

THE ALEXANDRIAN JEWS
DURING THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
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CHARLES A. ALBERRO
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The Alexandrian Jews During the Ptolemaic
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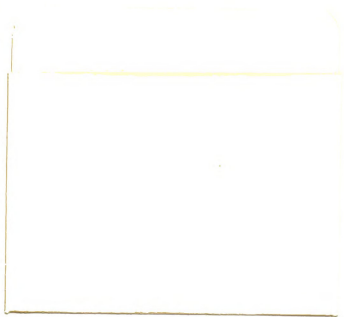
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ABSTRACT

THE ALEXANDRIAN JEWS DURING THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

By

Charles A. Alberro

This dissertation is a study of the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious life of the Jews of Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period. The work is divided into three parts: first, the foundation of Alexandria and the matter of when and how the Jews settled there; second, a study of the political, social, and economic activities of the Alexandrian Jews during the Ptolemaic period; and third, the influence of Hellenism on the Alexandrian Jews and an analysis of anti-Jewish feelings during this era.

Ancient sources for the Jews of Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period are scarce. Among the meager sources, Josephus is basic; but his works are late and apologetic for the Jews so that they must be balanced by good judgment and the use of papyri and other available ancient sources. Another problem is that most reliable sources from the Ptolemaic period come from outside of Alexandria, as is the case with all the extant papyri. Conclusions concerning the Alexandrian Jews are often based on the evidence offered by the papyri and ostraka concerning the Jews of Egypt proper, or they assume a similarity of practices between the Ptolemaic period and the early Roman one, since the later period is well represented in Alexandrian papyri.

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Evidence indicates that Jews were present at the very foundation of the city of Alexandria, though their exact number is difficult to estimate. The Jews occupied the Delta quarter during the Ptolemaic period, but this quarter did not constitute a "ghetto" since the Jews were not limited to one area but lived in others as well. By Roman times a second, unidentified, quarter of the city had become known as Jewish.

Very little is known concerning the political history of the Jews in Alexandria and in Egypt during the period between the reigns of Ptolemy I (323-285 B.C.) and Ptolemy VI (died 145 B.C.), relatively more during the rest of the Ptolemaic period. Not much is known, however, of the Alexandrian Jews per se, so that frequently assumptions concerning their activities must be gleaned from the general activities of the Jews in Egypt. The evidence shows that the Alexandrian and Egyptian Jews were aware of and closely affected by the political events that took place in Coele-Syria, especially Palestine, during the Ptolemaic period. On several occasions they actively participated in these events, and played an important role in determining the course of events in both Egypt and Coele-Syria.

What was the status of the Jews at Alexandria? During the Ptolemaic period, Alexandria was not a "Greek" city as were other cities founded by Alexander the Great. Rather, it was a collection of politeumata based on nationalities. As time passed, the Greek politeuma and the Jewish one became the two most important in Alexandria. The Jewish politeuma possessed, at the very least, an equality

of rights and privileges with the Greek politeuma. Probably under the direct control of the crown, Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period was neither a "Greek" city nor a "Jewish" one, but rather a "Royal City." To be an "Alexandrian" did not necessarily mean being a citizen of the Greek politeuma, but rather a member of one of the politeumata of Alexandria.

In many ways the Jews of Alexandria were similar to their brethren in other parts of the Diaspora, as well as those in Palestine. The religious center of the community was the synagogue. A second institution, the school, was closely associated with the synagogue. The Alexandrian Jews shared the same beliefs as their religious brethren, they participated in the same religious festivals, and they sent their tribute to the Temple of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, the Alexandrian Jews were strongly influenced by Hellenism. An increasing number of Jewish children received Greek names and a Greek education in the gymnasium. Greek became the everyday language for the Jews instead of Hebrew, so much so that the Torah, and eventually the rest of the Old Testament, had to be translated into the Greek Septuagint. Many Jews abandoned the stricter traditions, such as the Mosaic prohibition against marriages with Gentiles.

Anti-Jewish feelings did not manifest themselves in acts of violence during the Ptolemaic period. When Jews were persecuted and killed, the cases had political motivations. Anti-Semitism did express itself through literature, which included slanders--such as the Jewish adoration of an ass, or the annual Jewish sacrifice of a Greek man--believed by a great majority of people.

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Charles A. Alberro

The Ptolemaic period was in general peaceful and prosperous for the Alexandrian Jews. The Roman period would bring strife and persecutions previously unknown to the Alexandrian Jews, and finally destruction.

THE ALEXANDRIAN JEWS DURING THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

By

Charles A. Alberro^{riel}

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INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND THE SOURCES

The purpose of this investigation is to make a historical survey of the political, social, economic, and religious life of the Jews of Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period. The study is divided into three parts. Part One focuses on the matter of how and when the Jews settled in Alexandria, and this study is preceded by a brief geographical description of Alexandria as related to the Jewish settlement there. Part Two is divided into three chapters. Chapter III attempts to determine to what extent the Alexandrian and Egyptian Jews were involved in the political storms that ravaged the Ptolemaic kingdom. Chapter IV analyzes the long standing dispute about the social status of the Alexandrian Jews during the Ptolemaic period, especially whether or not the Jews as a whole were citizens of that city. And Chapter V studies the economic affairs of the Alexandrian Jews during this period. Part Three is divided into two chapters. Chapter VI studies the religious and cultural experiences of the Alexandrian Jews, and the influence that Hellenism exerted upon them. The last chapter analyzes the anti-Jewish feelings at Alexandria and Egypt during the Ptolemaic period and attempts to determine, if possible, the origins of such feelings.

Ancient sources concerning the Jews of Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period are scarce. Apart from Josephus, no one source can

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be utilized for the entire study; almost every topic requires a different set of sources. The few existing ones come chiefly not from the Ptolemaic period but from the Roman era.¹

Josephus constitutes the basic source for my study. Born during the reign of Caligula, c. 37 A.D., Josephus ben Matthias traced his family's ancestry back to a line of distinguished priests.² In the year 66 A.D. he reluctantly participated in the Jewish war against the Romans, and was eventually captured after the fall of Jotapata in 67 A.D.³ By prophesying that Vespasian would soon become emperor (an event which came true in 69 A.D.), Josephus gained the confidence of this general and of his sons Titus and Domitian.⁴ He went to Rome with Titus at the conclusion of the war, where he was assigned a residence, given Roman citizenship, and granted a yearly pension.⁵ Josephus was thus able to engage in literary work with the support of Vespasian and his sons.

Much criticism has been leveled against Josephus and his work by modern historians. In addition to being called a "renegade" and a

¹Only the Septuagint and the Letter of Aristeas, neither of which provides much reliable historical information on the subject, have survived from the Ptolemaic period originating from Alexandria itself. From outside of Alexandria, there is more extant material from the Ptolemaic era that refers to the Jews in Egypt and Alexandria, especially in the form of Greek papyri, ostraka, and inscriptions.

²Josephus The Life 1, 2.

³Jos. The Jewish War III. 387-92.

⁴Ibid., 399-408.

⁵Ibid., 422-423.

"coward,"⁶ he has been accused of being an apologist with very little sense of impartiality.⁷ There is no doubt that Josephus, like Philo, attempted to show the Jewish people in such a light as to make them acceptable to their Gentile neighbors, especially to the Greeks and Romans. In that sense both writers were apologists. But I do not find evidence that either intentionally altered the truth to suit his purpose.

Like all historians of antiquity, Josephus made mistakes. His reliability on matters he did not personally witness depends on the reliability of his sources, many of which he utilized without adequate discernment or critical analysis. As I have used Josephus, I have pointed out passages where his sources appear untrustworthy, and the reasons for which I make this judgment. Here I will analyze briefly his historical methods and aims, his use of sources, and his reliability, especially as these matters concern my study.

There are no references in the Jewish War (the first of his works) to Josephus' sources. The inference is that he relied upon his own experience as an eyewitness to the events he records. "The industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another's work, but one who uses fresh materials and

⁶S. G. F. Brandon, "Josephus: Renegade or Patriot?" History Today 8 (December 1958): 836.

⁷H. St. John Thackeray, Josephus, The Man and the Historian (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1967), pp. 19 and 27; Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 309-319.

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and makes the framework of the history his own."⁸ On occasions, Josephus interviewed people who were eyewitnesses to certain events he had not witnessed, and so based his report on their accounts.⁹ When the work was completed, Vespasian, Titus, and Agrippa II read it carefully and vouched for its fidelity to the truth.¹⁰

In spite of Josephus' silence concerning his sources for the Jewish War, he no doubt utilized a certain number, in addition to his own recollections. Thackeray suggests that Josephus used the "memoirs" or "commentaries" of Vespasian and Titus,¹¹ documents with which Josephus was familiar.¹² In addition, Thackeray believes he utilized a source frequently mentioned in the Antiquities,¹³ Nicolas of Damascus, friend of Herod the Great and Augustus,¹⁴ and author of a universal history which contained 144 books.¹⁵ Fragments of Nicolas' works have been preserved by Josephus, Athanaeus, and in the Constantine excerpts, de virtutibus and de insidiis.¹⁶ There seems to be no reason why the

⁸Jos. Jewish War I. 15.

⁹Jos. C. Ap. I. 47-52.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Thackeray, Josephus, p. 38.

¹²Jos. Life 342, 358; C. Ap. I. 56.

¹³Jos. Ant. I. iii. 6; VII. v. 2; XVI. 183-185; C. Ap. II. 84.

¹⁴Jos. Ant. XVI. 184.

¹⁵Athanaeus VI. 3.

¹⁶See Karl Müller, Fragmenta historicorum graecarum, 5 vols. (Paris: F. Didot, 1878-85), 3: 343-464; 4: 661-664, for a collection of most of Nicolas' fragments.

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overall credibility of Nicolas should be doubted, thus marking him as a reliable source. On the other hand, when it comes to events in the life of Herod the Great, his obvious partiality for this man makes those sections less reliable.

Josephus wrote the Jewish War, in part at least,¹⁷ to warn his fellow countrymen of the futility of opposing Rome. He saw himself as another Daniel before Belshazzar, prophesying the fall of Babylon,¹⁸ or another Jeremiah before Jerusalem, warning the besieged not to continue the resistance against the King of Babylon.¹⁹ "You are warring not against the Romans only, but also against God,"²⁰ Josephus claims to have told those besieged in Jerusalem by Titus. After describing the invincibility of the Roman army, Josephus states: "If I have dwelt at some length on this topic, my intention was not so much to extol the Romans as to console those whom they have vanquished and to deter others who may be tempted to revolt."

The Antiquities was written c. 94 A.D. (the thirteenth year of Domitian),²² some sixteen years after the completion of the Jewish

¹⁷ His outlook concerning the greatness of Rome furthered his personal interests as well, since as a propagandist of Rome he became highly esteemed by Vespasian and his sons.

¹⁸ Compare Jos. Ant. X. 250f. with Life 414-429.

¹⁹ Compare Jos. Ant. X. 115 with Jewish War V. 373-378.

²⁰ Jos. Jewish War V. 378.

²¹ Ibid., III. 108.

²² Jos. Ant. XX. 267.

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War.²³ Josephus' motive for writing the Antiquities was different from the one for the Jewish War. His purpose now was to magnify the Jewish people in the eyes of the Graeco-Roman world, to show that the Jews possessed a very ancient and glorious history, and that they merited respect for their way of life.²⁴

The Antiquities also differs from the Jewish War in that Josephus makes constant references to the sources he used for his work. For the pre-exilic portion of the Antiquities (books I-X), he utilized almost exclusively the canonical books of the Old Testament, and it seems that he often consulted the Greek translation known as the Septuagint.²⁵ Besides the Bible, he quotes, wherever possible, external authorities to support it, such as Herodotus, Menander, the Sibylline oracles, Nebuchadnezzar, Berosus, and others.²⁶

²³Jos. C. Ap. I. 50. According to this passage, the completed Jewish War was submitted to Vespasian (who ruled from 69-79 A.D.). After reading the work, the emperor vouched for the veracity of its information. Since Josephus did some writing in Rome previous to the Jewish War (Jewish War I. 3), it is safe to suppose that he completed the Jewish War towards the end of Vespasian's reign.

²⁴Jos. Ant. XVI. 174-178.

²⁵Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, 2 divisions, 5 vols., authorized English translation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), Div. I, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 85.

²⁶Jos. Ant. I. iii. 6 (Berosus, Mnaseas, Nicolas of Damascus); I. iii. 9 (Manetho, Berosus, Hesiod, Hecataeus, Hellanicus, Ephorus, Nicolas); I. iv. 3 (Sibylline Oracles, Hestiaeus); VII. iii. 2 (Homer); VII. vi. 2 and x. 2-3 (Herodotus), etc. Some of these sources, such as the Sibylline Oracles, are of dubious reliability.

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For the post-exilic history (the last ten books), Josephus utilized a great variety of sources, some of which are also of dubious reliability. This was the case especially for the period 440-175 B.C. for which Josephus depended almost entirely upon two unreliable productions,²⁷ the Alexander legends and the Letter of Aristeas.²⁸ The First Book of Maccabees is the principal source for the period 175-135 B.C., while the chief authorities for the period 135-37 B.C. are Nicolas of Damascus²⁹ and Strabo.³⁰ The careful method of weighing his evidence which characterizes Strabo, and is so conspicuous in his Geography, is discernible in several passages of Josephus.³¹ Polybius is mentioned twice,³² and Josephus had the good judgment to call him an "honest man."

Finally, the treatise against Apion (Contra Apionem) was aimed not only against the grammarian Apion and his calumniations against the Jewish people, but also (and perhaps mainly) against the prejudice, the anti-Jewish sentiment, and the attacks suffered by the Jews in those days.³³ He begins the defense of his people by once more giving

²⁸ Josephus based the passages of Ant. XII. 11-118 on this source.

²⁹ Nicolas is mentioned as a source on many occasions (Ant. XIII. 249, 347; XIV. 8, 68, 104, etc.).

³⁰ Strabo is mentioned by Josephus as a source in Ant. XIII. 286, 319, 347; XIV. 35, 68, 104, 114; XV. 9. Strabo's Geography is extant, but this is not the case with the historical writings which Josephus used.

³¹ Schürer, Jewish People, II, i, p. 87, referring to passages such as Ant. XIII. xii. 5.

³² Jos. Ant. XII. 135f. (concerning Antiochus III) and 385f. (concerning Antiochus IV's death).

³³ Jos. C. Ap. I. 2-5.

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evidence to the great antiquity and honorable past of the Jews. And he brings to bear as evidence for his assertions the statements of Phoenician,³⁴ Chaldean,³⁵ Greek³⁶ historians and other men of learning. In addition, Josephus cites official documents, such as the "letters of King Alexander and Ptolemy," the "papers of their successors," and the stele of Julius Caesar at Alexandria.³⁷

One of the problems encountered in working with Josephus, is the historian's occasional carelessness in cross-checking conflicting information he gives about a certain event in different passages of his works. A good example of this weakness is found when comparing the accounts of the foundation of the Temple of Leontopolis. Using an unknown source, Josephus states in the Jewish War³⁸ that the founder of this temple was Onias III, High Priest of the Jews, who was forced to flee into Egypt by the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. In Antiquities,³⁹ based probably on different source from the account in the Jewish War, the foundation is attributed to Onias IV, son of Onias III. It is left to the reader to evaluate the contradictory accounts in an attempt to determine what actually took place.⁴⁰

³⁴ Ibid., 112f.

³⁵ Ibid., 129f. (Berosus).

³⁶ Ibid., 162f. (Pythagoras), 167f. (Theophrastus), 168f. (Herodotus), 176f. (Aristotle), 183-204 (Hecataeus of Abdera), 205-213 (Agatharchides).

³⁷ Ibid., II. 37.

³⁸ I. 33 and VII. 423.

³⁹ XII.387ff. and XIII. 62ff.

⁴⁰ In Part Two, Chapter III, pp. 63ff., I analyze the accounts and argue for the reliability of the one in Antiquities.

Another good example of Josephus' use of different sources for a certain event, and the confusion produced by his failure to harmonize them or to distinguish between them, is found in the account of the Jewish settlement in Alexandria under Ptolemy I. In Antiquities⁴¹ Josephus relates how at one time (undetermined) Ptolemy I seized Jerusalem, captured about 100,000 Jews, and took them back to Egypt as slaves. Once there, Ptolemy assigned some of the Jewish slaves to garrison duties, while others he settled in Alexandria, where he gave them equal rights with the Macedonians. Josephus based this unlikely story on Agatharchides⁴² and on the Letter of Aristeas,⁴³ both unreliable sources for events which occurred during the time of Ptolemy I.⁴⁴

In his work Against Apion,⁴⁵ Josephus preserves a conflicting tradition of a Jewish settlement in Alexandria under Ptolemy I. Following a different source, Hecataeus of Abdera,⁴⁶ Josephus relates that after the battle of Gaza (312 B.C.), many of the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, hearing of the kindness of Ptolemy I, wished to follow him

⁴¹ Jos. Ant. XII. 3-8.

⁴² A Greek historian who lived in the second century B.C., and who probably wrote during the time of Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-145 B.C.).

⁴³ The account of Ant. XII. 11-118 is based almost word for word on this source.

⁴⁴ I have argued extensively against the reliability of Agatharchides on this matter in Part One, Chapter II, pp. 44ff. On the reliability of the Letter of Aristeas, see below, p. 35 and pp. 46ff.

⁴⁵ Jos. C. Ap. I. 186ff.

⁴⁶ Hecataeus lived during the time of Ptolemy I, and therefore was a contemporary of the events he reported.

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back to Egypt. The High Priest Hezekias gathered a great number of his people, and emigrated to Egypt. Between these two contradictory traditions the account found in Against Apion, based on Hecataeus, is the one that merits credibility.

Among the passages of Josephus that have provoked the greatest controversy in modern times are those that deal with the matter of Jewish citizenship in Alexandria.⁴⁷ In these passages Josephus either states or clearly implies that the Jews possessed Alexandrian citizenship. In what context are these passages found? In the Jewish War and in the Antiquities Josephus is endeavoring to show that the Jews were held in esteem by Hellenistic and Roman rulers alike.⁴⁸ The proof of their esteem was to be found in the many concessions and privileges which the Jews had been granted from Alexander the Great to Julius Caesar. Among the privileges mentioned by Josephus was the right of citizenship held not only by the Alexandrian Jews, but also by the Jews in other cities such as Sardes,⁴⁹ Cyrene,⁵⁰ and Antioch.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Jos. Jewish War II. 487; Ant. XII. 8; XIV. 187, 188; XVIII. 257-60; XIX. 280-285; C. Ap. II. 37f. For an analysis of these passages and a discussion of the citizen controversy, see below Part Two, Chapter IV, pp. 103-133.

⁴⁸ As for example, Ant. XIV. 185, 186: "It seems to me necessary to make public all the honours given our nation . . . by the Romans and their emperors, in order that the other nations may not fail to recognize that both the kings of Asia and of Europe have held us in esteem and have admired our bravery and loyalty."

⁴⁹ Ant. XIV. 259

⁵⁰ Ibid., XVI. 160.

⁵¹ Jewish War VII. 43-46.

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In Against Apion⁵² Josephus argues against Apion's claim that the Jews of Alexandria were not citizens of that city. Josephus maintains that the Jews were no different from any other group of persons who had been invited to join a colony and who by so doing took the name of the founders. He points out that the Jewish residents of Antioch were called Antiochenes, "having been granted rights of citizenship by its founder Seleucus. Similarly, those at Ephesus and throughout the rest of Ionia bear the same name as the indigenous citizens, a right which they received from Alexander's successors."⁵³ In a similar fashion, concludes Josephus, the Jews of Alexandria originally settled there by invitation of Alexander the Great, and therefore they are Alexandrians in every sense of the word. In addition, their Alexandrian citizenship is authenticized by official documents, such as the "letters of King Alexander and Ptolemy. . . . The papers of their successors . . . [and] the stele which stands in Alexandria, recording the rights bestowed upon the Jews by Caesar the Great."⁵⁴

In all these passages Josephus is attempting to present his people, the Jews, in a favorable light, and to defend them against the attacks of their enemies. Therefore, these passages are obviously apologetic in nature, and for this reason their reliability has been doubted by a school of modern historians.⁵⁵ Since the official

⁵² II. 37ff.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cf. Chapter IV of Part Two.

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documents he cites as evidence of his contentions are not extant, nor is there even proof (outside of Josephus' assertions) that they ever existed, the matter of the Alexandrian citizenship of the Jews remains a controversial one.

What does Josephus have to say about his historical methods and reliability? He criticizes historians (without naming them) who wrote histories based on hearsay reports, "who never visited the sites nor were anywhere near the actions described."⁵⁶ On the contrary, when he, Josephus, reported contemporary events he either had been present when they occurred, or went out later to the sites and interviewed those who had been actual eyewitnesses.⁵⁷ The result, says Josephus, is that his historical writings are a model of reliability as corroborated by such authorities as Vespasian, Titus, Archelaus, Herod, and Agrippa.⁵⁸

It is obvious that Josephus was aware of the aims and methods of a reliable historian. The fact that he was aware of them does not assure us that he always practiced what he knew. He no doubt used the sources that best accomplished his propagandistic and apologetic aims. On the other hand, and to his credit, there is evidence that he subjected (at least occasionally) his sources to critical examination.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Jos. C. Ap. I. 46.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 47-52. In Jewish War I. 16 he adds that "at a vast expenditure of money and pains" he managed laboriously to collect all essential facts and information pertinent to his histories.

⁵⁸ Jos. C. Ap. I. 50-52.

⁵⁹ For example, in Ant. XIV. 9 and XVI. 183-187 Josephus dismisses certain statements in Nicolas of Damascus as untrustworthy due to

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"Even when we become suspicious about Josephus' reliability and even when we can convict him of contradiction, and of . . . apologetic tendencies, we are faced with the circumstance that if we were to discard or eliminate Josephus, we would virtually be devoid of a clear knowledge of historical events from the beginning of the Maccabean War through the end of the first Christian century."⁶⁰ These words are all too true as far as my work is concerned.

Philo of Alexandria (born c. 20 B.C.), is also a source of great value. He represents the Hellenized Alexandrian Jew of this age, attempting on the one hand to remain true to the Jewish tradition, and on the other to fit into the Greek cultural atmosphere of Alexandria.

Philo's writings provide an insight into the religious, social, cultural, and legal practices of the Alexandrian Jews during the early Roman period, practices that no doubt also held true in general for the second and first centuries B.C. He was trying to explain his people, the Jews, to the Gentiles of his day. In that sense he was like Josephus, an apologist. On the other hand, since it was the religious ideas of the Jews that he was endeavoring to explain, his writings are not nearly as controversial in political matters as those of Josephus. And while his allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament may not have been shared by the majority of the Alexandrian Jews, the basic

Nicolas' pro Herod biases. In Ant. XIX, 68, 69, and 107 he disregards certain information provided by his Roman source (not named by Josephus) concerning the life of Gaius Caligula, because the information did not appear sound to him. Josephus offers alternatives which seem to him more logical.

⁶⁰ Thackeray, Josephus, p. xiii.

beliefs and practices which are the bases of his allegories were undoubtedly held in common with them.

For the political history of the Jews in Egypt and Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period I have, in addition to Josephus, occasionally utilized the non-canonical Books of the Maccabees. Even though the historical accuracy of the Third and Fourth Books of the Maccabees has been placed in doubt by modern scholars,⁶¹ valuable information concerning the Alexandrian Jews can be found in its pages, though it must be used judiciously. There is, for instance, in Third Maccabees,⁶² an account of how the Jews of Alexandria suffered a terrible persecution during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 B.C.). The king, angered by the Jews of Jerusalem who did not allow him entrance into the Holy of Holies, vented his wrath upon the Alexandrian Jews, who were condemned to die under the feet of elephants. At the last moment God intervened and miraculously spared the Jews from destruction.

Josephus has an account which is similar in many respects to that of Third Maccabees,⁶³ though he places this persecution during the time of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145 to 116 B.C.). In the struggle for the throne between the latter and Cleopatra II, the Jews, under the leadership of Onias IV, sided with the Queen. Euergetes II would have had political reasons for persecuting the Jews. Therefore the account

⁶¹ See, for example, Moses Hadas, The Third and Fourth Books of the Maccabees (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 15.

⁶² Third Maccabees V and VI.

⁶³ C. Ap. II, 53ff.

of Josephus seems more reliable since it fits better into the historical picture of the Ptolemaic period. The author of Third Maccabees, writing probably at the beginning of the Roman period,⁶⁴ used the same historical tradition as Josephus, but inaccurately placed the events at the time of Ptolemy IV Philopator. The account of Third Maccabees adds, however, color and details to the one found in Josephus.

Invaluable also are the numerous collections of papyri.⁶⁵ The most important for this study has been the collection by V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks,⁶⁶ who attempt to gather all published papyri and ostraka from Egypt that concerns Jews or Judaism. The Jews in Egypt and Alexandria appear in these primary documents as everyday people, involved, like the rest of the population, in such activities as farming, industry, commerce, government, military, and so on. These matter-of-fact, contemporary records are unusually reliable, albeit spotty, sources. Tcherikover has also included an extensive commentary which has added to the value of his work.

The great deficiency of these sources is that there are no extant Ptolemaic papyri from Alexandria itself.⁶⁷ It has, therefore,

⁶⁴ Hadas, Maccabees, p. 18 f.

⁶⁵ See Bibliography, under "Collections of Papyri, Ostraka, and Inscriptions."

⁶⁶ Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-64). Especially important have been volumes 1 and 2 which contain papyri and ostraka that have a direct bearing on the Jews in Egypt during the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 16.

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been necessary to draw conclusions from the evidence offered by the papyri and ostraka concerning the Jews of Egypt proper, or from the evidence of Alexandrian papyri from the early Roman period. In the latter case one must assume that what was true for the early Roman period probably often held true for the Ptolemaic era, or at least its latter part. Inferences so drawn can sometimes be checked by other available sources.

An important source for the religious practices of the Jews in Egypt and Alexandria is the Talmudic literature. This rabbinical literature comprises portions from both the Halacha and the Haggada. While both of these are based on the same premise, that is, the investigation, discussion, and criticism of the Scriptures, they differ in other ways. The Halacha concentrates on discussing the Torah. It analyzes the text and expands on its meaning and its application to everyday life. Validity is given in the Halacha to traditional custom as a means of interpreting the laws of the Torah. Thus, in the course of time, a multitude of legal decisions grew up, many of which had no connection with the Torah but were nevertheless of equal authority with the latter.

The Haggada consists of the elaboration of the historical and didactic portions of the Scripture. It freely uses subjective opinion and imagination in the explanation and expansion of these portions of the Old Testament. Thus many of the works of Philo,⁶⁸ where he comments

⁶⁸Such as De Abrahamo, De Iosepho, De Vita Moses, De Confusione Linguarum, etc. Philo's works are not part of the rabbinical Haggada, but an example of Haggadic work.

and expands on narrative and didactic portions of the Scriptures, can be considered an example of Haggadic treatment of the Scriptural text.

The Halacha and the Haggada were transmitted during the Ptolemaic period by oral tradition only. The final fixing of both in numerous and comprehensive literary works makes up what is called "Rabbinical Literature." Almost all rabbinical literature that has been preserved reaches no farther back than the last decade of the second century after Christ.⁶⁹ But the oral traditions thus fixed in the rabbinical literature go back many centuries, and therefore constitute an invaluable source for the religious customs of the Jews, in Palestine and in the Diaspora, during the Ptolemaic period.

Part of the rabbinical literature became known as "Talmudic Literature." These are commentaries upon Scripture, a combination of Halacha and Haggada, but grouping the materials in a systematic order, according to the subjects dealt with. The Talmudic literature embraces the Mishna, the Tosephta, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud.

Numerous other sources provide some information, but in a much lesser degree than the Jewish writers. For the foundation and topography of the city of Alexandria the main sources are Arrian⁷⁰ and Strabo.⁷¹ Arrian, born at Nicomedia about 96 A.D., based his history of Alexander mainly on the reliable accounts of Ptolemy and

⁶⁹Schürer, Jewish People, Div. I, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 118.

⁷⁰Anabasis of Alexander III. i and ii.

⁷¹Book XVII.

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Aristobulus,⁷² who in turn based their works on their own recollections and material from Callisthenes. When Arrian utilizes other sources, he uses the term logos, and part of the story of the foundation of Alexandria is based on logos and not on Ptolemy or Aristobulus.⁷³ He does not identify the source of the logos in this case, and rarely can it be determined elsewhere in his writings. In general, his work is trustworthy, though he is more comparative than critical.⁷⁴

Strabo's description of Alexandria is based on what he saw while he visited the city in 24 B.C. Since the city obviously experienced many changes from its foundation to Strabo's time, his description must be considered rather unreliable for the early Ptolemaic era. In addition, his wording is often vague and inconclusive, shifting from one area of the city to another without warning, leaving the reader confused as to the exact location of many of the sites described. Nevertheless, his description is far better than the extremely brief one by Diodorus Siculus,⁷⁵ who had visited the city a generation earlier. In addition to being brief, Diodorus' account is worded in even more vague and general terms than Strabo's.

⁷²Anabasis I. Preface.

⁷³Anabasis III. ii. 1, on the story of the barley-meal dropped by the soldiers to mark the perimeter of the city.

⁷⁴R. B. Steele, "The Method of Arrian in the Anabasis," Classical Philology, XIV (1919): 157. By "more comparative than critical" Steele refers to Arrian's method of placing facts gathered from Aristobulus and Ptolemy by the side of facts gathered from other authors, none of whom (except Onesicritus) he identifies by name. When his authorities disagree, he often cannot decide which is correct.

⁷⁵Diodorus Siculus XVII. 52.

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Plutarch is another source occasionally useful.⁷⁶ He was a biographer rather than a historian, more interested in relating anecdotes than in reporting facts with accuracy, more interested in moral edification than in stating the truth. As a result he sometimes is careless in chronological matters, omits many important events, and retells stories of uncertain authenticity. For his Life of Alexander it is possible that he utilized the same sources as Arrian, since there are many similarities between the two accounts.⁷⁷

The Letter of Aristeas provides a legendary account of how the Septuagint came into existence, and also recounts the fate of the 100,000 Jewish captives brought to Egypt as slaves by Ptolemy I: acting on the request of the courtier Aristeas (the alleged author of this work), King Ptolemy II granted freedom to all Jewish slaves in Egypt.⁷⁸ The Letter of Aristeas, supposedly written during the reign of Ptolemy II (died 246 B.C.), is considered today a forgery dating from about 132 B.C.,⁷⁹ and therefore called by many authorities Pseudo-Aristeas. From beginning to end it reads like a tale. Therefore, I have argued

⁷⁶ Caesar, Pompey, Alexander, Antony, Cato the Younger, and Crassus.

⁷⁷ J. E. Powell, "The Sources of Plutarch's Alexander," Journal of Hellenic Studies, 59 (1939): 231f.

⁷⁸ Letter of Aristeas 22.

⁷⁹ Hadas, Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 54; E. Bickermann, "Zur Datierung des Pseudo-Aristeas," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 29 (1930): 280-296; J. G. Février, La Date, la composition, et les Sources de la Lettre d'Aristee a Philocrate (Paris: Bibliotheque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, 1925), pp. 10ff.

below⁸⁰ against accepting Pseudo-Aristeas as an authoritative source to support an alleged settlement of 100,000 Jewish slaves in Egypt by Ptolemy I.

There are intermittent references in other authors to the Jews of Egypt and Alexandria which add some details to my study. But the synthesis and harmonizing of all available sources still leaves an account which is fragmentary, uneven, and weighted in favor of the Jews.

⁸⁰ See below, Part One, Chapter II, pp. 46-52. The internal evidence which I analyze in this study corroborates my contention that Ps.-Arist. is historically untrustworthy.



PART ONE

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CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATION OF ALEXANDRIA: A TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Arrian, the main historical source for the foundation of Alexandria,¹ describes the event in the following way:

When he [Alexander] had reached Canopus and sailed round Lake Mareotis, he came ashore where is now the city of Alexandria, named after Alexander. It struck him that the position was admirable for founding a city there and that such a city was bound to be prosperous. He was therefore filled with eagerness to get to work, and he himself marked out the ground plan of the city, both where the marketplace was to be laid out, how many temples were to be built and in honor of what gods . . . and where the wall was to be built.²

Arrian then adds the following story, which he saw no reason to disbelieve. Alexander, wishing to lay out the ground plan of the fortification, did so by having his soldiers drop behind him as he walked the meal (barley) which they carried in vessels. Arrian adds that the soothsayers then prophesied prosperity for the future city.³

¹See also Plutarch, Life of Alexander 26, and Pseudo-Callisthenes Life of Alexander I. 32. Neither of these romantic accounts is as reliable as Arrian.

²Arrian Anabasis of Alexander III. i. 5.

³Ibid., ii. 2. Strabo XVII. i. 6, and Plutarch Life 26, relate a similar story. Plutarch adds, however, that birds suddenly descended upon the area and devoured every bit of the flour that had been used to set out the perimeter of the city. Alexander felt troubled, says

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The date of the foundation was probably early in the year of 331 B.C.⁴

It seems clear from Arrian's statements that Alexander's purpose in establishing a city at that particular spot stemmed from his firm belief that this city was "bound to be prosperous." The potential of the harbor for future commercial activities cannot have been overlooked by Alexander,⁵ and it is even possible that Alexandria was founded to become a "Macedonian Tyre."⁶

One might add some other probable motives for the foundation of Alexandria. The climate of the area was excellent.⁷ Possibly a complex of villages already existed on the spot, including a series

Plutarch, at this event until the augurs restored his confidence once more by telling him that the event was a sign that the future city would not only abound in all good things within itself, but also be a feeder of many nations.

⁴Pseudo-Callisthenes *Life* 1. 32. 10 places the event on the 25th of Tybi. P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1972), 2:3, note 9, has concluded that the equivalent of this date should be calculated on the Roman calendar and not on the Ptolemaic. Thus the foundation should be placed early in 331 B.C.

⁵Strabo XVII. i. 7.

⁶D. G. Hogarth, "Alexander in Egypt and some Consequences," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 2 (1915): 53-60. Hogarth maintains that Alexandria was founded with the purpose of taking Tyre's place in world commerce, thus preventing the potential revival of Tyre after its recent destruction by Alexander.

⁷Strabo XVII. i. 7; Diodorus XVII. 52. 2; Ammianus Marcellinus XXII. 16. 8.

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of canals running through them into the sea.⁸ If this was the case the area was evidently propitious for the establishment of a large city.

Alexander founded many cities throughout his vast empire, and probably he was not always driven by the same motives. Nevertheless I suggest that at least one motive persisted in each and every case: the hope of making his cities a potential melting pot of races and cultures which would aid in setting the basis for an universal kingdom of which he would be the supreme ruler. I am convinced that he did indeed have this ideal of establishing such a kingdom, a kingdom in which there would be eventually a fusion of races and cultures.⁹ The existence of this ideal would help to explain why he established so many new cities throughout the territories he conquered. Of course these cities would serve for military and administrative purposes also, as well as centers for the diffusion of Hellenistic culture.

⁸Pseudo-Callisthenes Life I. 31. 2, mentions 13 villages, of which Rhakotis was the most famous, as existing in this area at the time of the foundation. Strabo XVII. i. 6 implies, on the other hand, that only Rhakotis existed on the spot.

⁹The mass marriages at Susa and Alexander's speech at Opis are indications of the existence of this ideal. This theory has been proposed by Charles Robinson, Alexander the Great (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1947), pp. 166-67, 216-219; and by W. W. Tarn, "Alexander: The Conquest of the Far East," Cambridge Ancient History, ed. J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1927), Vol. 6, Chapter XIII, p. 437f.; Alexander the Great (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1972), p. 137f.; Tarn goes as far as to maintain ("Alexander," p. 437) that Alexander "proclaimed for the first time . . . the brotherhood of man."

It was from Strabo that we learn the main topographical features of Alexandria.¹⁰ Having arrived in the company of the Prefect Aelius Gallus in 24 B.C., Strabo traveled throughout Egypt and finally settled at Alexandria for a considerable period of time. His description of the city is of course based on what he saw at the time he was there, thus making it rather unreliable for the Ptolemaic era. To add to the unreliability, his wording is many times vague and inconclusive, shifting from one area of the city to another without warning, leaving the reader, who has not been able to visit Alexandria in 24 B.C., uncertain of the exact location of innumerable sites. The account of Diodorus,¹¹ who had visited the city a generation earlier, is even more vague and general.

A great many authors have attempted to compile maps of Ptolemaic and Roman Alexandria based on the description of Strabo and Diodorus.¹² There is general discrepancy among these authors, and no two maps agree except for some basic features which I have incorporated in my own map.¹³ Guesswork will probably never be eliminated from topographical studies of Alexandria, since what nature did not alter through the ages, man

¹⁰ Strabo XVII. 792-795.

¹¹ Diodorus Siculus XVII. 52.

¹² A. Bernand, Alexandrie La Grande (Paris: Arthaud, 1966), p. 376; Fraser, Ptol. Alex., I: 8; H. T. Davis, Alexandria, the Golden City, 2 vols. (Evanston: The Principia Press of Illinois, 1957), I: 5; John Marlowe, The Golden Age of Alexandria (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1971), p. 55; E. M. Forster, Alexandria: A History and a Guide (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 38.

¹³ See below, p. 31.

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did. In addition, extensive archaeological excavations, indispensable if ancient sites are to be determined with exactitude, are practically impossible without disturbing modern Alexandria, and therefore few have been and probably will be undertaken. In any case, I shall deal only in general terms with the topography of ancient Alexandria as it relates to the history of the Jewish people living there during the Ptolemaic period.

Several ancient sources attest to the fact that Alexandria was enclosed by walls.¹⁴ According to Arrian and Diodorus, Alexander himself determined the lines of the walls.¹⁵ However, it appears that the task of erecting the walls was not completed until the time of King Ptolemy I; for Tacitus, in his account of the origins of the cult of Serapis, speaks about Soter as the "first of the Macedonians to establish the power of Egypt on a firm foundation, by giving the new city of Alexandria walls, temples, and religious rites."¹⁶

Callimachus¹⁷ speaks of the scholars of Alexandria gathering "in the shrine before the wall." And Livy, in his account of the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C.,¹⁸ makes it clear that

¹⁴ Strabo, however, is not among them, probably because by his time the city had spread beyond the walls so that they no longer held their previous importance. He does mention (XVII. 1. 16) the Canopic Gate, and speaks of "going out" through it.

¹⁵ Arrian III. i. 5; Diodorus XVII. 52. Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII. 16. 7, states that the architect Dinocrates performed this task using flour.

¹⁶ Tacitus The Histories IV. 83. 1.

¹⁷ Callimachus Iambus I fragment 191, lines 9-11.

¹⁸ Livy XLIV. 19. 9 and XLV. 11. 1.

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Antiochus found the walls on the eastern side very effective in thwarting his attempt to take Alexandria.

The existence in Ptolemaic times of two large necropoleis at Chatby and Gabbari has aided scholars in determining the approximate course of the walls on the eastern and western part of the city, respectively, since according to Greek practice both necropoleis would have been located outside the city walls.¹⁹ The southern course of the walls is a matter open to conjecture, and no one can guarantee its exact location,²⁰ so that on my map I have only tentatively traced this particular course.

The general street plan, as it was in Strabo's days, included two main streets "which cut one another into two sections and at right angles."²¹ These two streets were particularly wide, "more than a plethrum" (one hundred feet) to allow for horse-riding and chariots. One of the streets ran from the Necropolis of Gabbari "past the Gymnasium, to the Canopic Gate."²² It can only be assumed that the other street, which must have run north and south, did so somewhere towards the center of the city.

Next Strabo describes the region of the city called "The Palaces" in the following manner:

¹⁹Strabo XVII. i. 10. See also Fraser, Pt. Alex., 1: 12, and 2: 26, note 64.

²⁰Fraser, Pt. Alex., 1: 12.

²¹Strabo XVII. i. 8.

²²Ibid., 9.

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And the city contains most beautiful public precincts and also the royal palaces, which constitute one-fourth or even one-third of the entire enclosure of the city. . . . However all these buildings are continuous to each other and to the harbour. . . . The Museum is also part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk, an Exedra with seats, and a large house, in which are the refectory and mess of the scholars who belong to the Museum. This group of men not only hold property in common, but also have a priest in charge of the Museum, who formerly was appointed by the kings, but is now appointed by Caesar. The monument known as the Sema is also part of the royal palaces. This was the enclosure which contained the tombs of the kings and of Alexander.²³

The next section in Strabo deals with an account of the disposal of Alexander's body. And nowhere else will Strabo deal with the location of the Museum or the Sema, so that one is left completely uncertain about the exact location of these two structures. Strabo continues:

In the Great Harbour at the entrance, on the right hand, are the island and the tower Pharos, and on the other hand are the reefs and also the promontory Lochias, with a royal palace upon it; and on sailing into the harbour one comes, on the left, to the inner royal palaces, which are continuous with those on Lochias and have groves and varied dwellings. Below these lies the harbour that was dug by the hand of man and is hidden from view, the private property of the kings, and also Antirrhodos, an isle lying off the artificial harbour, which has both a royal palace and a small harbour. . . . Above the artificial harbour lies the theatre; then the Poseidium, an elbow as it were, projecting from the Emporium, as it is called, and containing a temple of Poseidon. To this elbow of land Antony added a mole projecting still farther, into the middle of a harbour, and on the extremity of it built a royal lodge which he called Timonium.²⁴

As can be seen from Strabo's description, the island of Pharos, with the lighthouse on it, is the first thing a traveler approaching Alexandria and the Great Harbour by ship would see. The island of

²³ Strabo XVII. i. 8.

²⁴ Ibid., 9.

Pharos was known in antiquity as the home of Proteus, where the sea-god was worshiped.²⁵ The famous lighthouse, made of white marble, was one of the wonders of the ancient world.²⁶ The island itself was inhabited and was connected to the mainland by the Heptastadium, which was not only a bridge but also an aqueduct.²⁷ The Heptastadium divided the Great Harbour on the east from the Eunostus Harbour on the west. Next to the Eunostus harbour can be found the "artificial harbour, which is also called Cibotus; it too has ship-houses."²⁸ A canal ran from Cibotus to Lake Mareotis.²⁹

During the Ptolemaic era, Alexandria was divided into five major divisions or quarters: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon.³⁰ Josephus describes the area where the Delta quarter was situated as the "finest residential quarter" of the city, on the coast, in an area where there were no harbors, in the neighborhood of the palaces.³¹ According to this data, the Delta quarter would have been situated east of Lochias, near the eastern city walls. In addition, Philo

²⁵ Pseudo-Callisthenes Life I. 32. 1-3.

²⁶ Strabo XVII. i. 6 (792); Jos. Ant. XVI. 144; Jewish War IV. 612 and 613.

²⁷ Strabo XVII. i. 6.

²⁸ Ibid., 795.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Pseudo-Callisthenes Life I. 32. 9; Philo In Flaccum 55.

³¹ Jos. C. Ap. II. 33-36.

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implies proximity to the Necropolis,³² a detail which would reinforce the above-mentioned conclusion.

