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Source: *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 31 (1941), pp. 1-18

Published by: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/297098>

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ANTI-SEMITISM IN ALEXANDRIA¹

By H. I. BELL

The subject of this paper is the relations between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria, that long-protracted racial animosity which forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of what is commonly, if loosely, known as anti-semitism ; but before coming to my subject proper it will be necessary to say something about the position of the Alexandrian Jews.

Alexandria seems from the first to have embodied its founder's great idea of a fusion of races and cultures in his newly acquired empire. We know very little, it is true, of the city's history during the first half-century of its existence, but we do know that it incorporated the native village of Rhacotis and that a few years after the foundation Alexander ordered the inhabitants of Canopus to be removed to it. We are further informed by Josephus that there were Jews among the original settlers : and even if his authority on such a matter be regarded with suspicion, it is at least certain that before the middle of the third century B.C. the Alexandrian Jewish community was well established and that the city included among its inhabitants representatives of many races, Hellenic or barbarian.

One or other of the early Ptolemies—we do not know which—assigned the Jews a special quarter, that known as the Delta quarter,² which stretched along the shore near to, and eastward of, the royal palace. Modern writers have often spoken of this as a Ghetto, but the term, which recalls the compulsory segregation of the Jews in the Middle Ages, is misleading, since there was no such enforced restriction at Alexandria : indeed, as the Jews increased in numbers, they not only came to fill most of a second quarter as well but spread to other parts of the city, in every division of which their synagogues were to be found.

A controversy has long raged over the question whether the Jews were citizens of Alexandria. Josephus, whether by a genuine misconception or by a deliberate falsification, declares that they were, and Philo has been understood, though as I think wrongly, to imply the same. Many modern scholars have espoused the same view ; but it is now known that the Jews did not possess the citizenship as a body, though single members of the race from

¹ A summary of this paper, which was read at the meeting of the Classical Association at Oxford in April, 1941, appears in the *Proceedings* of the Association. For convenience of reading what makes no pretence to be more than a popular survey

of the subject, footnotes are reduced to a minimum. References to the sources used will be found in my *Juden und Griechen im römischen Alexandreia* (Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1926).

² Jos. Bell. *Iud.* ii, 495.

time to time were granted the privilege.³ They did, however, enjoy some of the rights held by citizens, they were generally known as Ἀλεξανδρεῖς, and they possessed substantial powers of self-government, which in some respects were superior to those of the citizen body itself, at least in later times, when Alexandria lacked a senate. There seems to have been a superior and an inferior class within the community, which was governed at first by elders and later by an official known variously as genarch or ethnarch. In Roman times we hear of a *gerusia* or council of elders, probably containing 71 members.

Several of the Alexandrian Jews are known to have been men of enormous wealth. The most famous of these multi-millionaires was Alexander the Alabarch, brother of the well-known writer Philo, who was the Rothschild of his age. The position of such men has created in some modern writers, and apparently created in the ancient world also, the idea that the Jewish community as a whole was wealthy; but there seems to be no warrant for any such general conclusion, and we have evidence of real poverty among its members. We think nowadays of the Jews as pre-eminently bankers and moneylenders, but as a matter of fact there is no evidence that these professions were much followed by those of Egypt, and the only accusation of usury against the race which has come to light in a papyrus is a remark in a letter written during the height of the anti-semitic movement to a man in money difficulties: ‘Mind you don’t bother us, importune him daily, it may be he will take pity on you; if he won’t, then, like everybody else, beware of the Jews!’⁴ In the upper country Jews frequently occur as tax-collectors: many were soldiers, on garrison service or in the field army, and many others were engaged in agriculture. At Alexandria the Jews seem mostly to have been occupied in commerce or industry, as merchants or tradespeople, as artisans, jewellers, smiths, and so forth.⁵ It seems clear that the envy of Jewish wealth which undoubtedly existed was due to anti-semitism rather than anti-semitism to Jewish wealth.

The Jewish community, numerous, hard-working, and in part at least wealthy, played a great rôle in the history of Alexandria, and not in an economic sense only. Here was prepared the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which may be called the Vulgate of the Orthodox Church, and from which were taken the eastern vernacular versions. Here, too, were composed some of the

Some scholars even now persist in claiming the citizenship for the Alexandrian Jews, but the evidence against this seems to me overwhelming.

⁴ Wilcken, *Chr.* 60.

⁵ Cf. Philo, *Fl.* 57, μηδένος δὲ ἔωμένου, μὴ γεωργοῦ, μὴ ναυκλήρου, μὴ ἐμπόρου, μὴ τεχνίτου, τὰ συνήθη πραγματεύεσθαι. All these professions then, were found among the Jews.

apocryphal books ; and the Jews of Alexandria included a number of authors, among them Philo, whose work was of outstanding importance in the attempt to clothe Jewish religious ideas in the form of Greek thought and whose doctrine of the Logos may have influenced Christian theology.

The Septuagint version was made not to render the Jewish scriptures accessible to Greek readers but for the use of the Alexandrian Jews themselves, who tended to drop their own tongue ; and this readiness to change their language suggests a certain weakening of their national consciousness. There was always a rigid sect among them, but in general the Jews of Alexandria were regarded, with justice, as rather latitudinarian. They compromised in various ways with the pagan world in which they lived, though without abandoning the essential principles of their faith.

