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For more information on Alexander the Alabarch, see the author's Web site at: <http://KassEvans.com>.

(Note: the title page and table of contents precedes the first page of the article which begins on p. 576).

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Alexander the Alabarch: Roman and Jew

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Alexander of Alexandria, known as the alabarch, was without a doubt one of the most prominent Jews to live in the Roman Empire in the first century. His fame can be attributed to his friendship with a Roman Emperor and members of the Imperial family, his kinship ties to the ruling class of Judea, his visible donations to the Jerusalem Temple, his illustrious family members, and above all to his personal wealth.

The following study will examine Alexander's life and demonstrate how his dual status as a Jew and as a Roman citizen were inextricably intertwined and jointly defined both him and his family. There has already been some biographical discussion of Alexander in contemporary literature chiefly by J. Schwartz in "Note sur la famille de Philon d'Alexandrie,"¹ and "L'Egypte de Philon," 1967,² by S. S. Foster in "A Note on the 'Note' of J. Schwartz," 1976-77³ and by A. Fuks in CPJ.⁴ To date, however, no one has dedicated an entire study exclusively to the life of the alabarch. Nor has anyone yet done a study to demonstrate how the lives of this or other prominent first century Jews were impacted by their possession of Roman citizenship.

This paper will first examine the nature of the primary sources and the direct evidence for the life of Alexander. It will then consider his status as a Roman including his citizenship, full name, and rank. Next it will examine his status as a Jew including his ancestry, ties to royalty and the high priesthood, and personal piety. Finally it will speculate on how Alexander's brother Philo may have shared his status as a Roman and a Jew.

¹ J. Schwartz, "Note sur la famille de Philon d'Alexandrie," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles* 13 (1953): 591-602.

² J. Schwartz, "L'Egypte de Philon," in *Philon d'Alexandrie, Lyon 11-15 Septembre 1966: colloques nationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Paris, 1967), p. 35-44.

³ S. S. Foster, "A Note on the 'Note' of J. Schwartz," *Studia Philonica* 4 (1976-77): 25-32.

⁴ Victor A. Tcherikover, and Alexander Fuks, eds. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), v. 2, p. 197-203 (=CPJ no. 419 a-d, 420 a-b)

The Reliability of the Sources

We know of Alexander the alabarch directly only through the writings of Josephus (*War* 5.205; *Ant.* 18.159-160, 259; 19.276; 20.100). Even his brother Philo in his many writings never refers to him by name although he does refer to him indirectly in *On Animals* 8.

As always when dealing with Josephus, one must first consider the reliability of his evidence. In so considering, two questions are paramount: 1) Was Josephus writing about persons of whom he would have had personal knowledge? 2) Would any of Josephus' readers have had personal knowledge of Alexander that in essence would have "kept him honest" in his history?

In fact Josephus' life appears to have crossed the path of either Alexander or Alexander's son Ti. Julius Alexander so often that it would have been practically impossible for Josephus not to have known much about the Alexander family or possibly had personal acquaintance with them. According to Josephus' *Life* 5-8, Josephus was born in 37-38 CE and was raised in Jerusalem by his father Matthias who was considered to be one of the most noble men in Jerusalem. Ti. Alexander was procurator of Judea between 46 and 48 CE. Josephus as a 10 year old boy in Jerusalem certainly would have known of the Jewish/Roman Procurator Ti. Alexander and, if Josephus' father was as prominent as Josephus claimed, the families may have been acquainted. In both Jewish and Roman culture the parentage of each person was of great importance and Ti. Alexander's would have been common knowledge.