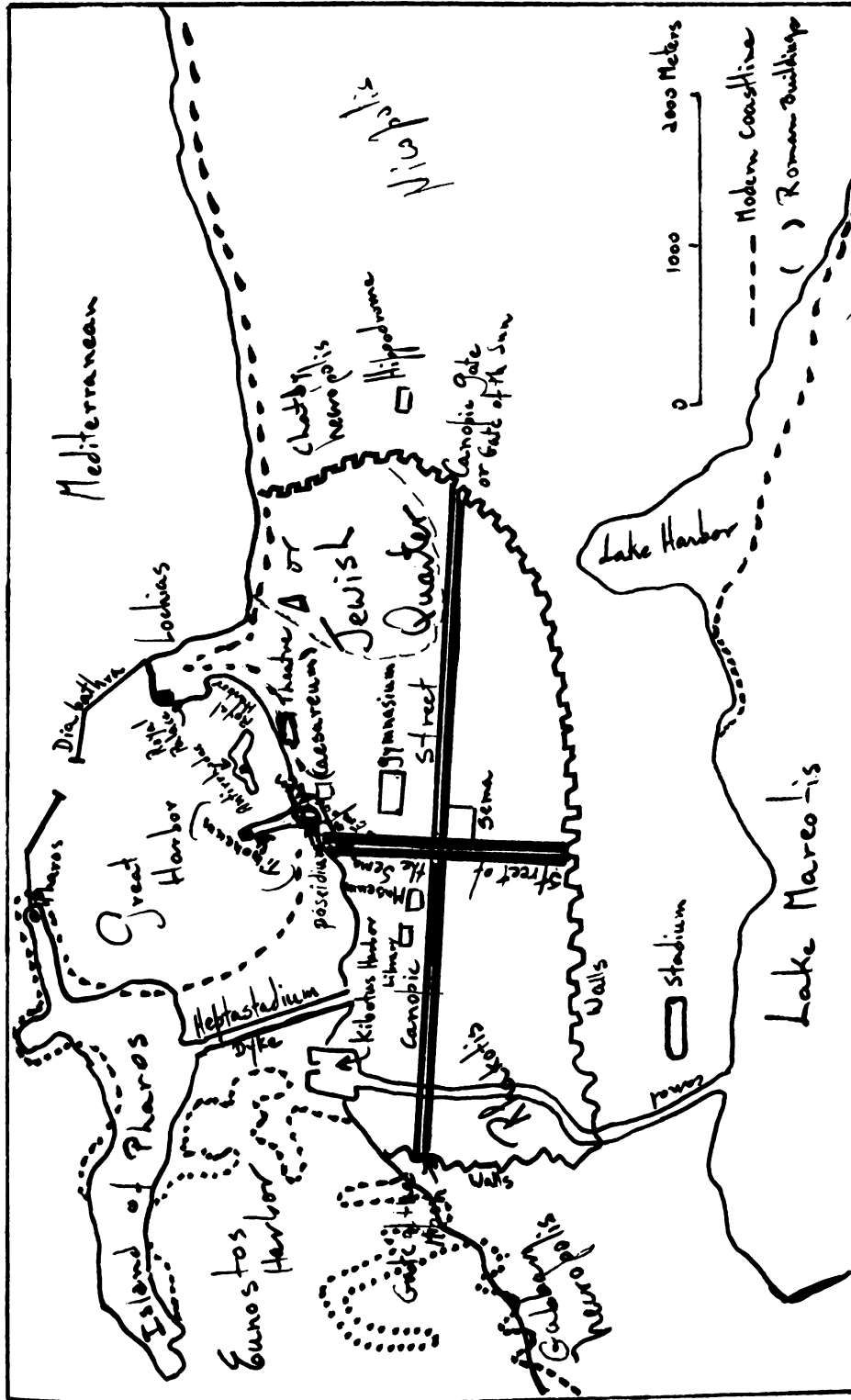
It was this area of the city, the Delta quarter, which was occupied mostly by the Jewish people. By Roman times a second quarter of the city had become known as Jewish, "because most of the Jews inhabit them, though in the rest of the quarters also there are not a few Jews scattered about."³³ Unfortunately, it is not known which was the second quarter of Alexandria that had become Jewish by Roman times. Neither is it known where any of the other above-mentioned quarters were located, apart, of course, from the Delta quarter. It is evident that the Jews did not, however, form part of a ghetto, since they were not confined to a single quarter or area. The attempt would have been a physical impossibility in any case, since by the time of Philo, the middle of the first century A.D., the Jews in Alexandria numbered close to a million.³⁴

³² Philo In Flaccum VIII. 56.

³³ Ibid., 55.

³⁴ Ibid., VI. 43. H. Idris Bell, Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt (Liverpool: at the University Press, 1953), p. 36, believes Philo's estimate to be not seriously exaggerated.

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CHAPTER II

WHEN AND HOW THE JEWISH PEOPLE SETTLED IN ALEXANDRIA

In the extant literature, Josephus is an important source for the Jewish settlement in Egypt and in Alexandria during the time of Alexander the Great and his successors. In his writings he has preserved three different traditions, two of which are apparently contradictory, a reflection, perhaps, of the fact that in each case he used different sources.

The First Tradition: A Settlement Under Alexander the Great

In Contra Apionem¹ Josephus engages in a lengthy analysis and refutation of Apion's accusations against the Jews of Alexandria. Evidently Apion considered the Jews an inferior people, a people with an Egyptian origin. And since Apion considered himself an Alexandrian rather than a native Egyptian, he reflected in his comments about the Jews the disdain that Greeks felt for the natives of the country.

First, Josephus disclaims an Egyptian origin for the Jews, referring the reader to his Antiquities for proof of the falseness of Apion's accusation. Josephus retorts to Apion by pointing out that it was not the Jews who had an Egyptian origin but rather Apion himself,

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a man born on The Great Oasis (west of Thebes) in upper Egypt. Apion could, therefore, be considered "more Egyptian than all of them, as one might say," a man who had "disowned his true country and falsely claimed to be an Alexandrian, thereby admitting the ignominy of his race. . . . Had he not had the meanest opinion of native Egyptians he would never have turned his back on his own nation."²

Josephus then explains how and when the Jews had entered Egypt and settled in Alexandria. Alexander the Great, in recognition of the support he had received from the Jewish people during his campaigns and as a reward for valor and fidelity, settled a colony of Jews at Alexandria on terms of equality with the Greeks.³ Scholars such as Schürer⁴ and Bell⁵ give credence to this account by Josephus and acknowledge a settlement in Alexandria under Alexander the Great. Others, such as Tcherikover⁶ and Bevan,⁷ do not agree.

²Ibid., 29-31.

³Ibid., 42. Also Jos. Jewish War II. 487, and Ant. XIX. 281.

⁴Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), 2: 228 of Div. II.

⁵H. I. Bell, Jews and Christians in Egypt (Oxford: at the University Press, 1924), p. 10.

⁶Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), p. 272.

⁷E. Bevan, A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), p. 8.

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Tcherikover argues that Josephus' account of a settlement under Alexander was part of an apologetic section which dealt also with the alleged citizenship of the Jews at Alexandria, a point which Josephus attempted to prove by means of some documents and inscriptions on monuments which he cited. Since Tcherikover does not believe that the Jews were citizens of Alexandria, nor that the documents cited existed in actuality,⁸ he also disregards any and all statements concerning a settlement under Alexander.

Even if one were to concede that Josephus was wrong on this matter, it should not necessarily mean that he was also wrong regarding everything else he wrote about in this section. Such an implication would necessitate the elimination of almost all of Contra Apionem for untrustworthiness.

Tcherikover's second argument against a settlement under Alexander is that neither Aristeeas nor Hecataeus of Abdera (fourth to third century B.C.) mentions such an event;⁹ rather, Aristeeas "passes over Alexander's period in silence, whence a conclusion may be drawn in respect of Hecataeus also, since Aristeeas had read Hecataeus."¹⁰ This is an argument from silence, which is at best weak. It is true that Hecataeus was a contemporary of Alexander,

⁸For a discussion of the citizenship matter see below, Part Two, Chapter III.

⁹Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 495, note 8. For a discussion of the reliability of Aristeeas and the date of the Letter of Aristeeas see below, pp. 35 and 46ff.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 272.

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and one perhaps could expect him to mention the Jewish settlement in Alexandria by the Macedonian. But it is also true that most of his writings have been lost, and what little has been preserved derives from the writings of Josephus. It is evident that Josephus did not have before him a clear-cut statement from Hecataeus concerning any settlement of Jews at Alexandria under Alexander the Great, but this factor cannot be considered conclusive proof that such a settlement did not occur.

As for the Letter of Aristeas, it is considered by general consensus to be a forgery dating from a date shortly after 132 B.C.¹¹ I cannot therefore agree with Tcherikover in placing such great importance on the fact that Aristeas' letter, a recognized forgery, did not mention an event which would have taken place 200 years before the forgery was written.

Bevan's argument against the alleged settlement under Alexander is that the Macedonian would not have been especially interested in the Jews, since the Jews "were not in those days what they afterwards became--a people connected to a preeminent degree with trade and

¹¹ Moses Hadas, Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), p. 54. Also E. Bickermann, "Zur Datierung des Pseudo-Aristeas," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 29 (1930): 280-296; J. G. Février, La Date, composition, et les Sources de la Lettre d'Aristee a Philocrate (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, 1925), p. 10ff. In addition to being considered a forgery by modern scholars, internal evidence, as I attempt to show during the course of this study, strengthens my assertions that Ps.-Aristeas cannot be considered in any way historically trustworthy. See below, pp. 46-51 for a discussion of the reliability of Ps.-Aristeas concerning the matter of the Jewish slaves.

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finance."¹² And since Bevan feels that Alexander's motives for establishing Alexandria were mainly economic and commercial, there would have been no reason for Alexander to include a colony of Jews in his new city.

Even though economic considerations played a vital role in the establishment of Alexandria, I believe that the Macedonian intended that his cities become also a melting pot of races and cultures, perhaps as an expedient way of unifying and maintaining control over his empire. If this was so, then a Jewish colony at Alexandria would not have been out of place. In addition, Josephus mentions the gratitude for loyal services which impelled Alexander to establish a Jewish colony in his new city. For this reason I cannot agree with Bevan, but accept Josephus' account of Alexander's settling the Jewish colony.

The Settlements Under Ptolemy I: The Question
of the 100,000 Jewish Slaves

Josephus also preserves two other traditions of Jewish immigration into Egypt and of settlements in Alexandria. The two traditions apparently contradict each other, reflecting perhaps the fact that Josephus utilized different sources for each account.

The earlier tradition is the one that derives from Hecataeus of Abdera. This historian, as quoted by Josephus, stated that after the battle of Gaza (312 B.C.) in which Ptolemy I defeated Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, all Syria and Palestine came under the control

¹² Bevan, Hist. of Egypt, p. 7f. Also Jos. C. Ap. I. 60.

of Ptolemy. "Many of the inhabitants, hearing of the kindness and humanity of Ptolemy desired to accompany him to Egypt."¹³ Hezekias, the High Priest of the Jews, gathered a great many of his people and read to them a document which enumerated all the advantages promised to them by Ptolemy if they emigrated to the land of the Nile. The report was accepted with great enthusiasm so that Hezekias and a multitude of Jews followed Ptolemy back to Egypt. All these Jews had been attracted by the "excellence of the country and Ptolemy's liberality."¹⁴

Josephus based the second account on Agatharchides, a Greek historian who lived in the second century B.C., and who probably wrote during the time of Ptolemy VI Philometor, though his work is not extant. According to this tradition, at one time (undetermined by Agatharchides as quoted by Josephus) Ptolemy I seized Jerusalem by resorting to cunning and deceit. He accomplished this feat by entering the city on the Sabbath, pretending that he wished to offer sacrifice to YHWH. Of course the Jews did not oppose him, especially since it would be against the Law of Moses to take up arms on the day of rest. Instead of offering sacrifice, Ptolemy took over the city and "ruled it harshly."¹⁵ When he left Jerusalem and Palestine, Ptolemy took with him to Egypt 100,000 Jewish captives as slaves. Once in Egypt, he assigned some of the slaves for garrison duties, while others were

¹³ Jos. Ant. XII. 9.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4.

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settled in Alexandria where "he gave them equal rights with the Macedonians."¹⁶

The next portion of Josephus' account¹⁷ is based almost word for word on a different source, the Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates, called Pseudo-Aristeas today by most authorities.¹⁸ The purpose of Pseudo-Aristeas was to give an account of how the Septuagint came into existence;¹⁹ however, a portion of the work was also dedicated to recounting the fate of the 100,000 Jewish slaves brought into Egypt by Ptolemy I. Basically in agreement with Agatharchides, Pseudo-Aristeas expanded greatly on the former's account.

Naturally, the author of the Letter of Aristeas declares himself to be none other than Aristeas himself, a very close friend of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (who ruled from 285 to 246 B.C.). This king wished that a translation be made into Greek of the Jewish laws, and petitioned Demetrius of Phalerum, who was in charge of the king's library, to start working towards this objective. Aristeas felt that this would be an opportune time to reconsider the plight of many thousands of Jewish slaves living in Egypt, and so he approached Ptolemy II with the following request:

We ought not, O king, to allow ourselves to be deceived, but to show the truth as it is; for, since we have decided not only to transcribe the laws of the Jews but also to translate them for your pleasure, by what right should we

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Ibid., 11-118.

¹⁸ See above p. 35, note 11.

¹⁹ See below, Part Three, Chapter VI, pp. 197-205.

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do this while so many Jews are slaves in your kingdom?
In accordance, therefore, with your magnanimity and goodness
set them free from their misery, since the God who gave them
their laws is the same who presides over your kingdom, as I
have succeeded in learning after much study.²⁰

After Aristeeas had spoken these and a few other words, the king "looked
at him with a cheerful and happy expression and asked, 'How many tens
of thousands to be set free do you suppose there will be?'"²¹ The king
was told there would be "somewhat more than 110,000 slaves."²² The
king then said:²³

It is indeed but a small gift that you are asking, Aristeeas.
But Sosibius and the others present said that he ought to
make a thank-offering worthy of his own magnanimity to God
who had bestowed the kingdom on him, and so, being gently
persuaded by them, he gave orders that, when they paid the
soldiers their wages, they should also pay them 120
drachmas for every captive [Jewish slave] they had.²⁴

The king then published a decree which in effect set free not only the
Jewish slaves "brought by his father [Ptolemy I] and his army, but also
those who had previously been found in the kingdom and any who were
subsequently brought in."²⁵

The actual decree, which Josephus reproduced following
Pseudo-Aristeeas,²⁶ stipulated the punishment that those who disobeyed

²⁰ Jos. Ant. XII. 19-21 and Ps.-Arist. 15.

²¹ Jos. Ant. XII. 24 and Ps.-Arist. 16.

²² Ps.-Arist. 17 has "a little over 100,000."

²³ Jos. Ant. XII. 25.

²⁴ Ps.-Arist. 20 quotes the sum of 20 drachmas offered to the
soldiers for each Jewish slave.

²⁵ Jos. Ant. XII. 26 and Ps.-Arist. 22.

²⁶ Except for the amount of talents paid out (see below, note 28).

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the decree would suffer: they would themselves become slaves of the person who had reported their disobedience, and all their property would be turned over to the royal estate.²⁷ The decree of the king was quickly carried out, "in just seven days, and the redemption-money came to more than 460 talents, for the slave-holders collected the 120 drachmas even for infants, as if the king had commanded that payment be made for these too."²⁸

Most modern scholars²⁹ accept without hesitation the tradition of Agatharchides (as quoted by Josephus) and Pseudo-Aristeas concerning the thousands upon thousands of Jewish slaves brought into Egypt by Ptolemy I and freed by Ptolemy II, and that the official decree cited is genuine. Tcherikover, for instance, has categorically stated: "Aristeas (12-14) tells of 100,000 Jewish captives brought to Egypt in the time of Ptolemy I; 30,000 of these, men of military age, Ptolemy placed in fortresses, and the rest (old men and children) he gave to his soldiers as slaves. Ptolemy II Philadelphus, on ascending the throne, freed them from slavery. There are no grounds for doubting

²⁷ Jos. Ant. XII. 31 and Ps.-Arist. 25.

²⁸ Jos. Ant. XII. 31. Ps.-Arist. 27 has 600 talents as the total redemption money, and also states that the king actually gave his approval to paying redemption money for children and infants. The silver talent was equal to 6,000 drachmas (see Ralph Marcus' note on the value of the silver talent at this time in Josephus, 9 vols., Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966], Vol. 7, p. 15, note e)).

²⁹ Among the most distinguished representatives of this school of thought which accepts the tradition of Agatharchides and Ps. Aristeas are: Victor Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 273; Solomon Zeitlin, The Rise and Fall of the Judaeen State, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 1: 52; John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), p. 398.

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the historical trustworthiness of this tale, and it is very credible that as a result of his wars in Palestine--especially after the capture of Jerusalem--Ptolemy took numerous Jews prisoner and brought them to Egypt as slaves. . . . It may therefore be accepted as a historical fact that the Jewish diaspora in Hellenistic Egypt began under Ptolemy I, and that the vast majority of the Jews left their native country not of their free will but under compulsion."³⁰

How does Tcherikover deal with the problem of the two traditions, one that spoke of a voluntary emigration to Egypt, attracted by Ptolemy's liberality and kindness (Hecataeus), and the other (Agatharchides and Pseudo-Aristeas), of a Ptolemy I who took Jerusalem by trickery, enslaved 100,000 Jews, and took them to Egypt? Tcherikover admits that there has been and still is a great deal of difficulty in explaining the two opposite traditions.³¹ He also admits that since Ptolemy I conquered Palestine four times (320, 312, 302, and 301 B.C.), and since most details of the conquests remain unknown, a great deal of guessing will have to take place in order to harmonize the two traditions. Tcherikover then outlines a series of "guesses" and "conjectures" as to how all these events could have taken place.

First, when did Ptolemy I actually capture Jerusalem? Tcherikover admits that the conjectures of other historians differ from his own, since he places the event in the year 302 B.C., while

³⁰ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 273.

³¹ Ibid., p. 56.

scholars such as Bouché-Leclercq, Willrich, and Abel place the event in 312 B.C.³² According to Tcherikover, the voluntary emigration of Jews under the High Priest Hezekiah occurred in 311 B.C., when, after the conquest of 312 B.C., Ptolemy was forced to withdraw the following year. Tcherikover assumes that during the previous rule of Ptolemy I in Palestine, which lasted five years (320 to 315 B.C.), the king made many friends among the population, including of course the Jews. Antigonos, on the other hand, must have been a harsh master, continues Tcherikover, especially during the years between conquests when Palestine was lost to Ptolemy (315 to 312 B.C.). If this was the case, says Tcherikover,³³ it comes as no surprise that in 311 B.C., when Ptolemy I was once again forced to abandon Palestine, a great many people felt it would be safer to go with the king to Egypt rather than to remain in Palestine for another period of Antigonos' stern rule and possible acts of vengeance for the support previously bestowed on Ptolemy.

So Hecataeus' tradition concerning a voluntary emigration, concludes Tcherikover,³⁴ was based on events which took place in 311 B.C. All the supporters of Ptolemy I followed him to Egypt.

³² A. Bouché-Leclercq, Histoire des Lagides, 4 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1904; reprinted Brussels: Culture et Civilisation, 1962), 1: 50; H. Willrich, Juden und Griechen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), pp. 23-25; Felix Abel, Histoire de la Palestine, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1952), 1: 31.

³³ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 57.

³⁴ Ibid.

Those who were not favorable to Ptolemy but were partial to Antigonus remained in Jerusalem.

In 302 B.C., continues Tcherikover,³⁵ the political situation in Palestine must have been completely different. Some of the Jews in Palestine and Jerusalem were probably tired of Antigonus and his rule, while many others would still be in his favor. Tcherikover assumes that these two opposing parties (whose whole existence is based, of course, on another of his conjectures) would be well represented within Jerusalem, and that Agatharchides' story would fit well into this political picture. Ptolemy took advantage first of the Jews' abstention from fighting on the Sabbath, and second, of the ruse of feigning friendship and an interest in sacrificing to the God of Israel to gain entrance into Jerusalem unopposed. Naturally, says Tcherikover,³⁶ he was aided by the fact that he had many friends within the city.

Agatharchides, to repeat, was not a contemporary of the events he described, but rather lived and wrote during the second century B.C. Hecataeus, on the other hand, was a contemporary of these events, and therefore his tradition carries considerable weight. He presented the Jewish emigration as a voluntary one, motivated by promises of future prosperity in Egypt from a kind and generous ruler, one that was evidently well-liked by the Jews.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

Agatharchides contradicted himself from the start, a fact that has gone unnoticed by Tcherikover and the scholars mentioned before.³⁷ Ptolemy I arrived before Jerusalem at an unspecified time with his invading army. The year, according to Tcherikover's conjectures, was 302 B.C., and Palestine had been in the hands of Antigonus for about ten years. Ptolemy then had a brilliant idea of how to conquer the city without a fight: he would feign a great desire to sacrifice to YHWH the God of Isreal. On a Sabbath day he expressed his wish to the Jews within the city. The people of Jerusalem immediately opened the doors of their city and welcomed him in. Not only did the Jews allow Ptolemy to enter the city, but also permitted his entire army to do the same. This account presents the Jews as being extremely naive, "for they did not suspect any hostile act."³⁸ But then Agatharchides contradicted himself by stating that since it was the Sabbath day, the Jews refused to bear arms and defend themselves on their day of rest. The Jews were "enjoying idleness," and Agatharchides laughed at their "untimely superstitions."³⁹

It seems incredible that the people of Jerusalem would be so foolish as to believe that after ten years' absence from Palestine, Ptolemy I had come all the way from Egypt and had camped before Jerusalem because he and his entire army wished to offer sacrifice

³⁷ See above, p. 40, note 29.

³⁸ Jos. Ant. XII. 4. See also C. Ap. I. 209-212.

³⁹ Jos. Ant. XII. 5-7.

to the God of Israel. If somehow they had been foolish enough to allow a huge army to enter their city in full force because they "did not suspect any hostile act," why then was it necessary for them to refuse to bear arms on the Sabbath, thus allowing their city to fall into Ptolemy's hands? Either the Jews did not suspect any violence and opened the gates in friendship, or they did suspect violence but refused to defend their city on the Sabbath. Once they had allowed Ptolemy and his army inside the city, it would have been too late to consider whether or not they should bear arms. One way or another, Agatharchides is an unreliable source on this matter.

According to Agatharchides, Ptolemy now turned into a very harsh ruler, a "hard master," who enslaved a multitude of Jews, not only from Jerusalem, but also from around the countryside. He then took all these slaves to Egypt where he assigned many of them to his garrisons, while others were settled at Alexandria where he "gave them equal rights with the Macedonians."⁴⁰ But why should Ptolemy I suddenly have turned into a harsh ruler, venting his anger on the Jews by enslaving many thousands of them? Had he not after all captured Jerusalem without a fight? It seems improbable that this ruler would

⁴⁰Ibid., 8. It is not clear whether the last portion concerning the equal rights with the Macedonians belongs to Josephus' source Agatharchides, or solely to Josephus. Either way, it makes little sense to believe that Ptolemy would enslave tens of thousands of Jews only to bring them to Alexandria and there give them equality of rights with the Macedonians.

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suddenly enslave tens of thousands of Jews and deport them to Egypt.⁴¹

On the contrary, the entire event seems fictitious.⁴²

Aristeas' account of the 100,000 slaves brought into Egypt by Ptolemy I, and of their subsequent fate, also seems unreliable. Tcherikover first calls Aristeas' account a "tale" and then states that he does not doubt its historical trustworthiness.⁴³ That the Letter of Aristeas is a forgery is no longer in dispute.⁴⁴ Hadas, in commenting on the style of Pseudo-Aristeas, suggests the possibility that the author of this forgery was mainly dependent on an earlier source, namely Agatharchides.⁴⁵ It is clear that the historicity of

⁴¹ It is possible, of course, that Ptolemy showed his appreciation to the faction within Jerusalem that favored him (since in all probability such a faction did exist) by enslaving their enemies. He could hardly have enslaved, however, "tens of thousands" of Jews living in Jerusalem and the outskirts without seriously depopulating the area. If the event did take place, it would be more logic to assume that the number of Jewish captives was far smaller, perhaps one or two thousand at the most.

⁴² Was there even such an event as the "capture" of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I? No one has yet doubted that Jerusalem was captured by Ptolemy during one of his Palestinian campaigns, though there is little agreement among historians concerning the date of this event. But on which ancient sources are historians basing the historicity of the capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I? On Josephus, who is following Agatharchides, and on Appian (Syrian Wars 50), who in speaking of the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey states that the Roman "destroyed . . . Jerusalem, as Ptolemy, the first king of Egypt, had formerly done." First, according to Agatharchides, Ptolemy did not destroy the city but, rather, entered unopposed. Second, Appian wrote his Roman History in the second century A.D. and does not indicate which were his sources for this particular information. His sources could well have been Josephus and Agatharchides! Perhaps Jerusalem was never "captured" by Ptolemy I at all.

⁴³ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., 273.

⁴⁴ See above, p. 35, note 11.

⁴⁵ Hadas, Aristeas, p. 98, note 12.

the enslavement of thousands upon thousands of Jews by Ptolemy I, and their subsequent deportation to Egypt, would still revert to the reliability of Agatharchides.

Pseudo-Aristeas added a considerable amount of information to that which he found in his source, especially concerning the subsequent fate of the 100,000 slaves brought into Egypt by Ptolemy I. It was Aristeas who persuaded Philadelphus to liberate the Jewish slaves. The king became so enthusiastic about the plan that he immediately issued an edict, and all Jewish slaves were liberated. It is this edict that I now wish to consider.

W. L. Westermann⁴⁶ has studied an official edict found in a papyrus (PER Inv. 24,552) in the Rainer collection in Vienna. This authentic decree apparently liberated a group of people who once had been free, but later had somehow fallen into slavery, probably for unpaid debts. This decree required that all slaves in Syria and Phoenicia be immediately registered by their owners in order to determine their legal status, with the ultimate aim of liberating the ones that were in the category which the edict called σώματα λαϊκὰ ἐλεύθερα. The similarities between PER Inv. 24,552 and the Pseudo-Aristeas decree have led scholars such as Wilcken to conclude that the latter was a genuine official document.⁴⁷ These similarities are: that slaves be registered immediately; that all slaves in

⁴⁶W. L. Westermann, "Enslaved Persons Who Are Free," American Journal of Philology 49 (1938): 1-30.

⁴⁷U. Wilcken, Archiv für Papyrusforschung (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1937), 12: 221-223.

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question not only be registered but also presented before the officials in charge; that those who disobeyed the decree should be punished; and that all informers be rewarded.⁴⁸ Westermann, however, does not agree with Wilcken that the Pseudo-Aristeas decree is in reality a genuine document.⁴⁹ While he does not discard the possibility that Pseudo-Aristeas used the Rainer decree or a similar one as a sample on which he based his forgery, he points out a number of important differences between the two decrees and several reasons why the Pseudo-Aristeas decree should not be considered genuine.⁵⁰

First, the Pseudo-Aristeas decree orders the liberation of not only the slaves brought by Ptolemy I, but of all other Jewish slaves brought into Egypt before and after the wars of Ptolemy I. "There is no similar retroactive nor post-active provision in the actual decree . . . and there is no place in the Syrian situation for such an order."⁵¹ It was perhaps the absence of such a provision that prompted Pseudo-Aristeas to have the king himself insert it as a special gesture which enhanced the king's "greatness of soul."⁵²

⁴⁸ Westerman, Persons, pp. 20 and 21.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 22-30.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵² Ibid. Westermann believes that this difference between the two decrees is not in itself evidence against the genuineness of the Ps.-Arist. decree, since, as he points out, the genuine decree has no place for such time-provisions. Rather, the difference suggests to him that Ps.-Arist. was closely following the genuine decree for his forgery, and when he realized the absence of a time-provision in the genuine decree, was forced to add one to his. His romanticized addition would have been out of place in a genuine document. The combination in the Ps.-Arist. decree of elements that fit into a genuine decree and

Second, it seems highly improbable that any decree from an absolute monarch such as Ptolemy II would assume the apologetic and moralizing tone that pervades the Pseudo-Aristeas decree. PER Inv. 24,552 is no doubt a genuine example of actual decrees issued by the Ptolemies, decrees that simply relayed orders without embellishments, in terse sentences, cut to the bare essentials. It is equally incredible that an absolute ruler such as Philadelphus would make an official statement declaring that it had been "contrary to justice" for Ptolemy I to capture and enslave the Jews.⁵³ It was an accepted matter in antiquity that the conquered could be enslaved during wars. The Jews themselves had in the past enslaved those whom they had defeated in battle.⁵⁴

Third, the time granted in PER Inv. 24,522 for the registration of the slaves was twenty days. In the Pseudo-Aristeas decree the time specified was three days, beginning with the official publication of the edict. Three days would have been insufficient to carry out the decree and enforce it throughout the entire kingdom, but it would be consistent with the seventy-two days that, according to Pseudo-Aristeas,

those that obviously do not, suggests to Westermann that Ps.-Arist. was "directly borrowing" (ibid., p. 21) from the Syrian (or another equally genuine) decree.

⁵³Ps.-Arist. 23. It can be added that Ptolemy II would certainly not attack the policies of his father whom he honored and whose paternity was Ptolemy II's sole claim to the monarchy.

⁵⁴Numbers 31: 9.

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were all that were needed to translate the entire Old Testament into Greek.⁵⁵

Fourth, the Pseudo-Aristeas decree has a provision stipulating that persons who had been found to have disobeyed the decree were to become slaves of those who had turned them in or had informed against them.⁵⁶ Westermann points out that he has never found a similar case of punishment in the entire range of Greek, Hellenistic, or Roman legislation.⁵⁷

Finally, the Pseudo-Aristeas decree stipulates that slave owners were to be paid out of the royal treasury a certain number of drachmas for every one of their Jewish slaves freed.⁵⁸ Westermann believes that it would have been highly improbable for any of the Ptolemies to have paid millions of drachmas from their own treasuries in order to advance the welfare of their subjects. They were absolute monarchs with every right to free the slaves by fiat and without compensation.⁵⁹

In addition to Westermann's objections, there are several others dealing with the contradictions and differences between the account of Pseudo-Aristeas and that of Josephus, who was supposedly

⁵⁵ Ps-Arist. 307. Obviously, the translation must have taken considerably longer.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁷ Westermann, Persons, pp. 25 and 26.

⁵⁸ Ps.-Arist. 20.

⁵⁹ Westermann, Persons, p. 25.

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using the former as his source. When the king asked Aristetas how many Jewish slaves would have to be freed, Josephus quotes Aristetas as answering "a little over 110,000."⁶⁰ However the figure listed in Pseudo-Aristetas is 100,000.⁶¹ This is a small discrepancy, however, when compared to the varied monies reported to be paid to the slave owners. Josephus states that for every Jewish slave freed his owner would receive 120 drachmas. And although the king realized that the "cost of redeeming them [the Jewish slaves] would be more than four hundred talents, he granted it."⁶² Pseudo-Aristetas mentions a different figure for the redemption money: 20 drachmas per Jewish slave.⁶³ And yet, in spite of the difference in the price to redeem each slave, both Pseudo-Aristetas and Josephus agree on the estimated grand total that would have to be paid out: "in excess of 400 talents."⁶⁴

But as the decree was being carried out, it was discovered that there had been a miscalculation as to the total number of Jewish slaves that would have to be redeemed. The actual total for the

⁶⁰ Jos. Ant. XII. 24.

⁶¹ Ps.-Arist. 19.

⁶² Jos. Ant. XII. 27.

⁶³ Ps.-Arist. 20. According to Westermann, Persons, p. 25, note 85, 20 drachmas per slave was not a "standard" price as Ps.-Arist. stated. Citing evidence from several papyri, Westermann indicates that 50 drachmas was the lowest price paid for a slave that has been recorded, and that was for a seven year-old girl in Birta during the time of Philadelphus.

⁶⁴ Ps.-Arist. 20 and Jos. Ant. XII. 27.

redemption money turned out to be far greater than the four hundred talents originally calculated. Pseudo-Aristeas states that the total came to 660 talents, "for many children of the breast were emancipated along with their mothers."⁶⁵ Josephus quotes the total as 460 talents, "for the slave-holders collected the 120 drachmas even for infants."⁶⁶

When one considers that one silver talent equalled 6,000 drachmas, the matter becomes even more confusing--100,000 slaves at 20 drachmas each (Pseudo-Aristeas) would equal 2,000,000 drachmas or about 333 talents. This means that approximately 200,000 slaves would had to have been freed for the total amount of redemption money to equal 660 talents. On the other hand, Josephus' figures of 110,000 slaves at 120 drachmas each would amount to 2,200 talents, without counting the children and infants that supposedly also were redeemed in the end. Not only, then, does Josephus contradict his source but both are inconsistent within themselves. And yet, in spite of the fact that Pseudo-Aristeas is recognized as a forgery, in spite of all the contradictions and confusion pointed out above, Tcherikover finds that "there are no grounds for doubting the historical trustworthiness of this tale."⁶⁷

Were large numbers of Jews ever brought into Egypt as slaves? The evidence of the papyri would seem to answer this question in the

⁶⁵ Ps.-Arist. 27.

⁶⁶ Jos. Ant. XII. 33.

⁶⁷ V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 273. And it is obvious that the whole story does read like a fairy-tale.

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negative. In the entire Zenon papyri, for example, there is not even a single reference to a Jewish slave. In the Tcherikover and Fuks collection there is a mention of two young circumcised slaves,⁶⁸ which could perhaps mean that they were Jews. But one could expect many more cases to be mentioned in the papyri if, in reality, Jewish slaves had been brought into Egypt in such large numbers as Agatharchides and Pseudo-Aristeas indicate.

M. Rostovzeff⁶⁹ points out that slavery in Ptolemaic Egypt was not a very important institution, and that slave-owners were forced to pay heavy taxes to the government, perhaps in order to discourage its practice. Native employment was, on the other hand, very cheap, and it is possible that slavery proved more costly in the long run. Very few people, except for the king, his court, his household, and his army, would have been in a position to support a great many slaves.⁷⁰ It is Rostovzeff's opinion, however, that a considerable number of slaves were utilized to work the factories in Alexandria, and so many were brought in for this purpose.⁷¹ But even that theory has been

⁶⁸V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-1964), I: no. 4. One should note that Jews were not the only ones who practiced circumcision in the ancient world. The Egyptians, for example, did so also (Herodotus II. 36; Diodorus I. 28, and III. 32; Philo De Specialibus Legibus I. 2-5).

⁶⁹M. Rostovzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World. 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1957), I: 321.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹M. Rostovzeff, Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 7, ed. S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, and M. P. Charlesworth (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928), Chapter IV, "Ptolemaic Egypt," p. 135.

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discredited by Westermann,⁷² who cites papyrological evidence to prove that the factory laborers at Alexandria were hired workers and not slaves.

In conclusion, I give more credibility to the tradition of Hecataeus of a voluntary immigration to Egypt during the time of Ptolemy I, since Hecataeus was a contemporary of the events he described. And even though I do not deny the possibility that a certain number of Jews were, occasionally, brought in as slaves, I discard the accounts of Agatharchides and Pseudo-Aristeas concerning a massive importation of Jewish slaves by Ptolemy I, their settlement, and subsequent liberation under Philadelphus. Even the account of the capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I seems to be based on Agatharchides whose reliability I doubt. The entire "tale" of Aristeas should remain as such, and not be considered of "historical trustworthiness."

⁷²Westermann, Upon Slavery in Ptolemaic Egypt (New York: Atheneum, 1929), pp. 54-57.



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CHAPTER III

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN EGYPT AND ALEXANDRIA DURING THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

While the successors of Alexander the Great waged wars against one another, and while family feuds divided the Ptolemies among themselves, very little is known about the influence that these events had upon the Jews at Alexandria. This is especially true of the period lasting until approximately 180 B.C., since hardly any materials or documents survive relating to Jewish involvement in the political storms that ravaged Egypt during that time.

The Jews in Egypt always looked to Jerusalem as the center of Jewish life and civilization. Therefore, the constant wars between Ptolemies and Seleucids for Palestine must have had a tremendous impact not only on the Palestinian Jewry, but on that of Egypt as well. I am sure that the Jews in Egypt felt especially close to those in Jerusalem during the periods when Coele-Syria was in the hands of the Ptolemies, forgetting many times that they were physically separated by a long distance. When Ptolemy V Epiphanes lost Coele-Syria permanently to the Seleucids at the battle of Panium (c. 198 B.C.), a new era began for the Jews in Egypt. The separation between Palestine and Egypt now became not only a physical reality but a spiritual one as well. The Jews in Egypt began to forget the feeling that they were an extension,

so to speak, of Jerusalem, and more and more felt that they were part of the locality in which they resided. Of course this process was gradual, went practically unnoticed while taking place, and never reached the point where a direct order from Jerusalem was disregarded.¹ The great extent to which the Jews of Alexandria became influenced by Hellenism after Panium is an example of this process in action.

Although we know next to nothing concerning the political history of the Jews in Egypt during the period between the reigns of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy VI Philometor, the period was one of slow, almost imperceptible establishment in a new place.² For the later Ptolemaic era, however, we have documentation for a few instances of Jewish participation in the political life of the country, instances that, though rare, are nevertheless very valuable to our study.

There is sufficient evidence to attest that Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-145 B.C.) was friendly towards the Jewish people. One of his counselors, probably on Jewish affairs, was a Jew named Aristobulus.³ During his reign, Jews were admitted to the financial administration of the State as tax-farmers and officials,⁴ a Jew,

¹Jos. Ant. XIV. 131 and Jewish War I. 190.

²Tcherikover and Fuks, C. P. Jud., 1: 19.

³II Maccabees 1: 10. Aristobulus is called "King Ptolemy's teacher" by the author of II Macc. Probably this exaggerates Aristobulus' true relation to the king (cf. Tcherikover and Fuks, C. P. Jud. 1: 20).

⁴See below, Chapter V. Also Tcherikover and Fuks, C. P. Jud., 1: 194-226.

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Dositheos, was a general in the Egyptian army,⁵ and Philometor even allowed a separate Jewish military unit to be created and placed under the command of Onias, a Jewish general of great importance to our study.⁶

Political problems that beset Egypt during the major part of Ptolemy VI's reign, and that of his successor Eurgetes II, had a strong bearing on the political role the Jews played during this period. In brief, Ptolemy VI Philometor's main internal problems were caused by family feuds, while, externally, the influence and intervention of Syria and Rome determined the vicissitudes of Ptolemy VI's political life.

The eldest son of Ptolemy V, Philometor began his rule in 181 B.C. at the age of five or six. The fact that he started to reign when he was only a small child caused many of his future problems, since he was dependent on a regent or regents to rule his kingdom. His first regent was his mother, Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus "the Great" of Syria, and sister of the then king of Syria, Seleucus IV. While Cleopatra lived, Egypt was quiet. She maintained good relations with Rome, whose influence was constantly increasing in the Near East, and with Syria, where in 175 B.C. Seleucus was succeeded by his brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. But after the death of Cleopatra, c. 173 B.C., matters changed drastically. Two men of the court, Eulaeus and Lenaeus, took over as regents. Since Rome immediately sent an embassy to "renew

⁵Jos. C. Ap. II. 49.

⁶See below, pp. 63-69, 75-84.

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friendship with Ptolemy,"⁷ the regents probably felt it would be wise to have the sixteen year-old boy assume his majority in order to remove a possible cause for future interference by Rome. Their influence did not diminish, however, after Ptolemy's anakleteria in 172 B.C., since they now became his personal advisors.

The "advisors" soon provoked a war with Syria, which they felt confident Egypt could defeat. In 170 B.C. Eulaeus and Lenaeus set out from Alexandria with an army to invade Syria. Embassies were immediately sent by both sides to Rome to plead their respective cases.⁸ Rome promised the ambassadors of Antiochus that the senate would ask Quintus Marcius, the consul, to write to Ptolemy concerning the matter. Antiochus, however, did not wait for the Roman embassy, and surprised everyone not only by defeating the Egyptian army, but then by seizing Pelusium, entering Egypt, and moving on Memphis, which he soon captured. Thinking that Alexandria would probably be next to fall, the young Egyptian king tried to escape to the sacred island of Samothrace, leaving Cleopatra, his sister and wife, and his younger brother behind in Alexandria. However, the Seleucid forces captured Ptolemy and brought him to his uncle's camp. A revolution in Alexandria immediately followed, Eulaeus and Lenaeus were overthrown, and Philometor's younger brother was named king (Ptolemy VII Euergetes II). The country was now divided; Alexandria had one king and Memphis had Philometor, who had been recognized as king by Antiochus before the Seleucid left Egypt.

⁷Livy XLII. 6.

⁸Polybius XXVIII. 1.

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For most of his life Philometor would henceforth have to contend with his brother for the throne of Egypt, especially after 163 B.C., when the uneasy alliance established between the two in 169 B.C. (which made them equal co-rulers) came to an end. Antiochus had attempted a new invasion in 168 B.C. when he heard of the newly formed alliance between the brothers, but Rome had intervened and forced Antiochus to give up the invasion.⁹ Gaius Popilius Laenas, the Roman legate sent by the senate, met Antiochus at Pelusium. Laenas, keeping a certain distance from Antiochus, and without making the conventional sign of friendship, handed the king the senatus-consultum and told him to read it. The king did so, and then expressed the desire to consult his friends and advisors before giving an answer. Laenas took the stick that he was carrying and drew a circle around Antiochus. When he had finished, he told the astonished king that he would have to remain inside the circle until he had reached a decision concerning the order. Antiochus, "after a few moments' hesitation, said he would do all that the Romans demanded."¹⁰

So Rome had intervened and had saved Egypt from Antiochus, but the same could not be done concerning the internal squabbles of the Ptolemies. Finally in 164 B.C. Philometor was forced by his brother to flee from Alexandria. He went immediately to Rome, where dressed in the clothes of a commoner, he made a pathetic appeal to the senate.¹¹

⁹Polybius XXIX. 27ff.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Diodorus Siculus XXXI. 15ff.

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Philometor was given Egypt and Cyprus by the senate, but at the same time the Romans kept Egyptian territories divided by allotting Cyrenaica to his brother Euergetes II.¹² A Roman embassy was eventually sent to Egypt to enforce the senate's decision.¹³

Of course Euergetes was not happy with the new situation. In 162 B.C. he decided to go personally to Rome to plead his case. When Philometor heard of his brother's trip, he sent representatives of his own, but to no avail. The senate changed its previous judgment, and now added Cyprus to Euergetes II's territories.¹⁴

Philometor, however, did not acquiesce in the senate's decision, and Euergetes was not able to take possession of Cyprus. Rome did nothing against Philometor apart from informing him of her displeasure, that her alliance with him had come to an end, and that she would henceforth support Euergetes.¹⁵ Since Philometor soon discovered that all these words meant nothing in practical terms, he continued to disregard Rome's wishes.

In 154 B.C. Euergetes II again appeared in Rome, this time in a very dramatic way: he showed several scars on his body alleging that they were the result of wounds inflicted upon him by a paid assassin of Philometor.¹⁶ The senate was apparently so horrified that it would not

¹²Livy XLVII. 1ff.

¹³Polybius XXXI. 10.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 17, 18.

¹⁶Ibid., XXXIII. 9ff.

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even listen to Neolaides and Andromachus sent by Philometor to defend him. Rome appointed five legates, headed by Gnaeus Merula and Lucius Thermus, to support the younger brother. The senate furnished "each of them with a quinquereme and ordered them to reestablish Ptolemy Euergetes in Cyprus, writing to their allies in Greece and Asia to the effect that they had their permission to assist his return."¹⁷ But the allies, seeing that Rome was doing nothing herself, did the same; and when Euergetes landed in Cyprus with a force, he found himself entirely on his own. Philometor took immediate action and captured his brother. But instead of killing him, "he granted him assurances of personal safety, and made an agreement with him according to which the younger Ptolemy was to rest content with the possession of Cyrene, and was to receive each year a fixed amount of grain."¹⁸ During the rest of Philometor's life this arrangement was followed, and Euergetes remained in Cyrene.