I must, however, turn to the subject of my paper, the relations between the Jews and their Greek and Graeco-Egyptian neighbours. Of anti-semitism in a racial or religious sense we have no real evidence during the Ptolemaic period. There is indeed the fantastic story told in the third book of Maccabees, according to which Ptolemy IV Philopator, miraculously foiled in an attempt to enter the sanctuary at Jerusalem, tried to avenge himself after his return to Egypt by driving drunken elephants against the Jews, a plan, of course, brought to nothing and ending in a national triumph. The story finds some slight support, on the one hand, in the statement of a contemporary inscription, that the King, while in Palestine, 'went into the temples which were there,' and, on the other, that there certainly *was* a Jewish feast at Alexandria commemorating a great deliverance ; but Josephus relates a similar, though less fantastic story, about Ptolemy Euergetes II, who had political causes of quarrel with the Jews ; and it seems on the whole likely that certain historical events of a later time have been used as the motive of a propagandist tract by an author writing at a period when the relations between Jews and Greeks were becoming embittered by religious as well as political factors.

Apart from this very doubtful case there is no trace of any strictly racial or religious antagonism under the Ptolemies. Many Jews, as I have said, were to be found in the Ptolemaic army, and they played an active part in the civil wars of the second and first centuries B.C. The forces of Ptolemy Philometor and Cleopatra were commanded by the Jewish generals Onias and Dositheus ; and when this civil war ended in the triumph of Euergetes II, the victor, if we may trust Josephus, wreaked his vengeance on the Jews. His hostility was not permanent, however, and in the later part of his reign relations appear to have been friendly. Again,

in the war waged by Cleopatra III and Ptolemy Alexander against Alexander's brother, nicknamed Lathyrus, the Jews supported the former, and once more two Jewish generals, Chelcias and Ananias, commanded the Queen's forces. Once more, too, on the triumph of the rival faction, the Jews appear to have felt the vengeance of the victor.

But these were political quarrels, and it is not till after the Ptolemaic period that we find a definitely racial conflict. That is not to say that no racial feeling existed at an earlier time. From the point of view of the government the Jews were ideal subjects, despite a tendency to turbulence, for they regularly supported the existing authority, and their industry and ability made them economically valuable ; but to their fellow-townsmen they were less congenial. The ancient creeds had no doubt lost much of their strength, but religion still pervaded the structure of a Greek πόλις : it was indeed the cement which held it together. Now religiously the Jews were cut off from the life of the city ; yet they possessed some at least of the special privileges of citizens and enjoyed the patronage and favour of the royal house.

To this general ground of dislike a more particular grievance was added later. When Gabinius, the Governor of Syria, in 55 B.C., led a Roman army against Egypt, the Jewish garrison of Pelusium, the key to the Delta, gave him a passage. In 47 B.C., when Julius Caesar was besieged along with Cleopatra in the royal palace at Alexandria by a nationalist rising, a Jewish force at Heliopolis, followed by their countrymen at Memphis, again betrayed the country, opening a passage to a relieving army under Mithradates. Finally, after the fall of Antony and Cleopatra, the Jews at once made their peace with the conqueror, Octavian, who confirmed them in all their privileges at the very time when he was refusing to the Alexandrines the senate they asked for. From this moment the relations between Greeks and Jews were fatally embittered. The Alexandrines had often given trouble enough to their own kings, but none the less they resented the decline of their city from a royal residence and head of a sovereign state to a mere provincial capital ; and the marriage of Rome and Alexandria was marred by a profound incompatibility of temper. The Alexandrines were in permanent opposition to Roman rule, not often indeed openly, for Rome had a heavy hand and no scruples about 'frightfulness', but passively and indirectly, with gibe and scoff and broadside. Over against them stood the Jews, the 'good boys' of the Empire, with all their Alexandrian privileges, their council of elders and archives and law-courts, and in addition enjoying the general concessions which the Roman government made to their religious scruples. The nationalist literature of

Alexandria, and therefore doubtless the popular feeling for which it catered, was in consequence strongly anti-Jewish ; anti-Jewish not merely because the Greeks hated the Jews but because to attack the Jews seemed a safer and less direct way of attacking the authority of Rome.

Whether this anti-semitism found serious political expression under Augustus or Tiberius cannot certainly be said. Sejanus, the favourite of Tiberius, was an enemy of the Jews, but we do not hear of any steps taken by him against them at Alexandria ; and though Germanicus, when he opened the granaries and distributed the grain to the people, excluded the Jews from his largesse, it is not recorded that this was occasioned or accompanied by any anti-semitic disturbances. It is not till the reign of Gaius (Caligula) that we hear of an open outbreak. As often happens in such cases the actual catastrophe was due to trivial and more or less accidental causes ; but of course those causes would not have led to serious trouble if the position had not already been precarious.

