

= Ventidius Cumanus =

Ventidius Cumanus (fl . 1st century AD) was the Roman procurator of Iudaea Province from AD 48 to c . AD 52 . A disagreement between the surviving sources , the Jewish historian Josephus and the Roman Tacitus , makes it unclear whether his authority was over some or all of the province . Cumanus ' time in office was marked by disputes between his troops and the Jewish population . Ventidius Cumanus failed to respond to an anti @-@ Jewish murder in Samaritan territory which led to the violent conflict between Jews and Samaritans . Following an investigation by the governor of Syria , Gaius Ummidius Durmius Quadratus , Cumanus was sent to Rome for a hearing before the Emperor Claudius , who held him responsible for the violence and sentenced him to exile .

= = Procuratorship of Iudaea = =

Nothing is known about Cumanus before he was appointed procurator of Iudaea in 48 , in succession to Tiberius Julius Alexander .

= = = Scope of Authority = = =

Josephus , the main source for Cumanus ' career , presents him as governing the whole of Iudaea until 52 , when he was succeeded by Marcus Antonius Felix . However , Tacitus states that Felix was already governing Samaria before 52 , while Cumanus had authority over Galilee to the north (see map) . Tacitus does not mention who controlled other areas of the province .

This conflict has led historians to take a number of positions on political arrangements in the province . Some have argued that Josephus ' greater knowledge of Jewish affairs justifies favouring his account . M. Aberbach believes that there was a division of power , but that Tacitus reversed the governors ' areas of authority and that Cumanus actually governed the south and Felix the north ; this fits better with Josephus , who describes Cumanus as active in Jerusalem and nearby . Another suggestion is that part of the province was transferred to Felix after disturbances under Cumanus ' rule .

= = = Roman @-@ Jewish conflict = = =

Under Alexander , the province of Iudaea had enjoyed a period of relative peace , but that proved to be transient , as Cumanus ' governorship was marked by a series of serious public disturbances . Trouble started while Jewish pilgrims were gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover feast . Cumanus , following the precedent set by earlier governors , assembled a detachment of Roman soldiers on the roof of the Temple portico to maintain order among the crowds , but one caused chaos by exposing himself to the Jews in the courtyard while calling out insults . Some of the Jews brought their complaints to Cumanus , but others began to retaliate by hurling stones at the soldiers . Some openly accused Cumanus of being responsible for the provocation ? a sign that relations between governor and provincials may already have been poor . Finding himself unable to calm the angry crowd , Cumanus called for fully armed reinforcements , who assembled either in the Temple courtyard or on the roof of the Antonia Fortress , overlooking the Temple . In the ensuing stampede , according to Josephus ' estimates , between twenty and thirty thousand people were crushed to death . These numbers may be exaggerated , but the loss of life was substantial ; the feast , says Josephus , " became the cause of mourning to the whole nation " .

Further unrest was triggered when an Imperial slave named Stephanus was robbed while travelling near Beth @-@ horon . Troops sent by Cumanus to arrest the leading men of the nearby villages began plundering the area . One of them , finding a copy of the Torah , destroyed it in view of the villagers while shouting blasphemies . Angered by this insult to God and to the Jewish religion , a crowd of Jews confronted Cumanus at Caesarea Maritima , demanding that the guilty party should be punished . This time the governor acted decisively and ordered that the soldier responsible should be beheaded in front of his accusers , temporarily restoring the calm .

= = = Jewish @-@ Samaritan conflict = = =

The events that would cost Cumanus his office began with the murder of one or more Galilean pilgrims who had been travelling through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem . A Galilean embassy asked Cumanus to investigate but received little attention ; Josephus alleges that he had been bribed by the Samaritans to turn a blind eye . The result was that a crowd of Jews decided to take the law into their own hands . Under the leadership of two Zealots , Eleazar and Alexander , they invaded Samaria and began a massacre . Cumanus led most of his troops against the militants , killing many and taking others prisoner , and the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem were subsequently able to calm most of the others , but a state of guerrilla warfare persisted .

Meanwhile , two separate embassies had been dispatched to Tyre to appeal to Ummidius Caius Quadratus , who as legate of Syria had some authority over the lower @-@ ranking procurator of Iudaea . One , from the Samaritans , protested the Jewish attacks on Samaritan villages . The Jewish counter @-@ embassy held the Samaritans responsible for the violence and accused Cumanus of siding with them . Agreeing to investigate , Quadratus proceeded in 52 to Iudaea , where he had all of Cumanus ' Jewish prisoners crucified and ordered the beheading of several other Jews and Samaritans who had been involved in the fighting .

Perhaps after hearing a case against Cumanus in Iudaea , Quadratus sent him , along with several Jewish and Samaritan leaders including the High Priest Ananias , to plead their cases in Rome before the Emperor Claudius . At the hearing , several of Claudius ' influential freedmen officials took the side of Cumanus . However , the Jews were supported by Agrippa II , a friend of Claudius whose father , Agrippa I , had been the last king of Iudaea before the province was placed under Roman procurators . Whether influenced by court politics or not , Claudius decided in favour of the Jewish side . The Samaritan leaders were executed and Cumanus was sent into exile . Felix succeeded him as procurator of Iudaea . Cumanus ' life and career after his banishment are unknown .

= = = Ancient = = =

Josephus , War 2 @. @ 223 @-@ 247

Josephus , Antiquities 20 @. @ 103 @-@ 137

Tacitus , Annals 12 @. @ 54

= = = Modern = = =

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