After the matter of Cyprus was settled, Philometor turned his attention to Syria, and was soon enmeshed in the political problems of that area. Finally in 145 B.C., Philometor took part in and was mortally wounded at the battle of the river Oenoparas, where Alexander Balas, a contender for the Syrian throne, was defeated.¹⁹

Philometor was followed by his infant son, Philopator Neos, under the regency of Cleopatra II, widow of Philometor and mother of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Diodorus XXXI. 11-15.

¹⁹ Strabo XVI. 751. 8; Jos. Ant. XIII. 116-119.

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the infant. But this situation did not last long, since Euergetes II soon disposed of the child and, after marrying Cleopatra II, took control of the throne. His reign lasted from 145 B.C. to 116 B.C., and it was a period of internal strife and family quarrels. After divorcing Cleopatra II, he married her daughter Cleopatra III, after which there was a bitter antagonism between the "sister" and the "wife." There is evidence that Euergetes II was cruel and vindictive, and that many outrages were perpetrated by him and his troops.²⁰ Among those that felt his hatred were the Jews, a people who had been staunch supporters of his brother Philometor.

I wish now to focus on the participation of the Jewish people in the political life of this period. For the time of Ptolemy VI Philometor, the building of the Temple of Onias merits detailed consideration. On four different occasions Josephus mentions this event, but, unfortunately, he contradicts himself several times. The main contradiction is with respect to who founded the Temple: in The Jewish War Josephus maintains it was Onias III,²¹ whereas in Antiquities it was Onias IV, son of Onias III.²² First, the account in The Jewish War:

²⁰ Justin XXXVIII. viii. 7; Diodorus XXXIII. 12ff. See also A. Bouché-Leclercq, Lagides, 2: 55ff; and Bevan, Ptolemaic Dynasty, 322f.

²¹ Jewish War I. 33; VII. 423.

²² Ant. XII. 387f; XIII. 62ff, and XX. 236f.

At the time when Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, was disputing with Ptolemy VI the suzerainty of Syria, dissension arose among the Jewish nobles. There were rival claims to supreme power, as no individual of rank could tolerate subjection to his peers. Onias, one of the chief priests, gaining the upper hand, expelled the sons of Tobias from the city. The latter took refuge with Antiochus and besought him to use their services as guides for an invasion of Judaea. The king, having long cherished this design, consented, and setting out at the head of a huge army took the city by assault, slew a number of Ptolemy's followers, gave his soldiers unrestricted licence to pillage, and himself plundered the temple and interrupted, for a period of three years and six months, the regular course of the daily sacrifices. The high priest Onias made his escape to Ptolemy and, obtaining from him a site in the nome of Heliopolis, built a small town on the model of Jerusalem and a temple resembling ours.²³

Josephus expands this first account in another portion of his

Jewish War:²⁴

Lupus was then²⁵ in control at Alexandria. . . . The emperor,²⁶ suspicious of the interminable tendency of the Jews to revolution . . . ordered Lupus to demolish the Jewish temple in the so-called district of Onias. This is a region in Egypt which was colonized and given this name under the following circumstances. Onias, son of Simon, and one of the chief priests at Jerusalem, fleeing from Antiochus, king of Syria, then at war with the Jews, came to Alexandria, and being graciously received by Ptolemy, owing to the monarch's hatred of Antiochus, told him that he would make the Jewish nation his ally if he would accede to his proposal. The king having promised to do what was in his power, he asked permission to build a temple somewhere in Egypt and to worship God after the manner of his fathers; for, he added, the Jews would thus be still more embittered against Antiochus, who had sacked their temple at Jerusalem, and more amicably disposed towards himself, and many would flock to him for the sake of religious toleration.

²³ I: 31-33.

²⁴ VII. 420-432.

²⁵ Josephus is referring to events that took place c. 73 A.D.

²⁶ Vespasian.

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Induced by this statement, Ptolemy gave him a tract, a hundred and eighty furlongs distant from Memphis,²⁷ in the so-called nome of Heliopolis. Here Onias erected a fortress and built his temple (which was not like that in Jerusalem, but resembled a tower) of huge stones and sixty cubits in altitude. The altar, however, he designed on a model of that in the home country, and adorned the building with similar offerings, the fashion of the lampstand excepted; for, instead of making a stand, he had a lamp made of gold which shed a brilliant light and was suspended by a golden chain. The sacred precincts were wholly surrounded by a wall of baked brick, the doorways being of stone. The king, moreover, assigned him an extensive territory as a source of revenue, to yield both abundance for the priests and large provision for the service of God. In all this, however, Onias was not actuated by honest motives; his aim was rather to rival the Jews at Jerusalem, against whom he harboured resentment for his exile, and he hoped by erecting this temple to attract the multitude away from them to it. There had, moreover, been an ancient prediction made some six hundred years before by one named Esaias, who had foretold the erection of this temple in Egypt by a man of Jewish birth.²⁸ Such then was the origin of this temple.

The first passage of Antiquities²⁹ reads as follows:

Then Onias, the son of the high priest, who, as we said before, had been left a mere child when his father died, seeing that the king had slain his uncle Menelaus and had given the high priesthood to Alcimus, although he was not of the family of the high priests . . . fled to Ptolemy, the king of Egypt. And being treated with honour by him and his wife Cleopatra, he received a place in the nome of Heliopolis, where he built a temple similar to that in Jerusalem.

The second passage of Antiquities³⁰ reads:

Now the son of the high priest Onias, who had the same name as his father, having fled to King Ptolemy surnamed Philometor, was living in Alexandria. . . . And seeing that Judaea was

²⁷ One furlong = 1/8 of a mile.

²⁸ The prophet Isaiah wrote these words c. 740 B.C., so the figure given by Josephus is incorrect. The reference is to Isaiah 19:18 and 19: "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt."

²⁹ XII. 387ff.

³⁰ XIII. 62-68.

being ravaged by the Macedonians and their kings, and desiring to acquire for himself eternal fame and glory, he determined to send to King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra and request of them authority to build a temple in Egypt similar to that at Jerusalem, and to appoint Levites and priests of his own race. In this desire he was encouraged chiefly by the words of the prophet Isaiah, who had lived more than six hundred years before and had foretold that a temple to the Most High God was surely to be built in Egypt by a Jew. Being, therefore, excited by these words, Onias wrote the following letter to Ptolemy and Cleopatra. "Many and great are the services which I have rendered you in the course of the war . . . when I was in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, and when I came with the Jews to Leontopolis in the nome of Heliopolis and to the other places where our nation is settled; and I found that most of them have temples, contrary to what is proper, and that for this reason they are ill-disposed toward one another. . . . And I have found a most suitable place in the fortress called after Bubastis-of-the-Fields, which abounds in various kinds of trees and is full of sacred animals, wherefore I beg you to permit me to cleanse this temple, which belongs to no one and is in ruins, and to build a temple to the Most High God in the likeness of that at Jerusalem and with the same dimensions, on behalf of you and your wife and children, in order that the Jewish inhabitants of Egypt may be able to come together there in mutual harmony and serve your interests. For this is what the prophet Isaiah foretold: 'There shall be an altar in Egypt to the Lord God,' and many other such things did he prophesy concerning this place."

Josephus continues his narrative with a letter of reply from Ptolemy granting Onias permission to build his temple at Leontopolis. But apparently the king wondered whether it would be pleasing to the Jewish God "that a temple be built in a place so wild and full of sacred animals."³¹ Nevertheless he left it up to Onias, who took over the place and built a temple and an altar "similar to that in Jerusalem, but smaller and poorer. . . . And Onias found some Jews of his kind, and priests and Levites to minister there."³²

³¹ Ibid., 70.

³² Ibid., 71-73.

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In Antiquities (XX. 236f.) Josephus makes a last allusion to this matter:

Onias, who bore the same name as his father, made his way to Egypt, where he won the friendship to Ptolemy Philometor and Cleopatra, his queen, and persuaded them to build a temple to God in the nome of Heliopolis, similar to the one at Jerusalem, and to appoint him high priest.

Modern scholars agree that the account of Josephus in the Jewish War refers to Onias III, while that of Antiquities refers to Onias IV. Their views, however, differ according to which of these versions they favor. Scholars such as Willrich,³³ Momigliano,³⁴ and Zeitlin³⁵ accept the account of the Jewish War. They argue that Onias III was a statesman and soldier whose flight to Egypt was a political act, seeking a military alliance between the Jews and Ptolemy. Only such a man as Onias III, who held a position of great influence in Judaea, could have played a part of such magnitude in the political world of his time.

The supporters of the account in Antiquities³⁶ have several very good arguments against the account making Onias III the founder of the temple at Leontopolis. First, there is the text of II Maccabees

³³H. Willrich, Juden und Griechen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), pp. 77ff.

³⁴Arnaldo Momigliano, Prime Linee di Storia della Tradizione Maccabaica (Amsterdam: Adolph M. Hakkert, 1968), pp. 38ff.

³⁵S. Zeitlin, The History of the Second Jewish Commonwealth (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933), pp. 28ff.

³⁶E. G. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., pp. 276-77; 392-94; Schürer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, No. 31, p. 287; S. W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, 9 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952), 1: 219.

IV. 34ff. which very clearly relates how Onias III was killed at Daphne near Antioch by his rival Menelaus, of the Tobiad family, c. 170 or 169 B.C. Second, since Josephus wrote his Antiquities after he had written the Jewish War, the later account should be considered the correct one, especially since more details are given in the Antiquities. Third, an Onias appears as an Egyptian general after the death of Philometor in 145 B.C.,³⁷ some twenty years after Onias fled to Egypt. It would, therefore, seem more logical to assume that the Onias who fled to Egypt c. 162 B.C. was a young man (Onias IV), and not an older one (Onias III).

I also accept Onias IV as the true founder of the temple at Leontopolis. However, in order to understand better the background of Onias IV and his temple, it seems useful to analyze briefly the events that took place in Coele-Syria and in Judaea prior to Onias' flight to Egypt, concentrating on the quarrels between the high priests at Jerusalem and their rivals from the Tobiad family.

The chronology and history of the high priests at Jerusalem are altogether unclear. Josephus remains the main source for this study, supplemented by portions in the Books of Maccabees.

In the eyes of the Jewish people, the high priest in Jerusalem was always viewed as the head of the community. During the time of Alexander the Great, the office of high priest was occupied by Jaddua, who died about the same time as Alexander.³⁸ Jaddua was succeeded by

³⁷ Jos. C. Ap. II. 50.

³⁸ Jos. Ant. XI. VII. 7.

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his son Onias I, and he by his son Simon, "who was surnamed the Just because of both his piety toward God and his benevolence to his countrymen."³⁹ Since Simon I died leaving an infant son, the office of high priest was occupied first by Eleazar, Simon's brother, and then by Manasses, uncle of Eleazar. Manasses was succeeded by the son of Simon I, Onias II, who was a contemporary of Ptolemy III, Ptolemy IV, and Ptolemy V.⁴⁰ Onias II was succeeded by Simon II c. 200 B.C.⁴¹ Simon II was succeeded by Onias III, who lived during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and was the last in the regular series of high priests.

The rivalry between the house of Simon and that of Tobias began during the time of Onias II, c. 242 B.C.⁴² Coele-Syria had been an area for which both Ptolemies and Seleucids had contended for many generations, and naturally the Jews were continuously affected by this controversy. The Jews would at times take one side, and at times the other. Onias II was pro-Seleucid. At this period Seleucus II seemed

³⁹ Ibid., XII. 43.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 157.

⁴¹ There is evidence to indicate that this is the Simon who received the name "The Just," and that Josephus was therefore wrong in ascribing this title to Simon I. For further discussion see Ralph Marcus, (trans.) Josephus, 9 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 7: 732-737.

⁴² Modern scholars have argued much over the chronology of the account. Following Josephus (Ant. XII. 157ff.), I agree with scholars such as Solomon Zeitlin, The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 1: 60ff., and V. Tcherikover, Hell Civ., p. 128ff. in ascribing these events to the time of Ptolemy III Euergetes I.

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to have been gaining the upper hand against Ptolemy III Euergetes I, after the latter had led a successful campaign into Asia but had been unable to retain control of many of the areas through which he had marched.⁴³

Onias II felt that under these circumstances he could dare to refuse the customary tribute of 20 talents of silver to Ptolemy.⁴⁴ Euergetes immediately sent a representative to Jerusalem who threatened to "parcel out their [Judaean] land and send his soldiers to settle it"⁴⁵ unless the payment was made. Whether for avarice, as Josephus claims,⁴⁶ or for political reasons, Onias still refused. At this crucial moment the Tobiads entered the picture.

A sister of Onias was married to a man named Tobias.⁴⁷ According to the Zenon papyri, there was a Tobias who was governor of a district in the country of Ammon at about this time, most probably the same man who was brother-in-law of Onias II.⁴⁸ Tobias had a son

⁴³ Justin, XXVII. ii. 5ff. Seleucus' come-back was successful enough to regain a great part of Syria, though he was not able to recover Palestine. A peace treaty was signed in 240 B.C. between Seleucus and Ptolemy. See also A. Bouché-Leclercq, Lagides, I: 257ff.

⁴⁴ Jos. Ant. XII. 157.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 158.

⁴⁶ Ibid. "Onias was small-minded and passionately fond of money and . . . for this reason he did not render . . . the tribute."

⁴⁷ Ibid., 160.

⁴⁸ Zenon Papyri in the Cairo Museum, PCZ 59003. For a discussion of this papyrus see V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 64ff. Tcherikover concludes that this Tobias is to be identified with the brother-in-law of Onias II.

named Joseph, who hearing of Onias' refusal to pay the tribute, came to Jerusalem and offered his uncle to assume the financial burden himself.⁴⁹ Onias agreed to this,⁵⁰ and Joseph was soon on his way to Alexandria with the monies owed. Once there, he so ingratiated himself with the king that shortly afterwards, and without much difficulty, he acquired the right to farm taxes for all of Coele-Syria in the hands of Ptolemy,⁵¹ including, of course, Palestine. Two thousand soldiers were assigned to Joseph to help him collect taxes, all of which made him a very powerful and influential man in the area. Jerusalem acquired new importance as the city where the chief tax-collector resided. For all practical purposes, Joseph had gained for the house of Tobias the civil and administrative leadership of the Jewish nation, powers once solely in the hands of the high priest.⁵²

⁴⁹ Josephus attributes this decision to Joseph's concern over the fate of the Jewish nation if the tribute was not paid (Ant. XII. 161). There is, I believe, the distinct possibility that Joseph saw in this "investment" the opportunity to ingratiate himself with Ptolemy.

⁵⁰ If avarice was the cause of his original refusal to pay the tribute, there is no need to explain why he gladly accepted Joseph's offer. If political reasons, he may have had a change of heart, but for reasons of pride continued to hold out; Joseph's offer may have allowed him to save face. Also, in this way, Onias might have felt he was safe with both the Seleucids and Ptolemies.

⁵¹ Joseph did have to bid for the post, but it is evident from the account in Josephus that being in the good grace of the king had much to do with receiving the tax-farming rights. For the entire account see Jos. Ant. XII. 175ff.

⁵² I find no textual evidence in Josephus to indicate that Onias II purposely "turned over the civil leadership to Joseph" as S. Zeitlin, Jud. State, p. 63 and Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 132 state.

Joseph had seven sons by one wife, and another son, Hyrcanus, by a second wife.⁵³ Hyrcanus remained, like his father, a partisan of the Ptolemies. Shortly before Joseph's death (c. 202 B.C.), Hyrcanus' half-brothers, together with a large Jewish faction which included the High Priest Simon II (son of Onias II), became pro-Seleucid, shifting their allegiance to the side which apparently was becoming the stronger. They were shortly proven correct, as (c. 200 B.C.) Ptolemy V lost the battle of Panium to Antiochus III. And with the battle of Panium Coele-Syria (including Jerusalem) was permanently lost to the Egyptians. From Jerusalem, the half-brothers continued to exert, in all probability, the same authority as Joseph, their deceased father, had possessed.⁵⁴

Onias III, son and successor of Simon II, became pro-Ptolemy, perhaps due to the decline in prestige suffered by the Seleucids after Magnesia (190 B.C.). There is evidence that Onias III found in Hyrcanus a ready-made ally.⁵⁵ For a short period it seems that Hyrcanus and Onias III controlled matters in Jerusalem. However, their triumph was short-lived, since once Antiochus IV Epiphanes turned his attention to Jerusalem, the situation there changed dramatically. Jason, one of Onias' brothers, working with the half-brothers of Hyrcanus, gained the approval of Antiochus Epiphanes,

⁵³ Jos. Ant. XII. 186.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 228ff. Whether they now collected taxes for the Seleucids, as Joseph had done for the Ptolemies, is unknown.

⁵⁵ II Macc. 3: 11. Hyrcanus entrusted Onias III with substantial funds, which were deposited in the temple.

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and Onias III was forced to flee from Jerusalem. Jason became the high priest, and a man named Menelaus, from the Tobiad family, his chief assistant. It was not long, however, before Menelaus had managed to gain the approval of Antiochus IV, and Jason was forced to flee from Jerusalem. Menelaus and his brother Lysimachus took over the control of the high priesthood.⁵⁶

Shortly thereafter, at the end of 170 B.C. or the beginning of 169 B.C., Menelaus stole some golden vessels from the temple and sold them in order to raise money he had promised Antiochus IV for his support. Onias III, who had fled to Daphne near Antioch and had taken refuge in a sanctuary there, openly rebuked the conduct of Menelaus. The latter felt that Onias III, regarded by most people as the legitimate high priest, was a threat to his position. He therefore laid a trap for Onias, and had him murdered.⁵⁷

In 168 B.C., Antiochus IV led another campaign into Egypt, but was met by Popilius Laenas and forced to withdraw.⁵⁸ The rumor spread in Palestine that Antiochus had died; and Jason, moving from his refuge in Ammon, took most of Jerusalem by force, forcing Menelaus and his supporters to take refuge in the acropolis.⁵⁹ When Antiochus IV returned from Egypt, he took Jerusalem, and a great massacre followed. Not only were the supporters of Jason killed, but also those suspected

⁵⁶ II Macc. 4: 7-31.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 32ff.

⁵⁸ See above, p. 60.

⁵⁹ II Macc. 5: 1-6.

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of favoring the Ptolemies. Antiochus then entered the temple and carried away many of its riches, including the altar and the lampstand which were made of gold.⁶⁰

At the end of 167 B.C., Antiochus IV once more turned his attention to Jerusalem. A systematic program of Hellenization was instituted, including the erection of a pagan statue in the Temple of Yahweh.⁶¹ The regular sacrificial services of the Jews were suspended, and in their place, pagan sacrifices were performed. A great persecution followed of those Jews who chose to remain faithful to their religious views.⁶²

Of the events that followed, mainly the rise and struggle of the Maccabee family against the Seleucids and the competition for the crown of Syria after the death of Antiochus IV in 163 B.C., it is sufficient to say that Menelaus remained high priest until sometime in 163 B.C., when he was blamed for the troubles in Judaea, taken to Antioch, and executed in a most brutal fashion.⁶³ Antiochus V and his regent Lysias then appointed a new high priest by the name of Alcimus.⁶⁴ However, since Judas Maccabaeus opposed the nomination, and Lysias was not in a position to enforce his will in Jerusalem at that time, Alcimus does not seem to have exercised his office until

⁶⁰ I Macc. 1: 21 and II Macc. V: 11-15.

⁶¹ I Macc. 1: 54.

⁶² II Macc. 6 and 7.

⁶³ II Macc. 13: 4ff., and Jos. Ant. XII. 384f.

⁶⁴ Jos. Ant. XII. 385; XX. 235; II Macc. 14: 3-7.

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162 B.C. when Demetrius I came to power, after eliminating Antiochus V and Lysias.⁶⁵ Who could have been the high priest during the time Alcimus was not able to exercise his office? It must have been someone anti-Seleucid, of the priestly line, and recognized by Judas and his followers. Onias IV would fit this description to the very last detail.

Onias IV, then, must have fled to Egypt around 162 B.C. With him fled a great number of Jewish supporters,⁶⁶ who no doubt acknowledged him as the true high priest. Onias was already a young man with leadership abilities, with military experience,⁶⁷ and with the desire to make a name for himself.⁶⁸ He must have organized a nucleus of fighting men and placed himself at the service of Philometor. Evidently the king saw the potential of having the Jews as allies, made Onias a general in his army,⁶⁹ and allowed him to build a fortress in the district of Leontopolis. Tcherikover suggests that the Jewish katoikia at Leontopolis required a place of worship, and that this gave Onias the idea of building his temple.⁷⁰ This theory would make the building of the temple incidental to the settlement of the Jewish colony at Leontopolis. Josephus' account in Antiquities gives a different reason for the desire to establish the temple: "in order that the

⁶⁵ I Macc. 7: 5.

⁶⁶ Jerome, In Daniel II. 13-14; I Macc. 15: 16ff.

⁶⁷ Jos. Ant. XIII. 65.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁹ Jos., C. Ap. II. 49.

⁷⁰ V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 277ff.

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Jewish inhabitants of Egypt may be able to come together there in mutual harmony."⁷¹ Tcherikover disregards this reason for two main arguments. First, Onias would have founded his temple in Alexandria, or at least in Memphis, if he had wished to establish a religious center for Egyptian Jewry.⁷² Leontopolis, a remote village 22 miles from Memphis, would not have been suited for this purpose. Second, the Jews in Egypt did not need such a center, since the Temple at Jerusalem remained their religious focus at all times.⁷³ "In the whole of Judaeo-Alexandrian literature there is no trace of Onias' temple; even the name is found only in Josephus."⁷⁴

Both arguments demonstrate that it is very possible that the idea of building a temple at Leontopolis came not from the mass of Egyptian Jewry as such, but rather from Onias and his group. Onias no doubt hoped that his temple would become the center of Egyptian Jewry. The fact that it did not, does not prove that Onias had different reasons for the foundation. And of course there were more ideal locations for the temple, but were they available to Onias? Therefore, I cannot accept Tcherikover's arguments for disregarding Onias' reasons as reported by Josephus. That a Jewish katoikia was established at Leontopolis, and that it remained there

⁷¹ Jos. Ant. XIII. 67.

⁷² V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 277f.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 278.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

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for generations to come,⁷⁵ is not a matter of dispute. However, I maintain that the building of the temple was not incidental to the settling of a military colony at Leontopolis, but rather the reason why the colony settled there. As the legitimate successor of Onias III, who perhaps had even been high priest for a period of time at Jerusalem, Onias IV must have felt that a temple in the style of that in Jerusalem could be and should be built in exile. The hellenizing movement of the Seleucids in Palestine had already produced terrible results. The present high priest in Jerusalem was an imposter working with the Seleucids. In a very real sense the temple at Jerusalem was still being desecrated, and who knew where it would all end? There at Leontopolis, in a friendly country where the Jews could have religious freedom, a temple in exile could be built, with a legitimate high priest performing legitimate ceremonies. Perhaps Leontopolis would become someday a new Jerusalem. Had not Isaiah foretold that,

in that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt. . . . And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors [the Seleucids?], and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation. . . . In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt. . . . In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Jos. C. Ap. II. 420-21 mentions the destruction of the Temple of Onias by the Romans c. 73 A.D.

⁷⁶ Isaiah XIX. 19-24. I strongly suggest that this prophecy was of tremendous importance to Onias IV, who saw himself as the "great one" who would deliver the Israelites and would fulfill Isaiah's prophecy in

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The religious dreams and ambitions of Onias IV for his temple and himself were never fulfilled. However, he did become a man of importance in the army of Ptolemy VI, who was in need of loyal allies such as the Jews, in his struggle against his brother Evergetes II and against the Seleucids. Another Jew, Dositheos, was also a general in Philometor's army,⁷⁷ and both men would be loyal not only to Ptolemy VI, but also after his death, to his queen.⁷⁸

One more instance giving proof of the king's pro-Jewish feelings is the account in Josephus concerning a religious dispute between the Jews and Samaritans:

Now there arose a quarrel between the Jews in Alexandria and the Samaritans who worshiped at the temple in Mount Gerizim, which had been built in the time of Alexander, and they disputed about their respective temples in the presence of Ptolemy himself, the Jews asserting that it was the temple at Jerusalem which had been built in accordance with the laws of Moses, and the Samaritans that it was the temple on Gerizim.⁷⁹

It is not clear why this quarrel was taking place in Alexandria, and not in Palestine, though Josephus attributes this to the anxiety that Alexandrian Jews felt towards the temple at Jerusalem. In the

every respect. Israel would become as powerful as Egypt and Assyria. Notice, however, that the prophecy centers around the establishment of an altar in the land of Egypt, where the Egyptian would come to know God and offer "sacrifice and oblation."

⁷⁷Josephus, C. Ap. II. 49. "Ptolemy Philometor and his consort Cleopatra entrusted the whole of their realm to Jews, and placed their entire army under the command of Jewish generals, Onias and Dositheos."

⁷⁸See below, p. 79.

⁷⁹Jos. Ant. XIII. 74ff. and also XII. 10.

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Onias is again mentioned by Josephus as playing an important role after the death of Philometor.⁸⁰ Cleopatra, Philometor's widow, became regent for her infant son, Philopator Neos. Euergetes II, however, with the support of the Alexandrian population, was soon on the scene vying for the throne. Onias remained loyal to Cleopatra, entering the city at the head of a small force to back Cleopatra and suppress the revolt of the Alexandrian population. Unfortunately for Onias and the Jews, his intervention was not enough to turn the tide, and Euergetes succeeded in gaining the crown of Egypt.

It is obvious why the Jews were counted among the enemies of Euergetes II. Josephus relates that when he was preparing to fight Onias, Euergetes ordered that all the Jews in Alexandria be arrested and brought together to be exposed to a terrible death: to be trampled by elephants, "the beasts being actually made drunk for the purpose."⁸¹

The elephants, without touching the Jews at their feet, rushed at Physcon's [Euergetes] friends, and killed a large number of them. Afterwards Ptolemy saw a terrible apparition, which forbade him to injure these people. His favorite concubine (some call her Ithaca, others Irene) adding her entreaty to him not to perpetrate such an enormity, he gave way and repented of his past actions and further designs. That is the origin of the well-known feast which the Jews of Alexandria keep, with good reason, on this day, because of the deliverance so manifestly vouchsafed to them by God.⁸²

⁸⁰ Jos. C. Ap. II. 50-52.

⁸¹ Ibid., 53ff.

⁸² Ibid. Evidently the Jews in Alexandria at the time of Josephus were still celebrating a yearly festival commemorating their deliverance from the elephants.

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There is another account, similar in many ways to the one mentioned above, that comes to us from a different source.⁸³ However the author of III Maccabees ascribes the events to the time of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221 to 205 B.C.). According to this account, Ptolemy IV, after defeating Antiochus III at Raphia (217 B.C.), visited Jerusalem.⁸⁴ Once there, the king decided that he would visit the temple and, in particular, enter the Holy of Holies. Naturally, his decision caused a great deal of consternation among the Jews. The king was immediately told that it would not be possible for him to enter the Holy of Holies, since only the high priest was allowed there once a year. When Ptolemy persisted in his purpose and attempted to carry it out, a miracle occurred: God intervened, taking hold of the king and, "shaking him to and fro as a reed is shaken by the wind,"⁸⁵ thrust him upon the ground, completely paralyzed. His friends and his body-guard removed him from the temple, and he left the city uttering terrible threats.

Once in Egypt, Ptolemy Philopator immediately set out to avenge himself on the Jews of his kingdom. A command was issued stating that all Jews in Egypt must be either initiated into the Dionysiac mysteries or suffer death. When the Jews refused the Dionysiac initiation, the king assembled all the Jews from his kingdom in the stadium of Alexandria. There, scribes sought to record all the names of the Jews that

⁸³ III Macc. 5 and 6.

⁸⁴ There are no other accounts of any such visit to Jerusalem by Ptolemy IV outside of that in III Maccabees.

⁸⁵ III Macc. 2: 22.

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were to be killed so that the exact number would be known. The task proved impossible, since after forty days of work, the scribes reported having run out of pens and papyrus. After several other postponements, also due to God's intervention, the dreaded day of execution finally arrived. Here also, as in the account by Josephus, the king ordered that a great number of elephants be made drunk and then let loose upon the Jews. God intervened, and the elephants turned around and trampled the king's soldiers instead of attacking the Jews. The king realized that he was fighting a superior force, repented of his evil designs, and set all the Jews free. With great rejoicing and with prayers of thanksgiving to God, the Hebrews celebrated a festival of their salvation for seven days. The Jews then decreed that such a festival would annually celebrate their miraculous deliverance from a certain and horrible death.

Scholars, not accepting III Maccabees at face value, argue that it is a work comparable to a Greek romance. Hadas suggests that not even the author intended his work to be accepted as literal truth.⁸⁶ Some scholars have rejected altogether the historical value of the story.⁸⁷ I believe, however, that the author of III Maccabees, writing probably at the beginning of the Roman period,⁸⁸ used the same historical tradition that Josephus ascribed to the time of Euergetes II.

⁸⁶Hadas, Maccabees, p. 15.

⁸⁷Emil Schürer, Jewish People, Division II, Vol. II, pp. 216ff. Also A. Bouché-Leclercq, Lagides, I: 313ff.

⁸⁸See Hadas, Maccabees, pp. 18ff.

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It is much more reasonable to accept that a persecution of Jews took place at the time of Euergetes II, who had every cause to hate them, and not at the time of Ptolemy IV, who was not a brutal tyrant such as Euergetes.⁸⁹

The Jews, then, who for a considerable time had been political enemies of Euergetes II, suffered some kind of persecution at the time when he was vying for the throne against his nephew and his mother, Cleopatra II. The fact that an annual feast of deliverance was still being celebrated at the time of Josephus by the Jews of Alexandria would seem to indicate that the persecution ceased abruptly, before the Jews suffered any considerable casualties. The reason why the persecution ceased could well have been that soon afterwards Euergetes reached an agreement with Cleopatra II, and married her. There was no longer any reason to persecute her supporters, and so the Jews were allowed to go free.

There is evidence that the rest of Euergetes II's reign was not one marked by hostility towards the Jews.⁹⁰ It is quite possible that the latter, after seeing Cleopatra II join Euergetes, became faithful supporters of the new regime. Since the Greek population

⁸⁹According to Valerius Maximus, IX. ii. 5, Euergetes II once ordered his army to surround the gymnasium at Alexandria and put all its pupils to the sword.

⁹⁰The Jews would not have dedicated their newly erected synagogues to him unless hostility had ceased. See V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, C. P. Jud., I, p. 23.

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of Alexandria became very hostile to Euergetes II,⁹¹ while the country continued to suffer numerous revolts from the native population,⁹² the Jews may have provided a neutral third element welcome to Euergetes, but detested by the Greek population.

The sons of Onias IV, Helkias and Hananiah, played an important role as Egyptian commanders under Cleopatra III (116 to 102 B.C.), the niece and widow of Euergetes II.⁹³ According to the latter's will, Cyrene was left to Cleopatra III and whichever of his two sons by her (Ptolemy IX Soter II and Ptolemy X, Alexander I) she wished to choose as her associate. She was forced by public opinion at Alexandria to place Soter on the throne with her from 116 to 108 B.C., while Alexander, her favorite son, ruled at Cyprus. But c. 108 B.C. she managed to gain the upper hand over Soter, turning public opinion against him with the accusation that he had attempted to murder her. Soter fled to Syria, closely pursued by his mother, who wished to eliminate her son as a contender for the throne once and for all.

⁹¹Valerius Maximus, IX. ii. 5 and Justin, XXXVIII. viii. 7, mention incidents adversely affecting the Greek element of Alexandria. Justin indicates that Euergetes increased the ranks of the Alexandrian citizens by including many foreigners. Who these foreigners were is not clear. Hermann Dessau, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1924), 2: 660 suggests Greeks and native Egyptians. V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, *C. P. Jud.*, 1, p. 23, note 58, suggest that a number of Jews could have been included.

⁹²Strabo, 797; Polybius, XXXIV. 14. 6. See also A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Lagides*, 2: 55ff.

⁹³For events during the life of Cleopatra III consult Pausanias I. 9; Justin XXXIX. 3 and 4: Diodorus Siculus XXXIV and XXXV; XIII. 284 and 328-355. See also A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Lagides*, Vol. II, Chapter XII, and E. Bevan, *Ptolemaic Dynasty*, Chapter 11. In Jos. Ant. XIII. 284, Helkias and Hananiah appear as heads of the Jews in the district of Onias.

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In Syria there were two contenders for the Seleucid throne. Antiochus Grypus was king in Damascus, while Antiochus Cyzicenus was king of Northern Syria. Palestine was almost entirely in the hands of Alexander Jannaeus. At the head of Cleopatra's army were Helkias and Hananiah.⁹⁴ During the campaign that followed, some of the queen's advisors counseled her to disregard the alliance with Alexander Jannaeus and invade his country.⁹⁵ At this point Hananiah⁹⁶ spoke out against such a plan, emphasizing that the queen would be committing "an injustice if she deprived an ally of his own possessions, 'especially one who is our kinsman. For I would have you know that an injustice done to this man will make all us Jews your enemies.' By this exhortation of Hananiah, Cleopatra was persuaded not to do Alexander any wrong."⁹⁷

According to this account, Hananiah was a man in a position to dictate terms, since he had behind him the entire Jewish population of Egypt, and at his command an armed force of considerable strength. It is also evident from Hananiah's speech that the Jews of the diaspora considered themselves closely bound to their kinsmen in Palestine, since an injustice to the latter would be taken as an affront to the Jews in Egypt as well.

⁹⁴ Jos. Ant. XIII. 349.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 353.

⁹⁶ Helkias had died shortly before (Jos. Ant. XIII. 351).

⁹⁷ Ibid., 354f. The conflict between Cleopatra III and Soter was not resolved in Syria. Soter went back to Cyprus c. 102 B.C., and Cleopatra returned to Egypt, where she died shortly afterwards.

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After the death of Cleopatra III in 101 B.C., her son Alexander I ruled alone until 89 B.C., when he was expelled by a popular uprising. Soter was recalled from Cyprus, where he had been ruling after the confrontation in Coele-Syria with his mother.⁹⁸ Soter II ruled with his daughter Berenice until his death in 80 B.C. He was succeeded by his daughter, by then an elderly woman, and by her young cousin whom she married, Ptolemy XI, Alexander II, son of Alexander I. After only 20 days in power, Alexander II murdered his wife Berenice, and was in turn dragged out of his palace to the Gymnasium and killed there by the Alexandrians.⁹⁹ The populace then placed an illegitimate son of Soter II, Ptolemy XII Philopator Neos Dionysus, nicknamed Auletes, on the throne.¹⁰⁰

Auletes found his position viz-a-viz Rome very precarious. Not only had he come to the throne by the will of a populace that had just murdered Alexander II, Sulla's nominee, but also it was claimed at Rome that Alexander II had bequeathed Egypt to the Roman people.¹⁰¹ Whether or not this was true, Auletes' reign from the beginning was under the constant threat of Roman intervention. A few years after Auletes came to the throne, in 65 B.C., Marcus Crassus, who held the censorship that year, proposed that Egypt should be made

⁹⁸ See above, p. 83.

⁹⁹ Appian The Civil Wars I. 102.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Cicero De Lege Agraria I. I; II. 17.

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tributary to Rome.¹⁰² It is true that he did not succeed in his enterprise; nevertheless the thought remained in the minds of many, as evidenced by the agrarian law proposed by the tribune Rullus in 64 B.C.¹⁰³

It is not surprising, therefore, that Auletes repeatedly tried to gain the support and confidence of the Romans, as when he sent 8,000 cavalry to Pompey who was subjugating Palestine. However this act only made him unpopular with his own people, thus making his position on the throne even more unstable. In 59 B.C., Auletes paid Julius Caesar 6,000 talents.¹⁰⁴ In return, Caesar had a law passed that recognized Auletes as king of Egypt, friend and ally of Rome.¹⁰⁵ But since the law did not mention Cyprus, the tribune Clodius, a partisan of Caesar, carried a second law that made Cyprus a Roman province. M. Cato was sent to the island to induce Auletes' brother,

¹⁰² Plutarch Life of Crassus XIII. 1.

¹⁰³ Cicero, during his consulship in 63 B.C., spoke against the proposed law of Rullus in his De Lege Agraria, where he made mention of the alleged will of Alexander. Cicero obviously saw that Rullus was simply a pawn in the hands of Julius Caesar and Crassus against Pompey. The law of Rullus did not mention Egypt specifically as one of the territories to be sold in order to acquire funds to carry out the project, but the implication was clearly there. For a more detailed discussion of the entire matter see E. G. Hardy, Some Problems in Roman History (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 82-98.

¹⁰⁴ According to Cicero, as quoted by Strabo, XVII. 797, the total annual revenue of Auletes amounted to 12,500 talents.

¹⁰⁵ Suetonius Life of Julius Caesar 54.

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who was king there, to turn over his kingdom to Rome. Auletes did not intervene to help his brother, who ended by committing suicide.¹⁰⁶

In 58 B.C., Auletes, fearing for his safety, left Alexandria, which was practically in revolt, and went to Rome hoping to gain some sort of support to insure his safe return and permanency on the throne.¹⁰⁷ In 57 B.C., he appealed to the Roman senate.¹⁰⁸ The senate seems to have been disposed to restore Auletes, but the problem arose of who was to do the restoring. Lentulus Spinther, proconsul of Cilicia, should have been appointed ex officio; but Pompey, though apparently supporting Lentulus, wanted the commission for himself. No doubt he saw an opportunity for direct intervention in Egyptian affairs with the possibility of a complete takeover in the near future, and Pompey wanted to effect the take-over.

It was at this time that Cato produced a Sibylline oracle forbidding the restoration cum multitudine hominum,¹⁰⁹ that is, by the employment of a host of men. Since Pompey held the imperium, and naturally would have had to mobilize and command an army to accomplish his purpose, he became ineligible by virtue of the oracle. In the end the question was shelved by a resolution (auctoritas) of the senate, forbidding the restoration altogether.

¹⁰⁶ Plutarch, Life of Cato the Younger, XXXVI. 1ff.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., XXXV. 1-5.

¹⁰⁸ Cicero, Ad Familiares I. 1-5; Ad Quintum Fratrem II.2f. Livy Ep. 104.

¹⁰⁹ Plutarch Cato the Younger XXXV. 6ff.

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Auletes did not give up, though for the moment he left Italy and moved to Ephesus. He was soon in negotiations with Aulus Gabinius, proconsul of Syria. For an enormous price,¹¹⁰ Gabinius agreed to restore Auletes to the throne. In the meantime, the Alexandrines had found a successor to Auletes in Archelaus of Pontus, whom they married to queen Berenice IV, Auletes' daughter. In 55 B.C. Gabinius was ready to invade Egypt, bringing Auletes with him.¹¹¹ The first obstacles in the way of Gabinius was the ford at Pelusium, which was guarded by Jewish soldiers.¹¹² Would the Jews allow the Roman army to break into Egypt?

In Palestine, the leadership of the Jews was partly in the hands of the king and high priest Hyrcanus, son of Alexander Jannaeus and Salome Alexandra. Sharing the leadership with the Hasmonean Hyrcanus was Antipater the Idumean, father of the future Herod the Great. Even though Hyrcanus was the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, Antipater was the real power, manipulating the weak Hyrcanus from behind the scenes. Antipater and Hyrcanus supported Gabinius, and for this Egyptian campaign to reinstall Auletes on the throne, they placed themselves entirely at his service. "In addition to providing money, arms, corn, and auxiliaries, Antipater further induced the local Jewish

¹¹⁰ Ten thousand talents according to Dio XXXIX. 55. 3.

¹¹¹ Livy Ep. 105 Cicero In Pisonem XXI. 8-50. Jos. Jewish War, I. 175, Ant. XIV. 98.

¹¹² Jos. C. Ap. II. 65, states that a Jewish guard (from the "district of Onias," see Ant. XIV. 130-133) had been entrusted with the defense of the strategic area at the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile, that is, the route from Pelusium to Memphis.

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guardians of the frontiers at Pelusium to let Gabinius through."¹¹³ So the authority of Antipater and the high priest Hyrcanus was recognized by the Jews in Egypt, and they allowed Gabinius to enter the country. Archelaus was killed in the ensuing battle against the army of Gabinius,¹¹⁴ whose cavalry was led by Marc Antony.¹¹⁵ Auletes was restored on the throne, and, after killing his daughter Berenice, ruled alone until his death in 51 B.C.

The first inference that can be drawn from this incident is that the Jews of Egypt recognized the authority of Antipater and Hyrcanus, leaders of the Palestinian Jews. Like all Jews in the Diaspora, the Egyptian Jewry always looked to Jerusalem as the center of their religious life, and to Palestine as their homeland. They remained aware of the political and religious developments taking place in Palestine, and of the possible consequences that these developments could have on their own particular situations.

It is, therefore, quite possible to make a second inference from the incident at Pelusium in 55 B.C. The Egyptian Jews had no doubt followed closely the events taking place in Syria and Palestine during the preceding decade. They had heard of the exploits of Pompey in defeating Mithridates of Pontus in 66 B.C., and the submission of

¹¹³ Jos. Jewish War I. 175. See also Ant. XIV. 99.

¹¹⁴ Dio Cassius XXXIX. 58.

¹¹⁵ Cicero Pro Rabir. Post., VIII. 11; Plutarch Anton. 3.

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Tigranes of Armenia.¹¹⁶ They had heard of the submission of Antiochus, king of Commagene,¹¹⁷ and of Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, who had inherited his father's kingdom of Pontus after the latter's defeat and subsequent suicide.¹¹⁸ But, above all, they had seen what happened in Palestine and Jerusalem, their sacred city, when a Jewish faction, led by Aristobulus (brother of Hyrcanus), had opposed the Romans.

The widow of Alexander Jannaeus, Salome Alexandra (who ruled from 78 to 69 B.C.), early in her reign had installed one of her sons, Hyrcanus, as high priest. She had left her other son, Aristobulus, without any power.¹¹⁹ The latter had sided with the Sadducees, whose power was being curtailed by the queen. A deputation from the Sadducees, including Aristobulus, was sent to the queen to present their complaints and petition for permission to leave Jerusalem for their own safety. Permission was granted to the Sadducees, and the queen entrusted several fortresses to them, so that they would not be utterly destroyed by the Pharisees and their supporters.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 104 and 105. Since Syria had been conquered earlier by Tigranes, Pompey took over Syria from Tigranes, who "voluntarily" gave it up.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 106.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹¹⁹ Jos. *Ant.* XIII. 407, 408.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 409-418. Even though the queen favored the Pharisees, she did not wish, according to Josephus, to have them massacre the Sadducees, who were also her subjects. Nothing is said of what Aristobulus did at this time, whether he remained in Jerusalem or resided in one of the Sadducean fortresses.

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When, towards the end of her reign, the queen became very sick, Aristobulus made his move for power. The fortresses that were in the hands of the Sadducees were turned over to him, and he soon had an armed force of considerable proportions. Hyrcanus and the Pharisees appealed to the queen for help, but were told to do whatever they thought was best, since she was in no condition to anything.¹²¹ Soon afterwards she died.

Hyrcanus became king after the death of his mother, but not for long. Aristobulus with his army met his brother near Jericho and defeated him.¹²² Hyrcanus was forced to surrender his position as king and high priest. Aristobulus took over and ruled from 69 to 63 B.C. but not peacefully, since Hyrcanus rose to challenge him, driven by Antipater the Idumean, the man behind the scenes.

Antipater, the father of the future Herod the Great, was the son of a man also named Antipater, who had been appointed governor of Idumea by Alexander Jannaeus.¹²³ The younger Antipater, a crafty intriguer hungry for power, saw in Hyrcanus a weak man he could manipulate. Antipater secured the aid of Aretas, the Nabatean king, and an alliance was established among the three (Antipater, Hyrcanus,

¹²¹ Ibid., 426-29.

¹²² Ibid., XIV. 4, 5.