Among the Emperor's boon companions and intimate friends was Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, between whose family and the Julio-Claudian house an old friendship existed. A notorious spendthrift and *bon vivant*, he had formerly, when threatened by his creditors, fled to Alexandria and thrown himself on the compassion of his countryman, Alexander the Alabarch, whose immense resources, seconded by those of Antonia, the grandmother of Gaius, set him on his feet again. Gaius, on his accession, conferred upon the companion of his revels the former tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, with the title of king ; but Agrippa, in no hurry to exchange the pleasures of Rome for his Jewish realm, lingered at court till the early summer of A.D. 38. Then at last, with an escort of magnificently accoutred soldiers, he set off to Palestine, travelling via Alexandria. He arrived off Pharos in the afternoon, and, if we can believe Philo, so far overcame his love of display as to wait outside the harbour till nightfall, lest a state-entry should irritate Greek prejudices. But his precautions were in vain : the arrival of a Jewish king was too great an event for his countrymen, who gave him a royal reception probably intended in part as an anti-Greek demonstration. It was at all events so taken by the Greeks, who, remembering Agrippa's previous visit as a defaulting debtor,⁶ found his present pomp beyond endurance. The Alexandrian populace was renowned for its caustic wit and love of elaborate 'rags'. Here was an opening indeed. The mob seized on a harmless idiot well known in the streets of the city, surrounded him with a bodyguard whose elaborate apparel parodied Agrippa's comic-opera soldiers, and

⁶ Jos. *Ant.* xviii, 159 f.

led him to the gymnasium crowned with a paper diadem, arrayed in a mat for robe of state and holding a papyrus stem for a sceptre. There, with cries of *Marin ! Marin !* (a Syrian word for ‘ lord ’ and so a hit at the Syrian origin of Agrippa), they did homage to him and enthroned him in royal state. Was there perchance anyone present, one wonders, who remembered a similar scene at Jerusalem not many years before ?

It was a glorious spree ; but like other pleasures it had to be paid for. The mob remembered, what in the excitement of the moment it had forgotten, that Agrippa was the friend of Caesar. The Romans had always been deplorably obtuse to Alexandrian humour : were they likely to be more responsive on this occasion ?

At this juncture some genius seems to have been struck by a brilliant idea. It might be well, if they would escape vengeance for the insult to Caesar’s friend, in some way to put the Jews in the wrong with the Emperor. Now Gaius had recently proclaimed himself a god and commanded his subjects to worship him. So far as the Alexandrines were concerned there was no difficulty about that : religion was notoriously a hobby of theirs, and one god more or less mattered little ; but those absurd Jews had the most ridiculous scruples about such trifles and would certainly not obey the Imperial command. They had offered lavish sacrifices on his behalf when he was ill, but they had not sacrificed *to* him. Here then was an opening. The idea took the fancy of the mob at once : a great concourse flocked early in the morning to the theatre and raised a cry to erect statues of Gaius in the Jewish synagogues.

It was a master-stroke. Even if the prefect had wished, he would have found it risky to oppose such a demand. He probably did not wish. The prefect at this time was Avillius Flaccus, whose earlier government receives a glowing eulogy from his bitter enemy Philo. According to the latter, the prefect’s policy had changed after the accession of Gaius. He had been a confidant of Tiberius and was a warm adherent of the young Gemellus, Gaius’s co-regent, and a personal friend of Macro, the praetorian prefect. When first Gemellus and then Macro fell victims to the Emperor’s jealousy, the last perhaps as the result of the intrigues of Isidorus, the gymnasiarch of Alexandria, Flaccus began to tremble for his own position, and naturally enough looked about for new allies. Gaius had a great partiality for the Alexandrines, with whose leaders the prefect had hitherto been at deadly feud. Flaccus’s first step, therefore, was to come to an understanding with them ; and the price of their support was hostility to the Jews. Hence, when the mob mocked at Agrippa’s royalty, Flaccus had not ventured to intervene : he had in fact, though showing proper respect for

Agrippa in his presence, poked fun at his splendour behind his back. He was conscious, however, that his inaction might be viewed in an ugly light by Agrippa's imperial friend ; and consequently he too grasped eagerly at the religious motive. The Jews had, of course, disregarded the demand about the statues : Flaccus fulminated against them in an edict, in which he probably ordered the closing of their synagogues and certainly branded them as aliens and intruders.

This disastrous edict opened the floodgates to disorder. The Jews had, as I have said, spread from the Delta quarter to other parts of the city. If they were aliens and intruders, what right had they to mingle with the citizens ? The mob resolved to expel them from the other parts of the city and drive them back to the Delta quarter,⁷ thus for the first time mooting the idea of the Ghetto. Resistance was in vain : the unhappy Jews were hunted from their homes and compelled to take refuge in a single quarter, where, cooped up in a confined space, they found conditions so unendurable that many left the city and encamped on the sea-shore outside. The shops happened to be closed owing to the public mourning for Gaius's sister, Drusilla, but those of the Jews, and their houses, were broken into and looted ; and when the Jews, driven by hunger, ventured into the streets to buy food, the mob, now quite out of hand, fell on them in fury. The usual incidents of a ' pogrom ' followed : men, women, and even children beaten to death, dragged living through the streets, or flung on to improvised bonfires. The rioters, moreover, proceeded to carry out their intention of placing in the synagogues cult-statues of the Emperor. The Jews resisted desperately, and in the struggle which followed some of the synagogues were sacked, and others set on fire. The supply of statues gave out at last ; and into the largest synagogue the mob dragged an old quadriga fetched from the gymnasium, where it had been dedicated years before in honour of one of the Cleopatras.