In *Life* 415-416, Josephus related how he was released as a prisoner and accompanied Vespasian to Alexandria where he remained some time between 67 and 70 CE. During this period Ti. Alexander was living in Alexandria as the Roman Prefect of Egypt and the close connections between Vespasian and Ti. Alexander have been well established. It is inconceivable that Josephus could have been living in Alexandria with Vespasian during this period and not learn much about if not personally meet with Ti. Alexander or members of his family. Whether Alexander the alabarch himself was still alive at this late date is unknown. There are other incidental connections that link these figures as well. Josephus claims to have maintained a friendly acquaintance with King Agrippa II. In around 41 CE Alexander's son Marcus married this Agrippa's sister Berenice which would have made Ti. Alexander Agrippa's brother-in-law when Ti. Alexander was Procurator of Judea in 46 CE.

In regard to the second question of whether there were prominent friends or family members of Alexander who would have confirmed or challenged the historical veracity of Josephus' accounts, this can probably be answered in the affirmative. The *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities* were dedicated to Vespasian and Titus who were known friends of Ti. Alexander. The *War* was read and corrected by Agrippa II and possibly by Ti. Alexander himself. In *Life* 362, Josephus wrote "To many others also I immediately presented my History, some of whom had taken part in the war, such as King Agrippa and certain of his relatives." This certainly seems to be a veiled reference to Ti. Alexander. In fact it is probable that Ti. Alexander was in Rome co-serving as Praetorian Prefect with Vespasian's son Titus when Josephus penned and published the Greek version of *The War*.⁵

⁵ Titus was Praetorian Prefect between 71 and 79 CE. An undated papyrus CPJ 418b = P. Hibeh 215, places Ti. Alexander as Praetorian Prefect during what has been understood to be the

The only passage in Philo that mentions Alexander, although not specifically by name, is in *On Animals* which was only recently translated by A. Terian from classical Armenian into a modern language.⁶ The authenticity of *On Animals* is tied with the authenticity of the two books of *On Providence* due to their thematic relationship. Both were cited by Eusebius in his list of Philo's works and both have been determined to be authentic due to philosophical, linguistic and stylistic affinities with the rest of Philo's books.⁷ It has generally been considered one of Philo's later works and Terian dates it around 50 CE.⁸

The Life of the Alabarch

Josephus first referred to Alexander in his earlier work, *The Jewish War* 5.205 where during an excursus from detailing Titus' siege of Jerusalem he described the gates of the Temple.

5.204–205 The dimensions of the other gates were all alike, but the one beyond the Corinthian gate, opening from the Women's Court on the east, opposite the gate of the sanctuary was far larger, having an altitude of fifty cubits, with doors of forty, and richer decoration, being overlaid with massive plates of silver and gold. The nine gates were thus plated by Alexander the father of Tiberius.

Although Alexander could have arranged this extravagant gift from Egypt, it is equally plausible that he did so during a stay in Jerusalem. According to *On Providence* 2.107 Philo made at least one pilgrimage to Jerusalem and it is possible that Alexander did as well. He also may have been in Jerusalem for political or family reasons such as Judea being returned to Jewish rule under Agrippa (41–44 CE), the marriage of his son Marcus to Agrippa's daughter Berenice (41 CE), or Ti. Alexander's procuratorship of Judea (46–48 CE). In any case a gift of this magnitude would suggest that Alexander either already had or quickly made important connections with the High Priest in Jerusalem. As Josephus noted in *Ant.* 20.151, the high priests were entrusted with the leadership of the nation so Alexander's connections may have been significant.

Another interesting point about this passage is that Alexander's name is not qualified with "alabarch" as is the case in every passage in the *Antiquities*. Rather he is identified in terms of his son Tiberius which is not surprising considering the evidence that Ti. Alexander may have been serving in Rome as Praetorian Prefect during the publication of the *War*.

Unlike *War* 5.205, the references to Alexander in the *Antiquities* provide some clear chronological points in his life. In around 32–35 CE he made a large loan to Cypros the wife of Agrippa (*Ant.* 18.159–160). In the events leading up to the loan (*Ant.* 18.145ff) Agrippa, having had various adventures and incurring

same period. cf. E. G. Turner, "Tiberivs Ivliivs Alexander," *Journal of Roman Studies* 44 (1954): 64 and S. Demougin, *Prosopographie des Chevaliers Romains Julio-Claudiens* (43 av. j.-C. - 70 ap. J.C.), Collection de l'Ecole Francaise de Rome 153 (Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1992), p. 585.

