

Herod Agrippa II

from Wikipedia

Herod Agrippa II (born AD 27/28), officially named Marcus Julius Agrippa and sometimes just called Agrippa, was the seventh and last king of the family of Herod the Great, the Herodians. He was the son of the first and better-known Herod Agrippa, the brother of Berenice, Mariamne, and Drusilla (second wife of the Roman procurator Antonius Felix).

Herod Agrippa II was educated at the court of the emperor Claudius, and at the time of his father's death was only seventeen years old. Claudius therefore kept him at Rome, and sent Cuspius Fadus as procurator of the Roman province of Judaea. While at Rome, he voiced his support for the Jews to Claudius, and against the Samaritans and the procurator of Judaea Province, Ventidius Cumanus, who was lately thought to have been the cause of some disturbances there. On the death of Herod of Chalcis in 48, his small principality of Chalcis, Syria was given to Herod Agrippa, with the right of superintending the Temple in Jerusalem and appointing its high priest. In 53, he was deprived of that kingdom by Claudius, who made him governor over the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias. Herod Agrippa celebrated by marrying off his two sisters Mariamne and Drusilla. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, repeats the gossip that Herod Agrippa lived in an incestuous relationship with his sister, Berenice.

In 55, Nero added the cities of Tiberias and Taricheae in Galilee, and Julias, with fourteen villages near it, in Peraea. Agrippa expended large sums in beautifying Jerusalem and other cities, especially Berytus. His partiality for the latter rendered him unpopular amongst his own subjects, and the capricious manner in which he appointed and deposed the high priests made him disliked by the Jews. Agrippa failed to prevent his subjects from rebelling, and urged instead that they tolerate the behavior of the Roman procurator Gessius Florus. But in 66 the Jews expelled him and Berenice from the city. During the First Jewish-

Roman War of 66–73, he sent 2,000 men, archers and cavalry, to support Vespasian, showing that, although a Jew in religion, he was entirely devoted to the Romans. He accompanied Titus on some campaigns, and was wounded at the siege of Gamala. After the capture of Jerusalem, he went with his sister Berenice to Rome, where he was invested with the dignity of praetor and rewarded with additional territory.

According to Photius, Agrippa died, childless, at the age of seventy, in the third year of the reign of Trajan, that is, 100, but statements of historian Josephus, in addition to the contemporary epigraphy from his kingdom, cast this date into serious doubt. The modern scholarly consensus holds that he died before 93/94. He was the last prince of the house of the Herods.

It was before him and his sister Berenice that, according to the New Testament, Paul the Apostle pleaded his case at Caesarea Maritima, possibly in 59.

He had a great intimacy with the historian Josephus, having supplied him with information for his history, *Antiquities of the Jews*. Josephus preserved two of the letters he received from him.

From International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Agrippa II, the son of Agrippa I and Cypros, daughter of Phasaël (Herod the Great's brother's son) and Salampsio (Herod the Great's daughter), was born in A.D. 27 (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii.5.4). Although Claudius wanted to make Agrippa II king over his father's territories, two freedmen persuaded him that a youth of seventeen years of age would not be able to rule such a large territory with so many diverse elements among the population. In A.D. 50, however, two years after the death of Agrippa II's uncle and brother-in-law Herod king of Chalcis, Claudius made Agrippa II king of Chalcis (*Ant.* xx.5.2 ; *BJ* ii.12.1). In 53 Claudius granted Agrippa II the tetrarchy of Philip—Abilene (or Abila), Trachonitis, and Arca (the tetrarchy of Varus)—in exchange for the terri-

tory of Chalcis (Ant. x.7.1 ; BJ ii.12.8). Shortly after Nero became emperor in A.D. 54, he gave Agrippa the Galilean cities of Tiberias and Tarichea and their surrounding land as well as the Perea cities of Julias (or Betharamphtha) and Abila and their surrounding land (e.g., Julias had fourteen surrounding villages) (Ant. xx.8.4 ; BJ ii.13.2). In appreciation for the imperial favor, Agrippa enlarged his capital city Caesarea Philippi and renamed it Neronias (Ant. xx.9.4). Agrippa II now ruled Philip the tetrarch's territory with the added toparchies of Galilee and the three detached territories of Abilene, two middle toparchies of Perea, and Arca.

Agrippa II's private life was not exemplary. His sister Bernice came to live with him after their uncle, who was also her second husband, Herod king of Chalcis, died in A.D. 48. Because of the rumors of incest, she resolved to marry Polemo of Cilicia, but shortly after this she returned to her relationship with her brother. This incestuous relationship became the common chatter in Rome (Ant. xx.7.3 ; Juvenal Satires vi.156–160).

Like his father Agrippa I, and his uncle Herod king of Chalcis, Agrippa II had control of the vestments of the high priest and had the right to appoint the high priests (Ant. xv.11.4 [405–407]; xx.1.1–3 ; 5.2 ; 9.4). The Romans would consult him on religious matters and this may be why Festus asked him to hear Paul at Caesarea in A.D. 59. Agrippa was accompanied by his sister Bernice (Acts 25–26).

In May of 66 the revolution in Palestine began (BJ ii.14.4). Although Agrippa failed to quell the revolt, he sided with the Romans all through the war of 66–70. After Nero's suicide on June 9, 68, Vespasian sent his son Titus, with Agrippa accompanying him, to pay respects to the new emperor Galba. Before they reached Rome, however,

they received the news of Galba's murder (Jan. 15, 69) and Titus returned to Palestine while Agrippa continued to Rome. After Vespasian was elected emperor (July 1, 69) by the Egyptian and Syrian legions, Agrippa re-turned to Palestine to take the oath of allegiance to the new emperor (Tacitus Hist ii.81). Agrippa sided with Titus, who was in charge of the war in Palestine (Tacitus Hist v.1), and after the capture of Jerusalem (Aug. 5, 70), Agrippa was probably present at the victory celebrations in Rome over the destruction of his people (BJ vii.1.2f).

Vespasian confirmed Agrippa in the possession of the kingdom he had previously governed and added new territories that are not recorded. In A.D. 75 he and his sister Bernice went to Rome where she resumed being Titus's mistress (as she had been during the war of 66–70). This became a public scandal (Tacitus Hist ii.2). The Roman populace was against oriental queens because one of their choicest sons, Mark Antony, had been destroyed by the lust of the oriental queen Cleopatra. So Titus sent her away. When he became emperor in A.D. 79, Bernice returned again to Rome hoping to become the emperor's wife. But once again Titus sent her away (Dio Cassius lvi.18), and she returned to Palestine, fading out of the pale of history.

After this time, nothing is known of Agrippa except that he corresponded with Josephus about The Jewish War, praised him for his accuracy, and subsequently purchased a copy (Vita lxxv ; CAp i.9). Some theorize that Agrippa II died in A.D. 93, but it seems more likely to have been ca A.D. 100. Although the Talmud (TB Sukkah 27a) implies that Agrippa had two wives, Josephus gives no indication of his being married or having any children. His death marked the end of the Herodian family.