¹²³ Idumea had been conquered by Alexander Jannaeus during his reign and incorporated into his kingdom. Antipater, obviously a collaborator of Jannaeus, had been appointed governor of the territory. (Jos. Ant., XIV. 8-10.)

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and Aretas).¹²⁴ The confederates met Aristobulus in battle near Jerusalem and defeated him.¹²⁵ As a consequence, a great part of Aristobulus' supporters went over to Hyrcanus, and the former was forced to withdraw to the temple where, with those of his men that had remained loyal to him, he was besieged by his brother and Aretas. In the meantime, the Romans had arrived.

After Pompey had secured the submission of Tigranes of Armenia, he took immediate steps to gain possession of Syria. Scaurus, his quaestor, was sent ahead to take over the territory (65 B.C.). After making sure that Damascus was secure in Roman hands, Scaurus proceeded to Judaea. Undoubtedly he had been informed of the civil war, and he might have seen an opportunity to intervene.

As soon as Scaurus stepped into the territory, he received ambassadors from Aristobulus and from Hyrcanus. The ambassadors from the former immediately offered a huge sum of money¹²⁶ for the Roman

¹²⁴ Ibid., 15-16. Hyrcanus promised Aretas that, if he was restored to the throne, he would return twelve cities taken by Alexander Janneus from the Nabateans.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹²⁶ Jos. Jewish War i. 128, mentions the sum of 300 talents, whereas in Ant. XIV. 29-31 the sum is 400 talents. This is not necessarily a contradiction on the part of Josephus. The latter passage, referring to the activities of Scaurus in Syria, declares that Pompey had sent Scaurus "also" to that area to secure it. Who was the other man? Most probably Gabinus, Pompey's legate, since Josephus (Ant. XIV. 37) mentions his name in connection with the bribes. According to this passage, at a meeting with Pompey in 64 B.C., Antipater's envoys insisted that their master should be recognized by the Roman as the Jewish king, since Gabinus had already been paid 300 talents while Scaurus had been paid 400 talents in order to secure the Roman support for Antipater (naturally this accusation did not ingratiate the latter with either Scaurus or Gabinus). This passage could explain why the two different amounts are mentioned by Josephus.

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support,¹²⁷ and Scaurus sent orders to Aretas that the siege should be raised. Aretas knew better than to go against Rome's wishes and obeyed the order. Aristobulus, filled with the confidence that Roman support could give, soon gathered a new army¹²⁸ and pursued Aretas, who was on his way home. At the battle of Papyron, Aretas and Hyrcanus were soundly defeated by Aristobulus.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Why did Aristobulus gain the support of the Romans when Josephus (*Ant.* XIV. 30, 31) states that Hyrcanus also offered to pay "no less a sum"? Josephus declares that Aristobulus' offer was accepted because he was "wealthy and generous and asked for more moderate terms, whereas Hyrcanus was poor and niggardly, and held out untrustworthy promises for greater concessions." I doubt that Hyrcanus offered "no less a sum" than his brother. First, neither Hyrcanus nor Aristobulus was present at this meeting, only their ambassadors who must have had their instructions before they had set out for the interview. Second, as Josephus points out, Aristobulus was "wealthy" while Hyrcanus was "poor" (he was not the king at that time, was on the run, and therefore probably did not have a large treasury at his disposal). I do not see how the ambassadors representing Hyrcanus could have promised, on the spot, to match Aristobulus' offer. In addition, in *Jewish War* i. 128, Josephus states that "three hundred talents outweighed considerations of justice." If both sides had offered 300 talents, this statement would be meaningless. The bribe was probably not the only factor which led Scaurus to decide in Aristobulus' favor. Perhaps he felt that it should be up to Pompey to decide on a matter of such importance as who should be king of the Jews. He might have judged that he was not in the position of declaring in favor of Hyrcanus, who was not the present king, against a man who had been king of the Jews for several years. In addition, Scaurus might have felt distrust towards Hyrcanus' allies the Nabateans, who had been at odds with the Romans on several occasions (see Richard S. Williams, "Aulus Gabinius: A Political Biography" [an unpublished dissertation, Michigan State University, 1973], p. 86; also Plutarch *Pompey*, 39. 2; Dio 37. 15).

¹²⁸ The news that he now had Roman support seems to have worked wonders, since he apparently did not encounter difficulties in raising a large army in a very short time.

¹²⁹ *Jos. Ant.* XIV. 33. Both Hyrcanus and Aretas escaped with their lives, but the latter lost many men. There is no mention in the account of Antipater.

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The first phase of Antipater's search for power had ended in disaster. He had had an important part in bringing the Roman intervention to Judaea, and I do not believe that at this point he had meant to do so. I also believe that about this time he had begun to realize that Rome's intervention had been, and would continue to be, inevitable, and that he would have to adapt himself to the circumstances, utilizing them to his advantage.

In the meantime Aristobulus was attempting to ingratiate himself with Pompey by sending him a golden vine worth five hundred talents as a present.¹³⁰ After spending the winter of 64 B.C. at Apis in Syria,¹³¹ Pompey came to Damascus, where he was met by representatives of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. This time, however, Antipater was there in person to represent his side (theoretically Hyrcanus').¹³² After listening to the arguments presented by both sides, Pompey said that he would not come to a decision until he had reached Judaea.¹³³ Perhaps Aristobulus believed that Pompey's decision would ultimately go against him, because instead of heeding the Roman's orders, he fortified himself in Alexandreion.¹³⁴ Pompey immediately marched against him, and Aristobulus, probably not very sure of the strength

¹³⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹³¹ Dio Cassius XXXVII. 7.

¹³² Jos. Ant. XIV. 37.

¹³³ Ibid., 46.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 49. This was clearly an act of defiance, and it was so interpreted by Pompey.

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of his position, "feigned obedience to everything he [Pompey] commanded," which was delivering Alexandreion to the Romans.¹³⁵

Aristobulus, however, continued with his plans of resisting Pompey. He now took his army into Jerusalem, and fortified the city. Pompey followed close behind, and set his camp near Jericho. Once more Aristobulus had a change of heart and decided to ask for terms. He personally went to Pompey's camp to negotiate, and there promised to deliver Jerusalem and a large sum of money to the Romans, in return for peace.¹³⁶ Pompey sent Gabinius to Jerusalem to receive the city and the money, but Aristobulus' soldiers would not open the gates nor deliver the money. Aristobulus, who had remained in Pompey's camp, was taken prisoner, and the city was placed under siege.¹³⁷

"But among the men within the city there was dissension."¹³⁸ Finally the supporters of Hyrcanus opened the gates of the city to Pompey, and the Romans marched in.¹³⁹ Aristobulus and his men took refuge in the Temple area where they fortified themselves and continued to resist for three more months.¹⁴⁰ In the end the Romans made a breach in the wall and a frightful massacre followed.¹⁴¹ The victims included the priests who were engaged in offering sacrifices on the altars. And to the horror of all the Jews down through the ages, Pompey entered the

¹³⁵ Ibid., 52, 53.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 54, 55.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 60-66.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 67-70.

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Antipater had finally achieved part of his aims: Hyrcanus was reinstated as high priest and made an ethnarch of the people (though not king). From then onward the real power in Judaea would be Antipater. Eventually, after Antipater had helped Gabinius to reinstate Auletes on the throne of Egypt, the Jew would be given official power as procurator of Judaea.¹⁴³

For the Jews of the Diaspora who were observing the events taking place in Palestine from 65 B.C. to 55 B.C., two factors had become quite clear: opposition to the Romans brought tragic consequences, while, on the other hand, working with them could and did bring abundant rewards. So when Gabinius advanced upon Egypt in 55 B.C. with a large army which included the Jewish leader Antipater and his soldiers, the Jews of Egypt understood which side they should take. Although the Egyptian Jews respected the leaders of the Jews in Judaea, siding with the Romans was the wisest course of action that the Egyptian Jews could take at that time. Auletes, no doubt, remembered that the Jews had been his and the Romans' allies, and, although there

¹⁴² Ibid., 72.

¹⁴³ According to Jos. Jewish War I. 199 it was Julius Caesar who nominated Antipater as procurator. However Antipater is called procurator of Judaea before Caesar's intervention in Palestinian affairs (Jos. Ant. XIV. 139). I believe Antipater was made procurator when Gabinius, after the Egyptian campaign, "settled the affairs of the city of Jerusalem according to Antipater's wishes (Ant. XIV. 102), or as Jewish War I. 178 states, "reorganized the government in accordance with Antipater's wishes."

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is no record saying so, the Egyptian Jews probably reaped many benefits in the remaining four years of Auletes' now undisputed reign.

Once again, in 48 B.C., the wishes of Antipater and Hyrcanus were followed by the Jews in Egypt. Before his death in 51 B.C., Auletes had bequeathed Egypt to his ten-year-old son Ptolemy XIII Philopator, who was to marry his seventeen year old sister Cleopatra VI Philopator. Three years later, however, they were at war with each other. At the same time, the Romans were also involved in a terrible civil war: Julius Caesar against Pompey and his followers. Caesar, after defeating Pompey at Pharsalus, followed him to Egypt, only to find that his enemy had been assassinated shortly before.¹⁴⁴ Caesar remained at Alexandria, and was soon involved in the internal affairs of the country on the side of Cleopatra VI.¹⁴⁵

Very soon Caesar realized that he was in a difficult position, since Ptolemy's army substantially outnumbered his own forces. Therefore he urged Mithridates of Pergamum to come to his aid. Mithridates complied promptly, but upon reaching Ascalon with his army, was informed that the city of Pelusium in Egypt would not allow him through.¹⁴⁶ At this critical moment Antipater, who had now become a supporter of Julius Caesar, joined Mithridates with a Jewish force of 3,000 men. Antipater distinguished himself during the capture of Pelusium and was

¹⁴⁴ Plutarch Caesar XLVIII.

¹⁴⁵ Dio Cassius, XLII. 40-44; Caesar B. Civ. III. 106; B. Alex.; Plutarch Caesar XLIX; Suetonius Caesar LII.

¹⁴⁶ Jos. Jewish War I. 187f., Ant. XIV. 128f.

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the first to pull down part of the wall, thus opening a way for the others to pour into the city. . . . But when Mithridates and Antipater with their men were on their way to Caesar, the Jews who inhabited the district of Onias, as it was called, prevented them from doing so. Antipater, however, persuaded them also to side with his party on the ground of their common nationality, especially when he showed them a letter from the high priest Hyrcanus, in which he urged them to be friendly to Caesar and receive his army hospitably and furnish it with all things necessary. And so, when they saw that Antipater and the high priest had the same wish, they complied. And when those in the neighborhood of Memphis heard that these Jews had joined Caesar's side, they too invited Mithridates to come to them.¹⁴⁷

Soon afterwards, in a battle fought somewhere in the Delta region of the Nile, Antipater saved Mithridates from defeat.¹⁴⁸ Thus Mithridates was able to join Caesar in Alexandria, playing an important role in turning matters around in favor of the Roman.

It is no wonder that Julius Caesar was very impressed by the contribution of Antipater and the Jews.¹⁴⁹ Not only did Antipater and Hyrcanus personally benefit after the conclusion of the Alexandrian

¹⁴⁷ Jos. Ant. XIV. 130ff. No doubt the Egyptian Jews again judged that in addition to showing respect for the authority of Antipater and Hyrcanus, it would be wise to join the Romans and the victor of Pharsalus.

¹⁴⁸ Jos. Jewish War I. 191f.; Ant. XIV. 133-136. Mithridates and Antipater had encountered an Egyptian force that had attempted to turn the relief force back before the latter could join Caesar and his men at Alexandria. Caesar, however, managed to leave Alexandria, meet Mithridates, and help him defeat the forces of Ptolemy XIII. Dio Cassius XLII 41-43, Caesar, B. Alex. 27-28.

¹⁴⁹ Jos. Jewish War. 193f.

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Julius Caesar did not forget that he owed much to the Jews.

The above account shows that the Jews in Egypt were aware and closely affected by the political events taking place in Egypt and Coele-Syria, and that on several occasions they actively participated in the political events of their age. The Jews in Egypt were a force that had to be acknowledged by the Ptolemies, Seleucids, and Romans, a force that many times played an important role in determining the course of events in both Egypt and Coele-Syria.

¹⁵⁰ Antipater was granted Roman citizenship, exempted from taxation, and confirmed as procurator of Judaea (a post probably granted him originally by Gabinius: Jos. *Ant.* XIV. 102 and 137). Hyrcanus was confirmed as high priest and ethnarch of the Jews.

¹⁵¹ Jos. *Ant.* XIV. 185ff. Among the benefits that Josephus cites as bestowed upon the Jews by Julius Caesar was the Alexandrian citizenship for those dwelling in that particular city. I shall discuss the citizenship question in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER IV

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY: ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL STATUS OF THE JEWS AT ALEXANDRIA

The purpose of this chapter is to study how the Jewish community was organized internally at Alexandria, and to determine whether or not the Jews as a whole belonged to the citizen body. Before studying the internal organization of the Jews at Alexandria, I shall endeavor to analyze briefly how the city of Alexandria was organized internally in relation to the rest of Egypt and to other Hellenistic cities founded by Alexander in this kingdom. The matter of whether or not Alexandria was founded following the Greek pattern which Alexander commonly used in the establishment of cities throughout his vast empire is of great importance in determining who was and who was not a citizen of Alexandria, what Alexandrian citizenship meant, and how it was acquired in this city.

A typical Greek city had a citizen body based on territorial and gentilial prerequisites.¹ Citizens in these cities had definite privileges and obligations. Since civic religion was an intricate part of Greek city life, citizens were expected to participate in

¹There existed in most Greek cities territorial and clan divisions for citizenship purposes, such as tribes, demes, and phratries. In post-Cleisthenic Athens, for example, a citizen had to be a descendant of citizens, and member of a phratry, a deme, and a tribe.

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civic ceremonies, which involved, on most occasions, performing sacrifices to and taking oaths by the gods of the city, and taking part in gymnastic festivals which were connected with some cult. The citizen body would normally govern a Greek city by means of an ecclesia, a boule or a gerousia, and a judicial body. Typical Greek cities in Egypt were Naucratis and Ptolemais. Naucratis, already in existence from the time of Psammetichus I (663 to 609 B.C.) of the XXVth pharaonic dynasty, quickly developed during the Hellenistic period into a regular Greek city.² The Greek citizen-body jealously guarded the purity of its Greek blood, as is evident by the law that forbade intermarriage with Egyptians.³ Ptolemais, founded by Ptolemy I, was a Greek city, with a Greek constitution, and a complete internal autonomy.⁴ "We see the council [boule] and people passing decrees, we hear of disorders in the sessions of the council and the assembly, particularly at the elections of magistrates, and we find the council and people, on the proposal of the prytaneis, modifying the constitution

²Athanaeus, IV. 149-150, speaks of the prytaneum of Naucratis of the Greek city-magistrates who bore the Ionic title of τιμουχοι. Naucratis even issued its own coins during the time of Alexander the Great (see A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces [London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1971], p. 301).

³Mitteis and U. Wilcken, Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde, 4 vols. (Leipzig-Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1912), Vol. 1, No. 27.

⁴W. Dittenberger, Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae (Hildesheim: George Olms, Verglagsbuchhandlung, 1970), Nos. 48, 49, 50, and 51 are four inscriptions from the third century B.C. which show that Naucratis possessed a Greek constitution of the normal type, with an assembly, a boule or council, and annual magistrates (six prytaneis in this case).

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in an oligarchic sense, by decreeing that the council and the law courts be chosen from a select register."⁵

Can Alexandria be classified as a typical Greek city such as Naucratis and Ptolemais? Max Radin believes strongly that the answer is negative. In Alexandria, he says, "there is no trace, till late in Roman times, of a boule, and of a demios as little. In the great mass of Greek papyri that have come from Egypt, there is nowhere any indication that a senate [council?] ever met, or a people ever assembled to parody the deliberations of the Athenian ecclesia. In other words, Alexandria was much less a polis than it was a royal residence."⁶

The problem of whether or not Alexandria ever possessed a boule has produced much controversial literature.⁷ In addition, there is

⁵Jones, Cities, p. 305, commenting on the four inscriptions mentioned above.

⁶Max Radin, The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915), p. 107.

⁷Spartianus, Vita Severi, XVII, indicates that Alexandria did not obtain a boule in Roman times until the reign of Septimius Severus. Max Radin, in a book review of H. Idris Bell's Jews and Christians in Egypt, which appeared in Classical Philology, XX (1925), pp. 368-375, states that it is his firm belief that Alexandria never did possess a boule until the time of Severus. Bell, Jews and Christians, pp. 9 and 10, analyzes the different arguments on both sides of this controversy. He points out that the Edict of Claudius to the Alexandrians found in Papyrus Lond. Inv. 1912 (edited by Bell on page 23ff. of Jews and Christians) seems to negate the existence of a boule at Alexandria at any time. Scholars such as Fraser, Ptolemaic Alexandria, p. 94; Jones, Cities, p. 303; Davis, Race Relations, pp. 70ff.; Pierre Jouquet, La Vie Municipale dans L'Egypte Romaine (Paris: Editions E. De Boccard, 1968), pp. 25-32; are among those who believe that Alexandria did possess a boule sometime early in its history, but that it was later abolished. However, it is not possible for these scholars to identify who effected the abolition, since Spartianus clearly implies that there was no boule under the Ptolemies, while Cassius Dio, l. xvii. 2, 3, seems to indicate that Augustus abolished a boule at Alexandria.

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only slight evidence to indicate that Alexandria possessed even the normal tribe and district divisions (tribes, demes, and phratries).⁸ Not until Roman times is there clear evidence that Alexandrian citizenship was open only to those who had finished their ephebic training,⁹ thus establishing Alexandria in the category of other Greek cities.

No one disputes that during the Ptolemaic period there was a large Greek element among the population of Alexandria. What is under dispute is whether this Greek element controlled the political life of the city, as would have been the case if Alexandria were a typical Greek city such as Ptolemais or Naucratis. Closely related to this issue is the question of Alexandrian citizenship, especially as it relates to the Jewish inhabitants of this city.

⁸According to papyrus dating from c. 265 B.C. (Mitteis and Wilcken, Grundzüge, No. 25, pp. 14ff.), the citizen body of an unnamed city was divided into five tribes, twelve demes in each tribe, and twelve phratries in each deme. Radin, Jews, p. 107f.; Davis, Race-Relations, p. 70, note 3; Fraser, Ptolemaic Alexandria, 1: 39, are among scholars who believe that this inscription probably refers to Alexandria, though Fraser also suggests Ptolemais as a possibility. On the other hand, Fraser also produces the evidence of Alexandrian inscriptions, also from approximately the middle of the third century B.C. (*ibid.*, 42ff.), where the names of certain Alexandrians are coupled with the statement that they belong to such and such a deme. I do not see any reason to deny Alexandria the common Greek division of tribes, demes, and phratries. But I would specify that the demotic was the official designation for citizens of the Greek politeuma or community only, which does not concede that Alexandrians without a demotic were not really Alexandrians.

⁹In the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians (P. London 1912, lines 52-59, in H. I. Bell's edition), the Emperor confirmed the Alexandrian citizenship of all those who had, up to his principate, attained it by completing their ephebic training. It is clear from his letter that the ephebate was the normal method of entering into the Alexandrian citizenship during the Imperial period. Very possibly, this was also the common method of achieving citizenship in the Greek Community of Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period.

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Of two modern schools of thought concerning the Jewish citizenship at Alexandria, one believes emphatically that the Jews as a whole were citizens of this city, while the other one believes they were not. Scholars who believe that the Jews as a whole possessed the Alexandrian citizenship¹⁰ base their opinion mainly on the authority of Josephus and Philo. Josephus, in Contra Apionem,¹¹ makes the following statement:

Let us investigate the grave and shocking charges which he [Apionem] has brought against the Jewish residents in Alexandria. "They came," he says, "from Syria and settled by a sea without a harbour, close beside the spot where the waves break on the beach." Well, if fault is to be found with the locality, he is stigmatizing, I do not say his native place, but what he professes to be his native place, Alexandria. For the sea-board forms part of the city, and is, by universal consent, its finest residential quarter. If the Jews owed their . . . tenure of this quarter to force of arms, that is a proof of their valour. In fact, however, it was presented to them as their residence by Alexander, and they obtained privileges on a par with those of the Macedonians. . . .¹² Down to the present time their local tribe bore the name of "Macedonians."¹³ If Apion had read

¹⁰ In addition to Max Radin, other scholars in this school are Emil Schürer, Jewish People, Division II, Vol. II, pp. 270ff.; J. Juster, Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1914), Vol. II, pp. 1ff.; G. De Sanctis, "Claudio e i Giudei d' Alessandria," Revista di Filologia Classica 20 (1924): 473-513; Arnaldo Momigliano, Claudius: The Emperor and His Achievement (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), pp. 96f. Davis, Race-Relations, p. 111, has a slightly different view. He believes that only the Jews who settled in Alexandria at its foundation received the citizenship. By Josephus' time, he continues, these Jews with citizenship were a minority.

¹¹ II. 33-42.

¹² In Jos. Jewish War II. 487 and Ant. XII. 8, their ἰσοπλιτεία was confirmed by the successors of Alexander.

¹³ The five tribes were probably identical with the five wards, α, β, γ, δ, ε, into which Alexandria was divided. See A. H. M. Jones, The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 158; and S. Davis, Race Relations, p. 93.

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the letters of King Alexander and of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, if he had set eyes on the papers of their successors on the throne of Egypt, or the slab which stands in Alexandria, recording the rights bestowed upon the Jews by Caesar the Great; if, I say, he knew these documents and yet had the face to contradict them in what he wrote, he was a knave; if he had no knowledge of them, an ignorant fool.

His astonishment at the idea of Jews being called Alexandrians betrays similar stupidity. All persons invited to join a colony, however different their nationality, take the name of the founders. It is needless to go outside our race for instances. Our Jewish residents in Antioch are called Antiochenes, having been granted rights of citizenship by its founder, Seleucus. Similarly, those at Ephesus and throughout the rest of Ionia bear the same name as the indigenous citizens, a right which they received from Alexander's successors. Have not the Romans, in their generosity, imparted their name to well-nigh all mankind?¹⁴ . . . If Apion disallows this class of citizenship, let him cease to call himself an Alexandrian. Born, as I have already mentioned, in the depths of Egypt, how can he be an Alexandrian, if, as he claims in our case, honorary rights of citizenship are to be ruled out?

In Antiquities XIV. 188, Josephus makes a most categorical statement: "And what is more, Julius Caesar made a bronze tablet for the Jews in Alexandria, declaring that they were citizens of Alexandria."

The letter of Claudius to the Alexandrines found in Josephus¹⁵ is additional evidence adduced by scholars wishing to prove that the Alexandrian Jews possessed the citizenship. It reads as follows:

¹⁴ Notice that Josephus was writing in the first century A.D. when full Roman citizenship had not been granted yet "well-nigh to all mankind." (An event that would occur later during the first century A.D. was the granting by Rome of Latin status to innumerable communities, a kind of partial citizenship quite similar to what, as I intend to show, the Jews possessed at Alexandria.)

¹⁵ Ant. XIX. 280-285.

Having from the first known that the Jews in Alexandria called Alexandrians were fellow colonizers from the very earliest times jointly with the Alexandrians and received equal civic rights from the kings as is manifest from the documents in their possession and from the edicts; and that after Alexandria was made subject to our empire by Augustus their rights were preserved by the prefects sent from time to time, and that these rights of theirs have never been disputed; moreover, that at the time when Aquila was at Alexandria, on the death of the ethnarch of the Jews, Augustus did not prevent the continued appointment of ethnarchs, desiring that the several subject nations should abide by their own customs and not be compelled to violate the religion of their fathers; and learning that the Alexandrians rose up in insurrection against the Jews in their midst in the time of Gaius Caesar, who through his great folly and madness humiliated the Jews because they refused to transgress the religion of their fathers by addressing him as a god; I desire that none of their rights should be lost to the Jews on account of the madness of Gaius, but that their former privileges also be preserved to them, while they abide by their own customs; and I enjoin upon both parties to take the greatest precaution to prevent any disturbance arising after the posting of my edict!

Philo¹⁶ also appears to confirm the statements of Josephus about the Alexandrian citizenship of the Jews.

It was to be feared that people everywhere might take their cue from Alexandria, and outrage their Jewish fellow-citizens by rioting against their synagogues and ancestral customs.

Again, In Flaccum 53:

When his [Flaccus']¹⁷ attack against our laws by seizing the meeting-houses without even leaving them their name appeared

¹⁶ In Flaccum 47.

¹⁷ Flaccus was appointed prefect of Alexandria and Egypt c. 32 A.D., near the end of Tiberius' principate. According to Philo, he showed considerable ability during his first five years of office. But the accession of Gaius in 37 A.D. endangered his position, since he had been a partisan of Tiberius Gemellus, the rival candidate for the succession. Flaccus had also been friendly with Macro, who had fallen into disfavour with Gaius. The anti-semitic party promised to support him in return for his help against the Jews.

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to be successful, he proceeded to another scheme, namely, the destruction of our citizenship, so that when our ancestral customs and our participation in political rights, the sole mooring on which our life was secured, had been cut away, we might undergo the worst misfortunes with no cable to cling to for safety. For a few days later he issued a proclamation in which he denounced us as foreigners and aliens and gave us no right of pleading our case but condemned us unjustly.

In both these passages Philo was writing in reference to the anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria in the summer of 38 A.D., during the principate of Gaius. Philo describes a series of atrocities committed by the Alexandrians against the Jews. In In Flaccum 78-80, he describes another humiliation suffered by the Jews, and in so doing he seems to indicate once more that the Jews had been, up to that time at least, classified with the citizens of Alexandria.

One point in the deeds committed at this time I mention only with hesitation, lest by being considered an insignificant matter it may detract from the magnitude of these horrors. Yet even if it is a small thing it is an evidence of no small malignancy. There are differences between the scourges used in the city, and these differences are regulated by the social standing of the persons to be beaten. The Egyptians actually are scourged with a different kind of lash and by a different set of people, the Alexandrians with a flat blade, and the persons who wield them also are Alexandrians. The custom was also observed in the case of our people by the predecessors of Flaccus and by Flaccus himself in his first years of office. For it is surely possible when inflicting degradation on others to find some little thing to sustain their dignity. . . . Surely then it was the height of harshness that when commoners among the Alexandrian Jews, if they appeared to have done things worthy of stripes, were beaten with whips. . . . Their [the Jewish] rulers, the magistrates, the elders, whose very name implies age and honour, in this respect fared worse than their inferiors and were treated like Egyptians of the meanest rank and guilty of the greatest iniquities.

In 39 A.D. the Jews of Alexandria sent an embassy to Gaius, and Philo describes this embassy, of which he was the leader, as a campaign

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on behalf of their citizenship,¹⁸ and their traditional rights which were being trampled by the Alexandrians. The ambassadors expressed their fear that their πολιτεία would be destroyed.¹⁹

Schürer believes that the Jews were not only citizens in Alexandria, but also in many other Hellenistic cities.²⁰ Following Josephus, Schürer speaks about Jewish citizenship in Sardes (Ant. XIV. x. 24), Cyrene (Ant. XVI. vi. 1), Antioch (Jewish War VII. iii. 3), and in other cities throughout Asia Minor and Syria (Ant. XII. iii. 1). He believes that the fact that the Jews possessed citizenship rights in all these cities produced what he calls an "internal contradiction."²¹ On the one hand, they formed in these cities a community of foreigners, organized into an independent body, with religious beliefs hopelessly at variance with Gentile worship. On the other hand, they participated as citizens in all the rights and duties of municipal life, they had seats in the civic councils, and therefore the right to vote in them. They had a share in the direction of city affairs. "This must of necessity have led to incessant collision. For the idea of separating religious from political concerns was, so long as it remained true to itself, altogether foreign to classical antiquity."²²

¹⁸ Embassy to Gaius, 349. Also Jos. Ant. XVIII. 257-260.

¹⁹ Philo Embassy, 193, 194.

²⁰ E. Schürer, Jewish People, 2: 270ff. of Div. II.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 274.

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Again following Josephus, Schürer points out that the Romans refused to deprive the Jews of their citizen rights when so petitioned by the non-Jewish citizens of these cities. He cites cases in the time of Vespasian at Alexandria (Ant. XII. iii. 1) and in the time of Titus at Antioch (Jewish War VII. v. 2), where the rights of citizenship were inscribed upon tablets of brass.²³ Many of the Jews began acquiring the rights of Roman citizenship: in Rome (Philo Embassy 23), in Asia Minor (Jos. Ant. XIV. x. 13, 16, 19), in the case of the Apostle Paul, native of Tarsus (Acts of the Apostles 16:37-39, and 22:25-27).

The school of thought that denies that the Jews were citizens of Alexandria includes a greater number of scholars than the former.²⁴ Max Radin simplifies their arguments against the citizenship to an extreme when he states that "the denial of their [Jewish] citizenship is principally based upon distrust of Josephus, who asserts it. But distrust of Josephus can be carried to an extravagant degree."²⁵ I firmly agree with the latter part of his statement. Arguments against the Jewish citizenship are based, however, on more than simple distrust of Josephus.

²³ According to Josephus, Titus not only refused to abolish their rights, but in addition confirmed them.

²⁴ Among them, W. W. Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, 3d. ed. (London: E. Arnold & Co., 1952), p. 221; H. Willrich, "Caligula," Klio, III (1903): 403-405; Pierre Jouguet, Vie Municipale, 18-21; W. Schubart, Archiv. 5 (1909): 108ff.; Bell, Jews and Christians, pp. 10-14, and Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt (Liverpool: at the University Press, 1953), pp. 37-41; V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., pp. 300-312, and C. P. Jud. (with A. Fuks), 1: 9ff.; Fraser, Ptol. Alex. 1: 54-58.

²⁵ Max Radin, The Jews, p. 109.

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One of the basic arguments against Jewish citizenship is that full citizenship in a Greek city would entail worship of the city gods, which would mean apostasy to a Jew.²⁶ Jews as a rule, Hellenizers or otherwise, held fast to their religion; and even though individuals, such as the two Jews who gave thanks in Pan's temple at Edfu, might be disloyal,²⁷ the majority of Jews were faithful to their God.

Scholars of this school believe that what the Jews formed in Alexandria was a politeuma, that is, an ethnic community which appeared as a legally independent unit within the city.²⁸ This term would apply not only to Jewish communities, but also to other ethnic groups as well. Thus there are inscriptions that speak of the politeumata of the Indumeans,²⁹ the Phrygians,³⁰ the Cretans,³¹ the Lycians,³² the Cilicians,³³ and the Boeotians.³⁴

²⁶ E.g., Tarn, Hell. Civ., p. 221.

²⁷ W. Dittenberger, Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae, No. 73, 74.

²⁸ In the Letter of Aristaeas, 310, the term politeuma is used in connection with the Jewish community of Alexandria. The same term also appears in two inscriptions from Berenice and Cyrenaica, which refer to Jewish communities there: see A. Boeckh, Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum (Berlin: G. Reimeri, 1877), No. 5361/2.

²⁹ W. Dittenberger, OGIS No. 737.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 658.

³¹ B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al. (eds.), The Tebtunis Papyri, 4 vols. (London: Oxford at the University Press, 1902-38), No. 32.

³² F. Bilabel, and F. Preisigke, Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1915), No. 6025.

³³ *Ibid.*, No. 7270.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 6664.

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Tcherikover³⁵ quotes Josephus³⁶ for a certain event that Tcherikover believes exemplifies how Jewish politeumata were established in Hellenistic Egypt. Josephus is in turn quoting Hecataeus, who relates an event in the life of Hezekiah, the high priest who joined Ptolemy I after the battle of Gaza. Hezekiah gathered a number of Jews who were willing to follow him to Egypt, and read to them a document which contained "the conditions of their settlement and their political constitution." Tcherikover feels certain that:

we have here an allusion to an official document issued to Hezekiah in Ptolemy's name, perhaps in the form of a letter signed by the king, which fixed in advance the type of settlement of the group of Jews in Egypt and also their political status in their new country of residence. . . . It will not be an error to state that this was the usual manner of setting up a politeuma, and every new Jewish community that arose in Ptolemaic Egypt needed a special "charter" on the pattern of that granted to Hezekiah by Ptolemy I.³⁷

Tcherikover suggests that the document which Hezekiah possessed probably contained only the main principles of the act of settlement. What principles were these? No doubt such matters as the number of inhabitants, the location of the settlement, its purpose, and its exemption from taxes.³⁸ Probably included in the document was the permission for the Jews to live according to their laws and religious

³⁵ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 300.

³⁶ Jos. C. Ap. I. 189.

³⁷ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 300.

³⁸ An example would be the case of the refoundation of Lysimacheia in Thrace by Antiochus III (Appian Syriaca I. i).

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concepts, which would have meant that the Jewish community in Alexandria and in the Diaspora in general would possess internal autonomy. Not a political autonomy, says Tcherikover, but only a social and religious one.

Tarn believes³⁹ that the Jews simply filtered into Greek cities in the Diaspora, their position being merely that of metics. Once they had become numerous enough, they set up their synagogues and formed private associations for worship. Officials were then elected, such as the "ruler of the synagogue," to whom disputes were submitted by the Jewish people, according to their laws.

Next the Jews were allowed to form a politeuma, making them quasi-autonomous settlers, with greater rights than those possessed by metics. Like other politeumata, the Jewish ones were allowed to manage their own internal affairs. In at least one respect, the Jewish politeumata were privileged beyond any other: they ultimately acquired the right of having cases judged by their own magistrates according to their own law, making them most probably exempt from the jurisdiction of the Greek courts.⁴⁰ Tarn believes that it was particularly this right that brought about Greek discontent towards the Jews in later times.

³⁹Tarn, Hell. Civ., pp. 147f.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 160 and 175f.

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Schubart⁴¹ tries to prove that the Macedonians formed a special class not possessing Alexandrian citizenship. Since Josephus states that Alexander gave the Jews the right to be classified with the Macedonians,⁴² Schubart concludes that the Jews did not possess the citizenship.

Jouguet,⁴³ following Willrich,⁴⁴ regards the existence of a ghetto in Alexandria as an argument against citizenship. Bell,⁴⁵ however, points out that the argument here is not conclusive either, since, at least in Philo's time,⁴⁶ the Jews were not confined to the Jewish quarter, nor was that quarter itself peopled exclusively by Jews.⁴⁷

Another set of arguments centers around the interpretation of the term "Alexandrians," since both Josephus and Philo speak about the Jews at Alexandria as "Alexandrians" or "called Alexandrians."

⁴¹Archiv., 5: 111. Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 53, and Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., 322f., agree with him. Bell, although also opposing the Alexandrian citizenship for the Jews, admits (Jews and Christ., p. 13) that Schubart's arguments are "not conclusive."

⁴²C. Ap. II. 35.

⁴³Vie Municipale, p. 19.

⁴⁴"Caligula" 406.

⁴⁵Jews and Christ., p. 13.

⁴⁶Philo In Flaccum VIII. 55 and 56.

⁴⁷Davis, Race-Relations, p. 92, agrees with Bell that one can not speak of a Jewish ghetto in Alexandria, "inasmuch as there was no compulsion upon the Jews to live in the Delta quarter."

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Polybius, in a well-known fragment,⁴⁸ divides the population of Alexandria into three categories: the native Egyptian element, the mercenary troops, and the "Alexandrians." Apparently Polybius included under "Alexandrians" the whole free Greek civil population, whether they belonged to the citizen-body or not. He does not mention the Jews.

Scholars who oppose the Alexandrian citizenship for the Jews argue⁴⁹ that Polybius could not have meant to say that all "Alexandrians" possessed the citizenship. Schubart believes⁵⁰ that the citizens proper that were included in the term "Alexandrians" were only a small minority of the Greek residents of Alexandria. The multitude of men who called themselves Hellenes, that spoke Greek and lived like Greeks, but did not possess the rights of citizenship, were perhaps not Greek in blood-- the offspring of marriages between Greeks and Egyptians for instance. The Jews, says Schubart, were classified in some ways with the Alexandrians,⁵¹ but not necessarily as members of the citizen-body.

Wilcken cites a papyrus⁵² in which a Jewish petitioner is described as 'Ἀλεξανδρῆ(ς) but the word has been altered to 'Ιουδαίου

⁴⁸Polybius, XXXIV. xiv. 2-5.

⁴⁹E.g., Fraser, *Ptol. Alex.*, 1: 47f., argues that the full citizen of Alexandria was known throughout Egypt by his demotic and patronymic, and not just by the term "Alexandrian" which was a geographic expression. Davis, *Race-Relations*, p. 70, seems to agree: "There were a number of people who were 'Alexandrians' but not members of a deme."

⁵⁰Schubart, *Archiv.*, 5 (1909), pp. 111f.

⁵¹As in the manner of punishment (see above, pp. 107f.), with the flat of the sword (for Greek citizens), and not with a whip.

⁵²Mitteis and Wilcken, *Grundzüge*, 1: 63, no. 58.

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τῶν 'απὸ 'Αλεξανδρέα(ς). From this he argues that there was evidently a difference between the 'Αλεξανδρεύς or citizen, and the 'Ιουδαῖος τῶν 'απὸ 'Αλεξανδρέας. Juster disputes this inference.⁵³ He believes that the alteration is simply "une meilleure determination de la qualite du solliciteur."

Bell believes that the entire matter can now be resolved on the basis of a letter from the Roman Emperor Claudius to the Alexandrians.⁵⁴ Two embassies had been sent to Claudius from Alexandria c. 41 A.D., each asking for certain privileges and presenting its side in the recent stasis at Alexandria between Jews and Greeks. It is clear that at least one of the embassies was Jewish.

The portions of the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, found in the London Papyrus 1912, which are relevant to our study begin in Col. 3, line 50, and extend to Col. 5, line 100. (I will use Bell's translation unless otherwise indicated.)

Concerning the requests which you are anxious that I should grant, I decide as follows: To all who have become ephebi down to my principate I secure and confirm the Alexandrian citizenship with all the privileges and amenities enjoyed by the city except only to such as may have intruded themselves among you and contrived, though born of servile mothers, to become ephebi; and not less is it my will that all those favours shall be confirmed which were granted you by my predecessors in the principate and by kings and prefects. . . . As to the question of the senate [boule], what was your custom under the former kings I cannot say, but that you had no senate under the Augusti who have preceded me you well know. Since therefore this is a new proposal now first mooted and it

⁵³ Les Juifs, 2: 9f.

⁵⁴ Papyrus Lond. Inv. 1912 (edited by Bell on p. 23 of Jews and Christians).

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is uncertain whether it will be to the advantage of the city and of my own interests, I have written to Aemilius Rectus to hold an inquiry and to inform me both whether the order should be constituted and, if this should be decided on, in what way it is to be formed.

As to the question which of you were responsible for the riot and the feud (or rather, if the truth must be told, the war) against the Jews, I was unwilling to commit myself to a decided judgment, though your ambassadors, and particularly Dionysius son of Theon, pleaded your cause with much zeal in confrontation with their opponents, and I must reserve for myself an unyielding indignation against whoever caused this renewed outbreak; 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 I conjure you yet once again that, on the one side, the Alexandrians show themselves forbearing and kindly towards the Jews who for many years have dwelt in the same city, and offer no outrage to them in the exercise of their traditional worship but permit them to observe their customs as in the time of Divus Augustus, which customs I also, after hearing both sides, have confirmed; and, on the other side, I bid the Jews not to busy themselves about anything beyond what they have held hitherto, and not henceforth, as if they and you lived in two cities, to send two embassies--a thing such as never occurred before now--nor to strive in [*ἐπιποταῖρευν*] gymnasiarchic or cosmetic games,⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The interpretation of this passage heavily depends on the meaning of the word *ἐπιποταῖρευν*. Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932-34), 2: 86 and 87, read *ἐπιποταῖρευν* instead of *ἐπιποταῖρευν*, and translate "force their way into gymnasiarchic or cosmetic games." Radin, *Classical Philology* 20 (1925): 370, suggests another interpretation, since he feels Bell's is incorrect. Radin judges that *ἐπιποταῖρευν* may well have the sense of "jeering" or "scoffing." Since the Alexandrian Jews were known to have been, on occasions, far from peaceful, they may well have attended the games with the purpose of "scoffing" and/or "jeering," which at such a time could hardly fail to provoke a counter-demonstration. I agree with Radin's interpretation of the term *ἐπιποταῖρευν*. Bell's interpretation makes little sense; for why should Claudius prohibit the Jews from participating in games which the Jews avoided by their own choice, as against their religion? The stadium and its equipment had been among the chief symbols of the Abomination from the time of the Maccabees (II Macc. 4: 9f., the high priest Jason was condemned for establishing a gymnasium in Jerusalem and for encouraging the priests to neglect the temple sacrifices in order to take part in the unlawful displays of the palaestra). Jos. *Ant.* XV. 267-280, uses strong language

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but to profit by what they possess, and enjoy in a city not their own [*ἐν ἁλλοτρίᾳ πόλει*] an abundance of all good things; and not to introduce or invite Jews who sail down to Alexandria from Syria or Egypt, thus compelling me to conceive the greater suspicion. . . . If desisting on both sides from these proceedings, you are willing to live with mutual forbearance and kindness, I on my side will continue to display the time-honored solicitude for the interests of the city, with which my family has a traditional friendship. . . .

Bell feels that this letter "settles" the long-standing controversy over the question whether the Jews were members of the citizen body.⁵⁶ He cannot understand how some "die-hard champions of the Josephus assertion" have remained unconvinced, after reading this letter, that the Jews as a whole were not citizens of Alexandria. Bell places the emphasis on Claudius' reference to the Jews as "profiting by what they possess and enjoying in a city not their own [*ἐν ἁλλοτρίᾳ πόλει*] an abundance of bounteous wealth." He feels that it is not possible to imply more definitely that the Jews were outside the body of Alexandrian citizens. In addition, says Bell, Claudius issued to the Jews a warning against "striving in gymnasiarchic and cosmetic games"; if the Jews were not entitled to take part in them, then they did not possess the citizenship, since citizens were required, as part of the ephebia, to take part in these activities.

in regard to Herod the Great's introducing such contests at Jerusalem. According to the Rabbinic doctors, participation was sheer idolatry (Bab. Talmud, Aboda Zara, 18 b), and permission to be present was grudgingly given, since apparently the rabbis allowed what they could not prevent. From attendance to participation, however, was a great distance. It is conceivable that those Jews that did attend, engaged in "jeering" or "scoffing" thus helping to bring about disturbances.

⁵⁶ Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 37.

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Max Radin, in addition to having a different interpretation of the entire passage which deals with the prohibition against taking part in the games,⁵⁷ takes issue also with Bell's interpretation of en allotria poiei. Radin⁵⁸ points out that undoubtedly not all Jews in Alexandria--Jews "as such"--were citizens. But neither were Greeks as such, no matter what their origin, and certainly not many Egyptians. Radin argues that citizenship was apparently confined to those who were originally included in the foundation, their legitimate descendants, and those who by magisterial grant of some kind had obtained the citizenship. He believes that there were very few, if any, political functions that accompanied the status as a citizen. It was more a fiscal designation and an honorific one, since it carried with it certain personal exemptions, particularly in the area of penal law.

Evidently a great many of the Alexandrian residents were other than 'Αλεξανδρεῖς. For example, there were people designated as Μακεδόνες, metics, transient sojourners, Πέρσαι τῆς ἐπιγονῆς. There were, no doubt, many Jews in Alexandria registered in some of the above mentioned categories. The question which is truly important, according to Radin, is whether a large or a small proportion of the Alexandrian Jews were carried on the census lists as 'Αλεξανδρεῖς and in possession of the complex of privileges, duties, and immunities of that status. Claudius' letter in fact shows, says Radin, that the Jews possessed additional

⁵⁷ See above, p. 116, note 55.