⁶ English translation by Abraham Terian *Philonis Alexandrini de Animalibus: The Armenian Text with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

considerable debt, finally went to Anthedon (near Gaza on the Mediterranean coast) where he was prevented from leaving by the procurator of the imperial estate at Jamnia with orders to collect 300,000 pieces of silver which Agrippa owed the Imperial Treasury at Rome. Here Alexander enters the story.

18.159–160. He (Agrippa) pretended at the time that he would obey these orders, but when night fell, he cut the mooring cables and proceeded on his voyage to Alexandria. There he begged Alexander the alabarch to grant him a loan of 200,000 drachmas. Alexander refused to grant this loan to him but he did not deny it to Cypros because he marvelled at her love of her husband and all her other good qualities. She promised to repay it; and so Alexander gave them five talents in Alexandria and offered to hand over the rest when they arrived in Dicaearchia, for he did not trust Agrippa's prodigal vein.

From this story we learn that Alexander was a very wealthy man who was either well-known outside of Egypt as a money lender or was personally known to Agrippa, mostly likely the latter.⁹ The date for the loan can be fixed with some certainty since Josephus wrote that after Agrippa received the money he sailed for Rome in 35 CE.

The next reference to Alexander is in *Ant.* 18.259 where Josephus relates the embassy of Philo and the Alexandrian Jews to the Emperor Gaius in 39/40 CE. The Jewish embassy has presented itself to Gaius to answer some charges made by their opponent Apion:

18.259–260. Philo, who stood at the head of the delegation of the Jews, a man held in the highest honour, brother of Alexander the alabarch and no novice in philosophy, was prepared to proceed with the defence against these accusations. But Gaius cut him short, told him to get out of his way, and being exceedingly angry made it clear that he would visit some outrage upon them.

Philo is described not only on his own merits but also in relation to his brother as if those who may not have known of Philo by reputation may have known of his wealthy brother. Alexander is mentioned as if he were not present at the time. It is possible that Alexander, hearing of Philo's lack of success with Gaius, set out for Rome to lend his wealth and position to the embassy since we next hear of Alexander as being imprisoned by Gaius in a fit of anger. In *Ant.* 19.274–276 Josephus relates that among the first acts of Claudius, recently elevated to Emperor (41 CE), was to release Alexander from prison.

19.276–277. He further liberated Alexander the alabarch, an old friend of his, who had acted as guardian for his mother Antonia and had been imprisoned by Gaius in a fit of anger. The son of Alexander married Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa. After the death of Marcus, son of

⁹ As a frame of reference, a drachma was equal to .975 of a Roman denarius. In the early first century, legionaries were paid 225 denarii per year, and the more elite praetorians were paid 750. A sum of 200,000 drachmas could have funded a large bodyguard for a year but would have been insufficient to, say, build a palace. Julius Caesar paid 25 million denarii for his Forum in Rome. cf. Segolene Demougin, *L'Ordre Equestre sous les Julio-Claudiens*, Collection de l'Ecole Francaise de Rome 108 (Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1988), p. 638–639.

Alexander, who was her first husband, Agrippa gave her to his own brother Herod, after asking Claudius to give him the kingdom of Chalcis.

Alexander was an old friend, φίλον ἀρχαῖον, to the Emperor Claudius suggesting that they were roughly contemporary in age. J. Schwartz uses this argument to date Alexander's birth between 15 and 10 BCE since Claudius was born in 10 BCE.¹⁰ There is no record of Claudius ever visiting Egypt and his poor health most likely would have prohibited such extensive travel.¹¹ Alexander, therefore, must have spent some time in Rome probably prior to 35 CE when Agrippa sought him out in Alexandria. Unfortunately Josephus neglected to tell us why Alexander was imprisoned by Gaius and when can only be placed at sometime between Gaius' accession in 37 CE and the date of his release in 41 CE.