Flaccus appears, if we can trust Philo, to have made no attempt to protect the Jews, and when he did intervene it was to seize thirty-eight members of their *gerusia* and have them publicly scourged in the theatre. We are not told what crime he alleged against them ; but Philo declares that when he ordered the houses of the Jews to be searched for arms none was found. The scourging was resented the more bitterly—so important is etiquette in human life—because the instrument employed was the thong, from which the Jews, like the citizens, were exempt, and because the sentence was carried out on a public holiday, the Emperor's birthday, namely 31st August.

⁷ Philo does not mention the Delta quarter, but this may be presumed.

The orgy of misrule ended in the dragging to the theatre of many Jewish women, who were ordered to eat pork in view of the crowd. If they obeyed, they were released; if not, they were savagely tortured. After this the disorders appear to have died down, but the Jews were in a terrible plight, and even the exercise of their religion and the observance of the Sabbath were forbidden by the prefect.

The Jews were not the people to sit down quietly under the outrages they had endured. They had at an earlier period⁸ drawn up a decree addressed to Gaius which Flaccus had promised to forward and had then quietly pigeon-holed. A second copy had been made when Agrippa was at Alexandria⁹ and was given to him with a complaint of the prefect's behaviour. Agrippa took care that this time it should reach the Emperor's hands. The unfortunate Flaccus, who had thus antagonized the Jews, had failed thereby to ingratiate himself with their enemies, and two of the nationalist leaders, Isidorus and Lampon, were working against him in Rome. The double attack was irresistible. A centurion was dispatched from Rome with a body of soldiers, arrived unrecognised after nightfall, and arrested the prefect while dining at the house of one of Tiberius's freedmen. The unhappy man was in the act of proposing a toast when the centurion and his detachment, armed with swords, broke into the room. 'Seeing the soldiers all round him,' says Philo, 'he knew even before he was told what the intentions of Gaius were regarding him, what orders had been given to the emissaries, and what his fate was to be.' It was during the Feast of Tabernacles; and the delighted Jews, with psalms and hymns of thanksgiving, hailed in the fall of their oppressor the hand of Jehovah. Taken to Rome for his trial, Flaccus was banished to Andros and later sentenced to death.¹⁰

Vengeance was won, but the synagogues continued closed, and during the following winter, A.D. 38-9, the Jews sent five¹¹ envoys, headed by Philo, to lay their grievances before Gaius. It was the famous embassy of which Philo has left us so vivid an account. The Jews had previously tried to buy the support of the Emperor's favourite Helicon, but that worthy had already been purchased at a higher price by the Greeks. The Jews, at first received by Gaius with a fictitious and mocking friendliness, were afterwards kept waiting until their patience was almost

⁸ Philo mentions no date (*Fl.* 97 ff.), but see refs. in next note. Note, too, Philo's ἕτοι, which seems to throw this back to an earlier period.

⁹ Philo, *Fl.* 103, and particularly *Leg.* 179.

¹⁰ Philo's *In Flaccum* has recently been translated, with a most valuable commentary

and introduction, by H. Box, *Philonis Alexandrini In Flaccum*, Oxford University Press, 1939.

¹¹ Philo, *Leg.* 370. The date is not quite certain: some scholars put the embassy in A.D. 39-40, but the evidence as a whole seems to me to favour the previous year.

exhausted ; and finally, when they obtained their interview, they were treated to an exhibition of that sardonic humour which the master of the world found so entertaining and his victims so uncomfortable. His first words were ominous : ‘ You are the impious people who don’t believe me a god, me who am now acknowledged by everybody else though *you* won’t name me.’ The envoys of the Alexandrines were delighted : their leader Isidorus exclaimed that Gaius would have even greater cause to hate the Jews when he knew that though all other men had sacrificed on his behalf they had not done so. The Jews indignantly declared that they had offered hecatombs. ‘ Yes,’ Gaius broke in, ‘ that is so ; you sacrificed on my behalf, but to another. What’s the use of that ? You have not sacrificed *to me*.’ The Jews had next to follow humbly in his train while he inspected a new building, upstairs and down, from chamber to chamber ; and suddenly he turned on them with the question ‘ Why do you abstain from pork ? ’ Amid the laughter of the spectators the terrified envoys explained that customs differed : many people, for instance, did not eat the flesh of lambs. ‘ Quite right too,’ cried Gaius with a laugh, ‘ unpleasant stuff ! ’ However, on this occasion the imperial humour had no very unpleasant consequences : Gaius dismissed the envoys with the remark, ‘ It seems to me that people who are stupid enough not to believe that I have become a god are more to be pitied than condemned.’ Their grievances, however, were not remedied, and Gaius persevered with a scheme beside which even the pogrom at Alexandria seemed a minor matter, that, namely, of placing his own image in the temple at Jerusalem. Only the daggers of Chaerea and his companions on that 24th of January A.D. 41 which freed Rome from the tyrant prevented an act which would have precipitated the revolt of Judaea.