⁵⁸ Radin, Classical Philology 20 (1925): 369f.

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immunities, and therefore must have been registered as 'Ιουδαίου
'Αλεξανδρεῖς or 'απ' 'Αλεξανδρεῖας, a term frequently found in the
papyri.

Therefore, says Radin, the question of whether a larger
percentage of the Alexandrian Jews were 'Αλεξανδρεῖς or not, is not
quite settled by the words 'εν 'αλλοτρίᾳ πόλει. The phrase can simply
mean that Alexandria was outside of Judaea, in a foreign country, or a
foreign foundation and not a colony of Jerusalem.⁵⁹ And why should
Claudius exhort the Alexandrians to send henceforth only one embassy,
and not as "if you and they [the Jews] lived in two cities, to send two
embassies" unless the Jews would normally be represented in an Alexan-
drian embassy by virtue of their citizenship. In other words, it would
be hard for the Jews to understand why they should not send their own
embassy if they would not be represented by an Alexandrian embassy,
selected by Alexandrian citizens, which the Jews, according to Bell,
were not. If they were not citizens, they would have had no way of
electing one of their own men to represent them in an Alexandrian
embassy, and therefore would have been forced to send their own embassy.

Momigliano, who also favors the Alexandrian citizenship for
the Jews, has interpreted the matter of the two embassies in a different
light.⁶⁰ Momigliano believes that the two embassies did not represent

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ A. Momigliano, Claudius, The Emperor and His Achievement
(New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), p. 96, note 25. Momigliano argues
that not all the Jews in Egypt were Alexandrians, and so the great
majority of those who were not Alexandrians appeared in the census
lists on the same footing as the native Egyptians. It was this fact,
he believes, that gave rise to the continual protests against the
Alexandrian citizenship of the Jews.

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a Jewish and a Gentile one, but rather were two Jewish embassies: "Jews with and Jews without Alexandrian citizenship." The two embassies would be divided from one another by jealousies and rivalries, and under these circumstances could well have been called by Claudius "inhabitants of two cities." Not only would this phrase apply in a metaphorical sense, but would also apply in a concrete sense, referring to the disparity between their political rights. An additional argument, says Momigliano, for the Alexandrian citizenship of the Jews, is to be derived from Philo's statement, In Flaccum 80, concerning the right of the Jews to be punished with the flat of the sword instead of with stripes.

Tcherikover, on the other hand, does not believe that Philo's statement on the manner of punishment of the Jews is an argument for their citizenship.⁶¹ The fact that Philo specifically stated that punishment with a whip was reserved solely for Egyptians, while the Jews had previously been punished with the flat of the sword, like the Alexandrians, means that the Jews had been granted in that respect equal rights with Alexandrians. If the Jews were citizens, Philo would not have put such emphasis on the fact that preceding governors had observed this custom "also in regard to ourselves." If the Jews were citizens, it would have been very clear that the proper punishment was the flat of the sword. Philo, says Tcherikover, was stressing equality of rights

⁶¹Victor Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., pp. 316ff. Tcherikover does not agree with Momigliano on another point: that the two embassies of Claudius' letter were Jewish. Neither does Bell, nor Fraser, nor Radin. And it seems apparent to me that Claudius was speaking on the one hand to a non-Jewish group and on the other to a Jewish one.

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in the matter of corporal punishment precisely because it was not a normal thing. Tcherikover argues that what Philo does show is evidence that, even though the Jews were not citizens, they had managed, with time, to gain certain privileges which belonged to citizens proper. And, during Philo's time, when the Jews were clamoring for citizenship, they could point to these precedents and rights as evidence that they had been granted many rights of citizenship.

The account in the Third Book of Maccabees is another piece of evidence adduced by Tcherikover in defense of his arguments against the Jewish Alexandrian citizenship. Ptolemy Philopator tried to compel the Jews to worship Dionysus. He threatened to classify them with the Egyptians who paid the poll-tax (laographia) and to make them all slaves if they refused to obey him. To those who obeyed him, he promised equality of rights with the Alexandrians.⁶² This is evidence, says Tcherikover, that the Jews did not belong to the citizen category (they were promised equality of rights if they obeyed the king), nor were they up to that time classified with the Egyptians, who had to pay the laographia, a tax that would be required henceforth from Jews who did not obey the king. Worship of the gods appears in III Maccabees, says Tcherikover, as a prerequisite to citizenship, and only those who betrayed their principles accepted the offer.⁶³

⁶² III Macc. 2: 28-30.

⁶³ Ibid., 31.

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Finally Tcherikover launches an all-out attack against the credibility of Josephus.⁶⁴ He begins by attacking Josephus' statement⁶⁵ that Alexander the Great rewarded the Jews, for their help during his Egyptian campaign, by allowing them to settle in Alexandria and granting them equality of rights with the Greeks. Josephus, says Tcherikover, was no doubt using some kind of Alexandrian legend. Alexander never "fought" in Egypt; it came into his hands without any resistance on the part of the inhabitants. The entire passage is to be disregarded as unhistorical and apologetic. And even if Josephus were to be taken seriously when claiming that the Jews received equal rights with the Macedonians, this would prove only that they were not citizens of Alexandria, since the Macedonians were not citizens of this city.⁶⁶

Next Tcherikover comments on Josephus' statement concerning the documents that proved that Julius Caesar had bestowed many rights on the Alexandrian Jews.⁶⁷ In this passage Josephus speaks of the "letters of King Alexander and of Ptolemy," and of "the slab which stands in Alexandria." Tcherikover thinks it strange that Josephus did not reproduce the inscription on the monument verbatim. And why would Apion ask on what authority the Jews were called Alexandrians

⁶⁴V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., pp. 319-326.

⁶⁵Jos., Jewish War II. 487ff.

⁶⁶Tcherikover adduces as proof Schubart's conclusion that the Macedonians were not citizens of Alexandria (in Archiv. 5: 111). Bell, in Jews and Christians, p. 13, judges that Schubart's arguments are not conclusive.

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if he could see the stele standing in the city where he himself lived? And what about the other documents with which, according to Josephus, Apion should have been familiar? Tcherikover points out that in another passage⁶⁸ Josephus admits that they were not easily available. Apparently they were not in the public records office, but were kept by the Jews and by some "barbarians" (foreigners?). How was Apion to get hold of them in that case? Josephus implies that he had read them, but if he had, asks Tcherikover, why does he not reproduce such rare and important documents? Tcherikover concludes that Josephus probably knew as little about these documents as Apion.⁶⁹

Finally, Tcherikover is also among those who interpret 'ἐπιλογαῖς' as a prohibition against the Jews' participating in the athletic contests held by the city magistrates.⁷¹ Tcherikover believes that Claudius was withholding from the Jews permission to receive a gymnasium education. And since a few lines earlier Claudius had confirmed entry into the citizen body to all those who had been registered as epheboi up to this time, he was, for all practical purposes, barring the Jews from admission into the citizen body.

⁶⁸ Ant. XIV. 187.

⁶⁹ As I will attempt to show later in this chapter, Josephus was vague about the documents and inscriptions because these in turn were vague concerning the matter of the Jewish citizenship.

⁷⁰ See above, p. 116, note 55.

⁷¹ V. Tcherikover, Hell, Civ., p. 317f.

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Davis⁷² does not agree that if the Jews were not entitled to take part in the games, they did not possess the citizenship. He believes that the Jews may have been granted exemption from this and other civic duties that might have conflicted with their religion, and yet been allowed the citizenship.⁷³

Finally, I will argue that if the entire matter is viewed from a different angle the seemingly contradictory evidence can be harmonized.

Basically, I believe that the question should not be whether the Jews as a whole⁷⁴ were or were not citizens. Rather the questions should be:

1. What was the meaning of the term "Alexandrian" in the papyri and extant inscriptions?
2. What did Josephus and Philo mean by the terms "citizenship" and "Alexandrian"?
3. Did the meaning of these terms always remain the same?

In the light of these three basic questions the next set of questions should be considered:

(1) Why were the Jews in Alexandria convinced that they were, or deserved to be, citizens? Obviously this was their belief, as evident by the fact that the Jews sent embassies on two occasions to

⁷² S. Davis, Race-Relations, pp. 106f.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ That individual Jews could and did become citizens of Alexandria had not been disputed by anyone.

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Rome (the one led by Philo in 38 A.D., and the one in 41 A.D. that prompted the Letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians [Lond. Papyrus 1912] to defend their claims to citizenship). (2) Why were the Greek citizens of Alexandria equally convinced that the Jews were not citizens? And (3) Why was it that the Alexandrian citizenship of the Jews did not become an issue until the Roman period.

Fraser⁷⁵ has made a lengthy study of the meaning of the term "Alexandrian" and concludes that the use of the term to refer to citizens would be a wholly anomalous practice within any Greek city, including Alexandria. However, he is quick to point out that the evidence on which he has based his study is "slight," and that many exceptions seem to occur. And outside Egypt, even outside Alexandria, the term "Alexandrian" could simply refer to someone from Alexandria. Others⁷⁶ argue that "Alexandrians" meant full-citizens, whether enrolled in a deme or not.

It seems clear that there is sufficient evidence to determine what the term "Alexandrian" meant. It is safe to assume that when the term "Alexandrian" is coupled with a demotic the reference is to a citizen of the Greek politeuma.⁷⁷ So when Josephus states that the

⁷⁵ Fraser Ptol. Alex. 1: 47ff.

⁷⁶ El-Abbadi, Dikaionmata, Auszüge aus alexandrinischen Gesetzen und Verordnungen . . . herausgegeben von der Graeca Halensis (Berlin: Weidmann, 1913), pp. 92f.; S. Davis, Race Relations, pp. 100f.; Max Radin, The Jews, p. 110.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 114, note 49, and below, next paragraph.

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Jews of Alexandria were "called Alexandrians,"⁷⁸ he does not necessarily have to mean a citizen of the Greek community.

Why the distinction? It is because, in my opinion, Alexandria was NOT a "Greek" city as were other cities founded by Alexander the Great. In the Boule Papyrus⁷⁹ the term πολῦτευμα is applied to the city-state organization of Alexandria itself. I agree with Tarn⁸⁰ that Alexandria was not a "city" in the strict Greek sense. It was rather a collection of politeumata, based on nationalities. But, contrary to what Tarn believes,⁸¹ there is no clear evidence that only the Greeks were called "the citizens." Nor is there evidence during the Ptolemaic period that Alexandria even possessed a constitution governing the entire city. Perhaps each politeuma was allowed to follow its own constitution and customs. As time passed, the Greek politeuma and the Jewish one became the two most important in Alexandria, for all practical purposes, TWO CITIES IN ONE. There is no evidence that the Greek politeuma was in charge of governing the ENTIRE city. In fact, the Greek politeuma for many centuries did not even have a boule. The Jewish politeuma, on the other hand, had a very well organized community. According to Strabo, the Jewish community of Alexandria was led by the ethnarch who "ruled the people, judged its cases, supervised

⁷⁸ Jos. Ant. XIX. 281.

⁷⁹ U. Wilken, Archiv. 9: 253; Herbert A. Musurillo, The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 1-3 and 83-92.

⁸⁰ W. W. Tarn, Hell. Civ., p. 147.

⁸¹ Ibid.

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contracts and ordinances, just as if he were the head of a sovereign state."⁸² The ethnarch was in charge also of supervising the courts of justice and the registry of the community. In addition to the ethnarch, the Jews possessed their own council of elders or gerousia, at least from the time of Augustus onward,⁸³ and its members numbered 71 according to the Talmud.⁸⁴ Philo's account (In Flaccum 74) mentions that 38 members of the gerousia were flogged during the riots in Alexandria under Gaius Caligula. The most prominent members of this body received the title of archons,⁸⁵ a post apparently common among the Jews of the Diaspora.⁸⁶ In addition to the archons, there were other posts in the Jewish community of which not much is known today: the head of the synagogue (Archisynagogos),⁸⁷ the head of the gerousia

⁸² Strabo, as quoted by Josephus, Ant. XIV. 117.

⁸³ Philo In Flaccum 74. V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 302, believes that the gerousia was instituted by Augustus in place of an ethnarch. H. I. Bell, Cults and Creeds, p. 38, disagrees with the theory that the ethnarchs were abolished. He believes that a gerousia was added or revived by Augustus. Josephus, Ant. XIX. 282, states that Augustus did not "prevent the continued appointment of ethnarchs."

⁸⁴ Tosephta Sukka IV. 6.

⁸⁵ Philo In Flaccum 80. In Egyptian documents Jewish archons are mentioned only once: in Thebais, the community of Arsinoe (see Tcherikover and Fuks, C. P. Jud. 1: 10 and 2: No. 432, p. 10, and No. 432).

⁸⁶ Archons were found at Antioch (Jos. Jewish War VII. 47), at Thos, (J. B. Frey, Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum [Rome: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1936], No. 757), at Berenice (A. Joekch, Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum, Vol. III, No 5361), at Rome ibid., Nos. 9906, 6447, and 6337).

⁸⁷ Ibid., No. 9906. Schürer, Jewish People, II Div., 2: 251f.

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(gerousiarches),⁸⁸ the secretary (grammateus), and the overseer (phrontistes).⁸⁹ In addition, the Jews had in Alexandria their own notary office and a court.⁹⁰ Josephus, in Antiquities XIV. 185-267, mentions a series of privileges enjoyed by the Jews throughout the Diaspora.⁹¹ The Romans not only reaffirmed their rights and privileges, but many times extended them.⁹²

⁸⁸A. Boeckh, CIJ, 9902. Schürer, Jewish People, II Div. 2: 251f.

⁸⁹Salo W. Baron, The Jewish Community, Vol. I, pp. 102ff.

⁹⁰Tosephta Peah IV. 6 and Tosephta Kethuboth III. 1. Also V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, C. P. Jud., No. 143.

⁹¹I have not found anyone who disputes that the Jews enjoyed a great many privileges and rights allowing them the free pursuit of their religious customs.

⁹²Josephus, Ant. XIV. 241-261, enumerates four Roman enactments traceable to the influence of Caesar: (1) A communication from the authorities of Laodicea to a Roman official in which they assure him that, according to his instructions, they would not interfere with the Jews in the observance of the Sabbath and the practice of their own religious usages. (2) A communication from the proconsul of Asia to the authorities of Miletus, in which the latter are told that they should not interfere with the Jews in their observance of the Sabbath, that they should allow them to dispose of their earnings in the way they have been accustomed to. (3) A similar decree relating to the city of Halicarnassus. (4) A public decree of the town of Sardes, to the effect that the Jews were to be allowed to meet on the days appointed by them for the celebration of their religious observances, and further that the magistrates of the town were to assign them a place of their own "on which to build and in which to reside."

Two other very important privileges mentioned by Josephus granted to the Jews by the Romans were: the Jews would not be compelled to appear in court on the Sabbath (Ant. XVI. 163), and Jewish soldiers would not be forced to march on the Sabbath (Ant. XIV. 225-227). Philo also mentions several privileges: Leg. 138 states that the Jews in Egypt were exempted from placing images of the Ptolemies in their meeting houses, and were not required to observe the ordinary forms of the dynastic cult.

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Thus, during the Ptolemaic period, the Jewish politeuma possessed, at the very least, an equality of rights and privileges in relation to the Greek politeuma. The city as a whole was probably under the direct control of the crown, since royal officials are mentioned by Strabo among the city magistrates.⁹³ And Jews, as well as Greeks and Egyptians,⁹⁴ were utilized in the royal service by the Ptolemies. So Alexandria was not a "Greek" city nor a "Jewish" city, but rather a "royal" city, composed of at least two major politeumata. To acquire citizenship in the Greek politeuma, the normal process of acquiring Greek citizenship would have been followed. The constitutional process of acquiring "Alexandrian" citizenship would not necessarily have been the same, during the Ptolemaic period, as the one followed to acquire "Greek" citizenship.

It is, in fact, possible that there never existed a constitution governing the entire city of Alexandria, with well

⁹³Strabo, 797: "The following are the local officials of the city: the exegete, who wears a purple robe and has hereditary honours, and is responsible for the public services in the city; the hypomnematographos; the archidikastes; and finally the Night General. These offices existed under the kings." Fraser (Ptol. pp. 96f.) points out that the posts of hypomnematographos and archidikastes were part of the Crown administration. It is evident that Alexandria was not governed in the traditional Greek democratic sense, and that Alexandria was not a typical Greek city.

⁹⁴Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 88 and 2: 167f., notes 334-336, brings out papyrological evidence to this effect. But especially see Alan E. Samuel, "The Greek Element in the Ptolemaic Bureaucracy," Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology 7 (1970): 443-453, where he shows that non-Greeks were used widely by the Ptolemies, who, in that respect, showed no ethnic preferences (see Part Two, Chapter IV of this work).

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defined provisions on how "Alexandrian" citizenship was to be acquired.⁹⁵ If this were the case, it would be easy to understand why information on the subject is so scarce. "Our ignorance of the organization of the Alexandrian citizen-body is matched by our ignorance about the constitution by which that body was governed."⁹⁶

All during the Ptolemaic period Jews and Greeks lived side by side in Alexandria without any contentions concerning citizenship. It is obvious that the Jews did not have any cause to envy the Greek politeuma, since their rights and privileges equalled, if not surpassed, those of the Greeks. The Jews of Alexandria were called Alexandrians, were not governed by the Greeks of the city but by royal authorities and officials (which included Jews also), and for all practical and legal⁹⁷ purposes, were citizens of Alexandria.

The Romans changed the policy concerning the Alexandrian citizenship. Perhaps with the purpose of achieving uniformity, the Romans placed Alexandria on a footing similar to other Hellenistic

⁹⁵ There is not even evidence that the Greek politeuma had a constitution by which it was governed. Perhaps when Alexander the Great founded Alexandria, he intended her to become a model as a melting-pot of races and cultures, and therefore left somewhat vague how the citizen body of the city would be established, and also what type of constitution would govern this body.

⁹⁶ Fraser, Ptol. Alex., p. 93. Again on p. 98: "We know very little of the constitution and magistracies (of Alexandria) at any period," and on p. 100: "Very little positive information exists regarding the Alexandrian constitution."

⁹⁷ I find no evidence during the Ptolemaic period that there was a legal issue over who was or was not an "Alexandrian." A Jew who could prove he was a legal member of the Jewish politeuma of Alexandria could consider himself, and be called, an "Alexandrian."

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cities such as Naucratis and Ptolemais. The Romans now recognized as citizens of Alexandria only members of the Greek politeuma, and citizenship could only be acquired in the normal Greek way, through the ephebate.⁹⁸ Greek citizens were treated by the Romans with deference, and were made partners with them in the institutions of local government. Other foreign inhabitants were classified with the native population, and the whole weight of taxation fell upon them. The payment of the poll-tax, known in Egypt as the laographia, became the external sign which distinguished the two sections of the population.⁹⁹ The Jews were classified by the Romans with the Egyptians in this matter, and were liable for the poll-tax.

It became more than a financial burden to the Jews. They had always considered themselves as good as the Greeks, and now they were classed with the native Egyptians. It was a mass humiliation. In addition, the Jewish politeuma at Alexandria began suffering physical abuse from the Greek and other non-Jewish population of the city. No wonder there was a great clamor from the Jews to defend their ancestral rights, their "citizenship."

I believe it can now be made clear what Josephus and Philo were speaking about. They were not saying that the Jews were citizens of the Greek politeuma, but of Alexandria. They were "Alexandrians."

⁹⁸ That this was the case in the Roman period is evident from the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians (Papyrus Lond. Inv. 1912).

⁹⁹ V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 311.

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They had isopolity,¹⁰⁰ they had an "honorary citizenship"¹⁰¹ of the highest kind. "If Apion disallows this class of citizenship,¹⁰² let him cease to call himself an Alexandrian. Born, as I have already mentioned, in the depths of Egypt, how can he be an Alexandrian, if, as he claims in our case, honorary rights of citizenship are to be ruled out?"¹⁰³

Josephus, I believe, clearly understood that the Romans recognized as citizens of Alexandria only those that had gone through the Greek process of acquiring citizenship, through the ephebate. He could not afford to quote Caesar's stele, or the other documents to which he alluded.¹⁰⁴ Why? Because these did not grant the Jews "Greek" citizenship, but rather equality of rights, the isopolity which had been all that was needed during the Ptolemaic period to support the Jewish claim for "this type of citizenship," an honorary citizenship, allowing the Jews to be "called Alexandrians."

During the Hellenistic period a certain prestige went along with being considered socially and culturally superior. That many Jews

¹⁰⁰ The isopolity of the Jews, which could well have included "potential (Greek) citizenship" (see S. Davis, Race-Relations, p. 102), is mentioned by Josephus in Ant. XII. 8 and Ant. XIX. 281. In addition, it is mentioned in III Macc. 2: 30.

¹⁰¹ Jos. C. Ap. II. 41.

¹⁰² τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας, like "all persons invited to join a colony, however different their nationality, take the name of the founders." (Jos. C. Ap. II. 38).

¹⁰³ Jos. C. Ap. II. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 37.

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aspired to be classified among the Greeks cannot be disputed, and this desire probably led many of them to compromise their religious beliefs, fulfill the requirements for Greek citizenship, and thus achieved this status. The majority of Greeks probably did not like what they considered as intrusion into their ranks by a people they perhaps envied for possessing an internal organization and government that equalled, and in some ways surpassed, their own. And when the Jews tried to prove, during the Roman period, that they should not be classified with the Egyptians, but rather with the Greeks, the latter waged an equally active campaign to prove that the Jews were not to be classified among their group. The Romans had given the Greeks of Alexandria a new status, which the latter were anxious to preserve. Alexandria was, in the eyes of the Romans, a "Greek city" in the full sense of the word. Citizens of Alexandria were those that had fulfilled the Greek prerequisites for citizenship, those that had been epheboi. No longer was Alexandria to be "two cities," but rather one. It was now the city of the Greek politeuma. The beginning of the end for the Alexandrian Jews.

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CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE JEWS AT ALEXANDRIA

Information is scarce concerning the economic activities of the Jews at Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period. There are hardly any references beyond the papyri to the economic activities of the Jews in Egypt. And since no Ptolemaic papyri from Alexandria survive,¹ the evidence for the economic life of Alexandrian Jews is extremely limited. Ptolemaic papyri from the rest of Egypt, however, often mention the economic activities of the Jews; and on the basis of this information, it is possible to make inferences concerning the Alexandrian Jews. In addition, papyri from the early Roman era (including some from Alexandria) can be utilized, especially when they refer to conditions which probably had remained unchanged since Ptolemaic times. Relevant information concerning the economic activities of Alexandria in general, especially industry and trade, also seems worth surveying briefly.

That Alexandria was an important commercial city in antiquity is well testified in many sources. According to Strabo,² topographical advantages made the city ideal for commercial activities. It had an excellent harbor, a beneficial climate, and access to Lake Mareotis and the Nile.

¹Tcherikover and Fuks, C. P. Jud., 1: 16.

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In addition to being an important commercial city, Alexandria became also a bustling industrial center. Various kinds of metal-work and glass-ware appear to have been the main industries of the city.³ The Ptolemies possessed a wealth of precious metals, and many items of Jewelry that belonged to Philadelphus are enumerated by the Rhodian historian Callixenus.⁴ It cannot be proved that the objects enumerated were manufactured in Alexandria, but probably many of them were.⁵

Glass was a very important industry in Egypt and Alexandria.⁶ Strabo refers to the glass-makers of the city as a well-established body of craftsmen.⁷ Since, however, very few references to glass objects appear in the papyri, some scholars suggest that glass might have been a luxury trade.⁸

Pottery was another important industry in Alexandria. Rostovtzeff believes that this was one of the major industries

³See M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, 3 vols. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1941), 1: 374f.

⁴As quoted by Athenaeus 5. 25-35, p. 196, A-203 B, in F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 165, no. 627. The objects mentioned by Callixenus include victories with gold wings, gold jewelry worn by women, gold crowns with floral arrangements and decorations in gold-leaf, golden cornucopias, a golden altar, golden mixing bowls, cups, and pitchers of various kinds, and innumerable silver vessels and objects.

⁵Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 136-137.

⁶Rostovtzeff, Hell. World, L; 370-374.

⁷Strabo, 758.

⁸E.g., Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 137.

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the city,⁹ although Fraser states that "there is great uncertainty how much of the pottery of superior quality most frequently encountered in Alexandria is actually of local manufacture."¹⁰ Fraser does believe, however, that Alexandria produced much faience, such as lamps, bowls, and small vases, in addition to statuettes of native deities.¹¹

Alexandria was also the center for the manufacture of perfumes.¹² Frankincense and myrrh were sent to Alexandria as raw materials from Nubia and Arabia, and there they were processed and sold.

Alexandria engaged in extensive trade with the hinterland. Strabo mentions that the imports on her lake harbors exceeded those of her maritime harbors.¹³ The papyri have many references to the shipments of wheat, barley, oil, and honey to the royal stores in Alexandria.¹⁴ In addition, the Revenue Laws of Philadelphus¹⁵ mention

⁹Rostovtzeff, Hell. World, 1: 367-68, 3: 1406, n. 163.

¹⁰Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 138-39.

¹¹Ibid., 140.

¹²Ibid., 175-177.

¹³Geography 793.

¹⁴B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, and E. G. Turner, The Hibeh Papyri (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1906-), no. 98; C. C. Edgar, ed., Zenon Papyri in the Cairo Museum (Cairo: L'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1925), no. 59, 141 and 790; B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, Papyri from Tebtunis (London: H. Frowde, 1902-38), 703.

¹⁵B. P. Grenfell, The Revenue Laws of Ptolemy Philadelphus (London: at the Clarendon Press, 1896), Cols. 40, 47, and 50.

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shipments of vegetable oils from the chora to Alexandria. Each nome was required to reserve a portion of its yield of sesame oil and castor oil for the capital.¹⁶

Alexandria's foreign trade covered a wide field.¹⁷ The city engaged in trade with the West: Italy,¹⁸ southern France, and northern Africa, especially Carthage and Cyrene.¹⁹ Trade with the East mainly went through the international ports of Rhodes and Delos.²⁰

The Jewish community of Alexandria was no doubt actively involved in the economic life of the city, as industrial workers in the factories, as store-owners, small and large merchants. A survey of extant evidence will show the Jews in Egypt and Alexandria involved in such activities, as well as in other occupations such as government officials, farmers, and soldiers. At times the evidence will concern the Jews of the chora, and inferences will have to be made about similar conditions for the Alexandrian Jews.

¹⁶ Ibid., Col. 53.

¹⁷ Rostovtzeff, Hell. World, 1: 381-404.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 151-54; 2: 263, n. 156.

²⁰ Diod. XIX. 77. 3; Fraser, Ptol. Alex. 1: 162. In the second century B.C., after Delos was made into a free port by the Romans to the detriment of Rhodes, the former became the nodal point for Alexandrian trade in the Aegean, even though Rhodian trade was not discontinued (Fraser, Ptol. Alex., p. 171).

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The Jews as Merchants and "Capitalists"

"We have no evidence in the papyri of Jewish merchants and money-lenders in the Hellenistic period."²¹ Two reasons are given by Tcherikover for the scarcity of information on this group of Jews. First, there are no extant Ptolemaic papyri from Alexandria, where Josephus and Philo indicate that most rich Jews had their domiciles. Second, the Ptolemaic principles of government did not favor private enterprise or commerce, so that under the Ptolemies there were few merchants even among the Greeks. The same held true for money-lending, since the Ptolemaic banks were a government monopoly, and the bankers were officials of the State.

Nevertheless, there is enough evidence to indicate that the Jews did engage in some commercial activities and capitalistic enterprises, especially in Alexandria. Philo²² provides valuable information that Alexandrian Jews were owners of property, owners of ships, and common merchants. Philo reports that the riots in Alexandria during the time of Caligula cost some of these wealthy men their investments, implying that Alexandria held Jews who were investors rather than actual participants in trading activities. There were also a number of ship-owning merchants in this city famous for being the export-harbor of Egypt. The simple traders probably composed the majority of the Jewish middle class of Alexandria, not much different in wealth status from the artisans mentioned by Philo, since at that

²¹C. P. Jud., 1: 230.

²²Philo In Flaccum 57.

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time craftsmen were also dealers who sold their products. The Third Book of Maccabees recounts the alleged persecutions suffered by the Jews of Alexandria under Ptolemy IV, and speaks of the favorable attitude that some Greeks and neighbors of the Jews had towards them as their "business associates," or "partners in business."²³

That there were wealthy men among the Jews in Alexandria has never been disputed. Josephus relates the case of Josephus the Tobiad, tax-farmer of Coele-Syria, who kept his wealth stored in Alexandria under the management of his steward Arion.²⁴ No doubt Arion put his master's wealth to work in diverse business enterprises instead of just keeping it safe. Josephus also mentions two wealthy Jewish Alabarchs, Alexander (brother of the writer Philo of Alexandria), and Demetrius.²⁵ The Jewish King Agrippa asked the wealthy Alexander for a loan of 200,000 drachmas. Alexander gave him part of the money in cash in Alexandria (about 6,000 drachmas) and promised him the rest when he arrived at Puteoli in Italy, where Alexander evidently had large sums of money deposited as backing for international business transactions.

²³ III Macc. 3: 4.

²⁴ Jos. Ant. XII. 199ff.

²⁵ Ibid., XVIII. 159, 259; XIX. 276; XX. 147. The function of the Alabarch is not clear. Salo W. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, 9 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952-64), 1: 409f., note 16, suggests he was a royal official in charge of local customs (presumably imports and exports from Alexandria), and a general tax administrator. If so, Alexander's wealth did not originate from the performance of his functions as Alabarch but rather was acquired in some other manner.

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A papyrus from 41 A.D.²⁶ indicates that Jews in Alexandria were engaged in lending money on interest. Serapion, a wholesale dealer, writes his agent in Alexandria, a certain Herakleides, advising him to seek a loan as a means of escaping his difficult financial situation. The servant, however, is warned against getting the loan from the Jews: "but you, like us all, beware of the Jews!" Jews were apparently well known as lenders of money at a profit in Alexandria. What is not clear from the letter is why Herakleides was warned against doing business with the Jews. If it had not been customary for non-Jews to seek loans from the Jews, no warning would have been needed since Herakleides would not have even considered taking such action. I therefore disagree with those who see in this letter "the most ancient evidence of business anti-Semitism."²⁷ I agree rather with Tcherikover²⁸ who judges that Serapion's words were simply a caution to a Greek merchant on first entering the Jewish quarter in Alexandria at a time when the relations between the two peoples were strained to the utmost.

It would seem erroneous to suppose that all Jews in the Diaspora were wealthy businessmen. Rather, the opposite must have been true, especially outside of Alexandria. The papyri from

²⁶C. P. Jud., No. 152. The author of this letter was Serapion, a wholesale dealer, who had his residence in the chora but maintained business connections with the capital. Herakleides, to whom the letter is addressed, seems to have been his business agent in Alexandria, possibly a slave also. Herakleides was evidently short of money, perhaps in consequence of an unsuccessful business transaction.

²⁷U. Wilcken, Grundzüge, p. 84.

²⁸Hell Civ., p. 339f.

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Alexandria during the time of Augustus²⁹ produce the impression that the Jews mentioned in them were rather poor, some of them owing money which was being repaid in monthly installments.

The Jews as Artisans

There are hardly any references to Jewish craftsmen in the Ptolemaic papyri. Two Jewish potters from the Fayum are mentioned in one papyrus;³⁰ others mention Jewish weavers.³¹ The Talmud reports artisans in Alexandria:³²

R. Judah says: He who has never seen the Diplostion of Alexandria in Egypt has never seen the glory of Israel. They said: it was a sort of great basilica, stoa in front of stoa; that at times it held twice as many as left Egypt. . . . And they did not sit intermingled, but the goldsmiths by themselves, the blacksmiths by themselves, the carpet-weavers by themselves; and when a poor man entered, he recognized the members of his own craft and applied to them, whence he derived his livelihood and that of his family.

Philo, in his description of the later persecutions suffered by the Jews in Alexandria during the time of Caligula,³³ also mentions Jewish craftsmen:

Their enemies overran the houses now left empty and turned to pillaging them. . . . A still more grievous evil than the pillaging was the unemployment produced. The tradespeople had lost their stocks, and no one, husbandman, shipman, merchant, artisan, was allowed to practise his usual business.

²⁹ C. P. Jud., Nos. 142-149.

³⁰ Ibid., No. 46.

³¹ Ibid., Nos. 95 and 405.

³² Sukkah 51b.

³³ 37-38 A.D. For the account, see Philo In Flaccum 56, 57.

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Although the papyri hardly mention them, Jewish craftsmen evidently did exist in Alexandria and in Egypt. Arguing from the above quoted passage from the Talmud, Tcherikover suggests³⁴ that in Alexandria the Jews were organized in special societies, on the model of the professional organizations (collegia) of the Hellenistic world, occupying an important place in the Alexandrian community. That the artisans of Alexandria were highly specialized is evident in several references in talmudic literature to Alexandrian craftsmen brought to Jerusalem to make repairs of Temple objects.³⁵

The Jews as Government Officials

Many Jews distinguished themselves as officials during the Ptolemaic period. Some of them were men of the court and high administrators. Others were minor officials, tax-collectors, and village officials.

The Third Book of Maccabees³⁶ tells the story of an attempt on the life of Ptolemy IV Philopator just before the battle of Raphia. Philopator's life was saved through the intervention of Dositheos, son of Primylos, "by birth a Jew, but subsequently an apostate," who placed another man in the royal tent before the attempt. That such a man was

³⁴ Hell. Civ., p. 338.

³⁵ Arachin 10b. The craftsmen of Alexandria were brought to Jerusalem to repair the bell in the Temple; the bell was made of brass, but had become cracked. Alexandrian craftsmen also repaired a brass altar, used to mix the incenses. Yoma 38a mentions that the gates of the Temple were made by Nicanor of Alexandria.

³⁶ III Macc. 1: 1-4.

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in the court of Ptolemy IV has been confirmed by two papyri from the year 222 B.C.,³⁷ one from the Fayum and the other from Oxyrhynchus. Both papyri speak of Dositheos, son of Drimylos, "priest of Alexander and the gods Adelphoi and the gods Euergetai." Tcherikover concludes that "since the name of Drimylos is very rare, whereas the chronology of the papyri is well in accord with the story of III Maccabees, it would seem that we can identify Dositheos son of Drimylos of the papyri with the man of this name spoken of in the Third Book of Maccabees."³⁸ His career can then be traced, with the help of the papyri, to the most prestigious offices in the state:³⁹

1. In 240 B.C. Dositheos held the office of ὑπομνηματογράφος, that is, one of the two heads of the royal secretariat (C.P.J. 127a).
2. In 225 B.C. Dositheos was travelling in Egypt with Ptolemy III (C.P.J. 127c)
3. In 222 B.C. he was holding the office of eponymous priest of Alexander and the deified Ptolemies, the highest priesthood in Hellenistic Egypt (C.P.J. 127d,e)
4. In 217 B.C. Dositheos accompanied Ptolemy IV Philopator during the battle of Raphia (III Macc. 1: 1-4).

Another Dositheos is mentioned by Josephus as a strategos over Ptolemy IV; "Ptolemy Philometor and his consort Cleopatra trusted the whole of their realm to Jews, and placed their entire

³⁷The Tebtunis Papyri (London), No. 815 = C. P. Jud., No. 127d; P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, and E. G. Turner, The Hibeh Papyri (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1906-55), No. 90 = C. P. Jud., No. 127e.

³⁸C. P. Jud., 1: 230.

³⁹Ibid., 231.

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army under the command of Jewish generals, Onias and Dositheos."⁴⁰ Who exactly this Dositheos was is not clear, but that Onias was probably Onias IV, the founder of the temple at Leontopolis, is fairly certain.⁴¹

A papyrus from 164 B.C. found near Memphis contains an interesting allusion to a man of importance, whose name was established by Wilcken⁴² as being Onias, thus a Jew. The papyrus⁴³ contains three letters from the dioiketes Herodes to [O]ni[ai], to Dorion, and to Leon. By the tone of the first letter, [O]ni[as] was a man of responsibility, probably an official of the crown. The letter reads as follows:

Herodes to [O]ni[as] greeting. King Ptolemy is well, and King Ptolemy his brother and Queen Cleopatra his sister and their children, and their affairs also are as usual; if you also are in good health and all else is in order with you, it would be as we wish; we too are progressing well enough. The copy of the letter addressed to Dorion the hypodioiketes is subjoined. Understanding therefore that consideration for those engaged in sowing the seed is a common duty incumbent on all those interested in the administration, be good enough to use every effort and take every precaution both that none of those unable to work in the fields be impressed, and that none of those who are able be shielded on any pretext whatsoever; and further that everything be performed in the manner laid down in the minute sent to you by us. Take care of yourself to keep in good health.

Wilcken suggests⁴⁴ that the polite tone of the letter indicates that Onias was a State official of high rank, perhaps a strategos of

⁴⁰Jos. C. Ap. II. 49.

⁴¹See above, Part Two, Chapter III, pp. 63-69.

⁴²U. Wilcken, Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1922), No. 110.

⁴³C. P. Jud., No. 132.

⁴⁴In his commentary of papyrus 110 in Urkunden.

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the Heliopolite nome. Tcherikover and Fuks⁴⁵ go even further, and suggest that this was the same Jewish general mentioned by Josephus as the founder of the temple at Leontopolis.

The identification with the high priest would be certain if we could identify the founder of the temple of Onias with the high priest Onias III. . . . Yet, according to II Macc. 4:34, Onias III was slain by Andronikos in Daphne near Antioch (c. 170 B.C.), and this evidence is now commonly accepted. . . . The founder of the temple was, in all probability, Onias IV, son of Onias III. Yet Onias IV cannot be identified with the Onias of our papyrus: according to Josephus (Ant. XII. 387), Onias IV left Palestine for Egypt after the execution of Menelaus and the nomination of Alkimos to the office of high priest, i.e., after 162 B.C., whereas our document was written in 164 B.C. On the other hand it would be very strange were we to find in Egypt at the same time two persons both called Onias, both on good terms with the king's court, and both connected in some way with Memphis or districts around Memphis. Such coincidences are far too unlikely to be credible. Thus the riddle seems to be insoluble.⁴⁶

Tcherikover and Fuks finally suggest that perhaps Josephus erred in dating the flight of Onias IV around 162 B.C.; it probably occurred several years earlier.⁴⁷

These seem sweeping conclusions to draw from such meager information. Even the name of the man to whom the letter is addressed cannot be established with absolute certainty. The papyrus was first published in Paris in 1865,⁴⁸ when C. Letronne established the reading of the name as [Θεω]ν(Θεον). Mahaffy, on the other hand, was not

⁴⁵ C. P. Jud., 1: 244f.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 245.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ W. Brunet de Presle, ed. Notices et extraits des papyrus du Musée du Louvre XVIII (1865).

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even able to identify the name.⁴⁹ Wilcken first established the reading of the name as Onias⁵⁰ in 1922, and perhaps he is correct.

Even if the name Onias were not disputed, sweeping conclusions seem drawn from the meager information that this letter provides.

Wilcken proposes the following conclusions:

1. The name to whom the letter is addressed should be read Onias.
2. Onias was a Jew.
3. Onias was a State official of high rank, "probably a strategos."
4. Onias was a strategos of the Helipolite nome (the district next to Memphis), since the strategos of the Memphite nome itself (where the papyrus was found), according to other sources, was another man and not Onias.

Tcherikover and Fuks not only agree with Wilcken's conclusions, but argue that "from the tone of the letter we can draw conclusions more far-reaching than those of Wilcken. It is not merely polite; the pre-script of the letter, mentioning the health of the king, the king's mother, the queen, and the royal children, is, according to Wilcken himself, unique in the whole of the official correspondence known to us. It is unlikely that a letter with such a prescript would be addressed by the dioiketes to a man who was a mere strategos: there were many strategoi in Egypt, one in every nome, and from the dioiketes' point

⁴⁹J. P. Mahaffy and J. G. Smyly, The Flinders Petrie Papyri, vols. (Dublin: Hodges, Figis, & Co., 1891-1905), 3: 15f. [. . .].

⁵⁰Urkunden, No. 110.

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of view the office was not of such great importance as to call for a quite unusual formula of greeting such as that used in this case. So we may conclude that Onias was a member of the court, known personally to the king, and, consequently to the dioiketes as well."⁵¹ Tcherikover's final conclusion, then, is that this man could have been no other than Onias IV, the founder of the temple at Leontopolis. And since the letter was written in 164 B.C., Josephus' account, placing Onias IV's flight to Egypt about 162 B.C., is probably incorrect.

Granted that Ptolemy VI was pro-Jewish, is it not questionable that Onias IV, a Jewish immigrant who was granted permission to establish a temple at Leontopolis, managed to become a "member of the court, known personally to the king," to the point where a letter "unique in the whole of the official correspondence" was sent to him a year after entering Egypt? Before rejecting Josephus' account, scholars need stronger evidence than this one letter. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear that Onias IV did become an important official of the crown, a strategos, as did his sons, Helkias and Hananiah⁵² under Cleopatra II. Other Jews must have followed similar official careers.

There were also policemen among the Jews. A papyrus from the Fayum dated 173 B.C. mentions a Jewish policeman as one of the witnesses to the contract of a loan.⁵³ An inscription from Athribis (Lower Egypt)

⁵¹C. P. Jud., 1: 245.

⁵²Jos. Ant. XIII. 283-355.

⁵³C. P. Jud., No. 25.

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mentions a chief of police by the name of Ptolemy who in mid-second century B.C. dedicated a Jewish synagogue to the Supreme God: "in honor of King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra, Ptolemy son of Epicles, police-chief, and the Jews at Athribis built this synagogue to the Supreme God."⁵⁴ Tcherikover and Fuks suggest that this Ptolemy was probably a Jew himself, since normally a non-Jew would not dedicate a Jewish synagogue to the "Supreme God."⁵⁵ Josephus also mentions that the Ptolemies entrusted the policing of the Nile, or more specifically, the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile, to the Jews of Leontopolis (the "District of Onias").⁵⁶

I have already mentioned two Jewish Alabarchs named Alexander and Demetrius.⁵⁷ It is generally agreed that the wealth of these two was not drawn from the performance of their duties, but rather that the post was an honorary position entrusted to prominent men of the community.⁵⁸ It is possible that in carrying out their functions as tax administrators these Alabarchs employed as their assistants lower officials, some of which could have been Jews.

⁵⁴Dittenberger, OGIS. No. 96

⁵⁵C. P. Jud. 1: 17, n. 46.

⁵⁶Jos. C. Ap. II. 64 and Jewish War I. 175.

⁵⁷See above, p. 139.

⁵⁸Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., 340f., Baron, Hist., 1: 409f., p. 16; Schürer, Jewish People, Div. II, 2: 280.

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The ostraca indicate that Jews were employed many times as tax-gatherers, at least in Upper Egypt.⁵⁹ The majority seem to have been simple tax-collectors, who personally collected the taxes and delivered them to the royal banks and store-houses. Such was the case for Sambathaios, who collected the ferry-toll or tax,⁶⁰ for Abielos, who collected the shoe-makers' tax,⁶¹ and many others. Other Jews were tax-farmers, who supervised the tax-collectors and guaranteed the full amounts to the king.⁶² Why so many Jews wished to dedicate themselves to gathering taxes is not easy to understand, especially in Egypt where, like tax-collectors everywhere, they were hated by the population.⁶³ No doubt there was some profit in this profession, but the organization of the Ptolemaic state did not enable private individuals or government officials to legally enrich themselves at the expense of the state, and illegal means, though no doubt used on occasions, were very dangerous.⁶⁴ Perhaps the Jews chose this

⁵⁹C. P. Jud., Section V, Nos. 48-124. This evidence although from the early Roman period, applies to the Ptolemaic one as well (especially on this the introduction by Tcherikover to Section V).