Coincidentally (or perhaps not so coincidentally) Agrippa also knew Claudius well. In *Ant.* 18.165 Josephus states that Agrippa's mother Berenice and Claudius' mother Antonia were "deeply attached to each other" and that "Agrippa had been brought up with Claudius and his circle" since around 4 BCE (*Ant.* 18.143). Perhaps Alexander, like Agrippa, was also educated in Rome and a part of Claudius' "circle" and that is how Alexander became "old friends" with an Emperor and "guardian" for an Emperor's mother. Certainly these connections had to be made somehow if not in the manner suggested here.

Alexander had also "acted as a guardian" (ἐπιτροπεύσαντα) for Claudius' mother Antonia Drusia. This translation of the Greek is misleading. The title ἐπίτροπος can be translated as guardian, steward, administrator, or procurator. The Latin word for a woman's legal guardian under the *tutela mulierum* was *tutor* and its normal Greek counterpart was κύριος. It is too great a conjecture that a Jew from Alexandria would have been an Imperial family member's legal guardian when there are other more plausible explanations. The most likely is that Alexander acted as the "procurator" for Antonia's extensive estates in Egypt. Roman citizens often acted as procurators for Imperial land holdings and Alexander certainly would have been present in Egypt to protect her interests and arrange for the profits to be sent to her in Rome.¹² This conclusion has also been drawn by N. Kokkinos who identified Alexander with a Gaius Julius Alexander who held land that was later sold or bequeathed to Antonia.¹³ How far the relationship between Alexander and Antonia extended cannot be known. When Agrippa was imprisoned in Rome, *Ant.* 18.179–204, Antonia interceded in his behalf to ensure his safety and comfort. It is possible that she, or even Claudius, did the same for Alexander.

In the same passage Josephus relates the marriage of Alexander's son Marcus to Agrippa's daughter Berenice. This was one of only three cases in which a female of the Herodian family married a man who is not known definitively to be a king, prince, or a relation of the Herodian family.¹⁴ The other two cases are the

marriages of Berenice's sister Mariamme to the Roman Jew Julius Archelaus (*Ant.* 19.355) of whom nothing more is known and her second marriage to Demetrius of Alexandria, the alabarch famous for both his lineage and wealth (*Ant.* 20.147). The marriage may have had some connection to the very large loan Alexander had made to Agrippa's wife or Claudius himself may have suggested the alliance given his friendship with both Alexander and Agrippa. As we shall see though, the cumulative evidence will support the hypothesis that Alexander was indeed related to Judea's ruling class. Josephus tells us that Marcus was Berenice's first husband but does not indicate whether Berenice was Marcus' first wife. The passage also relates the premature death of Marcus apparently leaving no children.

The last reference of Josephus is in *Ant.* 20.100:

20.100 The successor of Fadus was Tiberius Alexander, the son of that Alexander who had been alabarch in Alexandria and who surpassed all his fellow citizens both in ancestry and in wealth. He was also superior to his son Alexander in his religious devotion, for the latter did not stand by the practices of his people [lit. ancestral practices].

The Greek which was translated above as "who had been alabarch" is the aorist participle form ἀλαβάρχησαντος. Some scholars have interpreted the use of the past participle to mean that Alexander was dead when Ti. Alexander became procurator. Since the main verb ἦλθε is also in the aorist, this interpretation is possible but not necessary. The use of a perfect participle would have made that reading more certain. The passage may simply indicate that Josephus knew that Ti. Alexander was the son of Alexander who had at one time held the title alabarch. It does not require that Alexander was dead.

Once again Alexander's wealth is emphasized with a new addition of his superior ancestry πρωτεύσαντος γένει. What this superior ancestry could mean is intriguing. It is unlikely to mean his superior ancestry as a Roman since his combination Roman/Greek name reveals only recent citizenship in the family. It is more likely that Josephus was referring to Alexander's Jewish ancestry particularly since in the same passage he praises his religious devotion. What would having "superior ancestry" have meant to Josephus? In the beginning of *Life* 1, Josephus relates that for Jews a claim to nobility includes a connection to the priesthood and having royal blood through being a descendent of the Hasmoneans. It seems very likely that these same criteria would apply to Alexander.

