

not much evidence that such religious expressions as the dualistic (metaphysical) Zoroastrianism had any or much influence in Rome with its monotheistic ideals. But most of the society paid mere lip service to the older deities while sporting their suggestive votaries. Devoted pagans were rare other than those who made their livings at it.

The innumerable gods were more a matter of nationalism than religion. In time the Emperor could join them...being promoted after death to the pantheon. The pagan gods were often depictions of men at their worst, of course, and they allowed the holidays, etc., that gave great liberty and license to the Roman peoples with the resultant ideal that any outcry against the gods was really an outcry against national institutions. The general scepticism and lack of devotion was understood and accepted so long as it did not give way to some form that would demand a contrary allegiance for the people.

II.1.e

Rome in Palestine

The Roman Palestinian Settlement

Rome became the protector of Palestine in 63BC after Hyrcanus, in conflict with Aristobulus, asked Pompey, the Roman general in the east, to assist him and thereafter assume a paternalistic role in that troubled state. Many Jews greatly resented the Roman presence and plots of revolt were common. The Romans, as was true of their general pattern, sought to use as much of the local rulership as possible. This was especially true in matters of taxation and individualized governmental dealings...the persons doing the work are known as "publicans". Herod, an Idumaeen, ruled in Palestine until 4 BC and provided the land with a time of intrigue, warfare, political assassination, extreme jealousy, but conversely economic and social progress. On the death of Herod and the conclusion of the power struggles that followed, the Palestinian territory was given a three way division for governmental improvement. Archelaus controlled Judea, Samaria and Idumaea. Antipas governed Galilee and Perea while Philip Herod was in control of Batanea, Trachonities and Auranitis. (The map on page 24 may help you locate these if there is any doubt in your mind!) Archelaus was removed from office by Augustus in 6AD and those territories were then governed by a Roman procurator for the next many years...of which Pilate is the office holder during the time of Christ.