⁶⁰Ibid., Nos. 51-60.

⁶¹Ibid., No. 66.

⁶²Ibid., Nos. 90, 107, 109, and 110.

⁶³Philo represents tax-collectors as persons who were rude and cruel, who turned cities and villages into deserts (De Spec. Leg. 159-163).

⁶⁴C. P. Jud., 1: 18.

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unpleasant task because a government office was, in a way, a mark of distinction.⁶⁵

Jews are found also among the royal bank employees in Upper Egypt.⁶⁶ A papyrus from the Roman period names several Jews who were aitologoi, that is, government officials who supervised the delivery of grain to the royal granaries.⁶⁷ Another papyrus from the end of the Ptolemaic period mentions a grammateus or scribe by the name of Onias,⁶⁸ who apparently was the assistant of the government official in charge of a toparchy in the Heracleopolite nome.

How many of the above-mentioned Jewish government officials could also be represented among the Alexandrian Jews? Jewish crown officials were involved in the administration of the city of Alexandria,⁶⁹ as generals (strategoi) at the service of the kings,⁷⁰ and even as heads of the royal secretariat or as eponymous priests of Alexander.⁷¹ The Jewish Alabarchs seem to have resided in Alexandria, and perhaps many of the tax-collectors did so also when not absent fulfilling their

⁶⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Nos. 65, 69, 97, 100-103.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 428.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁹ Strabo, 797, and above, pp. 129f.; also Alan E. Samuel, "The Greek Element in the Ptolemaic Bureaucracy," Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology 7 (1970): 443-453.

⁷⁰ Such as the case of Onias IV and his sons.

⁷¹ As the case of Dositheos, son of Drimylos (see above, 142f.)

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duties. And if there were Jewish policemen in the chora, why not in Alexandria? In conclusion, there is no reason to doubt that most, if not all, of the government posts occupied by Jews in other parts of Egypt were also held by Jews of Alexandria.

The Jews as Soldiers

A great many Jews in Egypt were involved in military activities for the Ptolemies. Jewish strategoi such as Onias IV, Dositheos, Helkias, and Hananiah have already been mentioned.⁷² The military role of the colony at Leontopolis likewise proves the point. But the writings of Josephus are now corroborated by the information in the papyri. The Aramaic papyri from Elephantine show that already in Persian times the Jews were settled in frontier fortresses.⁷³ Tcherikover and Fuks include a series of papyri from the Ptolemaic period which mention Jewish soldiers serving in the regular army or in the reserve (Epigone).⁷⁴ The army was organized either on the national principle (Thracians, Thessalians, Macedonians and so on, which when the Ptolemaic army was still in formation represented units of such nationalities), or in mixed squadrons designated by numbers. As time passed, persons of different national origins were admitted into the units originally divided by nationalities, so the papyri

⁷² See above, Part Two, Chapter III.

⁷³ B. Porten, Archives from Elephantine (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

⁷⁴ C. P. Jud., 1: 147-178.

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mention Jews in the Persian and Macedonian squadrons.⁷⁵ When a soldier was changed from one unit to another, his designation also changed.⁷⁶ Jews were, of course, no exception to this rule. The Jews mentioned in the papyri served in the Egyptian army on an equal footing with the other peoples. Jews are found among the simple soldiers as well as among the officers,⁷⁷ men of the regular army as well as of the Epigone,⁷⁸ cavalymen and infantrymen.⁷⁹

Periodic settlements of foreign soldiers on Egyptian soil was carried out by crown officials who divided certain tracts of land into plots which were to be allotted to the soldiers.⁸⁰ Generally soldiers of the same nationality were settled together in colonies which received the name of cleruchies or katoikiai. Such was the case of the Jewish settlement at Leontopolis.⁸¹

It is quite possible that Jewish soldiers were settled in Alexandria, perhaps serving in the reserve, perhaps part of the royal army stationed in the area. There could have been in Alexandria

⁷⁵ Ibid., Nos. 1, 417; 1: 13. Perhaps this is why Josephus states that the Jews in Alexandria were allowed "to take the title of Macedonians" (Jewish War II. 488).

⁷⁶ B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, and D. G. Hogarth, Fayum Towns and their Papyri (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1900), No. 11 and 12, where a soldier styled Perse tes Epigones is recorded ten years afterwards as a Mysian of the fourth hipparchy.

⁷⁷ C.P.J. Nos. 24 and 27.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Nos. 18-26, 30.

⁷⁹ Ibid., No. 24.

⁸⁰ C. P. Jud., 1: 13.

⁸¹ Jos. Jewish War I. 190, Ant. XIV. 131.

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representatives of the military settlers who held considerable allotments of land which was worked by others. Some of these Jews are mentioned in the papyri as being involved in business activities,⁸² and therefore could well have had a residence in Alexandria.

The Jews as Farmers

The papyri and ostraca give ample evidence for the existence of a rural population of Jews in Egypt.⁸³ There were, of course, the military settlers, who had received from the Ptolemies portions of land according to royal practice. Some of these Jewish servicemen held considerable allotments of land, which they did not generally work themselves but rather leased out to Egyptian peasants.⁸⁴ Originally these allotments of land were considered the property of the crown, but in time they were treated as the private property of the settlers.⁸⁵ Since each military settler received about 80 to 100 arourai (about 100 acres), this group of Jews was considered rather wealthy and influential, as landowners rather than tillers of the soil.⁸⁶

⁸² C. P. Jud., Nos. 24, 25.

⁸³ Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 15 and 179-93.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Nos. 24, 28; Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., 336.

⁸⁵ Mitteis and Wilcken, Grundzüge, Nos. 282, 334, and 335. The Tebtunis Papyri (London), No. 956. During the second century B.C. the properties were being bequeathed from father to son.

⁸⁶ Several papyri, such as P. Tebtunis Nos. 815 and 818, C. P. Nos. 24, 25, mention business negotiations involving Jewish military settlers, which are evidence that these Jews were sufficiently free to engage in such non-military and non-agricultural activities.

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Of course, Jews other than military settlers held land. Ostraca found in Upper Egypt testify to the great number of Jews who paid land-tax on their holdings to the government.⁸⁷ Various quantities of grain were "measured" out by these Jews as payment for taxes,⁸⁸ a fact that could reflect the differences in the sizes of their estates.⁸⁹ There is no certainty as to which class of farmers these Jews belonged, but Tcherikover suggests that they might have been "royal peasants" settled on royal land, working this land according to pre-established conditions.⁹⁰

Many of the Jews mentioned in the ostraca were evidently freed laborers. A papyrus from Fayum mentions a laborer by the name Joab among the "peasants receiving wages" for working the land of a wealthy estate-owner.⁹¹ A couple of papyri mention two Jewish partners, Samuel and Alexander, who were leasing a vineyard of 60 ourai from Zenon.⁹² Other papyri mention Jewish shepherds who owned sheep and sold the wool to customers.⁹³ Evidently during the Ptolemaic period the Jews of Egypt found their way into various types of agricultural activities, as military settlers, land-holders, "royal peasants,"

⁸⁷C. P. Jud., Section V.

⁸⁸Ibid., Nos. 73-96.

⁸⁹Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., 336f.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹C. P. Jud., No. 36.

⁹²Ibid., Nos. 14 and 15.

⁹³Ibid., Nos. 9, 38, 39, and 412.

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field hands, vine-dressers, shepherds, and so on, the types of work they had long followed in their native country.

Among the Jews in Alexandria there could well have been those who lived in the outskirts and had small plots of land which they farmed. Others may have been rich landowners who, at the same time, were involved in other business activities, and therefore had a residence in the city. Their land might have been either leased out or worked by hired hands. Of the other above-mentioned Jewish farmers of the chora, there probably would be none represented in the Alexandrian community.

Jews, then, were involved in just about every branch of the economic life of Egypt. The absence of papyri from Alexandria for the Ptolemaic period makes it difficult to reconstruct the economic life of the Alexandrian Jews with any degree of certainty. However, there seems generally to be a difference between the Jew of the chora and the one in Alexandria. The latter probably engaged more actively in trade, banking or lending money at a profit, or acted as an artisan and small merchant. He was also, in general, wealthier than the Jew of the chora, though there were cases of rich Jews among the latter. The poorest Jews in Egypt, however, were not among the wealthy, but rather among the hard-working people of rather limited means.

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CHAPTER VI

HELLENISM AND THE ALEXANDRIAN JEWS: ITS IMPACT ON RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

There is no doubt that Hellenism had an influence on the Jews, especially those of the Diaspora. The Hellenic world offered the Jews an esthetically attractive form of paganism, one quite different from the crude savageries of some Near Eastern faiths. Greek philosophy provided a number of ideals quite compatible with Jewish thought, and vice-versa, as Philo attempted to demonstrate. Jewish Hellenistic literature, too, exhibits an interesting fusion of Greek ideas and Jewish tradition. In this chapter I shall attempt to trace some of the ways in which Hellenism influenced the Alexandrian Jews in their religious and cultural affairs.

The Synagogue

The religious center of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora was the synagogue, and closely associated with it was the school. These two institutions, "though of independent origin and never organically connected, worked together in a harmony which resulted in substantial unity of instruction."¹

¹George F. Moore, *Judaism*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 1: 283.

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The origin of the synagogue is unknown. Perhaps, as Moore suggests,² it had its antecedents in spontaneous gatherings of Jews in Babylonia and other lands of their exile on the sabbaths and at the times of the old seasonal feasts or on fast days.³ The proved religious value of such gatherings led to custom, and to the spread of the institution to other communities.

By the beginning of the Christian era, the synagogue, wherever and however it arose, was already an institution of long standing, believed to have been established by Moses.⁴ Synagogues were to be found in the Diaspora wherever there were enough Jews to maintain them.⁵ They were public institutions, commonly possessing an edifice for religious and communal meetings, which had been erected by the community or given to it by individuals. The synagogue was a place not only of worship, but also of instruction in the philosophy of the Jews.⁶

² Ibid.

³ Zechariah 7:5; Isaiah 58:3.

⁴ Philo Vita Moses ii. XXXIX. 211; Jos. C. Ap. ii. 17.

⁵ Philo De Septenario c. VI: "In all the towns thousands of houses of instruction were open where discernment and moderation and kill and justice and all virtues generally were taught." Paul met with Jewish synagogues throughout his travels, as for instance in Antioch of isidia (Acts 13:14), Iconium (Acts 19:1), Ephesus (Acts 18:19, 26; 19:8), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (Acts 17:10), Athens (Acts 17:17), and Corinth (Acts 18:4, 7). Josephus mentions synagogues in Caesarea Jewish War ii. 14. 4,5) and Dora (Ant. XIX. 6. 3) on the Phoenician coast.

⁶ Philo Vita Moses ii. XXXIX. 211.

On every Sabbath and festal day the Jews of Alexandria (as elsewhere) met in the synagogues for worship and instruction. Worship followed the traditional form which consisted of the recitation of the Shema (confession of faith), prayer and benedictions (Tefillah), and the reading of the scriptural passage with the subsequent homily. At Alexandria the necessity of a translation of the readings from the Scriptures must have been early felt, perhaps as early as the institution of the reading itself.⁷ The language of the Bible had long since ceased to be the vernacular of the Jews everywhere. In Egypt, Aramaic had given way to Greek, the language of most of the Jews in the western Diaspora. And earlier, Aramaic had taken the place of the original Hebrew, as can be seen from the case of Nehemiah 8:8, where the reading of the Law by Ezra was accompanied by a translation into Aramaic.

Any competent person could be an interpreter, subject to the control of the head of the synagogue.⁸ The translation was supposed to be extempore; the interpreter listened to the reading of a verse and gave the meaning of it to the congregation in their own language. He could not have anything written before him.⁹ Whether or not the Jews of Alexandria utilized a translator in this fashion is not known especially since the Pentateuch and the Prophets were available to

⁷M. Megillah 4. 1, and Moore, Jud., 1: 302.

⁸Jerusalem Megillah 74d.

⁹Ibid.

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them in Greek (the Septuagint) two centuries before Christ.¹⁰ Previous to the Septuagint, translators were undoubtedly utilized in the Alexandrian synagogues, as they were everywhere including Palestine.

Eusebius quotes Philo for a description of the service in the Hellenistic synagogues.¹¹ According to Philo, Moses commanded that the Jews should assemble on the seventh day, and being seated should reverently and decorously listen to the Law, in order that no one might be ignorant of it. One of the priests, or one of the elders, read to them the divine laws and expounded them in detail, continuing until some time in the late afternoon; then the congregation dispersed, having acquired knowledge of the divine laws and made much progress in religion.

Each synagogue was presided over by a Head of the Synagogue,¹² probably chosen from among the "elders" by the community or by coöperation.¹³ He had general oversight of the exercises in the synagogue, maintained order,¹⁴ and invited strangers to address the assembly.¹⁵ A salaried officer was the synagogue attendant, the Hazzan ha-keneset¹⁶

¹⁰ On the Septuagint, see below, pp. 197-205.

¹¹ Eusebius Præparatio Evangelica VIII 16. 23.

¹² Rosh ha-keneset (Mishna Sotah 7. 7), or in Greek, the κλουνάγῳρος (Mark 5:27).

¹³ G. Moore, Jud., 1: 289f.

¹⁴ Luke 13:14: "But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.'"

¹⁵ Acts 13:15

¹⁶ Mishna Sotah 7. 7f.

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ὀπρῆτη.¹⁷ In his charge were the synagogue building and its furniture, especially the rolls of the Scriptures. Sometimes he even had his dwelling under the same roof. From the roof of the synagogue he gave the signal to people to stop work when the Sabbath was approaching by blasting on a trumpet three times.¹⁸ In a similar manner he gave notice that the holy day had come to an end.

The synagogues never replaced the Temple worship in Jerusalem. From Egypt, as elsewhere, the Jews continued to make pilgrimages to the City of David.¹⁹ Also the Temple tribute continued to be collected in the Diaspora and sent to Jerusalem.²⁰ Philo describes the way in which the temple tribute was collected and remitted to Jerusalem:

The revenue of the temple is derived not merely from a few lands, but from other and much more copious sources which can never be destroyed. Because as long as the human race endures so long will the sources of the temple revenue continue to exist, seeing that they will last as long as the world itself. For it is prescribed that every Jew who is over twenty years of age is to pay so much tribute annually. . . . But as might be expected in the case of so numerous a people, the amount thus contributed is very large. In almost every town there is an office for the collection of the sacred funds and into which the tribute is paid. Then at particular seasons these funds are entrusted to men of good standing whose duty it is to convey them to Jerusalem. For this purpose it is always those of the highest rank that are chosen, as a kind of guarantee that that which is every Israelite's hope may reach the Holy City untampered with.²¹

¹⁷Luke 4:20.

¹⁸T. Sukkah 4. 11; Shabbat 35b.

¹⁹Philo De Providentia quoted by Eusebius Praep. Evang. VIII. 24.

²⁰Jos. Ant. XIV 7. 2.

²¹Philo De Monarchia II. 3.

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his passage makes clear that the synagogues were not the places where the tribute of the Diaspora was collected for the Temple of Jerusalem, which continued to be looked upon as the center of Jewish religious life.

The dedicatory inscriptions are an interesting aspect of the study of the synagogues in Egypt. Eight of them survive, from the reign of Euergetes I down to that of Cleopatra VII.²² All of them are worded in the same general terms: either individuals, or else Jewish communities dedicate a synagogue or a part of its furniture to the Theos Hypsistos--the regular Greek equivalent of Jahweh--on behalf of the reigning Ptolemy and his wife.²³ Fraser analyzes several interesting points.²⁴ The opening formula is always "on behalf of" the ruling house. This was the common "loyalty formula" used in Ptolemaic dedications to deities both Greek and Egyptian. Its use avoided the direct ascription of divinity to the sovereign, and yet associated him with the worship.²⁵ From Philo we learn that the Jews did not consider

²²The two inscriptions from Alexandria are: one from the second century B.C. (in F. Preisigke and F. Bilabel, Sammelbuch griechischer Kunden aus Ägypten, 5 vols. [Berlin: De Gruyter Co., 1913-52], 2: 589), and one from 36 B.C. (in W. Dittenberger, OGIS., No. 742).

²³Fraser, Ptol. Alex., 1: 282.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 283f.

²⁵That a dedication "on behalf of" a certain sovereign was not considered the same as a dedication "to" this or that sovereign is clear in the story told by Philo concerning the Emperor Gaius and the Jews of Alexandria (Embassy 356-7). The Jews complained to the Emperor that the Greeks were maligning them, and that they had offered the requisite sacrifices to him on various occasions. To this complaint Gaius replied: "May be that you offered sacrifice, but it was to another, even if on behalf of me. What good is that? You did not sacrifice to me."

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themselves as worshiping the rulers: "In three hundred years there was a succession of ten Ptolemies, yet they [the Alexandrians] made no dedication of images or statutes in synagogues. . . ." ²⁶ What the dedicatory formulae show is that the Jews in Alexandria had, in fact, utilized the contemporary method employed by the Greek population to express their respect for the royal family. On the other hand, the dedications "on behalf of" involved no co-worship in their eyes, and, therefore, no cult-statues or images.

Apart from the opening formula, the synagogal dedications exhibit a complete correspondence with contemporary pagan dedications of sacred furniture and shrines. ²⁷ In most instances, the dedication is indistinguishable from a pagan equivalent, save for the substitute of the term "synagogue" for "the shrine" or "the temple," and for the name or names of the dedicating party. The Hellenism of these dedications is, therefore, pronounced in all external respects, and the Judaism is largely concealed beneath the pagan exterior.

The dedications also raise the question of the status of the synagogues. Pagan temples were either public--that is, in Alexandria, either royal or civic foundations--or private. In the latter case, they might have been dedicated by and be the property of a private body or a private person. ²⁸ The evidence indicates that synagogues

²⁶ Philo Embassy 134-149.

²⁷ W. Dittenberger OGIS, Nos. 96 and 101.

²⁸ Fraser, Ptol. Alexan., p. 284.

also were erected either by the Jewish community or by prominent individuals. One urban dedication of a synagogue, which belongs to the latest Ptolemaic period, was made by an individual named Alypus.²⁹ Sometimes the synagogues were built by the entire community, calling itself in such cases "Jews of the Place X," sometimes by the community in cooperation with a private person.³⁰

That there was more than one synagogue in Alexandria is evident from Philo, who says that there were many "in each section of the city."³¹ There was, perhaps, a central synagogue. It is true that Philo does not make specific mention of any central synagogue, but he does speak of one synagogue in Alexandria as being larger and more splendid than the others.³² The tradition that there existed in Alexandria the so-called "Great Synagogue" is also inferred from the Talmud:³³

Rabbi Judah taught: He who has not seen the double colonnade [διπλόστοον = יִרְמְיָהוּ לְפָנָיו] at Alexandria has never seen the glory of Israel. It was made like a great basilica [βασιλική = יִרְמְיָהוּ לְפָנָיו] one colonnade [στούα = יִרְמְיָהוּ] within another. Often there were as many as twice the number which went out of

²⁹ C. P. Jud., No. 1432.

³⁰ For examples of synagogues dedicated by Jewish communities, W. Dittenberger, OGIS, Nos. 96, 101, 726, and 742; and F. Preisigke F. Bilable, Sammeibuch, Nos. 5862, 6832, 7454, and 8939.

³¹ Philo Embassy 132.

³² Ibid., 134.

³³ I am following here the translation that Erwin Goodenough has of the text found in Tosephta Sukka IV. 6, in Jewish Symbols in Graeco-Roman Period, 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1955), 2: 85f.

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Egypt in the Exodus.³⁴ Seventy-one golden chairs were in it corresponding to the seventy-one elders.³⁵ Each chair had a cost of 250,000.³⁶ In the middle stood a wooden platform upon the top of which stood the Chazan of the synagogue. He had a scarf in his hand which he waved when a person took up the scroll [of the Torah] to read, whereupon all the people responded with "Amen." At each distinct benediction he waved the scarf and all the people responded with "Amen." They did not, however, sit together promiscuously, but goldsmiths by themselves, silversmiths by themselves, blacksmiths by themselves, weavers by themselves, carpetmakers by themselves, so that if a stranger came he associated himself with his profession in order to get his livelihood.

The passage is interesting for showing not only the tradition of the building itself, but also for revealing that even the rabbis had only Greek terms for these architectural borrowings, since Greek loan words were used in the Hebrew to describe the building. Krauss³⁷ suggests that this building was not primarily a synagogue, but really a great merchants' hall which the Jews also used as a courthouse and for worship. He bases his assumptions on the description of how the different tradespeople were grouped. Prayers, benedictions, and readings of the Law were going on all through the day, and the mass of Jewish merchants and craftsmen would go on with their work in this happy atmosphere of

³⁴ By tradition this would be 1,200,000.

³⁵ The implication of the text in Tosefta and in the Jerusalem Talmud, Sukkah, V. 55a,b, is that there were such officials in Alexandria. The Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 51b, changes this to make these chairs simply honor "members of the great Sanhedrin."

³⁶ The Jer. Talmud makes this 250,000 denarii which is fantastic enough, the Bab. Talmud makes the value of each chair 210,000 gold talents!

³⁷ Samuel Krauss, Synagogale Altertümer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1922), pp. 261-263.

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worship, even though they could join in it only by periodically saying "Amen."

The School

The second great institution of religious education in Judaism was the school. In some form or other the school was as old as the synagogue if not older, and the synagogue was always dependent upon it.³⁸

Several Biblical passages give evidence of early beginnings of religious instruction among the Jews. Originally the priests were in charge of teaching the people the law of Moses.³⁹ In the time of Ezra, the Levites were charged with explaining the provisions of the Law after Ezra had completed reading it.⁴⁰ In the time of Jehoshaphat, the king sent throughout the land a group of men, princes, and Levites, and they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the Lord with them; they went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people."⁴¹ It can be inferred from this passage that, as time passed, men other than priests were also entrusted with teaching.

By the last century of the Persian rule, the men who had taken the lead in the field of teaching were receiving the name of soferim,

³⁸ G. Moore, Jud., 1: 308.

³⁹ Deut. 33:10 "They [the Levites] shall teach Jacob thy finances, and Israel thy Law." Jer. 2:8; Mal. 2:4-9.

⁴⁰ Nehemiah 8:7 and 8.

⁴¹ II Chron. 17:7-9.

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commonly translated "scribes."⁴² In the Greek period, Jesus, son of Sirach, described the station and occupation of the scribe, contrasting him with the classes who had to give all their time and thought to making a living. The learning of the scholar (sofer) can be acquired only by such as are free from these necessities and have the leisure to consider and discuss matters of higher interest.⁴³

The ideal scholar of Sirach is a cultivated man, who has broadened his mind by travel in foreign countries and had experience of the good and the bad in men, and is a presentable person in the highest company.⁴⁴ He is occupied with prophecies,⁴⁵ seeks out the wisdom of the elders,⁴⁶ and preserves the wisdom of the men of old.⁴⁷ He is skilled in the interpretation of parables and proverbs,⁴⁸ and devotes his mind to the study of the Scriptures and to understanding the law of the Most High.⁴⁹

It is probable that organized schools of higher learning, such as appear in the sources shortly before the beginning of the Christian

⁴²From ספר, "book"; the soferim would be literally translated as: "bookmen," referring of course to the books of the Scriptures.

⁴³Jesus ben Sirach's Ecclesiasticus 38:24-39.

⁴⁴Ibid., 39:4; G. Moore, Jud., 1:309.

⁴⁵Eccles. 39:1

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹Ibid., 1.

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ra, were preceded by stated or occasional meetings of the soferim for study and discussion. Younger scholars, who perhaps pursued their studies under the guidance of individual masters, would have frequented these conventions as auditors, and profited from listening to the discussions of their elders.⁵⁰

As early as Sirach, "place of study"⁵¹ became a common term for a school of higher education. The name was often coupled with that of the synagogue in combinations which show that the two were distinct, though closely associated. The existence of many biblical scholars from the third century B.C. on⁵² shows that there was regular provision for transmitting the learning of former generations and adding to it.

In Palestine, and probably elsewhere, the school was frequently adjacent to the synagogue, and in later accounts it is assumed that each synagogue had its own school.⁵³ The building occupied by a synagogue could be transformed into a school, but not vice-versa; it would have been a descent in rank, such as was forbidden in Mishna Megillah 3. 1.

Elementary instruction was doubtless the responsibility of parents who could impart the education themselves or hire tutors.⁵⁴ Since apparently many parents did neither, many Jewish children were

⁵⁰G. Moore, Jud., 1:311.

⁵¹Ecclesiasticus 51:23. Bet ha-Midrash refers to a school of higher education, not an elementary school.

⁵²I Macc. 7: 12-18.

⁵³Megillah 27a.

⁵⁴G. Moore, Jud., 1:316

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left without an adequate knowledge of the ancient Hebrew language, a necessary requirement for those who wished to pursue studies in the advanced schools. To meet this need, elementary schools were established, called Beth ha-Sofer, where boys were taught reading and writing. The maintenance of the schools and payment of teachers were the responsibilities of the Jewish community as a whole, which was made to feel by the rabbis that a community without schools was not fulfilling the will of God.⁵⁵ Unlike the advanced schools, the boys' school maintained by the community was held in the synagogue.⁵⁶ In small communities the same man often served as school teacher (sofer) and as synagogue attendant (hazzan).⁵⁷

The Pirkè Abot⁵⁸ would have a boy begin Bible school, or the Beth ha-Sofer, at the age of five, then go on to the study of tradition (Mishnah) at ten, and advance to the Talmud at fifteen.⁵⁹ This ideal was probably seldom achieved. More probably, boys ordinarily passed from the elementary school to the more advanced studies of the Beth a-Midrash between the years of twelve and fifteen. Only a small proportion of those who began the study of tradition (Mishnah) had

⁵⁵ Shabbat 119b.

⁵⁶ Baba Batra 21a and M. Baba Batra 2. 3.

⁵⁷ Jer. Yebamot 13a. Megillah 25b.

⁵⁸ Pirkè Abot 5:21. The Pirkè Abot ("Chapter of the Fathers") is an appendix to the fourth series (Nezikin) of treatises in the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud.

⁵⁹ "Mishnah" is used here in the narrower sense, formulated and authorized rules (halakot); Talmud, in this context means explanation and discussion of the rules.

either the opportunity or the ability to go on to the higher stages by which men advanced to the rank of what we might call professor.⁶⁰ The later Midrash gives this turn to the words, 'I have found one man out of a thousand' (Eccles. 7:28): "Such is the usual way of the world; a thousand enter the Bible school, and a hundred pass from it to the study of Mishnah; ten of them go on to Talmud study, and only one of them arrives at the doctor's degree (rabbinical ordination)."⁶¹

From Philo it is learned that the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria and Egypt also had this system of schools for the study of the Scriptures and religious laws.⁶² But because the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria were no longer able to read the original Hebrew, the Septuagint was used in their synagogues and schools. Philo himself seems to have had very little knowledge of Hebrew, and probably used the Greek translation of the Scriptures for his writings.⁶³ Apparently there were no other major differences from other Jewish communities in the system of worship and education. In Alexandria, as in all other Jewish communities, the synagogue and the school were two basic pillars of their religious foundation.

⁶⁰ G. Moore, Jud., 1:320.

⁶¹ The Midrash commentary on Ecclesiasticus 7:28.

⁶² Embassy 115.

⁶³ Erwin Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 9; Samuel Sandmel, The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 111; G. Moore, Jud., 1:322.

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Some Jews to whom Greek education seemed superior to their own system adopted a more Hellenized education. The gymnasium was the vehicle for a Greek education, and athletics, carried out in a Greek religious setting, were part of this training. Therefore, when the Jews participated in this system of education they did so against the strict orthodox principles. Not only was the gymnasium, in a sense, a vehicle for the practice of Greek religion, but in addition athletic activities were carried out with very little (if any) clothing, a pattern highly improper to the orthodox Jew. II Macc. 4: 13, for instance, speaks of the gymnasium at Jerusalem as the height of evil and corruption. Philo is an example of the more Hellenized Jews, who saw very little if anything wrong with the participation in the Greek gymnasium:

Further, who could be more truly called benefactors than parents in relation to their children? . . . they have held them entitled to nurture and later to education of body and soul, so that they may have not only life, but a good life. They have benefited the body by means of the gymnasium and the training there given, through which it gains muscular vigour and good condition and the power to bear itself and move with an ease marked by gracefulness and elegance. They have done the same for the soul by means of letters and arithmetic and geometry and music and philosophy as a whole which lifts on high the mind lodged within the mortal body and escorts it to the very heaven and shews it the blessed and happy beings that dwell therein, and creates in it an eager longing for the unswerving ever-harmonious order which they never forsake because they obey their captain and marshal.⁶⁴

Obviously, many Hellenized Jews in Alexandria were educating their children in the Greek educational system, the gymnasium, and so thinks them worthy of praise for doing so. The same seems to

⁶⁴ Philo *De Spec. Leg.* II, 229; see also *ibid.*, 246; *De Opif.* 78; and *De Ioseph* 82.

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have been occurring in other parts of the Diaspora. At the town of Iasos in Asia Minor a list of epheboi of the early Roman period has been preserved on which names such as Judah, Dositheos, and Theophilos indicate that among these men were many Jews.⁶⁵ At Miletus a special place was reserved in the theater for the Jews,⁶⁶ and at Hypaipa (near Sardis in Lydia) a group of young Jews called themselves neoterioi, following the usual system of grouping the ephebes into juniors, intermediates, and seniors.⁶⁷ All these examples indicate the keen ambition of the Diaspora Jews to emulate the Greeks in the most important branches of original Greek cultural life, and there is no doubt that the education of young Jews in the gymnasium opened to them the way to a deeper understanding of Greek culture as a whole.⁶⁸

Religious Observances and Festivals

The Jewish community of Alexandria observed such fundamental practices as circumcision and the keeping of the Sabbath. Philo staunchly defends the practice of circumcision in his first book On the Special Laws.⁶⁹ He argues that the Jews were not the only ones to practice circumcision: many other nations, such as the Egyptians,⁷⁰

⁶⁵V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 350.

⁶⁶J. B. Frey, C. I. Jud., No. 748.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, No. 755.

⁶⁸V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 350.

⁶⁹De Spec. Leg. I. 2-11.

⁷⁰Herodotus II. 104 mentions that circumcision was practised by the Egyptians, the Ethiopians (Nubians), the Phoenicians, and the Syrians of Palestine," and further by certain tribes in Asia Minor.

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zealously observed this custom, since it was a good one for reasons of cleanliness, health, and spiritual emancipation.⁷¹

The second of the fundamental observances of Judaism was the Sabbath, the keeping of every seventh day as a "holy" day. No work was allowed. The Sabbath was the "eternal covenant," between God and Israel.⁷² "Every one who does work on it, that person shall be cut off out of the midst of his people."⁷³ The observance of the seventh day of the week as a day reserved for God made the Israelites unpopular and gave rise, as I will show later, to accusations of laziness and to anti-semitic feelings.

Philo extensively deals with and firmly defends the observance of the Sabbath.⁷⁴ The law, he says, was given not to induce slackness, but rather to give men a rest from continuous and unending toil. This refreshes the body and allows it to return to work for another six days with renewed energy. The Sabbath is also important because, while on that day the body is resting, the soul is liberated to go into the spiritual life (Βλὸς θεωρητικὸς).

⁷¹Philo *De Migratione Abrahami* 92. For proselytes Philo commends circumcision, but does not feel it should be a requirement of them (*Questions and Answers* II. 2).

⁷²Ezekiel 20:12; Exodus 31:13, 16, and 17.

⁷³Exodus 31:14.

⁷⁴*De Spec. Leg.* II. 56-70.

A papyrus from the Archives of Zenon⁷⁵ is a good example of the observance of the Sabbath in the Egyptian chora.⁷⁶ The papyrus contains a list of bricks received on the estate of Apollonius at Philadelphia in the Fayûm; the foreman recorded daily the number of bricks received from the wagoners who brought the load. One day, instead of recording the number of bricks, he noted only one word: "Sabbath." On that day either he or the wagoners who brought the bricks had not worked. The papyrus also indicates that the building work on Apollonius' estate was proceeding at a forced pace, and the chief overseer of the estate, Zenon, had no inclination to clemency or pity. To keep the Sabbath in such conditions would not have been easy.

Circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were two practices against which Hellenism had very little effect, even in the Diaspora. No compromise was possible, and most Jews were willing even to die rather than to break these observances.⁷⁷

Philo also indicates that the Jews of Alexandria carefully observed all the other important religious festivals of Judaism. Philo, however, sees in these festivals more than just a series of physical ceremonies and activities. The Passover is also a symbol of the

⁷⁵As quoted in C. P. Jud., No. 10, and Tcherikover, Hell. Civ. p. 528, note 54.

⁷⁶There is no reason to doubt that the same example could also illustrate the attitude among the Alexandrian Jews toward the observance of the Sabbath.

⁷⁷As, for example, during Antiochus Epiphanes' attempt to Hellenize the Jews by force (I Macc. 2: 29-41; II Macc. 5: 25f; 11; 8: 26).

migration from body to spirit, the purification of the soul.⁷⁸ The feast of the Unleavened Bread is in reality the "unmixed food which is prepared by Nature,"⁷⁹ that is immaterial, unmixed with matter, which the mystic eats.⁸⁰ The Feast of the New Moon is useful for "inculcating kindness and humanity and bidding men never grudge their own good things, but, imitating the blessed and happy beings in heaven, banish jealousy from the confines of the soul, producing what they have for all to see, treat it as a common property, and give freely to the deserving."⁸¹ The Day of Atonement should serve as an occasion for turning from the material in order to seek immaterial sustenance.⁸² Philo makes every Festival into a sacrament in the sense that it is a visible sign of an invisible, a mystic grace. . . . How far this resulted in the modification of ritual we do not know, but I doubt if much modification would have been attempted, or felt desirable."⁸³

What caused Philo to interpret the Jewish festivals in this manner? First, the influence of Hellenism upon Philo. Second, Philo's desire to present Judaism in terms that could be understood by the Graeco-Roman world of his day. His allegories, the spiritualization of the festivals, the mystical language and ideas present in his

⁷⁸ Philo De Spec. Leg. II. 145-149.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 150-161.

⁸⁰ E. Goodenough, Int., p. 157.

⁸¹ Philo De Spec. Leg. II. 140-144.

⁸² Ibid., 193-203.

⁸³ E. Goodenough, Int., p. 158.

writings, are all evidence of the Greek influence, especially of Plato and the Stoic philosophers.⁸⁴ On the other hand they are also evidence that Philo is a representative of the Jewish intelligentsia of Alexandria, though it is not possible to determine how far he represents the great mass of Alexandrian Jews.

A popular festival highly esteemed by the Jews was the observance of Purim,⁸⁵ commemorating the deliverance of the Jews from the wholesale destruction Haman had planned for them. In accordance with the pronouncedly secular character of the Book of Esther, the festival was not a religious observance, and the secular character remained the signature of the celebration through its history, notwithstanding its adoption into the religious calendar.⁸⁶

At the end of the Book of Esther in its Greek translation,⁸⁷ two Jews are mentioned, Dositheos ("who said he was a priest and Levite"), and his son Ptolemy, who introduced "the present epistle of Purim" into Egypt during the fourth year of the reign of "King Ptolemy and Cleopatra." Tcherikover, analyzing the chronology involved,⁸⁸ points out that there were three joint reigns of a Ptolemy with a Cleopatra (114 B.C., 78 B.C., and 49 B.C.), Tcherikover argues

⁸⁴Davis, Race-Relations, p. 128f., Goodenough, Int., p. 114.

⁸⁵Esther 9:26.

⁸⁶G. Moore, Jud., p. 51.

⁸⁷Apocryphal additions to Esther VII:10 and 11.

⁸⁸C. P. Jud., 1: 46, note 119.

that, since the Purim stressed so sharply the antagonism between Jews and non-Jews and evoked the national feeling of Jewish readers, the Book of Esther was excellently suited to fulfill the aims of Hasmonaean propaganda abroad. Therefore, the book probably was sent into Egypt on the initiative of the official circles at the Hasmonaean court. The date 114/13 B.C. seems to Tcherikover the most probable for the introduction of the Book of Esther into Alexandria. From then onward, the Alexandrian Jews would have celebrated with enthusiasm the festival of Purim.

The festival of Hanukkah is among those religious celebrations not prescribed in the Pentateuch. It was instituted in the year 165 B.C. by Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, as an annual eight-day celebration of the reestablishment of worship in the Temple after three years' interruption. This festival was to be celebrated with joy and gladness,"⁸⁹ and was to be patterned after the Feast of Tabernacles.⁹⁰ The people carried palm leaves and fair branches, and sang praises to Him who had helped them to purge His Temple.

II Maccabees opens with a letter from the Jews of Palestine to their brethren in the Egyptian diaspora, dated in 124 B.C., which invites the Egyptian Jews to celebrate the festival of Hannukah.⁹¹ Reference is made to another letter sent to Egypt "during the reign

⁸⁹ I Macc. 4: 59.

⁹⁰ II Macc. 10: 6-8.

⁹¹ II Macc. 1: 1-6.

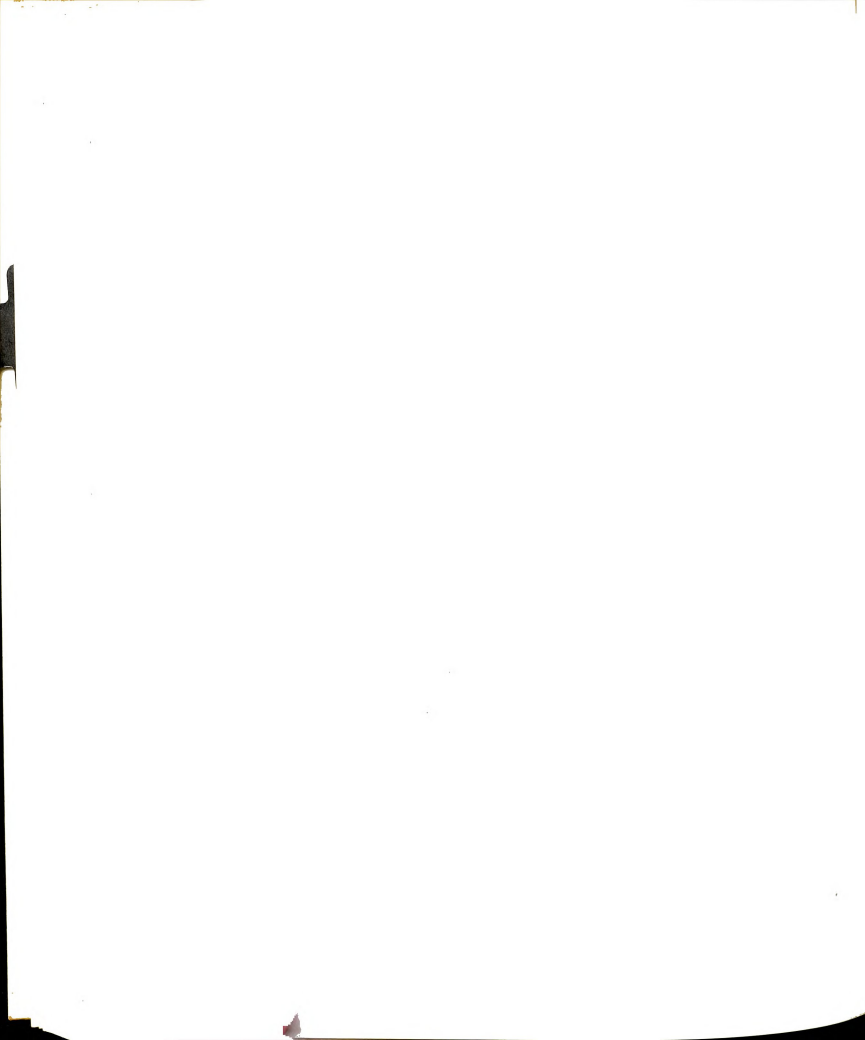
of Demetrius, in the hundred threescore and ninth year,"⁹² with the same purpose. To Tcherikover, this is another demonstration of the organized propaganda emanating from Hasmonaeen Palestine.⁹³ Together with the new books, such as the Book of Esther and the Book of Judith, a different spirit reached the Diaspora of Aristaeas or Philo. This was the aggressive national spirit of Hasmonaeen Israel, born with the rebellion of the Maccabees against their Hellenistic Seleucid rulers. This spirit, says Tcherikover, desired no compromise with the Greeks, and still less with those Jews who inclined to them. "The philosophical works of Philo and the Letter of Aristaeas reflect, after all, only the views of restricted groups of wealthy people in Alexandria and of the Jewish intelligentsia influenced by Hellenism, while literature of the type of the Third Book of the Maccabees faithfully reflects the trend of thinking prevailing among broad sections of the Jewish population in the Egyptian diaspora and probably in other diaspora centers as well."⁹⁴

In contrast to Tcherikover's views, Goodenough believes that Philo was the spokesman for a large group of Alexandrian and Diaspora Jews who were adopting Hellenistic thinking. As a result, Greek philosophical metaphysics were introduced into the Jewish Bible, and the message which resulted was to Philo the true meaning of the Torah,

⁹² Ibid., vs. 7. The year 169 of the Seleucid era corresponds to 143 B.C. (V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 529, note 61).

⁹³ V. Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 355f.

⁹⁴ Ibid.



of Judaism.⁹⁵ As Philo expounds his thinking, he exhorts this Hellenised group to keep these "mysteries" to themselves:⁹⁶

These thoughts, ye initiated, whose ears are purified, receive into your souls as holy mysteries indeed and babble not of them to any of the profane. . . . But, if ye meet with anyone of the initiated, press him closely, cling to him lest knowing of some still newer secret he hide it from you. . . . I myself was initiated under Moses the God-beloved into his greater mysteries, yet when I saw the prophet Jeremiah and knew him to be not only himself enlightened, but a worthy minister of the holy secrets, I was not slow to become his disciple.

Using this passage, Goodenough suggests that this mystical thinking and language was not merely figurative but perhaps literally a mystery religion.⁹⁷ It is possible, he says, that Philo's mysteries had ritualistic acts corresponding to sacraments: something was really done to the participant. Here, however, the evidence is less certain, and while there are suggestions that they may have had such ceremonies, the evidence does not explicitly establish the fact. Philo several times refers to divine rites (orgia). . . .⁹⁸ Goodenough quotes another passage in Philo: "'It is strange that there should be a law in cities forbidding one to divulge the mystic secrets (mustica mysteria) to the uninitiated, but that the true mystic rites (hai aletheis eletai) which lead to piety and holiness should be revealed to ears full of wickedness.' Philo could hardly have told us more clearly that

⁹⁵ E. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, 12: 15. For a recapitulation of the opposite views of Tcherikover and Goodenough, and some conclusions on the matter, see below, p. 211.

⁹⁶ De Cherubim 48-53.

⁹⁷ E. Goodenough, Jew. Symbols, pp. 19ff.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

the Jews had mystic rites which really worked, rites that were sacred, and hence more to be kept secret than those in pagan mysteries."⁹⁹

However, concludes Goodenough, we know as little about the Jewish mysteries alluded to in Philo, as we do about the pagan mysteries.

Philo and his followers probably celebrated such observances as circumcision, the Sabbath, New Year, the Day of Atonement, First Fruits, and the rest, not merely on a literal level, but in such a way as to fulfill the true mystical rites of Philo's mysteries.¹⁰⁰

Two other uniquely Alexandrian festivals are mentioned by Philo and Josephus. As already related,¹⁰¹ Josephus has an account, similar to one found in the Third Book of Maccabees, of how the Jews of Alexandria were saved by God from a horrible death under the feet of elephants.¹⁰² Even though the accounts in Josephus and III Maccabees differ in chronology, both agree that the miraculous deliverance gave rise in Alexandria to an annual festival of thanksgiving to God for deliverance,¹⁰³ a festival which, according to Josephus, was still being celebrated by the Alexandrian Jews in his day.