In the negotiations which placed Claudius on the throne, Agrippa, once more at Rome, played a decisive part, and on his representations Claudius issued two edicts, one confirming all the rights of the Alexandrian Jews, the other making similar provisions for the Jews throughout the Empire. Those of Alexandria had not waited for this. They had employed the interval of comparative peace since the great pogrom in procuring arms, and on hearing of Gaius’s death they at once fell, assisted by compatriots from Egypt and Syria, on the Greeks. A regular civil war followed, and the disturbances were so serious that Claudius had to send the prefect instructions for their suppression.

No sooner was the struggle over than both parties found it prudent to send embassies to the Emperor. Ostensibly these were to congratulate him on his accession, but the predominant motive was firstly to make various requests and secondly to offer an

apology for the recent disturbances. The Alexandrines asked for a senate : the Jews may have suggested the recognition of their claim to the full citizenship of Alexandria. For there had grown up among them a desire for even greater privileges than they enjoyed. Natives of Egypt could receive the Roman citizenship only if they were already citizens of Alexandria ; but that was an honour which, in these days of racial antagonism, an individual Jew had little hope of obtaining. Thus, there was a tendency in the community either to demand the Alexandrian citizenship or actually to represent themselves as already possessing it ; and a party among the Jews even wished to take part in the gymnastic contests of the *ephebi*, which to the orthodox were an abomination. The stricter sect were opposed to this ; and thus, according to a not improbable interpretation of the Emperor's letter which I shall quote directly, the Jews sent *two* embassies, each party among them putting its own point of view.

The answer of Claudius was given in a letter of which a copy was written on the back of a taxing-list discovered some years ago in the Fayûm. Much of the letter, which was addressed to Alexandria, is occupied with the honours proposed for him by the city and the requests made, but in the last section Claudius deals with the recent disturbances, and this part I must quote :—

' As to the question which of you were responsible for the riot and dissension (or rather, to speak the truth, the war) with the Jews, I was unwilling to commit myself to a decided judgment, though your ambassadors, and especially Dionysius son of Theon, pleaded your cause with much zeal when confronted with their opponents, and I must reserve for myself an unyielding indignation against whichever party may resume hostilities ; but I tell you plainly that if you do not desist from this baneful and obstinate mutual hostility I shall perforce be compelled to show what a benevolent prince can be when turned to just indignation. Wherefore yet once again I conjure, on the one side, the Alexandrines to show themselves forbearing and kindly towards the Jews, who for many years have dwelt in the same city, and offer them no outrage in the exercise of their traditional worship but permit them to observe their customs as in the time of Divus Augustus, which I, after hearing both sides, have confirmed, and, on the other, the Jews not to busy themselves about anything beyond what they have held hitherto, and not henceforth, as if they lived in two cities, to send two embassies—an unheard-of thing—nor to intrude themselves into the gymnasiarchic or cosmetic games, but to profit by what they possess, and enjoy in a city not their own an abundance of all good things ; and not to introduce or invite Jews who sail down from Syria or Egypt, thus compelling me to

conceive the greater suspicion ; otherwise I shall certainly take vengeance on them as fomenting a general plague for the whole world.'

This letter, closing the door as it did on all hope of further privileges, cannot have pleased the Jews ; but it was no more agreeable to the Greeks, since not only did Claudius confirm all the existing Jewish rights and uphold their liberty of worship, but he shelved the demand for a senate by referring it to the ancient equivalent of a royal commission. It may have been dissatisfaction with this result which led, if the hitherto accepted date is correct, ten or eleven years later, to a fresh outbreak of racial antagonism. To this outbreak there is no reference in any extant ancient historian. Our knowledge of it rests solely on some fragments of a class of literature of which several specimens have come to light in Greek papyri found in Egypt, and to which the name 'Pagan Acts of the Martyrs' has sometimes been given, owing to its resemblance in spirit and method of composition to the Christian *Acta Sanctorum*. It consists of texts, possibly though not certainly portions of a single work, describing trials of prominent Alexandrines and written from the point of view of Alexandrian nationalism, their object being to represent Roman tyranny in an odious light and to magnify the courage and independence of spirit displayed by the magistrates of Alexandria. As a rule strongly anti-Jewish in tone, these texts are so mainly owing to anti-Roman feeling : the Jews were the stalking-horse from the shelter of which the nationalists directed their attack on Rome.

