Strab. 16.2.46; Tac. *hist.* 5.9. Cf. App. *civ.* 5.75.

24 Sullivan 1990, 311–313. On the collaboration of Antigonus with the Parthians, see among others: Otto 1913, 23–27; Abel 1952, 329–336; Schalit 1969, 74–80; Schürer 1973, 278–282; Smallwood 1976,

51–53; Kasher 1988, 122–125; Richardson 1996, 125–130.

25 On the expulsion of the Parthian troops by P. Ventidius Bassus, see: Broughton 1952, 383, 388, 393; Gundel 1955, 807–813.

26 Cf. Ios. *bell. Iud.* 1.288–289; 1.291.

not be detected, he left Silo behind with a certain number of soldiers; to him also Antigonus paid court in order that he might not cause any trouble, hoping at the same time that the Parthians would once more give him help ... And so, while Ventidius was quieting the disturbances that had been created in the cities by the Parthians, Silo remained in Judaea, having been corrupted by bribes from Antigonus. (transl. Loeb)

In this passage, Josephus seems to imply that financial allurements have wrought Ventidius to refrain from advancing against Antigonus in the year 39. The accuracy of this explanation for Ventidius' "side-march into Judaea" can, however, not be assured.²⁷ It is at least evident that a certain legate, named Pompaedius Silo, was left behind by Ventidius in Judaea and proved not to be of much help to Herod. Josephus informs us that towards the winter of 39 Silo withdrew his troops from Judaea – allegedly because he had been offered bribes by Antigonus.²⁸ As a result of Silo's departure, Herod was forced to give up his gains in Judaea proper; he focused instead on securing Galilee and Idumaea.²⁹ Only after the final defeat inflicted upon the Parthians at Gindarus in 38, Roman troops were again made available for the support of Herod in Judaea. Antony urged Ventidius to send a certain Machaeras to the assistance of Herod with at least two legions.³⁰ Machaeras, however, is said by Josephus to have been offered a bribe by Antigonus as well. Although the historian clarifies that Machaeras did not succumb to the financial allurements, the way in which he assisted Herod did not lead to promising results.³¹ Therefore, Herod travelled to Samosata in Commagene where he made a personal appeal to Antony. On this occasion, Antony put at least two legions at Herod's disposal and an unknown number of contingents under the command of Gaius Sosius.³² With the support of these Roman troops in 37, Herod eventually succeeded to inflict a final defeat upon Antigonus and secure the throne for himself.³³

Fortunate as the outcome of the war was for Herod, a more proactive role of Ventidius and Silo in this conflict would almost certainly have accelerated the events leading up to the defeat of Antigonus. It is not unlikely that the bribery practices to which

27 Sullivan 1990, 223–224 purports that Josephus' view according to which the short march into Judaea was a means to acquire financial resources from Antigonus, is "not unlikely given the chronic need for funds to support these Roman expeditionary forces".

28 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.406–412; *bell. Iud.* 1.297–302. On Silo's role in the war between Herod and Antigonus, see: Otto 1913, 27–28; Abel 1952, 339–340; Schalit 1969, 89–91, 690–691; Schürer 1973, 282; Smallwood 1976, 56–57; Kasher 1988, 126; Sullivan 1990, 224; Richardson 1996, 153–156;

Kasher 2007, 73–75.

29 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.413–433; *bell. Iud.* 1.303–316.

30 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.434; *bell. Iud.* 1.317.

31 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.435–438; *bell. Iud.* 1.317–320.

32 *Ios. ant. Iud.* 14.439–447; *bell. Iud.* 1.320–322; 327; Cass. Dio 49.22.3; Oros. 6.18.24.

33 For more details on the campaigns of C. Sosius and Herod against Antigonus in 38 and 37, see: Otto 1913, 29–34; Abel 1952, 342–346; Schalit 1969, 88–97; Schürer 1973, 383–386; Smallwood 1976, 57–59; Sullivan 1990, 224–225; Richardson 1996, 157–160; Kasher 2007, 77–92.

Josephus alludes contributed to Ventidius' inaction and Silo's withdrawal from Judaea. In the early 30s BC, Rome was engaged in the war against the invading Parthian armies. Under these circumstances it would in all likelihood have been difficult for the Roman Senate and for Antony in his capacity as Triumvir to check whether all the pro-magistrates dispatched to the east would follow the official senatorial line or the Triumviral decisions.³⁴ A lack of good means of communication gave governors on the fringe of Rome's empire the opportunity to maintain a more independent position. In other words, despite the official senatorial conferment of the royal title upon Herod, Ventidius and Silo could get away with denying Herod sufficient support. Antigonus was probably aware of the freedom that governors in Syria and Judaea had. From that perspective, it is indeed not implausible that Antigonus offered bribes to Ventidius, Silo and Machaeras. Antigonus was not the first Near Eastern ruler who, in reaction to the support that a political opponent had received from the Senate or from a specific Roman governor, tried to win the favour of a different Roman governor or magistrate. In 63, a pretender to the Judaeian throne called Hyrcanus II acted in a similar way. Ever since the death of queen Alexandra Salome in 67, he and his brother Aristobulus II had both laid claim to the High Priesthood and the kingship.³⁵ In order to settle the succession crisis, both brothers sent deputations to Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, probably an ex-quaestor who had arrived at Damascus around the year 65 under Pompey's authority.³⁶ Having heard the pleas made by both parties, Scaurus chose eventually the side of Aristobulus. Hyrcanus was, obviously, not satisfied with the result, and when Pompey arrived in Judaea in the spring of 63, the succession question was reopened. Initially, Pompey declined to make a decision, but after Aristobulus had taken up the arms against Hyrcanus, Pompey chose the latter's side, revoking the choice made by Scaurus.³⁷

The ways in which Hyrcanus endeavoured to secure Roman recognition thus strongly resemble Antigonus' attempts to win Roman support. In reaction to the assistance that a political opponent had received from the Senate or from a specific Roman governor, both rulers tried to win the support of different Roman governors or officials in the Near East. Antigonus' behaviour in the early 30s BC was thus not typical of the era of civil war from 49 until 31. Both during and before this period, it proved to be possible for dynasts in the eastern Mediterranean to exploit the freedom that individual Roman

34 Cf. Schalit 1969, 691.

35 On the conflict between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II that erupted after the death of their mother Alexandra in 67, see: Abel 1952, 247–249; Schalit 1969, 4–13; Schürer 1973, 233–236; Smallwood 1976, 19–28; Sullivan 1990, 213–215; Richardson 1996, 76–78.

36 Broughton 1952, 163.

37 On the embassies sent to Scaurus and Pompey, as

well as on the ultimate decisions made by Pompey, see: Abel 1952, 248–261; Schalit 1969, 6–11; Schürer 1973, 236–240; Smallwood 1976, 21–23; Sullivan 1990, 215–217; Richardson 1996, 78–80, 97–100. On the pleas made to Pompey at Damascus by Aristobulus II, Hyrcanus II and a third party which allegedly pleaded for the abolition of the kingship, see: Eckhardt 2010.