

Free jewish civilization term paper example

[History](#), [Middle East](#)



- TURNING POINT: The significant social change that you will discuss (from the list given in the paper's instructions): The Roman rule in the land of Israel.

- The YEAR or YEARS when the significant social change (" turning point") occurred:

63 BCE - 70 CE

- The YEAR your first time period begins (this is the time period before the turning point and must be at least 100 years prior to the earliest year listed in item #2):

167 BCE.

- The YEAR your second time period ends (this is the time period following the turning point and must be at least 100 years after the latest year listed in item #2):

170 CE.

- The GEOGRAPHIC PLACE of this change (a geographic region or a state):

Israel (Judea and Jerusalem).

- The SOCIAL PATTERN you will examine--the one particular aspect of Jewish life that you will describe (from the list given in the paper's instructions): Governance.

- The POINT you will be making (in a sentence):

How the Roman rule in Israel resulted in the subsequent changes in the social and cultural patterns of the Jewish community in relation to governance as a pattern of life of the Jews

Prior to the Roman rule in the land of Israel, in Judea, the Jews lived under two distinct groups. One set of Jews was called Hellenistic Jews while the other was referred to as the Religious Jews. The Hellenistic Jews were a set of Jews who practiced the Jewish religious traditions together with some aspects of the Greek culture. On the other hand, the Religious Jews only practiced the Jewish traditions without any foreign elements being incorporated. Around 167 BC, tensions between the Hellenized Jews and the religious Jews rose and there was a dramatic deterioration of relations between them. Around this time, Antiochus IV Epiphanes - a Seleucid (Greek) king - enforced certain decrees that sought to ban existence of some Jewish religious traditions and rites (McLaren, 64). This he did by introducing execution by death on everyone who tried to circumcise their sons. He also banned the food laws that the two sets of Jews followed (kashrut) as well as the keeping of the Sabbath. Further, Antiochus IV introduced "abomination of desolation" as known in the book of Daniel's prophecies. This meant desecration of the Jerusalem temple by offering a pig sacrifice to the Greek god, Zeus.

Aggrieved by the actions of King Antiochus IV, a separate group of Jews known as the orthodox Jews (or the Maccabees) staged a revolt against him. The revolt lasted from 167 to 142 BCE. The Maccabees were successful in their attempt to oust Antiochus IV as their political action was based on guerilla warfare. Eventually, the revolt led to the establishment of a new and independent Jewish kingdom, the Hasmonean kingdom. This Hasmonean Dynasty lasted from 165 to 63 BC. In spite of their ultimate victory over the Seleucid king, the Maccabees were opposed at some point in their push by a

different group of Jews known as Hasideans. However, their opposition did not last for long as they later joined hands with the Maccabees. The Maccabean revolt (led by Judas Maccabeus) was instrumental in the creation of a twenty-five year time period of Jewish independence as a result of the Seleucid Empire collapse (Grabbe, 27).

The Hasmonean Kingdom was ruled by priest-kings with the Pharisees, Essenes and the Sadducees forming the primary social movements. The Pharisees were instrumental in the establishment of the world's earliest male religious learning and literacy plan. This plan was based around the synagogues. In these systems, justice was governed by the Sanhedrin who were led by the Nasi. Gradually, the Nasi's authority on religion surpassed that of the high priest in the temple. Under the Hasmonean Kingdom, the Jews were led by the Temple's High priest (Grant, 75).

The Roman rule in Israel started at round 64 BCE and ended in 324 CE. This is considered as one of the greatest turning points in the history of the Jews. As we have seen, the Jews had been organized into different groups which later integrated into one Jewish kingdom. This was after the Maccabean revolt that ousted the Seleucid king Antiochus IV.