The particular specimen here concerned, which is very imperfect, has been constructed from two fragments respectively at Berlin and Cairo, and from a third in the British Museum¹² which in part overlaps and completes that at Berlin. Various pieces of evidence converge to fix the date of the events recorded as 30th April and 1st May, A.D. 53, and the subject of the text is a law-suit brought by Alexandria against Agrippa II, the son of Gaius's friend. On the first day, 31st May, the proceedings were preparatory, the Emperor finally deciding to hear the Alexandrian envoys. The next day, 1st June, the envoys were received in certain gardens by Claudius and his *consilium*, in the presence of the ladies of the court. The embassy was headed by the gymnasiarach Isidorus and a certain Lampon, the former of whom requests a favourable hearing, the Emperor replying : 'I will grant you this day.' 'All the men of senatorial rank who sat as assessors,' proceeds the text, 'assented to this, knowing what sort of man Isidorus was. Claudius Caesar : "Say nothing extravagant (?) against my friend ; for you have already destroyed two other

¹² Published in *Arch. f. Pap.* x, 5-16.

friends of mine, for you have destroyed Theon the *exegetes* and [Na]evius the prefect of Egypt, [who was prefect of the camp at] Rome, and now you are attacking this man.”’ The latter part of this passage is got from the London fragment and from my conjectural restoration of it. If my reading of the name Naevius is correct, the reference must be to Naevius Macro, the prefect of the Praetorian cohorts, and it then appears that his fall was due to the machinations of Isidorus. The fragment, if my restorations be accepted, proceeds : ‘ Isidorus : “ My lord Caesar, what concern is it of yours to [bother about] a twopenny-halfpenny Jew like Agrippa ? ”’ Claudius Caesar : “ What do you say ? You are the most shameless of all men.”’ After this the London fragment becomes too much mutilated for any confident restoration ; and when the Cairo fragment takes up the tale we are at a much later stage of the proceedings. Isidorus and Lampon are under sentence of death, and the former, reckless from the consciousness of impending doom, defies the Emperor. The text reads :—

‘ Claudius Caesar : “ You have killed many friends of mine, Isidorus.”’ Isidorus : “ I gave ear to the commands of the late Emperor. You too, tell me whom you wish me to accuse.”’ Claudius Caesar : “ Truly you are the son of a chorus girl, Isidorus.”’ Isidorus : “ I am not a slave nor yet the son of a chorus girl but gymnasiarch of the famous city of Alexandria. As for you you are the cast-off son (?) of the Jewess Salome¹³ . . .”’ So Lampon said to Isidorus : “ Well, what can we do but give way to an insane monarch ? ”’

That Lampon and Isidorus were put to death we know, not from this fragment, which ends here, but from a text relating to the condemnation of a later gymnasiarch, who invokes the memory of the ‘ martyrs ’. The propagandist work no doubt exaggerates the insolence of the two envoys, but in its general tone it well illustrates the spirit which animated the Alexandrines and which made the task of keeping order among the factious, bitter-tongued and violent populace so difficult.

¹³ Σὺ δὲ ἔξαλώμη[ς] (= ἐκ Σαλώμης) [τ]ῆς ιουδα[ι]ος . . . βλητος. So the text in Wilcken, *Chr.* 14. Th. Reinach’s viόjs [άπό]βλητος had found some acceptance, but W., with commendable prudence, left the lacuna as it was. A. von Premerstein (*Zu den sogenannten alexandrinischen Märtyrerakten, Philologus*, Supplementband xvi, Heft II) read ιουδα[ι]ος ήμ[ι]ο[ν δά]βλητος. In my copy of this article (p. 27) I have read, from the original (which I examined at Cairo in 1926), ιουδα[ι]ος υ[ι]ος [άπό]βλητος or [άπό]βλητος, noting that ‘ α would probably be visible ; ο is indicated ’, but adding

later ‘ There is a very tiny trace of ink but it is more probably the end of the last stroke of π ’. If my eyes can be trusted (I know how apt one is to read the same characters differently on different occasions) we seem forced back on άπόβλητος or ιουδα[ι]ος βλητος. On general grounds the former is perhaps slightly the more likely. To describe Claudius as the son, whether cast-off or supposititious, of Salome may seem preposterous ; but the modern world has seen not less monstrous assertions put about by anti-Jewish controversialists, and Isidorus at this stage was quite reckless.

Thirteen years passed before the occurrence of another outbreak serious enough to leave any trace on our sources. All through the first half of the first century there had been perceptible among the Jews a vague ferment and unrest, in which various currents can be distinguished, messianic hopes, religious enthusiasm, political and economic discontent. It was not confined to Judaea and may have been responsible among the Jews of Alexandria for the attempt to obtain the citizenship. In the year 66 it produced simultaneously a serious disturbance at Caesarea and the supreme catastrophe of Jewish history, the revolt at Jerusalem. This event had its repercussions at Alexandria ; for the conflict which there ensued, though it arose from a trivial cause unconnected with the revolt in Judaea, would hardly have been so bitter without the influence of that event.

A gathering of Alexandrines met in the amphitheatre to discuss the sending of an embassy to Nero. Josephus gives no details, but the object of the embassy may well have been an address of loyalty in connection with the Jewish revolt. At all events the discovery in the throng of some Jews provoked a storm. ‘Enemies and spies’—so they were described by the excited crowd, which attempted to lynch them. Most of them escaped but three were captured with the intention, according to Josephus, of burning them alive. The news of the outrage stirred the Jews to fury : they fell on the Greeks, pelted them with stones, and finally tried to burn the amphitheatre and all its occupants.