The second uniquely Alexandrian festival was the one celebrated annually on the island of Pharos to commemorate the completion of the Septuagint.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ See above, Part Two, Chapter II, pp. 79ff.

¹⁰² Jos. C. Ap. II. 53f. and Third Maccabees.

¹⁰³ Jos. C. Ap. II. 53, and III Macc. 7: 18-20.

¹⁰⁴ See below, pp. 197-205.

Therefore, even to the present day, there is held every year a feast and general assembly in the island of Pharos, whither not only Jews but multitudes of others cross the water, both to do honour to the place in which the light of the version [Septuagint] first shone out, and also to thank God for the good gift so old yet ever young. But, after the prayers and thanksgivings, some fixing tents on the seaside and others reclining on the sandy beach in the open air feast with their relations and friends, counting that shore for the time a more magnificent lodging than the fine mansions in the royal precincts.¹⁰⁵

proselytism

An important element in the Judaism of the dispersion were the proselytes, that is, the body of adherents who joined themselves to the Jewish communities.¹⁰⁶ The conviction that Judaism was the only true religion, destined to become universal, was a singularity of the Jews. No other religion of that time made any such pretensions or cherished such aspirations.¹⁰⁷ Of course, this exclusiveness was not understood by the rest of mankind, and therefore the Jews were resented. So it seems strange that Jewish propaganda should have been crowned with anything like success among the Gentiles. Schürer mentions three reasons why, in spite of the unfriendly feelings felt by the Graeco-Roman world towards the Jews, many Gentiles did in fact join the ranks of the Jews.¹⁰⁸ (1) In the course of their missionary efforts, the Jews learned eventually to present their religion in a form calculated

¹⁰⁵ Philo De Vita Moses II. 41 and 42.

¹⁰⁶ E. Schürer, Jewish People, Division II, Vol. II, #31, p. 291.

¹⁰⁷ G. Moore, Jud., 1: 323.

¹⁰⁸ E. Schürer, Jewish People, 2: 297ff. of Div. II.

to recommend it to Gentiles. Schürer believes that whatever the Jews judged would be considered odd or have a repelling effect was kept in the background, as if not of an essential nature, until a later time. The stress was placed first upon those points which the Jews assumed would strike a sympathetic note among the Gentiles they were trying to reach. Thus, Moses was presented as an enlightened legislator whose ideas were similar in many ways to those of the Stoic philosophers. Strabo reports that Moses taught:

that the Egyptians had erred in making the divinity to resemble animals; that such a thing was not done by the Libyans, nor even the Greeks, who represented Him under a human form. For that alone is God which embraces us all as well as the earth and the sea, which we name heaven, and world, and the nature of things. But what man in his senses would venture to make an image of that, an image only resembling something around us? Rather must the making of images be given up altogether, and a worthy temple being consecrated to Him, let Him be worshipped without any image whatever.¹⁰⁹

(2) Judaism as a religion aimed at achieving a moral and happy life. Naturally, there were other religions that also had a similar aim, but in the case of Judaism it assumed a much more definite, more complete, and more satisfactory form than any other ancient religion. The Greek and Roman gods would guide their worshipers neither to a truly moral nor to a truly happy life. Judaism, through the promise given its followers of deliverance from sin and sorrow, held out a certain prospect for both a moral and a happy life.

(3) It was to the advantage of Judaism that the fashion of the time happened to be affiliation with Oriental religions. In Athens the

¹⁰⁹ Strabo, XVI. 2. 35.

Pyrgian worship of Sabizius (Bacchus) can be found as early as the fifth century B.C. Egyptian and other Oriental religions followed, such as the Astarte, Isis, and Serapis cults.¹¹⁰ Similar cults appeared in Rome¹¹¹ and widely throughout the empire. Schürer finds the attraction of all such religions in two characteristic features common to all: a touch of monotheism, and the elimination of sin, leading to a life of moral purity.¹¹² Since Judaism possessed both these features, and to a greater extent than the other religions, its appeal was accentuated.

In the Hellenistic-Roman period, Jewish propagandism seems to have been carried on actively. One could doubt that orthodox Pharisaic Judaism would make an effort to obtain converts, since the promise of God applied only to the children of Abraham. What could the Gentiles gain by their conversion to the Jewish faith? But here the natural impulse, so characteristic of all active religionists, to impart to others what Jews themselves possess, proved too powerful for dogmatic preconceptions. If by his conversion to Judaism the Gentile would not acquire all the privileges of the true Israelite, still he would be

¹¹⁰ A. Boeckh et al., *C. Insc. Graec.*, No. 120.

¹¹¹ See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 10 vols. (Berlin: George Reimer, 1863-83), 345 (Isis), and notes 570-574 (Serapis). In the year 43 B.C. the Triumvirs themselves built temples to Serapis and Isis for public worship (Dio Cassius XLVIII. 15).

¹¹² E. Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2: 302. Philo's writings often contain mystical terms and allusions to practices of mystery cults (see above, pp. 179ff.), an evidence of the influence exercised by the oriental religions on Philo and the Jewish school of thought he represents, as well as of Philo's method of using Hellenistic terminology as a means of presenting Judaism.

saved from the mass of those doomed to perdition. Consequently, even the Pharisees in Palestine developed a zeal for conversions. "They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte."¹¹³

In the Diaspora, the desire to convert Gentile neighbors was much stronger, since the Jews lived among them. Horace even satirizes their zeal in this respect.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, their efforts were crowned with great success. "Many of the Greeks have been converted to the observance of our laws; some have remained true, while others, who were incapable of steadfastness, have fallen away again."¹¹⁵ In another passage¹¹⁶ Josephus remarks that "there has for a long time now been a great amount of zeal for our worship; and there is not a single town among Greeks or barbarians or anywhere else, nor a single nation to which the observance of the Sabbath as it exists among ourselves has not penetrated; while fasting and the burning of lights,¹¹⁷ and many of our laws with regard to meats, are also observed." In another passage¹¹⁸ Josephus mentions that the great amount of tribute

¹¹³ Matthew 23:15.

¹¹⁴ Horace Sat. 1. 4. 142-143.

¹¹⁵ Jos. C. Ap. II. 123.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 282.

¹¹⁷ "The burning of lights" refers to the practice carried on by the Jews before the dawn of the Sabbath, so that there would be no occasion to violate the law (Exodus 35:3, Mishna Shabbath II. 6, 7) during the course of the day. Josephus is, therefore, speaking of the observance of practices of a specifically Jewish character by those who are not native Jews.

¹¹⁸ Ant. XIV. 7. 2.

sent to the Temple at Jerusalem did not come only from Jews, but also from the proselytes. Acts 2:9-11 mentions the proselytes along with the Jews when speaking of the number of Jews of every nationality living in Jerusalem. Wherever, in fact, there was a Jewish community, there was also a body of proselytes attached to it.¹¹⁹

There were two major types of proselytes. First, those that attended the synagogue, observed several of the Jewish ordinances, but never quite gave up their own gods and religion.¹²⁰ They did not go through all the ceremonies, especially circumcision, that a full proselyte was bound to perform. Moore opposes calling these "adherents of the synagogue" semi-proselytes, or even trying to find a category for them in the rabbinical deliverances concerning proselytes.¹²¹ Schürer, on the other hand, does believe that a gradation of proselytes is possible.¹²²

¹¹⁹ See Acts 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 17:4, 17. Jos. Jewish War II. 0. 2 and VII. 3. 3; Dio Cassius XXXVII. 17.

¹²⁰ Tertullian Ad Nationes i. 13.

¹²¹ G. Moore, Jud., 1: 326 and 339f.

¹²² E. Schürer, Jewish People, 2: 311-318. Schürer mentions as an example the case of Izates of Adiabene. In the court of this king there was a Jew by the name of Ananias, who in his desire to avoid difficulties and unnecessary hardships for the king (and perhaps eventually for himself), suggested to Izates that he should observe all other requirements for becoming a Jew except circumcision, which would be painful and subject perhaps to ridicule by other monarchs. Izates, said Ananias, would no doubt overlook the omission of this observance (Jos. Ant. XX. 2. 5). Schürer believes that there were many who thought in a similar manner, or Ananias would not have suggested such a course. And if this was the case, there must have been many semi-proselytes of this kind: men who "feared God" but were not full proselytes (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; Jos. Ant. XIV. 7. 2, 3; 16:14).

All agree, however, on the second type, the full proselyte: man who, having forsaken all his previous beliefs and religious practices, has partaken of the initiatory rites for full proselytes, and has become not only a member of the Jewish church, but also a naturalized Jew. Such men have bound themselves to observe the whole law to its fullest extent.¹²³ Philo describes this type of man in the following terms:¹²⁴

All who are like him [Moses], all who spurn idle fables and embrace truth in its purity, whether they have been such from the beginning or through conversion to the better side have reached that higher state, obtain His approval, the former because they were not false to the nobility of their birth, the latter because their judgment led them to make passage to piety. These last he calls "proselytes,"¹²⁵ or newly-joined, because they have joined the new and godly commonwealth. Thus, while giving equal rank to all in-comers with all the privileges which he gives to the native-born, he exhorts the old nobility to honour them not only with marks of respect but with special friendship and with more than ordinary goodwill. And surely there is good reason for this; they have left, he says, their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion. Let them not be denied another citizenship or other ties of family and friendship, and let them find places of shelter standing ready for refugees to the camp of piety.

According to Philo, a proselyte was one who had completely severed himself from his people, friends, and kinsmen, and had embraced Judaism with all his heart. He is obviously describing not a partial-proselyte but a full one.

¹²³G. Moore, *Jud.*, 1: 327, Galatians 5:3. By "naturalized Jew" he means accepting Judaism in its entirety as Philo describes below.

¹²⁴*De Spec. Leg.* I. 51 and 52.

¹²⁵The subject of ἀποδέχεται = "approval" is certainly God, but of καλέω = "calls" and the verbs that follow is more likely Moses (F. H. Colson's note on this passage, *Philo*, Loeb Classical Lib., 7).

How was a proselyte fully admitted into the Jewish community? The early initiatory rite consisted of three elements: circumcision, baptism by immersion, and a sacrifice. In the case of women, only the last two applied.¹²⁶ After the destruction of the Temple, the sacrifice, a burnt-offering for which doves or pigeons sufficed,¹²⁷ was discontinued. Baptism, a practice well-established by the time of Christ,¹²⁸ remained as a basic observance for proselytes.

The proselyte, as well as the Jew, was obliged to observe the whole law.¹²⁹ He was expected to pay the sacred tribute.¹³⁰ On the other hand, only the portions of the proselyte's earnings liable after his conversion were subject to the sacred tax.¹³¹

The proselytes were, in theory at least, equal to the Jews before the law. On the other hand, there were certain social limitations for proselytes which diminished their "equality." Only females who were less than three years and a day old at the time of their mother's conversion were equal with native Jewish women with respect to the numerous matrimonial rights.¹³² Furthermore, female proselytes

¹²⁶ Kerithoth 81a.

¹²⁷ Mishna Keritot 2. 1.

¹²⁸ Pesachim 8. 8; Edujoth 5. 2; Shürer, Jewish People, 2: 322ff; Moore, Jud., 1: 332ff.

¹²⁹ Galatians 5:3: "I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law."

¹³⁰ Shekalim I. 3, 6; Bikkurim I. 4.

¹³¹ Pea IV. 6; Chullim X. 4; Challa III. 6.

¹³² Kethuboth I. 2, 4; III. 1, 2.

were not at liberty to contract marriage with priests, nor were the daughters of proselytes allowed to do so except in those instances in which one of the parents happened to be an Israelite by birth, in which case the privilege was extended to the tenth generation.¹³³ On the other hand, proselyte women were allowed to marry a person who had been mutilated or emasculated, a thing which, according to the Torah,¹³⁴ native Jewesses were debarred from doing.¹³⁵ The legal enactment to the effect that, if anyone through carelessness happened to strike a man in such a way as to cause abortion, he was to give compensation, did not apply to the case of proselyte women.¹³⁶ A proselyte was never allowed to call the fathers of Israel "his" fathers,¹³⁷ while in the order of rank in the theocracy, a proselyte occupied a lower place even than a bastard and just above that of an emancipated slave.¹³⁸

It is evident that a proselyte was, though in theory equal to the Jew, considered by the native Jews as inferior. Nevertheless, the treatment of proselytes must have depended upon many circumstances: the community itself, who the proselyte was, and what was his social and financial status. The Jews of Alexandria probably treated their

¹³³ Jebamoth VI. 5; Kiddishim IV. 7; Bikkurim I. 5.

¹³⁴ Deut. 23:2

¹³⁵ Jebamoth VIII. 2.

¹³⁶ Baba Kamma V. 4; E. Schürer, Jewish People, 2: 325f.

¹³⁷ Bikkurim I. 4.

¹³⁸ Horajoth III. 8.

proselytes with respect and equality, especially the Greek ones. Philo was undoubtedly reflecting in his words¹³⁹ the general attitude of most Alexandrian Jews of his day.

The Law

The question of which judicial system was utilized by the Alexandrian Jews is one which had led to much controversy. No one doubts that the Jewish community at Alexandria possessed the right to live according to their ancestral laws, that is, possessed their own judicial system.¹⁴⁰ The Law of Moses, the Torah, was the basis of the Jewish judicial system. The problem arises over determining the influence of Hellenistic law on the Jewish system. Was the Jewish judicial system utilized by a majority or a minority of the Alexandrian Jews? When did the majority of Jews utilize their judicial system and when did they utilize the Hellenistic legal system?

The sources, papyri and Philo's writings, compound the difficulties. The Greek papyri show that apparently a great number of Jews accepted the Greek judicial system for certain transactions and procedures. Greek documents were used, and cases were tried in Greek courts.¹⁴¹ The legal documents in the papyri reveal the following picture:¹⁴²

¹³⁹ De Spec. Leg. I. 51 and 52.

¹⁴⁰ V. Tcherikover, C. P. Jud., 1: 32: "The existence of an independent law in the Jewish communities is beyond question."

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 33-36.

¹⁴² Ibid.

1. The documents dealing with Jews were drawn up in the usual manner of Hellenistic documents; even the prescript, containing the full titles of deified kings, was never omitted.¹⁴³
2. When the document was drawn up in an office, it was not the office of a Jewish community (even when both contracting parties were Jews), but a regular government notary's office. The government official, the agronomos, appended his signature.¹⁴⁴
3. There are cases in the papyri where Jews brought legal disputes to be settled before the Greek tribunals. In these cases also, the documents were drawn in the usual Hellenistic fashion, addressed as petitions to the king.¹⁴⁵
4. There are many examples of contracts between Alexandrian Jews, such as loan contracts,¹⁴⁶ contracts upon the hiring of wet-nurses,¹⁴⁷ and a deed of divorce.¹⁴⁸ They were all written in Greek by Greek officials, in the Hellenistic format and courts.

Tcherikover concludes that "if the contract, the office, the court, were Greek, so were the laws and regulations, and thus we are

¹⁴³ Ibid., Nos. 1, 18, 22-26.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Nos. 23 and 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Nos. 19, 37, and 128.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Nos. 148 and 149.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Nos. 146 and 147.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., No. 144.

placed with the likelihood that Egyptian Jews lived not according to the precepts of the Bible but according to the principles of Hellenistic common law."¹⁴⁹ Tcherikover notes two additional facts. He relates to the position of women in society. A Greek woman was not allowed to appear in court without a "guardian," that is, a man representing her and acting for her before the authorities.¹⁵⁰ There is no such provision in the Jewish law. Nevertheless, the papyri have several instances of Jewish women represented by "guardians."¹⁵¹ Philo apparently confirms the evidence of the papyri when, speaking of the betrothal of a woman, he emphasizes that the bridegroom has to demand his bride from her parents or, if they are not alive, "from her brothers, or tutors, or other guardians."¹⁵²

The second item relates to business affairs. The Biblical prohibition on lending money at interest to a Jew is clear.¹⁵³ The regulations in the Talmud concerning this matter are even stronger.¹⁵⁴ However, the papyri show that Jews lent money to Jews at the regular interest of 24 percent.¹⁵⁵ "Thus it may be inferred that in their business

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁵⁰ P. Meyer, Griechische Texte aus Ägypten (Berlin-Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1916), p. 31.

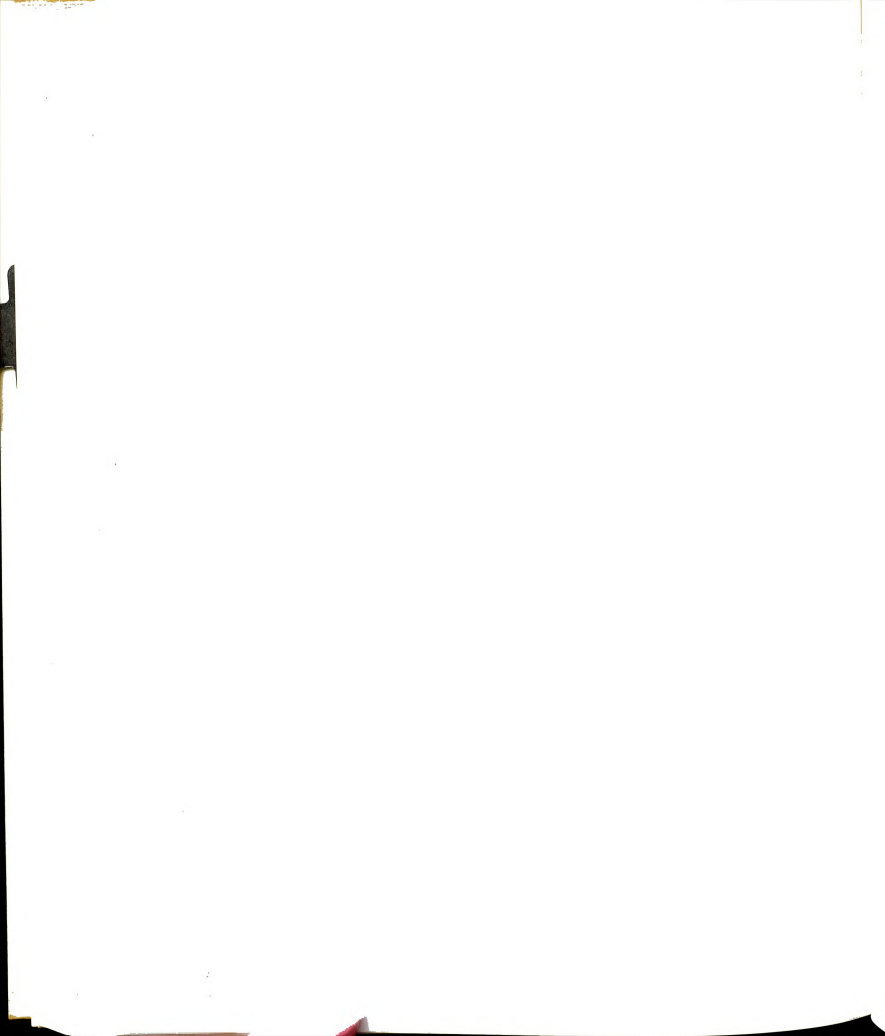
¹⁵¹ C. P. Jud., Nos. 19, 26, 144, 146, 148, 149, 430, 453, 455.

¹⁵² Philo De Spec. Leg., III. 67.

¹⁵³ Exod. 22:24; Deut. 23:20.

¹⁵⁴ Mishna Baba Mezi'a 5. 1, 7, 9. Tosephta Baba Mezi'a 6. 10.

¹⁵⁵ C. P. Jud., Nos. 20 and 24.



affairs as in matters of family law Egyptian Jews followed the common juridical practice of the Ptolemaic kingdom."¹⁵⁶

Tcherikover does not deny that there were Jewish courts in Egypt, nor does he deny the effectiveness of the autonomous Jewish law in the Jewish communities. Rather, he stresses that the Egyptian Jewry were faced with two contradictory tendencies: the desire to follow old national and religious tradition, and the desire to participate vigorously in all aspects of Hellenistic life. When the Jewish community as a whole was affected, the first tendency was predominant. Individual Jews, on the other hand, when faced with the innumerable petty problems of everyday life, were more disposed to follow the second.

But Tcherikover is basing all his conclusions on the evidence of the Greek papyri. Naturally, these reflect transactions of the Greek courts, and therefore the evidence has to be considered one-sided. I do not think the evidence proves that the majority of the Jewish community of Alexandria utilized the Greek courts and generally surpassed the Jewish ones. Nor can it be determined how much influence the Hellenistic system had over the years on the Jewish system. Goodenough has attempted to answer the latter question by a careful study of Philo's interpretation of the Biblical laws in De Specialibus Iuris.¹⁵⁷ Was Philo's interpretation a reflection of the real juridical practice of the Jewish tribunals of Alexandria, or no

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1: 36.

¹⁵⁷ E. Goodenough, The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt (Amsterdam: Philo Press Publishers, 1968).

more than his own interpretation? Goodenough affirms the former, and am persuaded by his arguments.¹⁵⁸ It is, of course, possible that here and there Philo utilized his own interpretation of the law, but in general he was expounding the law as it was understood and applied in the Jewish courts at Alexandria.

De Specialibus Legibus opens with a discussion of the law requiring circumcision, which Philo cannot class under any of the Ten Commandments, but defends for health reasons as well as spiritual ones.¹⁵⁹ After this preface, Philo passes to the real subject of his treatise, an examination of the individual statutes by which the legal principles laid down in the Decalogue are applied to specific problems. The first two commandments deal with the matter of One God, monotheism, and Philo defends these laws with vigor.¹⁶⁰ Philo then deals with the proof of God's existence,¹⁶¹ with the value of meditation on the Divine nature,¹⁶² and finally with the regulations of worship.¹⁶³ De Specialibus Legibus II opens with the Third Commandment.¹⁶⁴ While swearing at God is to be deprecated, since the simple word should be enough, to swear by parents or by heaven and the like is better than using God's

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 12-29.

¹⁵⁹ Philo De Spec. Leg. I. 11, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 13ff.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 32-35.

¹⁶² Ibid., 36-50.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 66-298.

¹⁶⁴ 1-38.

name. After a study of the Fourth Commandment, in which inter alia, the Sabbath is explained,¹⁶⁵ Philo deals with the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." "When Philo comes to discuss the Fifth Commandment, he does so from a Graeco-Roman basis almost entirely."¹⁶⁶ Parents are regarded almost as divine.¹⁶⁷ Thus parents have the right to "beat and degrade" their children if they do not obey. Parents ultimately have the right, says Philo, of extending the punishment to death.¹⁶⁸

De Specialibus Legibus III and IV deal with the rest of the Ten Commandments. In brief, adultery is condemned by Philo, and so are marriages with mothers, step-mothers, sisters, and aliens.¹⁶⁹ A woman who has been divorced and then married another may not return to her first husband.¹⁷⁰ Graver faults, yet, are pederasty¹⁷¹ and bestiality.¹⁷² A harlot is worthy of death.¹⁷³ Murder is a sacrilege and deserves the death penalty.¹⁷⁴ While unpremeditated murder may be

¹⁶⁵ Philo also deals with the many festivals observed by the Jews, such as the New Moon, Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, etc.

¹⁶⁶ Goodenough, Courts, p. 67.

¹⁶⁷ Philo De Spec. Leg. II. 225. Parents are in a position analogous to God, since they too are Creators.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 232.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., III. 7-29.

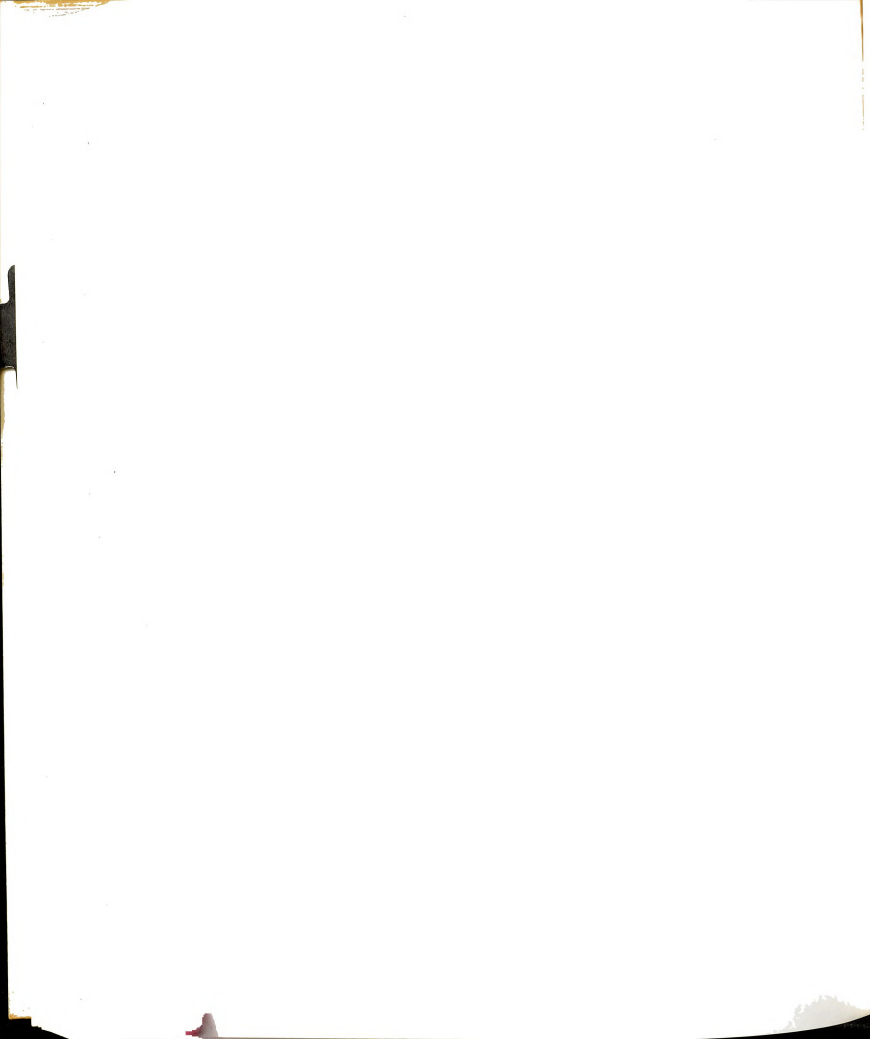
¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 31-33.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 37-42.

¹⁷² Ibid., 48-50.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 83-85.



less heinous,¹⁷⁵ no mercy must be shown to poisoners.¹⁷⁶ Causing miscarriage by a blow is a capital crime if the child is fully formed.¹⁷⁷ It is also wrong to expose infants.¹⁷⁸ Diverse laws on robbery with and without violence are dealt with in part IV, as are the last two commandments on false witness and coveting.

Philo mentions several Jewish courts, above all of which stands the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁹ The highest Jewish court in Egypt which Philo mentions is the "whole body of elders."¹⁸⁰ Goodenough believes that the fact Philo specifies pasa in this case suggests that the gerousia might meet in other than plenary session, divided into sections for periodic respite, or to hear different sorts of cases.¹⁸¹ The Theion dikasterion is mentioned by Philo as a court to hear the ordeals by oath.¹⁸² Oaths were used for different sorts of trials, particularly in cases where goods had been deposited with another person who was later unable to restore these goods because they had disappeared without trace. An oath of innocence of any fraud, when taken by the receiver before the "divine tribunal" or "court of law" satisfied such a case entirely. But that all juridical oaths had to be heard before this court is not certain.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 92.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 93-99

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 108-109.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 110-119.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., III. 53.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 80. ἡ γερουσία πᾶσα met to judge on a charge of fraudulent misrepresentation of a daughter's virginity.

¹⁸¹ Goodenough, Courts, p. 249.

¹⁸² De Spec. Leg. IV. 34.

In connection with actions for rural property damage, Philo speaks of an agronomos.¹⁸³ This man apparently was an official who regulated suits for damage done to property, including damage done to domestic animals. One infers from Philo that there was a regular agronomos in the Jewish quarters of Alexandria, since he specifically says that wage-disputes were settled by such an officer according to Jewish law.¹⁸⁴

All judges took an oath of office by which they swore to give true decisions,¹⁸⁵ and the courts, if we may judge from Philo's composition, were conducted with high standards of integrity.¹⁸⁶ Fees were not allowed for decision, and personal predilections were to be given no consideration.¹⁸⁷ The judge's decisions were to be based on two things only: the evidence and the law.¹⁸⁸ Evidence was to be carefully studied. Hearsay evidence was strictly prohibited.¹⁸⁹ Trials were conducted on the basis of documentary evidence, as interpreted by legal precedent. When documentary evidence was missing, witnesses were called in.

"It is unfortunate that Philo's apologetic inversion of thought processes has limited him to defending the Torah with

¹⁸³ Ibid., 193-96.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Philo De Decalogo 141.

¹⁸⁶ Philo De Spec. Leg. IV. 55, 56.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 57, 58, 62-64.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

its provisions, and that as a result the large body of laws which the Jews must have enforced which were not in the Torah are represented only by casual digressions. . . . But we must be thankful for what survives: for it is one of the most comprehensive pictures of a legal practice which we have of any people from that period."¹⁹⁰

There seems to be enough evidence to conclude that the Jews of Alexandria utilized both their own courts and judicial system as well as the Greek courts and system. Why and when one or the other was used by individual Jews cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Perhaps certain Greek legal documents had become so common that they were utilized by Greeks and Jews alike. It seems that an individual Jew could choose the courts and judicial system he wished to use, and perhaps expediency played a role in the choice. The Greek system might have been quicker and more widely recognized than the Jewish one. What must be considered a fact is the existence in Alexandria of an independent judicial system for the Jewish community, a system that was in use and was used in one fashion or another by the majority of the Alexandrian Jews during the Ptolemaic period.

Literature

Hellenized Jews took an active part in the literary production of the Hellenistic age. Their prime purpose centered around strengthening the faith of their co-religionists, while at the same time convincing the Gentile readers of the greatness of Israel's history and the soundness of her beliefs.

¹⁹⁰ Goodenough, Courts, p. 255.

The chief seat of Hellenistic Judaism, and consequently of Graeco-Jewish literature, was Alexandria. Through the exertions and generous patronage of the Ptolemies, this city had been raised to the first rank as a place of Hellenistic scholarship. Its famous library and museum afforded scholars and writers much material upon which to draw. In this propitious environment, Jewish Hellenistic literature reached great heights.

The foundation of all Judaeo-Hellenistic culture was the ancient Greek translation of the Scriptures, known as the Septuagint. The Letter of Aristeas presents a romantic account of the origins of this translation. The author of the Letter, supposedly a man living in the court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.), relates that the king wished that a translation be made into Greek of the Jewish laws of which he had heard high praises. Demetrius of Phalerum, who was in charge of the library, was assigned the task of arranging a translation. The king also wrote to the High Priest of the Jews in Jerusalem requesting help in this enterprise. Eleazar, the High Priest, sent 72 elders, six from each tribe, to Alexandria to do the translation. These men were knowledgeable not only in Jewish literature and language, but also in Greek. When they arrived in Alexandria, the king immediately had them admitted into his presence. "This procedure struck everyone as strange, for it was the custom that those who came on official business gained access to the royal presence on the fifth day, while visitors from kings and prominent cities were barely admitted to the court in thirty days. But he thought that these men who had

come were worthy of higher honor and rightly judged the eminence of him who had sent them, and so, dismissing all persons he considered superfluous, he waited, walking to and fro, to greet them on their arrival."¹⁹¹

The elders, admitted into the king's presence, showed him the "precious parchments on which the Law was inscribed in Jewish letters with writing of gold."¹⁹² After the king had examined the rolls, and "after bowing deeply some seven times said, 'I thank you, good sirs, and him that sent you even more, but most of all I thank God whose holy words these are.' And when all with one accord, both those newly come and those already present, exclaimed in a single voice, 'Excellent, Your Majesty!' he was moved to tears out of the fullness of his joy."¹⁹³ A banquet followed which lasted seven days and during which the king asked many questions of the elders. The answers were all wise, and the king was very impressed. Three talents of silver and a slave were given to each of the elders.

Demetrius then took the 72 elders, "crossed the breakwater, seven stades long [the Heptastadium] to the island [Pharos]. . . . Here he called a meeting in a mansion built by the seashore, magnificently appointed and in a secluded situation."¹⁹⁴ There, provided with everything they needed, they proceeded to their task, "making all

¹⁹¹ Letter of Aristeas 175.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 177, 178.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 301.

details harmonize by mutual comparisons. The appropriate result of the harmonization was reduced to writing under the direction of Demetrius."¹⁹⁵ Every day the elders appeared in court early in the morning to pay their respects to the king, and then they returned to work on the translation. The work-sessions lasted until 3:00 p.m. (the "ninth hour"), after which the elders broke up to take care of their bodily needs. Work itself was immediately preceded by the washing of hands and prayer to God.¹⁹⁶ The spot where they worked was obviously well situated for this task. "They forgathered every day to this spot, so delightful for its seclusion and its clear light, and carried out their appointed task. And so it came about that the work of transcription was completed in seventy-two days, as if this coincidence had been the result of some design."¹⁹⁷

When the work was concluded, Demetrius assembled the Jewish community at the spot where the translation had taken place. There it was read to the entire gathering, in the presence of the translators. A great ovation was given to the latter at the conclusion of the reading, "and they accorded Demetrius a similar reception, and requested him to have a transcription of the entire Law made and to present it to their rulers."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 302.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 305.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 307.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 309.

Then the priests, and the leaders of the people and of the politeuma,¹⁹⁹ rose up and said: "Inasmuch as the translation has been well and piously made and is in every respect accurate, it is right that it should remain in its present form and that no revision of any sort take place."²⁰⁰ Everyone approved of these words, and a curse was pronounced on any who should revise the text by adding or transposing anything whatsoever, "so that the work might be preserved imperishable and unchanged always."²⁰¹

A full report was made to the king, and the entire work was read to him. The king was so pleased and so astonished at the wisdom of the law-giver, that he asked Demetrius why no one before had dealt with this subject. Demetrius answered that the Law was so holy that those who were not fit to write on the subjects had been smitten by God when they had attempted to do so. Such was the case, explained Demetrius, of Theopompus who had suffered derangement of the mind when he had attempted to introduce into his work certain portions of the Law. God finally restored him to health after he had desisted from his purpose. Theodectes, the tragic poet, had suffered cataracts when he had attempted a similar project, and only after he had earnestly besought God had his ailment been removed.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πολιτεύματος.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 310.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 311.

²⁰² Ibid., 313-316.

The king then sent the elders back to Jerusalem with many gifts for Eleazar: ten couches with legs of silver, shallow bowls and plates, two mixing bowls of gold, and several other precious objects.²⁰³ The king also sent a letter with a standing invitation for Eleazar's scholars to visit his court anytime in the future.

I have not found any scholar who accepts the account of the Letter of Aristeas at face-value. In fact, the letter itself does not, as it claims, date from the reign of Ptolemy II, but from c. 130 B.C.,²⁰⁴ and therefore is a forgery. Possibly Pseudo-Aristeas is reflecting some historical tradition, the essence of which is that Ptolemy Philadelphus did entrust a group of scholars with a translation of the Jewish law, the Pentateuch. On the other hand, some scholars argue that Alexandrian Jews themselves called for the translation because they had all but forgotten Hebrew, and therefore needed to have their sacred writings available in the Greek language they understood.

When, exactly, the first translation took place cannot be determined; but, as time went by, no doubt several revisions were made of the early and probably rather inexact translation. The Letter of

²⁰³ Ibid., 313-316.

²⁰⁴ Hadas, Aristeas, p. 54.

²⁰⁵ Schürer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 161; Paul E. Kahle, The Cairo Geniza (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1959), pp. 209-211.

Aristeas may have been a piece of propaganda for the most recent and most authoritative of these revisions.²⁰⁶

Once the Torah had been made accessible to Hellenistic Jews, the need to have the rest of the Scriptures in a Greek translation became evident. Hence, translations first of the Prophets and afterwards of the Hagiographa followed. These too chiefly originated in Egypt.²⁰⁷

What is the importance of the Septuagint? Ralph Marcus offers several reasons why the Greek translation of the Bible by the Jewish scholars of Alexandria proved one of the most important translations ever made.²⁰⁸ First, the Septuagint is a valuable control of the traditional Hebrew text of the Bible, known as the Masora. Secondly, this early translation, having been made by competent scholars with some knowledge of early Palestinian exegesis, is of great aid in interpreting some obscure passages in the Hebrew. In the third place, the Septuagint was the source of a number of secondary versions made for the early Christian churches, so that through this work the contents of the Hebrew Bible became known to the peoples of Europe and

²⁰⁶ Ibid. S. Jellicoe, The Septuagint and Modern Study (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 60ff., disagrees on this point: "As Kahle's theory involves two hypothetical elements, namely a comparatively late date for Aristeas and the postulate of an otherwise unknown 'Biblical Commission' from which emanated a revised official Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures, further evidence in its support must come to light before it can be regarded as probable."

²⁰⁷ Schürer, Jewish People, II, 2: 162ff.

²⁰⁸ Ralph Marcus, "Hellenistic Jewish Literature," The Jews, ed. Finkelstein (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 46.

Western Asia. In the fourth place, the Greek Bible played a considerable part in the gradual transformation of Greek philosophy into the theology of the Church Fathers and into the influential body of thought known to Neoplatonism. These, in turn, exerted an immeasurably great influence on medieval scholasticism. Philo's great work of harmonizing Greek philosophy with Judaism, which deeply influenced early and medieval Christian theologians, would have been almost impossible if he had not had at his disposal an official Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. And, finally, the existence of the Septuagint was indispensable to the rise of Christianity. The earliest Christian apostles to the Gentiles would probably have had much less success in converting Jews of the Diaspora and Gentiles in general to Christianity if they had not had an authoritative Greek text of the Jewish Scriptures to support their claim that Jesus was Christ.

Historical Literature

The church father Eusebius has preserved in his ninth book of the Evangelical Preparation fragments from three historical writers who might have been Alexandrians.²⁰⁹ Eusebius took excerpts from a Universal History compiled by Alexander Polyhistor, a Greek encyclopedist of the first century B.C. Alexander, in turn, included excerpts from the writers in question.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 47. Marcus says they "probably" were Alexandrians, but he does not offer any conclusive evidence to substantiate his assertion. Nevertheless, I will follow his analysis of these writers in this section.

Some time near the end of the third century B.C. a Jew by the name of Demetrius wrote a history of Israel in brief chronological form. The extant fragments deal with some of the events in the lives of Jacob and Moses, and with the number of years that elapsed between the Israelite deportation to Assyria and the writer's own date, the reign of Ptolemy IV.²¹⁰

The second group of fragments derives from Eupolemus, who wrote a history of the Jews about the middle of the second century B.C. Like most Hellenistic Jewish historians, Eupolemus embellished his work with legendary material showing the Jews in a most favorable light. The most extensive fragment preserved by Eusebius deals with the building of the Temple of Solomon.²¹¹

The third historian was Artapanus, who asserted that Moses was none other than the Greek Museus and the Egyptian Hermes (Toth). The Jews were a distinguished people of Syrian origin, and not the descendents of plague-carrying outcasts from Egypt.²¹²

In spite of the meager information available on these three Jewish historians, certain inferences can nevertheless be made concerning them. First, they were Jewish historians (possibly Alexandrians) dedicated to writing on the history of the Jews, using the Old Testament as their main source. Second, their writings were mainly for

²¹⁰ Eusebius Praep. Evang. IX. 21 and 29.

²¹¹ Ibid., 30-34.

²¹² Ibid., 27.

non-Jewish people, and they were apologetic in nature. In a sense these men can be considered the forerunners of Philo and Josephus.

Philosophic Literature

Among the Alexandrian philosophers who preceded Philo, there is one writer of whose work extensive enough fragments have been preserved to enable us to form some notion of the more strictly philosophical literature produced by Philo's co-religionists. The Alexandrian Aristobulus was a Hellenistic philosopher in the proper sense.²¹³ He was acquainted with, and expressly quotes the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and was at home with their views as a philosopher. According to the church father Clement of Alexandria, Aristobulus was a contemporary of Ptolemy VI Philometor,²¹⁴ who reigned from 181 to 145 B.C. He attempted to harmonize the Law of Moses with the teachings of Greek philosophy in a work titled Interpretation of the Law of Moses.²¹⁵ Like Philo after him, Aristobulus attempted to show that the Mosaic law, if correctly understood, already contained all that the best Greek philosophers subsequently taught.²¹⁶

The best known of the Hellenistic philosophers of Alexandria is, of course, Philo. His main effort also was to prove to the Gentiles

²¹³ Schürer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 237.

²¹⁴ Clement of Alexandria Stromateis I. 22. 150.

²¹⁵ Euseb. Praep. Evang. VII. 13. 7. Also Hist. Eccl. VII. 32. 16.

²¹⁶ Euseb. Praep. Evang. VII. 14; VIII. 10; XIII. 12; Clement trom. I. 15. 72; 22. 150; V. 14. 97; VI. 3. 32.

and his fellow Jews that the views expressed by many Greek philosophers were very similar to Jewish beliefs.

Very little is known of the man Philo. According to Josephus, he was a brother of the Alabarch Alexander,²¹⁷ and, consequently, a member of one of the most aristocratic families of Alexandrian Jews. The only event in his life which can be chronologically fixed is his participation in the embassy to Caligula in 39/40 A.D., of which he furnishes an account in Embassy to Gaius. Since at that time he was of advanced age,²¹⁸ he probably was born c. 20 B.C. It is not known whether Philo was throughout his life very active politically in the Alexandrian Jewish community, though there is no contrary evidence.²¹⁹

Philo was a man of multiple interests, who was in touch with all aspects of life in Alexandria. He was the habitué of theaters, the games, and the banquets of this city. After attending some of the athletic contests, he comments on the skills of the boxers and their physical fitness.²²⁰ He tells of being at the chariot races where excitement ran so high that some of the spectators rushed into the course and were killed.²²¹ He describes the enthusiasm of the crowd

²¹⁷ Ant. XVIII. 8. 1.

²¹⁸ Philo Embassy 28.

²¹⁹ E. Goodenough, The Politics of Philo Judaeus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 1-20, argues that Philo was quite active in politics during his life.

²²⁰ Philo Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit 26.

²²¹ Euseb. Praep. Evang. VIII. 14. 58.

at the performance of a now lost play of Euripides.²²² And it is obvious from his writings that he was knowledgeable in Greek poetry and philosophy.²²³ Philo sought to find the highest truths of Greek philosophy, science, and religion in the laws of Moses. Like Aristotolus he used whatever Greek philosophical theories were convenient for adaptation to his allegorical interpretation of the Bible. The result is a presentation of the Old Testament in a way which could be understood by the Hellenistic thinkers of his day. In parts, his presentation is a blend of Greek philosophic ideas and expressions with Judaic teachings. Other times his statements appear as an attempt to fit Jewish thought into Greek philosophy and vice-versa. He made consistent use of the Platonic doctrine that the immaterial ideas are superior to sense-perceived matter. From Plato and the Stoics he derived his theory of intermediate beings between God and the world, especially the one he calls the logos.²²⁴ In Philo's writings, the term logos means reason, wisdom, speech, or word. It is a process which begins with God, where it is one and spirit, and culminates in the multifarious phenomena of the universe where it is many, concrete, and material.²²⁵ The logos is more than the quickening principle of

²²² Philo Quod Omnis 141.

²²³ Much literature has been produced on Philo of Alexandria. Almost half of Goodenough's book Politics is dedicated to an enumeration of modern works on Philo. It would be outside the scope of this work to attempt even a general survey.

²²⁴ Philo De Confusione Linguarum 40-43; 134-139; Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres 133-143; 201-206.