Philo's only reference to Alexander, albeit an indirect one, also raises the issue of the family's ancestry. In *On Animals* Philo and a relative named Lysimachus, who is clearly not Alexander the alabarch, are discussing Alexander's son Ti. Alexander who apparently is living in Egypt and holding some public office.

In Section 8, Lysimachus describes a meeting between Philo and his nephew Ti. Alexander. "The young man" refers to Ti. Alexander and "his father" is Alexander.

8. The young man entered in a respectful manner, without that over-confident bearing that some have nowadays, but with a modest self-reliance that becomes a freeman—even a descendant of freemen. He sat

¹⁰ Schwartz, "Note," p. 599.

¹¹ Vincent M. Scramuzza, *The Emperor Claudius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 35–50.

¹² George M. Parassoglou, *Imperial Estates in Roman Egypt*, American Studies in Papyrology, v. 18 (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1978), p. 15–29.

¹³ Nikos Kokkinos, *Antonia Augusta: Portrait of a Great Roman Lady* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 70–71, 73. Cf. P. Ryl. 126 = CPJ 420b and further discussion below.

¹⁴ Schwartz, "Note," p. 600.

down partly for his own instruction and partly because of his father's continuous, insistent urging.

On the surface it appears that with "descendant of freemen" Philo is revealing that Ti. Alexander is not descended from slaves but this would be a rather trivial point to make given the family's known personal circumstances. Rather, I think that Philo is here making a statement that may be philosophical or political but there is insufficient evidence to judge which. For example, Philo may be referring to the Stoic notion of freedom which he is known to embrace or it may be a now unclear allusion to their family lineage.

Philo also tells us that Alexander strongly urged his son to seek instruction from Philo. It is possible that Ti. Alexander was being enticed away from traditional Jewish observances causing Alexander's "insistently urging" of his son to seek counsel from Philo. If so then this again reveals Alexander's concern for personal piety including proper Jewish observance. It also implicitly acknowledges that Alexander trusted his brother's ability to instruct and persuade.

Alexander's Roman Citizenship

Every individual living within the Roman Empire was assigned his or her legal status. One's particular status was of the utmost importance since it governed everything from legal rights and privileges including inheritance and marriage to the way one was allowed to dress.¹⁵ No one has ever questioned that Alexander was a Roman citizen. The basis for this assumption is the Roman names of his sons. A Roman citizen's name consisted of three parts: the praenomen, nomen, and the cognomen.¹⁶ The nomen, also called the gens or the gentilicium, was the name of the individual's gens or 'clan.' The cognomen was the family name within the gens. The praenomen was the name of the individual within the family and had to be selected from a brief official list. Ti. Julius Alexander and Marcus are parts of the Roman *tri nomina* and could only be held by a Roman citizen. If they inherited their citizenship from their father then they all would have had the same nomen and cognomen Julius Alexander.¹⁷ This assumption although credible tends to be circular since the nomen and cognomen of Alexander and Marcus depend on each other and on the full name of Tiberius Julius Alexander.

There is other evidence for Alexander's Roman citizenship—evidence which again depends upon his son Ti. Alexander and again must be deduced. It would have been virtually impossible for Ti. Alexander to attain the two pinnacles of an equestrian career (prefect of Egypt and Praetorian Prefect) if he had not been born the son of a Roman citizen. In the early first century CE, there was only one

way to become an equestrian. A citizen must first serve as a knight in the Roman army. Knights could then present themselves to a censor and if they had the required personal wealth and if they had the "right" family, patron, or service record, they could be elevated to equestrian.