The prefect at the time was a renegade Jew, Tiberius Alexander, son of Alexander the Alabarch and nephew of the philosopher, Philo. He pointed out to the Jews how foolish it was at such a crisis in the history of the nation to irritate the Roman army, and his words had some effect on the more moderate among them, but the extremists laughed at and abused him. Eventually he had to call out the troops ; and to crush the Jews who, driven to the Delta quarter, defended themselves desperately, required not only the permanent garrison but a force of 2,000 men from Cyrene who had opportunely arrived on their way to the Jewish war. If we may trust Josephus—and his figures, like those of most ancient historians, must be used with caution—no less than 50,000 Jews perished before Alexander called off the troops.

This display of frightfulness served its purpose, so much so that in A.D. 70 Vespasian was able to detach 1,000 men from each of the two Egyptian legions to the Jewish war. After the fall of Jerusalem some of the extremists known as *sicarii*, whose impracticable fanaticism had done so much to bring about the final catastrophe, fled to Alexandria and tried to stir up a fresh revolt there. They even killed some of the moderates who opposed them ;

but the leaders of the *gerusia*, summoning a conference of the community, vehemently attacked the fanatics, who were, they declared, the cause of all the disasters which had befallen Judaea : now they were attempting to involve the Jews of the Diaspora also. The effect was immediate : the gathering fell on the *sicarii* and secured some 600 of them. The remainder fled to Upper Egypt, but were there captured.

After this, so far as appears from our fragmentary sources, peace reigned at Alexandria between Jews and Greeks for forty years. The Jews had learned their lesson from the reprisals of Tiberius Alexander, and, crushed and cowed by the destruction of the Temple and the defeat of the nationalist hopes, were for some time in no mood to try conclusions with Rome. But beneath the outward peace smouldered a fierce resentment. The revolt of Judaea had been followed by anti-Jewish measures on the part of the Roman government ; and these measures, in particular perhaps the diversion of the two-drachma tax on adult males, hitherto levied by Jewish law for the support of the Temple, to the cult of Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome, acted as a permanent irritant, which led at last to a renewed revolt. Before that, however, about A.D. 110, there occurred a local disturbance at Alexandria. That there had been trouble appears from an oration or lay sermon of the pagan sophist Dion Chrysostom to the Alexandrines : that it took the old form of a collision between Jews and Greeks is proved by another fragment of the nationalist literature, found at Oxyrhynchus. The propagandist tone is more evident here and the historical value less than in the fragment I have previously quoted : in particular the portrait given of the Emperor Trajan is a caricature. But it will be interesting to quote some of the text, which opens with the dispatch of rival embassies by the two sides, at least eleven Alexandrian envoys and seven Jewish, each party, we are strangely informed, 'taking their own gods'. The god of the Alexandrines was a bust of Sarapis : that of the Jews may have been a roll of the law. This is how the Emperor and one of the Greek ambassadors answer each other :—

'[Trajan] . . . "You are studying how to die, being so contemptuous of death as to answer even me with insolence." Hermaiscus said : "We are distressed that your council chamber has been filled with godless Jews." The Emperor said : "Look here, Hermaiscus, I tell you a second time, your pride of birth leads you to answer me insolently." Hermaiscus said : "What insolent answer am I making, most mighty Emperor ? Explain to me." The Emperor said : "Because you describe my council as dominated by Jews." Hermaiscus : "So the name of the Jews is irksome to you ? You ought then to turn round and help

your own people, and not to defend the godless Jews.’’ While Hermaiscus was saying this, sweat suddenly broke out on the bust of Sarapis which the envoys carried, and Trajan seeing it marvelled ; and presently there were tumults in Rome and a great deal of shouting and all fled to the high parts of the hills.’ Sarapis, in fact, like Jehovah, was ready to help his own people.

How this affair ended we do not know ; but a few years later, in 115, there occurred a storm of far greater intensity. Trajan was in the East, where war had broken out with Parthia, and the provincial garrisons had been reduced to supply his army. From Egypt in particular two of the three legions there stationed had been withdrawn, in whole or in part. The time seemed come, not indeed in Palestine, which was too near Trajan’s headquarters, but in Egypt and the Cyrenaica, to pay off old scores ; and in the latter region accordingly a revolt broke out. The Jews elected as king a certain Lukuas ; and so wholesale was the butchery in which they indulged that it looks as if they intended, by the extermination of the other inhabitants, to establish a new Jewish state on African soil : 220,000 people are said to have been slaughtered there, and 240,000 in Cyprus, to which the revolt spread. The Jews from Cyrene, led by their king, broke into Egypt, where the Roman garrison was now too weak to resist them. The defending army was routed at the first encounter and, fleeing to Alexandria, fell on the Jewish community there. The Jews, though outnumbered, fought with desperate courage, and not only in their own quarter, for they destroyed a temple of Nemesis just outside the city. Whole quarters of the city were laid waste during the struggle, but the Jews, unassisted by their compatriots outside, who, not venturing to attack Alexandria, were laying waste the upper country, were crushed in the end, and with a slaughter so terrible that the community never recovered its former importance.