²²⁵ Philo De Somniis II. 37; J. B. Agus, The Evolution of Jewish Thought (London: Abelard-Schuman, Ltd., 1959), p. 88.

divine intelligence; it is also the flow of His love and redeeming grace.²²⁶

Philo's allegorical interpretation of Scripture, and the use of Biblical symbols to describe the pilgrimage of the soul to the eternal truth of God, are exceptionally ingenious. Not only do the Patriarchs and the sacred cult objects serve Philo as symbols of moral and religious ideas, but even such common objects as rivers, mountains, plants, and animals are all made to play a part in this dramatic composition.²²⁷ Again, in Philo's method of interpreting the Scriptures, the influence of Hellenism can be clearly recognized.

Conclusion

The Alexandrian and Egyptian Jews, like other Jewish people in the Diaspora, felt the pressure of two contradictory tendencies: one, to safeguard their religious traditions, to be faithful to the Law of Moses and to the precepts of their God. The second tendency was to fit into the climate of ideas in which they lived, to be like the rest of the people that surrounded them.

Plentiful evidence shows that the Jews of Alexandria were similar in most ways to their brethren in Palestine and other countries of the Diaspora. The synagogue was the religious center of the community, and closely associated with it was the school. The people shared in the same beliefs, participated in the same festivals (except for a

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

²²⁷ Ralph Marcus, "Literature," p. 77.

couple that were uniquely Alexandrian), and sent their tribute to the Temple in Jerusalem.²²⁸

On the other hand, the influence of Hellenism can also be clearly seen. From the typically Greek dedicatory inscriptions of the synagogues to the increasingly common gymnastic education of Jewish children, the tendency to become assimilated culturally was at work. Some Jews openly betrayed their ancestral tradition and completely abandoned their nation and religion.²²⁹ Many others, while not going that far, nevertheless gave up some of the stricter traditions. Mixed marriages seem to have been quite common, and while Philo defends the Mosaic prohibition against such marriages, he does so with uncharacteristic lack of force.²³⁰

The Greek language replaced Hebrew as the everyday language, and the Jewish native tongue was all but forgotten. Many Jews started taking Greek names. A study of names in the papyri shows a strong tendency among Jews towards Hellenization.²³¹

²²⁸ The Alexandrian Jews looked upon the Temple at Jerusalem as the center of Jewish religious life, and never recognized the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis as a substitute to the one in Jerusalem.

²²⁹ Such was the case of Dositheos, son of Drimyllos, who "changed his faith and became a stranger to the laws of his fathers" (III Macc. 1: 3). Another case was that of Tiberius Julius Alexander, Philo's nephew, who left Judaism and in a short time achieved a brilliant career as a high Roman official (Jos. Jewish War VI. 237; C. P. Jud., no. 418).

²³⁰ Philo De Spec. Leg. III. 29; Baron, Soc. and Rel. Hist., 2: 232-234.

²³¹ C. P. Jud. in no. 21, all five names preserved are Greek; in no. 22, nine out of ten; in no. 23, all four; and so on. Many Jews adopted Greek names such as Alexander, Ptolemy, Antipater, while some even used names derived from Greek deities, such as Apollonius, Heracleides, and Dionysus.

How many of the Alexandrian Jews were Hellenized and to what degree is a matter of dispute. Did Philo for instance represent a majority or a minority of Alexandrian Jews? That there was a group opposed to Hellenism is evident from such literary works as III Maccabees, the Book of Esther, and the Book of Judith. These works represented the aggressive national spirit of Hasmonean Israel, born with the rebellion of Judas the Maccabee.²³² It is possible, as Tcherikover maintains, that Philo represented the intelligentsia.²³³ The majority of Jews would be Hellenized to a degree, but not perhaps to the extent of a Philo. A minority of fierce anti-Hellenists would constitute the other extreme.

I am persuaded that Philo is speaking for a majority of Jews at Alexandria. Perhaps the Jews of the Egyptian chora fall into the three groups that Tcherikover mentions, and in the quantities he prescribes. At Alexandria, a cosmopolitan city where Greek culture was at its height, the majority of Jews were probably Hellenized to a much greater degree than their compatriots of the chora.

²³² Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 355.

²³³ Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ALEXANDRIA

During the Ptolemaic period, anti-Semitic¹ feelings toward the Jews of Alexandria did not manifest themselves physically, as they would during the Roman period. Rather, we find these feelings expressed through literary means, that is, through the writings of Manetho, Apollonius Molon, Poseidonius, Lysimachus, and others.²

What caused these anti-Semitic feelings? One factor was that the Greeks and Egyptians did not understand the religion of the Jews.

¹The term "anti-Semitic" in the context of this work, has the meaning of "anti-Jewish."

²In all fairness, one must point out that the subject of anti-Semitism during the Ptolemaic (and Roman) period is analyzed mainly on the basis of the writings of Jewish authors such as Josephus and Philo. In modern times, most writers on the subject are Jewish or have Jewish connections. Therefore, it is possible that the picture of anti-Jewish feelings could suffer from a lack of balance in favor of the Jews. It is conceivable that Josephus and Philo misinterpreted or exaggerated the statements of authors they quote as examples of anti-Semitism. Perhaps, if the complete writings of the authors quoted by Josephus and Philo were extant, a different meaning could be drawn from their words. Also, it is not possible to determine (for at least the Ptolemaic period) how far the anti-Semitic writers (no doubt the intelligentsia of the Hellenistic world) represented the great mass of Greeks of the Hellenistic world. Certainly, the Jews on many occasions received privileged treatment, especially from the Graeco-Roman authorities. Nevertheless, I believe that anti-Semitism did exist in one form or another in Egypt and Alexandria during the Ptolemaic period; if not, Josephus, Philo, and the Jews in general would not have felt so defensive about the subject, nor would they have written as much nor as vigorously in defense of their people.

To them, the incomprehensible obstinacy of the Jews in refusing to worship the pagan gods, while theirs could not be seen or heard, simply meant that they had no god. The observance of the Sabbath could only mean that the Jews had a propensity towards idleness. These and other religious beliefs segregated the Jews from the rest of the population, especially since marriage between Jews and Gentiles was normally prohibited.

Another factor which aggravated the existing animosity was the uncanny ability which the Jews possessed of always gaining the favor of whichever power was in command at the time. From the time of the Persians onward, there was always some type of alliance between the ruling minority and the Jews. Naturally, the oppressed native majority felt resentment against them, a resentment many times justified by the treatment suffered at the hands of Jewish tax-collectors and other government officials. After the Roman conquest, the Greeks realized that they now had become the subject population. They did not even have a Council in Alexandria, while the Jews, who once again appeared to have found favor in the eyes of the new conquerors, maintained their gerousia, their ethnarchs, their synagogues, and their judicial system. The anti-Semitic feelings during the Roman period became a means of showing hostility against Rome.

As far as extant evidence permits us to judge, literary anti-Semitism originated in Egypt.³ The Egyptian priest Manetho was the first to speak of the Jews with detestation. Such detestation had been

³Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 358.

unknown to the Greeks previously. Their first encounters with the Jews had aroused no antipathy among them. On the contrary, they looked upon the Jews as members of a unique people devoted to philosophic observation. According to Josephus, Clearchus of Soli related a story of a meeting between Aristotle and a Jew who was a Greek "not only in language, but also in spirit,"⁴ and who sought the acquaintance of Aristotle because he was interested in Greek philosophy. In the end, said Clearchus, Aristotle and his pupils learned from him and not he from them. An interesting point that Clearchus mentioned concerned the origin attributed to the Jews: "The Jews are the descendants of the philosophers of India. They say that the philosophers are called Kalanoi among the Indians, Jews among the Syrians; the name is derived from their place of habitation, Judah. The name of their town, which is very strange, is Hierousaleme."⁵

Megasthenes, one of the intimates of Seleucus I, also spoke about the Jews as philosophers. Megasthenes visited India between 302 and 291 B.C. on diplomatic business and wrote a book on that country. "Everything recorded by the wise men of ancient times about nature is to be found also among the philosophers outside Greece, part among the Brahmans in India, part in Syria among the people known as Jews."⁶

⁴Jos. C. Ap. I. 175-183.

⁵Ibid., 179.

⁶Theodore Reinach, Textes D'Auteurs Grecs et Romains Relatifs au Judaïsme (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963; first ed. by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1895), No. 8.

Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, referred to the Jews in the following terms: "They discourse together about the Divine, because they are philosophers by nature, and at night they observe the stars, watching them and addressing them in their prayers."⁷

Hecataeus of Abdera, a contemporary of Ptolemy I, was another Greek writer who dealt with the Jews.⁸ According to him, Moses did not merely enter Palestine, but also founded Jerusalem and other towns, and built the Temple. In Hecataeus' version of the Exodus, a severe epidemic had spread over Egypt, and the Egyptian population ascribed the cause to the wrath of the gods. These were venting their anger on the Egyptians for allowing strange deities and cults to overshadow the local gods and their shrines, which stood empty and forsaken. To appease the gods of Egypt, the Egyptians resolved to expel all foreigners. The stronger and cleverer among those expelled formed contingents which crossed to Greece, and the remainder of the exiles departed to the land of Judaea, which was then a desert. Thus the Jews became a people. There are not yet strong signs of anti-Semitism in this story. A hint, however, is to be found in the remark that Moses initiated a form of life encouraging seclusion from humankind and hatred of aliens.⁹

It was during the reign of Ptolemy II that the Egyptian priest Manetho published his Egyptian history, which he wrote for the Greeks

⁷Ibid., No. 5 = Euseb. Praep. Evang. IX, 2.

⁸Ibid., No. 9 and Diod. Sic. Book XL.

⁹Diod. XL. 3 and 4.

in their own language. Two passages of his work have been preserved by Josephus. In the first one¹⁰ no real anti-Semitic feelings are found. Manetho tells of the Hyksos who attacked Egypt and ruled it for over five hundred years. After being forced out of Egypt, they turned toward Syria, and on their way founded the city of Jerusalem in the land of Judaea. Thus, Manetho identified these "king-shepherds" with the ancestors of the Jews.¹¹

The second passage, however, is laden with anti-Semitic feelings.¹² Manetho is here recounting legends he had collected apparently from among the Egyptian priesthood. According to his story, King Amenhotep, wishing to be granted a vision of the gods, was told to purge the entire country of lepers and other "polluted persons" and his wish would be granted by the gods. Delighted at hearing this, he collected all the maimed people in Egypt, numbering 80,000, and sent them to work in the stone-quarries, on the east side of the Nile, segregating them from the rest of the Egyptians. Included among these people were many afflicted with leprosy, some of them learned priests. Later on, the king assigned the abandoned city of Avaris, which had belonged to the Hyksos, to these sick people.

After an undetermined amount of time these people decided to rebel against the king; they fortified themselves at Avaris, elected as

¹⁰ Jos. C. Ap. I. 73-106.

¹¹ Ibid., 103. Josephus feels that Manetho is implying that the "so-called shepherds" were the ancestors of the Jews.

¹² Ibid., 228-253.

their leader one of the priests of Heliopolis whose name was Osarsiph, and swore to obey all his orders. His very first order was that no one should henceforth worship the Egyptian gods, and that, in addition, the people should slaughter and eat the animals which were sacred to the Egyptians. He further forbade them to associate with any person who was not a member of their confederacy.

After this, Osarsiph sent an embassy to the Hyksos, the "shepherds," who had been expelled by Tuthmosis and were not residing in Jerusalem. He invited the Hyksos to come down to Egypt and join them in their rebellion. The Hyksos, delighted with the idea, eagerly set off for Egypt and, 200,000 strong, soon reached Avaris.

When Amenhotep heard the news of the invasion, he was terribly perturbed. He collected the sacred animals which were held in the temples, and instructed the priests in each district to conceal the images of the gods as securely as possible. He entrusted his five-year old son Sethos to the care of a friend, and then crossed the Nile with an army of 300,000 men to meet the enemy. Instead, however, of engaging them, he turned back toward Memphis because he felt that he was about to fight the gods (?). There he picked up Apis and the other sacred animals which had been brought there, gathered his army and "the Egyptian population," and set out for Ethiopia. There the Egyptians were accommodated by its king, cities were assigned to them, and food provided. For a period of thirteen years, the Egyptians remained in Ethiopia.

In the meantime, the shepherds and their allies, the polluted Egyptians, ruled Egypt in a most oppressive and cruel fashion. Towns and villages were burned, temples were plundered, images of the gods defiled and mutilated. The priests were forced to slaughter the sacred animals and roast them so that they could be eaten by the oppressors. At about this time Osarsiph gave these people a constitution and a code of laws, and then changed his name to Moses.¹³

Eventually, Amenhotep gathered courage and attacked the lepers with a large army. The lepers and shepherds were defeated, and those that remained were pursued back to Syria. It is implied that the Hyksos returned whence they had come, to Jerusalem, and that the lepers went with them. Evidently, Moses led the entire group of survivors back to Judaea. Thus the Jews of the time of Manetho would be the descendants of the Hyksos and the Egyptian lepers, and the description given by Manetho of the activity of the lepers in Egypt was directed undoubtedly against the Jews.¹⁴

Manetho, as an Egyptian priest, was replying to the Biblical story of the Exodus, which does not distinguish itself for its sympathy towards the Egyptians. Manetho probably did not invent the reply himself, but rather collected the legends and stories used by the Egyptian priests as material in their disputations with the Jews.¹⁵

¹³ Jos. C. Ap. I. 250.

¹⁴ Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 363.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Another anti-Jewish writer mentioned by Josephus was the Alexandrian Lysimachus,¹⁶ who lived during the first century B.C.¹⁷ Lysimachus also wrote referring to the Jews as lepers. According to this account, the Jews, who in addition to being lepers were also afflicted with "scurvy and other maladies," took refuge in the temples and lived a mendicant existence in the reign of a certain Bocchoris. "The victims of disease being very numerous, a famine ensued throughout Egypt."¹⁸ King Bocchoris immediately sent an embassy to consult the oracle of Ammon, situated at an oasis in the Libyan desert. The god told the king that the failure of the crops was due to the temples' desecration by the impure and impious people, and that these should be driven out of the land into the wilderness. Those afflicted with leprosy and scurvy, however, should be drowned. The king had a list made of all the unclean people. Then he had his army drive part of the unclean people into the wilderness, while the lepers were packed in sheets of lead and drowned in the ocean.

That night, the survivors in the desert were instructed by a certain Moses to march until they had reached inhabited country. So they traversed the desert and, after reaching inhabited country, maltreated the population, plundered and set fire to the temples, until they came to Judaea, where they built a city in which they settled.

¹⁶ Jos. C. Ap. I. 303-320.

¹⁷ E. Schürer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. III, No. 33, p. 254.

¹⁸ Jos. C. Ap. I. 305.

They called this town Hierosyla ("town of temple-robbers") because of their sacrilegious propensities. "At a later date, when they had risen to power, they altered the name, to avoid disgraceful imputation, and called the city Hierosolyma and themselves Hierosolymites."¹⁹

A third author who dealt with the departure of the Jews from Egypt was Chaeremon.²⁰ According to this account, Isis appeared to Amenophis in his sleep, and reproached him for the destruction of her temple in war-time. The sacred scribe Phritobautes told him that if he purged Egypt of its contaminated population, Isis would be appeased. The king, therefore, collected 250,000 afflicted persons and banished them from the country. The leaders of these people were Moses and Joseph. The exiles, upon reaching Pelusium, joined a body of 380,000 persons left there by Amenophis, who had refused them permission to cross the Egyptian frontier.²¹ The entire body now turned back on Egypt and attacked Amenophis, who fled to Ethiopia leaving behind his pregnant wife. The latter took refuge in a cavern and there gave birth to a son named Ramesses. When Ramesses grew up, he drove the Jews out

¹⁹ Ibid., 311.

²⁰ Jos. C. Ap. I. 288-302. Chaeremon was a Stoic philosopher and a librarian of Alexandria who lived in the first century A.D. He was afterwards the tutor of Nero. He wrote a *History of Egypt* and also a work on hieroglyphics (see E. Schürer, *Jewish People*, II, 3: 255). Chaeremon and Apion (see below), though belonging to the early Roman period, refer to beliefs prevalent also during the Ptolemaic times, and base themselves on Ptolemaic sources. Both authors generally fit into the category of anti-Jewish writers previously mentioned.

²¹ Chaeremon does not explain who these 380,000 persons were or where they had originated.

of Egypt into Syria, and then brought his father Amenophis back home from Ethiopia.

The grammarian Apion also included a report on the Jewish Exodus in his History of Egypt.²² According to Apion, Moses was a native of Heliopolis who in that city built prayer-houses all facing east. This Moses led an exodus of lepers, blind, and lame out of Egypt in the first year of the seventh Olympiad, the year of the foundation of Carthage. The number of people that left Egypt was 110,000. After marching for six days, they all developed tumors in the groin. That is why, after reaching Judaea, they rested on the seventh day, and called it "sabbaton," preserving the Egyptian terminology for disease of the groin, "sabbo."²³ Thus, Apion explains the origin of the Jewish "Sabbath."

Apion also related another anti-Semitic story which seems to have gained widespread acceptance during the Ptolemaic and Roman period. It referred to the Jewish cult of an ass in the Temple of Jerusalem. Following the earlier accounts of Poseidonius,²⁴ Damocritos,²⁵ and

²² Jos. C. Ap. II. 8-27. Born in upper Egypt, Apion studied at Alexandria and taught rhetoric in Rome under Tiberius and Claudius. Under Caligula, he headed the anti-Jewish deputation sent from Alexandria to the Emperor, when he was opposed to Philo (Jos. Ant. XVIII. 257ff.). This is the same Apion against whom Josephus wrote his Contra Apionem.

²³ Jos. C. Ap. II. 21.

²⁴ Diod. XXXIV. 1, 3 = Reinach, Textes, No. 25. Poseidonius was born in 135 B.C. in Syria.

²⁵ Reinach, Textes, No. 60. Damocritos was, according to Reinach, probably a contemporary of Chaeremon and Lysimachus. He wrote a work entitled On the Jews which is not extant.

others, Apion related that when Antiochus Epiphanes entered the Holy of Holies, he saw there the statue of a bearded man riding on an ass and holding a book. The man was Moses, who gave the Jews laws of hatred toward all mankind.²⁶ The ass's head was of pure gold, worth a very high price.

This valuable and sacred ass-head was once stolen during a long war between the Jews and the Idumaeans.²⁷ An inhabitant of the city of Dorii by the name of Zabidus came out to the Jews and promised them to deliver Apollo, the god of Dorii, into their hands. The Jews believed his words, whereupon Zabidus constructed an apparatus of wood, inserted in it three rows of lamps, and put it over his person. Thus arrayed he walked about, presenting the appearance of stars circling the earth. Astounded at this amazing spectacle, the Jews kept their distance, in perfect silence. Zabidus then passed into the sanctuary, snatched up the golden head, and made off quickly to Dorii. Apion does not explain how the Jews got their golden ass-head back, since apparently this Idumaeen war took place before the visit of Antiochus to the Temple.

²⁶Tacitus *Hist. V.* 3ff. explains the relation between Moses and the ass in the Temple by stating that when Moses was in the desert leading the exodus, he followed a herd of wild asses and discovered water in the wilderness. From then onward, the Jews held the ass as a sacred animal, and paid divine honors to it in their temple. Tacitus also explains the observance of the Sabbath as an act of idleness, the abstinence from swine flesh as due to the fact that this animal is peculiarly liable to the itch, the very disease that made the Jews suffer so much during the exodus and wanderings through the desert, and the use of unleavened bread as an evidence that the Jews stole wheat at the time of the exodus.

²⁷Jos. *C. Ap.* II. 112-120.

The origins of this strange slander are not known. It is perhaps connected with the Egyptian myth of the deity Typhon or Set, god of evil and the opponent of Osiris.²⁸ The ass was the sacred animal of Typhon, and Plutarch relates that, after a battle, the god fled on an ass for seven days. Having been saved from death, he begot two sons, Jerusalem and Judah.²⁹ In this myth Typhon appears as the ancestor of the Jews, and since Poseidonius described Moses as an old man riding on an ass,³⁰ it is quite possible that the anti-Semites equated Moses with Typhon, symbol of evil.

Another slander whose origin is obscure refers to the account of the ritual murder. Baron believes the story was created to justify Antiochus Epiphanes after he had desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem.³¹ Tcherikover believes that the king appears in the story only for convenience.³² In any case, the myth was invented and was believed by most people of that time.

According to Damocritos, the Jews made a practice of kidnaping a foreigner every seven years, killing him, and then cutting his flesh into small pieces.³³ Apion had a more detailed version.³⁴ When

²⁸Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 365.

²⁹Reinach, Textes, No. 68 = Plutarch On Isis and Osiris 31.

³⁰Diod. XXXIV. 1 and 3 = Reinach, Textes, No. 25.

³¹Baron, A Soc. and Rel. Hist., 1: 192ff.

³²Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., p. 367.

³³Reinach, Textes, No. 60.

³⁴Jos. C. Ap. II. 91ff.

Antiochus entered the Temple, he found a couch, on which a man was reclining. In front of the man was a table laden with good food, such as fish, fowls, and other meats. The "poor fellow was gazing in stupefaction" at the table and its contents when the king walked in. The appearance of the ruler brought great happiness to the man, who "hailed him with adoration." The man fell at the king's feet and, stretching out his arms in supplication, implored the king to set him free. The king reassured the man and asked him who he was, why he was there, and what was the meaning of the banquet set before him. With sighs and tears, the man, "in a pitiful tone," told him the following story. He was a Greek who, while traveling about the province making his livelihood, was suddenly kidnapped by men of a foreign race, and conveyed to the temple. There he had been locked and secluded from everybody, but was being fattened on feasts of the most lavish description. At first he was deceived by all these attentions, and felt himself to be quite fortunate. But then he became suspicious and finally extremely worried. He asked some of his attendants the reason for all that had occurred to him and was told the horrible secret. Every year the Jews would kidnap a Greek foreigner, fatten him up for a year, and then would take him to a wood where he was slain. It was a sacrificial ritual, they told him, during which the Jewish people partook of the flesh,³⁵ that is, entrails, of the Greek, while swearing an oath of perpetual hatred to the Greeks. The remains of the man were then

³⁵Josephus later questions (C. Ap. II. 101) how the flesh of one Greek man could suffice for so many thousands of participants.

thrown into a pit. The wretched man had but a few days to live before the sacrifice took place, and implored Antiochus to deliver him from his miserable predicament. The king was horrified at the story and was happy to set the man free.

Closely connected with the myth of the ritual sacrifice was the charge of misanthropy or hatred of mankind leveled against the Jews. Diodorus, citing Poseidonius,³⁶ relates that when Antiochus Sidetes attacked Jerusalem, he was advised by his courtiers to exterminate the Jews completely, since they were the only people who refused to associate with other peoples and regarded all of them as enemies. Apollonius Molon declared that the Jews did not accept among themselves people who entertained different opinions concerning the divinity, neither did they wish to come into contact with those whose customs differed from their own.³⁷ Apion described the solemn oath which was allegedly taken by the Jews "by the God who made heaven and earth and sea, to show no goodwill to a single alien, above all to Greeks."³⁸

As Reinach points out, once hatred for a certain class of people becomes rooted in the hearts of men for one reason or another, everything associated with this class begins to be detestable.³⁹ So Apollonius Molon declared that the Jews were cowards, insolent, and

³⁶ Diod. XXXIV. 1. 1 = Reinach, Textes, No. 25.

³⁷ Jos. C. Ap. II. 258.

³⁸ Ibid., 121.

³⁹ Reinach, Textes, Introd., p. xiv.

the only barbarians who had not made any useful invention because they were people without any abilities.⁴⁰

As mentioned before, anti-Semitism during the Ptolemaic period did not manifest itself in acts of physical violence. The persecution that took place during the reign of Euergetes II (145 to 116 B.C.), according to Josephus,⁴¹ had wholly political motivation. The king ordered that all the Jews of Alexandria be arrested and then exposed to die under the feet of elephants. Third Maccabees has a similar account, but ascribes the events to the time of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221 to 205 B.C.). According to the author of Third Maccabees, the attack on the Jews was inspired by anti-Semitic feelings of the king after being refused entrance to the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. As shown above,⁴² modern scholars disregard the chronology of Third Maccabees, and agree that the event is the same as the one related by Josephus. Euergetes II had political reasons for persecuting the Jews of Alexandria, since they were allies of Cleopatra II. Once Euergetes became reconciled with the Queen, the persecution was called off, and the Jews of Alexandria, who attributed their deliverance to God rather than to political reasons, instituted a day of celebration to be held annually from then onward.

⁴⁰ Jos. C. Ap. II. 148.

⁴¹ Ibid., 53ff. See also above, pp. 79ff.

⁴² See above, Part Two, Chapter III, pp. 80ff.

Tcherikover analyzes some modern-day explanations of anti-Semitism.⁴³ He feels that there are three main bases for antagonism: economic, religious, and political. The economic interpretation argues that anti-Semitism in antiquity was due to the functions filled by Jews in that era as traders, money-lenders, tax-collectors, and the like. This explanation rests on the hypothesis that the Jews in the ancient world performed the same functions of traders and financiers as they afterwards performed in the Middle Ages and in modern times. For Tcherikover, sufficient evidence is lacking to indicate that most Jews of that time were wealthy and dedicated to business enterprises as may be true in modern times.

The second school of thought emphasizes the religious and public self-segregation of the Jews, and regards it as the sole cause of anti-Semitism. Tcherikover feels that this thinking approximates the truth more closely, but does not solve the problem completely. He asks whether every people with strange customs evoked a similar reaction on the part of the Greeks, and he feels that they did not.

The third line of thinking emphasizes the political antagonism between the Jews and the other peoples. The Jews remained, according to this school, a political and national unit even outside their country, and this the Greeks were unwilling to recognize. Tcherikover feels that this political theory solves isolated problems of the growth of anti-Semitism in various places, but cannot explain the origin of anti-Semitism in its entire scope.

⁴³Tcherikover, Hell. Civ., pp. 369ff.

Tcherikover believes that the inner quality of anti-Semitism arises from the very existence of the Jewish people as an alien body among the nations.⁴⁴ This alien character has two aspects: the Jews are alien to other peoples because they are foreigners derived from another land, and they are alien because of their foreign customs which are strange and outlandish in the eyes of the local inhabitants. In addition, the Jews do not resemble the other aliens.⁴⁵ As long as strangers are not numerous and live unobtrusively, without making demands and claims, there is no special reason for hating them. The Jews in Alexandria, however, enjoyed numerous privileges but at the same time were exempt from duties. This situation resulted from the fact that the Jews were not dependent on the favors of the Greek city, but had received their privileges directly from the kings. During the Hellenistic period, the Greek cities were also dependent on the favor of the kings, and, consequently, the Greek city and the Jewish community existed side by side as forces of equal importance. While the Greeks had to surrender at times some part of their autonomy, the Jews enjoyed, under the same monarchs, all their privileges and rights; so the Greeks felt envious.

I agree in great part with Tcherikover's analysis because I believe that during the Ptolemaic period the Jewish politeuma at Alexandria enjoyed at least an equality of rights with the Greek politeuma. The Jews did not have any cause to envy the Greek

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 358.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 372.

politeuma, and it is, in fact, quite possible that the opposite was the case. No doubt in theory, the Greeks of Alexandria felt this city to be theirs, but in practice, it belonged just as much to the Jews. The situation lent itself to producing problems. The evidence of the Ptolemaic literature indicates that the situation in Alexandria did produce feelings of hostility toward the Jews.

CONCLUSION: A SUMMARY AND EPILOGUE

Evidence indicates that Jews were present at the very foundation of the city of Alexandria, though the exact number would be difficult to estimate. The Jews occupied the Delta quarter during the Ptolemaic period. This quarter did not constitute a "ghetto" since Jews lived in other quarters as well. By Roman times a second unknown quarter of the city had become known as Jewish.

A tradition maintains that about 100,000 Jewish slaves were brought into Egypt by Ptolemy I and settled in the land, some as soldiers who performed garrison duties, others in Alexandria on equal terms with the Macedonians. This tradition of Pseudo-Aristeas seems less trustworthy than the tradition of Hecataeus that the Jews voluntarily migrated to Egypt under the same ruler. It is possible that occasionally some Jews were brought into Egypt as slaves, but the enormous number of Jewish slaves that Pseudo-Aristeas maintains existed in Egypt until the time of Philadelphus seems unrealistic.

Very little is known of the political history of the Jews in Alexandria and in Egypt during the period between the reigns of Ptolemy I (323 to 285 B.C.) and Ptolemy VI (died 145 B.C.). Relatively more information exists for the political activities of the Jews in Egypt during the rest of the Ptolemaic period. Not much is known, however, of the Alexandrian Jews per se, and their activities must be considered against the background of the general activities of the Jews in Egypt

during this period. A major religious event was the foundation of the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis. This Onias should be identified with Onias IV, son of the high priest Onias III. If Onias hoped that his temple would become the new religious center for the Jews in Egypt, replacing the Temple of Jerusalem, his hopes were disappointed. The foundation did seem to serve this purpose, however, for the Jewish katoikia at Leontopolis. Onias also became a man of importance in the army of Ptolemy VI, and after the death of Philometor he played a significant political role on the side of the royal widow, Cleopatra II.

It was due to political enmities that the Jews of Alexandria suffered persecution after the death of Ptolemy VI Philometor. The Jews, led by Onias, sided with Cleopatra II who was fighting Euergetes II, brother of Philometor. Onias was not able to stop Euergetes who took Alexandria and condemned the Jews of the city to death. Fortunately, Euergetes II made peace with Cleopatra II and married her. The persecution against the Jews was immediately called off, and the Jews attributed their deliverance to God.

The sons of Onias, Helkias and Hananiah, played an important role as military commanders under Cleopatra III (116 to 102 B.C.). The Jews at Pelusium filled the same office at the time of Gabinius (55 B.C.), and again in 48 B.C. during the time of Julius Caesar. Clearly, the Jews of Egypt and Alexandria were aware of and closely affected by the political events that took place in Egypt and in Coele-Syria during the Ptolemaic period. On several occasions they

actively participated in these developments, and played an important role in determining the course of events in both Egypt and Coele-Syria.

What was the status of the Jews at Alexandria? During the Ptolemaic period, Alexandria was not a "Greek" city as were other cities founded by Alexander the Great. Rather, it was a collection of politeumata based on nationalities. As time passed, the Greek politeuma and the Jewish one became the two most important in Alexandria. The Jewish politeuma possessed, at the very least, an equality of rights and privileges with the Greek politeuma. Under the direct control of the crown, Ptolemaic Alexandria was neither a "Greek" city nor a "Jewish" one, but rather a "royal city." To be an "Alexandrian" did not necessarily mean being a citizen of the Greek politeuma. It could very well mean being a member of any one of the politeumata of the city.

The Jewish politeuma was led by an ethnarch who ruled the Jewish community as if he were the head of a sovereign state. In addition to the ethnarch, the Jews possessed their own council of elders, their own judicial system, and their own notary office. It is interesting to note that while the Jewish politeuma enjoyed all these privileges, the Greek politeuma did not possess even a boule. The city of Alexandria was not governed by the Greeks any more than by the Jews, but rather by royal authorities and officials, which included both Greeks and Jews. There is no evidence that the city of Alexandria as a whole was governed by one constitution, and even less evidence that it was governed by a "Greek" constitution, one that declared as "Alexandrians" only those who had acquired "Greek" citizenship in the Greek politeuma. So, in

this light, the Jews were as much "citizens" of Alexandria as were the Greeks.

The economic activities of the Alexandrian Jews differed in some respects from those of their fellow Jews in the Egyptian chora. The city dwellers engaged to a much greater extent in commercial and industrial activities, so that, in general, they were wealthier than the Jews of the countryside. Some must have been engaged in all the major industries of Alexandria, working as glass-makers, potters, and in the manufacturing of perfumes. Others were shop-owners, merchants, and artisans. A few Alexandrian Jews were so wealthy that they were involved in banking and as investors. In addition, there were Jews engaged as soldiers, farmers, and government officials, or in almost every branch of the economic life of Egypt.

In many ways the Jews of Alexandria were similar to their brethren in other parts of the Diaspora, as well as those in Palestine. The religious center of the community was the synagogue. A second institution, the school, was closely associated with the synagogue, as was the case for the Jewish communities everywhere. The Alexandrians shared with their fellow Jews the same beliefs, they participated in the same religious festivals, and they sent their tribute to the Temple in Jerusalem.

On the other hand, the Alexandrian Jews were strongly influenced by Hellenism, as is evident in the ever-growing practice of offering Jewish children a Greek education in the gymnasium, and of giving them Greek names. The influence of Hellenism can also be seen in the fact



that Greek became the everyday language for the Jews instead of Hebrew, so much so that the Torah, and eventually the rest of the Old Testament, had to be transcribed into Greek, a version of which became known as the Septuagint. And finally, the influence of Hellenism can be seen in the abandonment by many of the Alexandrian Jews of the stricter traditions, such as the Mosaic prohibition against mixed marriages.

Anti-Semitism during the Ptolemaic period did not manifest itself in acts of physical violence. Those cases in which the Jews were persecuted and killed were due to political motivation. Anti-Semitism during this period did express itself through literature, which included purposely invented slanders, such as the Jewish adoration of an ass, or the annual sacrifice of a Greek man. Sadly enough, such absurd stories were believed by a great majority of people.

Thus we come to the end of our study of the Alexandrian Jews during the Ptolemaic period. It was a period in which they enjoyed relative peace, with the possible exception of the political persecution under Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II which was brief and did not cause many casualties among the Jews. It was a period in which the Alexandrian Jews prospered politically, socially, and economically. They enjoyed the overall respect of the Greeks, the Jewish politeuma enjoyed an equality of rights with the Greek politeuma, and the Alexandrian Jews claimed and received an equal share in this beautiful city.

Ahead of them loomed the Roman period. The Alexandrian Jews had no way of knowing that it would be a terrible time for them. When the Romans conquered Egypt they changed the nature of citizenship.

"Alexandrians" to the Romans meant those who had acquired citizenship the normal Greek way, through the ephebate. Greek citizens were made partners with the Romans in the institutions of local government, while the non-Greeks were classified with the native population: the whole weight of taxation fell upon the latter. The payment of the poll-tax or laographia became the distinguishing sign between the two sections of the population. To the Jews, all this represented more than just a financial burden. It became a terrible humiliation to a people who had always considered themselves "Alexandrians" and equal in all respects to the Greeks. So the Greeks saw in this policy change their chance, while the Jews saw their danger. The latter set out to defend their "citizenship" with all their might, and the Greeks fought just as tenaciously against it. The Alexandrian Greeks, though now theoretically a subject population, felt more recognized as Greeks than they had during the reign of the Ptolemies. The Jews, strangers who had gained equality with the Greeks at Alexandria during the Ptolemaic era, were now being placed where the Greeks felt their rightful place was: below them. Alexandria had now been given to the Greeks as it had never been given to them before, and they were not willing to share the city again with the Jews without a fight. And so the stage was set for the physical struggles that followed, struggles that would culminate in the terrible pogroms during the reigns of Caligula, Nero, and Trajan. The Jewish revolt in Egypt under Trajan (115 to 117 A.D.) was actually only part of a more general movement, which included the

Jews of Cyrene and Cyprus also.¹ The stasis became an outright war of Jews against Greeks and Romans alike, a war during which atrocities were committed by both sides.² The Roman attitude towards the Jews had suffered a considerable change, especially after the Jewish revolt and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This event seems to have produced a Roman hostility and suspicion against the Jews, not only in Judaea, but throughout the Diaspora as well.³ And so during the stasis of 115 to 117 A.D. the Romans vigorously crushed the rebellion, which had grown to a polemos after the Jews of Cyrene intervened on the side of their Egyptian brethren. As a result, the Jews in Egypt were almost totally exterminated.⁴

¹The sources for the Jewish rebellion under Trajan are: P. Oxy. 1242, a fragment which forms part of a collection known today as the "Acts of the Pagan Martyrs" or *Acta Alexandrinorum* (for a good commentary on this fragment, see H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* [Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1954], pp. 161-178); Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 4. 2; Dio Cassius 68. 32; Appian *Bell. Civ.* 2. 90 = Reinach, *Textes*, No. 76; Jer. Sukkah 5. 55b; and *C. P. Jud.*, Nos. 158, 435, 436-450.

²Dio Cassius (68. 32) emphasizes the ferocity of the Jewish rebels against the Greeks and Romans: they smeared themselves with the blood of their victims, ate their flesh, and the like. He quotes 220,000 as the number of persons slaughtered by Jews in Cyrene, and 240,000 in Cyprus. Though he perhaps exaggerates, there is no doubt that the struggle was fierce, and the atrocities committed by the Jews against their enemies were, no doubt, reciprocated with equal ruthlessness.

³An example of the new attitude of the Romans is found in the account of the destruction of the Temple of Onias c. 73 A.D. (Jos. *Jewish War* VII. 420-21). Josephus states that the temple was destroyed because Vespasian was "suspicious of the interminable tendency of the Jews to revolution. . . ." (Josephus does not explain why Vespasian felt that destroying the Temple of Onias would aid in curbing the Jewish tendency to revolution.)

⁴Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 4. 2. 4; *C. P. Jud.*, Nos. 445 and 448; and J. Sukkah 5. 55b.

Why did the Romans change the nature of citizenship? It certainly was not because they disliked the Jews, since the contrary seems to have been the case early in the Roman period. As the Jews had done on previous occasions with other conquerors, they soon had managed to gain from some of the Roman leaders recognition for their religious customs and traditions, and slowly appeared to be gaining once again the confidence of the conquerors.⁵ The Romans allowed the Jews to retain much of their internal autonomy, including their own judicial system, their gerousia, their ethnarchs, and the like. The Greek politeuma, on the other hand, petitioned for a boule and was turned down. So at this point the Roman policy change in the Alexandrian citizenship could not have had anything to do with hostility against the Jews. It rather must be attributed to a desire on the part of the Romans to eliminate anomalies in constitutional matters in relation to other Hellenistic cities throughout the Empire. The Romans were much in favor of overall consistency, and Alexandria did not conform to the rule. Therefore the policy change was introduced that brought so much grief to the Alexandrian Jews and would cause their ultimate near-extinction there. And so, at the beginning of the Roman period, the Jews, without knowing it, had started to move from sunlight to darkness, from a period of relative happiness to one that would bring great sorrow.

⁵See above, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 128, note 92.

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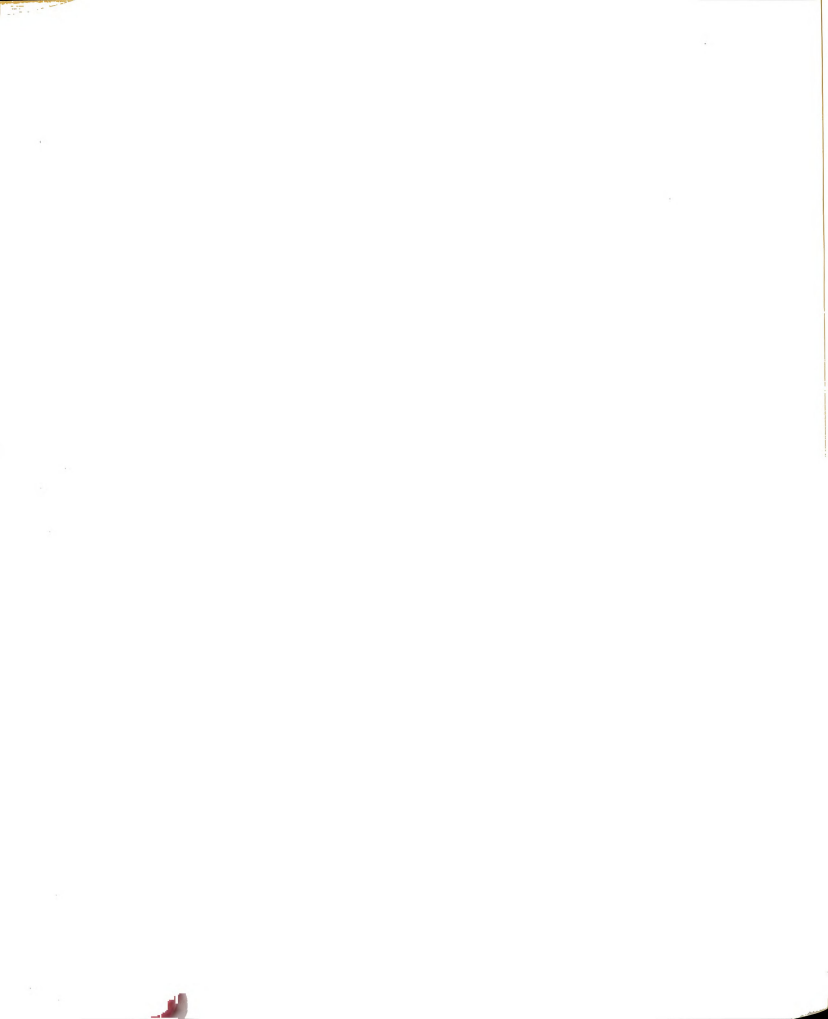
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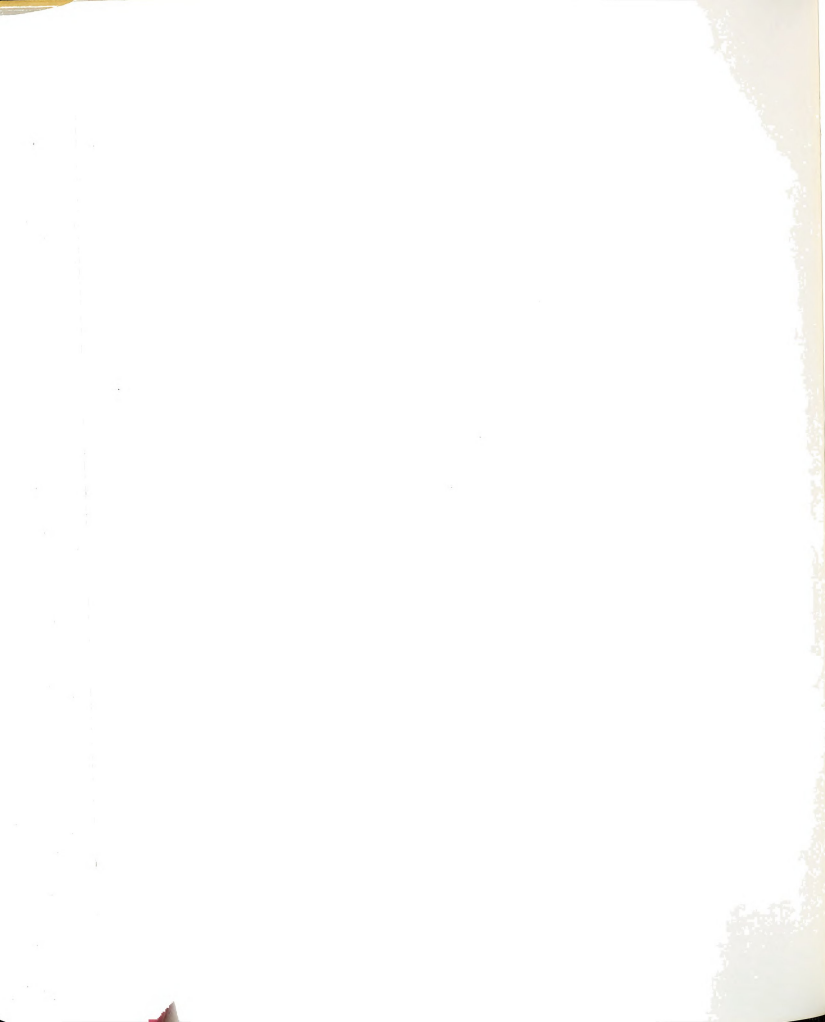
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