Based on the governance structures prior to the Roman rule, the Jews had their own priest-king leaders. These were the Temple's high priests, Sadducees, Essenes, and the Sanhedrin who also happened to be the justice administrators. However, with the start of the Roman rule, the governance structures changed from what they had been into new systems of governance. The change in governance resulted in administration changes as Romans took over Jewish leadership (Grant, 25). This was a key factor

that contributed to the disintegration of the Hasmonean Dynasty. This was caused by a great deal of civil war that ensued between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II - the sons of Salome Alexandra. At this time, the Jews did not want to be governed by a king anymore. They preferred the theocratic clergy instead. To this effect, the people appealed to the Roman Empire expressing their concerns.

In 125 BCE, King John Hyrcanus of the Hasmonean Dynasty conquered Edom and managed to convert the Jewish population into Judaism. This created a power vacuum in the Hasmonean Kingdom that made the Roman Senate recognize the Jewish state. With the Jewish state under recognition by the Romans, Hyrcanus II and his brother Aristobulus II - Simon's great-grandsons - were locked up in a battle between Pompey and Julius Caesar. This time, the two brothers became pawns in a proxy war that resulted in the overall Jewish kingdom being under the Syrian Roman governor supervision in 64 BCE (Grabbe, 48). Under the Roman rule, Judea was first an independent kingdom of the Jews governed by the Hasmoneans and later by the Herodians. However, the independent rule of the kingdom gradually diminished till the time it was taken over by the direct rule of the Romans. This brought about the renaming of Judea to Iudaea Province.

After the takeover of the Jewish Kingdom by the Roman Empire, there was widespread brutality towards the Jewish subjects. This created great tension in the empire to the extent of the Jews forming revolts against the Roman rule. In 66 BCE, Jews began a revolt against the Roman emperors of Judea (Palmer, 19). Unfortunately, the revolt was inadvertently defeated by the Roman emperors who included Vespasian and Titus. The Jews were then

subjected to more frequent insurrections by the Romans in the years that followed the revolt. In 40 BCE, there was a last attempt by Antigonus Mattathias to restore the former Hasmonean Kingdom which had been quite a success in granting the Jews the freedom they sought (McLaren, 45). However, the attempt was quickly muted by the defeat and subsequent death of Antigonus. This brutally brought the Hasmonean rule to a dead end. Consequently, the whole of Judea became a province of the Roman Empire. Around 37 BCE, Herod - Hyrcanus II's son-in-law - became the King of Judea having been appointed by the Roman Empire. He became one of the most powerful figures in the empire since he had almost absolute autonomy. With his admiration for the Greek and Roman cultures, Herod tried to win his Jewish subjects by remodeling the Temple among other reconstruction projects that he undertook on the Caesarean and Sebestean cities. However, his achievements were fruitless as he never won any support or trust among his subjects (Grant, 87).

After his death in 4 BCE, Judea made a direct Roman client. During this time, the Romans suppressed the Jewish traditions and way of life to such an extent that violence arose from time to time. Wary of the suppression of their way of life, the Jews grew violent and a full-scale revolt was witnessed in 66 CE. However, Roman Empire forces led by Titus overpowered the Jews, ruining Jerusalem to the ground in 70 CE. This meant the end of Jerusalem and the Temple to the Jews, and it seemed a catastrophe. Moreover, huge Jewish populations perished during the siege in Jerusalem and throughout Israel. The remaining Jews were sold into slavery in Rome together with all their Temple artifacts (Grant, 65). The Jews who remained in the land of

Israel after the destruction of the Temple went through torrid moments and conflicts against their enemies who threatened to occupy their land. In the years that followed (up to around 200 BCE), the small Jews that had remained behind recovered gradually with new reinforcements coming in as those who were on exile continually returned. To this effect, the institutional as well as communal way of life was lastly renewed. Priests who had governed the Jews were now replaced by rabbis. Equally important, the synagogue became a principal point of the Jewish settlement. This is evidenced by the remnants of synagogues at Capernaum, Gamla and elsewhere in Israel (McLaren, 25).

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