For the time being, however, Egypt itself was lost ; and it was not till Trajan dispatched an army under one of his ablest generals, Q. Marcius Turbo, that the invaders could be expelled. Even to Turbo the task was by no means an easy one, and the revolt was not finally crushed until after the accession of Hadrian. Meantime there had occurred a new outbreak at Alexandria. Our knowledge of this event rests solely on the evidence of another specimen of the Alexandrian nationalist literature which records a law-case before Hadrian. The papyrus, though in the aggregate fairly extensive, is in a lamentable condition. The order of the columns is not beyond doubt, and there are extensive lacunae. Many of these have been filled conjecturally, and with the aid of further hypotheses it is possible to obtain a consecutive

narrative ; but many of the details are very much in the air, and experience makes it improbable that far-reaching restorations will be right. At all events it is clear that the disturbances were in some way connected with, probably indeed provoked by, the performance of a farce ridiculing the Jews and their ' comic-opera king ' as we may render the phrase used. This probably provoked the Jews into reprisals ; and on his accession Hadrian issued certain orders, perhaps with reference to the recent events or possibly concerning the rebuilding of the city, which were so distasteful to the Alexandrines that, with the irreverent wit which characterized them, they revenged themselves by singing satirical songs at the Emperor's expense. The prefect made numerous arrests, and no less than sixty Alexandrines were punished, while many of their slaves were beheaded. Other slaves remained in custody, and an attack was made on the prison in order to rescue them. Who made this attack was matter of lively controversy between the parties. The Greeks, declared the Jews : the slaves were theirs. No, retorted the Greeks, it was the Jews who wanted to arouse suspicion against us. The result of the trial is uncertain, but we learn that Antoninus, one of the Alexandrian envoys, was put to the torture by Hadrian's command. He faces the torturer with the defiant courage which custom required of martyrs, pagan or Christian.

These incidents were the last anti-Jewish disturbances of which the surviving evidence shows any trace during the Roman period. It is possible that there were no others. The Jewish community, much reduced in numbers and shorn of its privileges, was no longer to be either feared or envied ; and the Jews themselves, disheartened by the recent events and by the ruthless suppression of the last revolt of Judaea in 132-135, can have felt little inclination to challenge fresh reprisals. Not till the fourth century do we hear of them as playing a part in the politics of Alexandria.

The establishment of Christianity as the State religion did not lessen anti-semitic feeling : it actually intensified it. To the pagan Greeks the Jews were merely unpleasant neighbours who stood aloof from the religious observances of the city, took but an imperfect part in its social and civic life, and had a detestable habit of siding with the dominant power against the local opposition : to the Christians they were the stiff-necked people who had rejected the Messiah and crucified the Divine Son of Man. Thus racial prejudice was reinforced by religious fanaticism. The Jews, on their side, who had once again become an important element in the population, realising with true instinct the disruptive tendencies of Arianism, allied themselves with the Arian party,

and played an active part among the enemies of the great Athanasius. With Arianism enthroned at court, Athanasius's position, even when he was not in exile, was too insecure for reprisals to be practicable. The catastrophe came later, early in the fifth century, when the patriarchal throne was occupied by Cyril, that least attractive among the saints of the early church, who had so much more of the wisdom of the serpent than the harmlessness of the dove.

For some time relations between the Jews and the city mob had been embittered by disputes concerning the performances of dancers on the Sabbath. At a public meeting called by the prefect Orestes, who held office from 412 to 415, for the purpose of publishing certain ordinances, a number of Cyril's adherents, notably an elementary teacher named Hierax, a fervid admirer of his sermons and leader of the claque, were noticed by the Jews among the audience ; and they raised the cry that Hierax was there to cause a disturbance. Orestes had long suffered under the constant interference of Cyril, who aspired to be the uncrowned king of Egypt ; and he ordered Hierax to be arrested and put to the torture. Cyril was furious at the outrage ; but instead of complaining to Orestes he sent for the leaders of the Jews and in a hectoring speech threatened them with the direst consequences if they did not desist from their hostility. He merely added fuel to the flame : the Jews vowed revenge ; and the wilder spirits among them hit upon an ingenious means to obtain it. On an appointed night they raised the cry about the streets that the church of Alexander was on fire ; and when the Christians hurried from all sides to extinguish the flames, the Jews fell upon them and massacred many of them.

Cyril did not wait for the prefect to take action. He called together the fanatical mob of the city, that mob to which Hypatia later fell a victim, and led it against the Jews. The synagogues were all captured and turned into churches, the houses of the Jews pillaged, and the Jews themselves expelled *en masse* from the city.

Thus ended the Jewish community of Alexandria. For seven centuries it had played a great part in the life of the city, contributing largely to its commercial and industrial prosperity, and in intellectual matters permanently influencing the thought of the world ; and it had successfully faced more than one dangerous crisis ; but in the end Christian fanaticism had accomplished what the devotees of Sarapis could never effect. The Jews seem indeed to have returned at a later date ; for 'Amr, the Arab conqueror of Egypt, after the fall of Alexandria, wrote home to the Caliph, with obvious exaggeration if the text is sound : 'I have taken a city

of which I can but say that it contains 4,000 palaces, 4,000 baths, 400 theatres, 12,000 sellers of green vegetables, and 40,000 tributary Jews'; but that event belongs to a world so far removed from that with which I have been dealing that it lies quite outside the scope of this paper.