A detailed study by S. Demougin of equestrians in the Julio-Claudian period shows that there were a few who made it who were the sons of plebeian parents but no record of any equestrian where it can be determined that his parents were not Roman citizens.¹⁸ Within the order there were gradations depending upon wealth, family, and service. Tacitus gives Ti. Alexander's rank in the *Annals* 15, 28, 3 as Roman knight of the first rank (*inlustris eques Romanus*).¹⁹ The exact meaning of *inlustris* (also spelled *illustis*) is unknown but a study of all *illustis* knights indicates that they were the highest order and these knights had tremendous personal status.²⁰ Ti. Alexander could not have achieved this status had he not been born the son of a Roman citizen.

There were three ways other than birth to acquire Roman citizenship: 1) being the freed slave of a Roman citizen 2) being granted it after 26 years of service in the Roman auxiliary forces, and 3) being the recipient of an individual grant of citizenship. We know from *On Animals* 8 that Ti. Alexander was descended from a long line of freemen which rules out the first possibility. For Alexander, or his father, to have received Roman citizenship through military service one of them would have had to spend twenty-six years in the auxiliary forces outside of his native province.²¹ He also could not have legally married until his term had been served. This means that after he had reached adulthood in around 6–10 CE, Alexander would have had to spend twenty-six years outside of Egypt as an auxiliary soldier before being granted Roman citizenship and the right to marry. This is highly unlikely for someone who was living in wealth in Alexandria by 35 CE. It also is not the type of background that would have put Alexander on close terms with Claudius and Antonia.

It remains most probable that Alexander or his father received an individual grant of citizenship from Julius Caesar, Marcus Antony, Augustus, or Tiberius. A little is known about the practice of each for granting citizenship to provincials. Julius Caesar was by far the most liberal viewing the granting of citizenship as a method for ensuring the friendship of distinguished foreigners towards Rome.²² Persons of wealth and influence, particularly those who provided some service to Caesar had a chance of receiving citizenship. It was Caesar who granted citizenship to Antipater (*Ant.* 14.137) thus ensuring that the royal family of Judea

15 Cf. Carroll A. Nelson, *Status Declarations in Roman Egypt*, American Studies in Papyrology v. 19 (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1979), p. 2.

16 For Roman naming traditions see R. T. Ridley *History of Rome: A Documented Analysis*, p. 636–637.

17 The name Marcus Julius Alexander has been found on several ostraca. cf. Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Magnes Press and Harvard University Press, 1960), vol. 2, p. 197–200. (i.e. CPJ no. 419, 419a, 419b, 419c, 419d, 419e). It has been suggested convincingly that the M. Julius Alexander of the ostraca and Marcus the son of Alexander are one and the same. cf. Alexander Fuks, "Notes on the Archive of Nicanor" in *Social Conflict in Ancient Greece* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), p. 214–216.

18 Demougin, *L'Ordre*, p. 649 does describe a category of equestrians who must have received both citizenship and equestrian status either successively or concomitantly. The only proof he gives for this statement is a list of equestrians, chiefly from the provinces, who did not have Latin cognomens. The creation of this category was counter to the other evidence he had just given in the previous 600 pages. It seems based on the assumption that there had not been enough time for provincials to marry and have children who were citizens. There was insufficient evidence to support his creation of this category and I am disregarding it.

19 C. H. Moore and John Jackson, trans., *Tacitus: The Histories and The Annals*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), v. 4, p. 258–259.

20 Demougin, *L'Ordre*, p. 594–599.

21 Naphtali Lewis, *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 20.

22 Charlotte E. Goodfellow, *Roman Citizenship: a Study of Its Territorial and Numerical Expansion From the Earliest Times to the Death of Augustus* (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press, 1935), p. 90 ff.

would be Roman citizens for the next 100 years.²³ As Josephus often noted, Julius Caesar paid particular attention to assuring the loyalty and friendship of Jews throughout the Roman world (cf. *Ant.* 14.185–212). Those given citizenship by Caesar assumed his praenomen Gaius and his nomen Julius.

Following Caesar's death, Marcus Antony began freely granting citizenship in Caesar's name—apparently almost selling it.²⁴ Those who received their citizenship from him would have adopted the nomen Antonius which is clearly not the case of the Julius Alexanders. Unlike Caesar and Antony, Augustus was very strict with the granting of citizenship and even refused requests from Tiberius and Livia to grant citizenship to their friends.²⁵ His motive was to keep the Roman people "pure." He did, however, make individual grants of citizenship to prominent persons for service to Rome. Those who received citizenship from Augustus would have assumed the names Gaius and Julius. Tiberius was also very restrained in the granting of citizenship and, in fact, was accused of retarding the social growth of the provinces.²⁶ In any case, a grant of citizenship from Tiberius would have occurred too late for the Alexander family to acquire the status already described.

It is known that it usually took several generations for a family with wealth to achieve enough status to become part of the Roman elite. Therefore citizenship most likely came by a grant from Caesar to Alexander's father or even grandfather. Certainly there were numerous Jewish Roman citizens in the Roman world as early as the second century BCE, so this theory is plausible (cf. *Ant.* 14.228, 232, 234, 237).

Alexander's Roman Name

The question of Alexander's full Roman name provides an intriguing mystery due to textual problems in several manuscripts. Alexander was a very common name in Egypt according to the evidence of the papyri. The only names given by Josephus is Alexander the alabarch and, in some manuscript traditions of *Antiquities* 19.276, Alexander Lysimachus or simply Lysimachus the alabarch.

From Roman naming protocols we know that Alexander's son Tiberius Julius Alexander was from the Julius gens, the Alexander family and his praenomen was Tiberius so the full name of Alexander the alabarch would have been [praenomen] Julius Alexander. There is insufficient evidence to enable us to reconstruct Alexander's praenomen with any certainty. Since the topic has received a considerable amount of discussion and speculation, however, the evidence will be surveyed here.

²³ Roman citizenship was passed on to children at birth. Antipater gave his citizenship to his son Herod who passed it on to his son Agrippa who passed it on to his son Agrippa II and his daughter Bernice (who married Alexander's son Marcus).

²⁴ Goodfellow, p. 97–98.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²⁶ Robin Seager, *Tiberius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 173.

The earliest prosopographical studies list Alexander's full name as Tiberius Julius Alexander.²⁷ The authors arrived at this conclusion from the somewhat circular argument that Alexander must have received his citizenship from the emperor Tiberius and took his nomen and praenomen. Alexander then named his first son after himself. The proof for all of this is his son's name Ti. Julius Alexander.

J. Schwartz was the first to suggest that Alexander's praenomen might be Gaius.²⁸ He assumed that Alexander could not have received citizenship under Tiberius because after 30 BCE one had to first be a citizen of Alexandria to gain Roman citizenship. He further assumed that Alexander could not have obtained Alexandrian citizenship because he was a Jew. He therefore suggests that Alexander received his citizenship outside of Egypt. Alexander probably would have been outside of Egypt before the reign of Tiberius and therefore may have been granted his citizenship by Augustus or Julius Caesar who both had the praenomen Gaius. A praenomen of Gaius would make his full name Gaius Julius Alexander.

A. Fuks capitalized on J. Schwartz' suggestion of Alexander's praenomen when he found two papyri bearing the name Gaius Julius Alexander dated 26 and 28–29 CE.²⁹ The C. Julius Alexander of these papyri was a wealthy landowner of Euhemeria, a city in the Thebaid. Coincidentally, the Thebaid was the location of Ti. Alexander's first equestrian post as epistrategos and the location of M. Julius Alexander's business dealings. N. Kokkinos also makes the identification of Alexander and the C. Julius Alexander of the papyri. Under closer scrutiny, however, we see that the papyri have some translation problems.

The two papyri in question are CPJ 420 a-b (= P. Ryl. 166, 126). CPJ 420a dated 26 CE comes from Euhemeria and is a lease of lands belonging to a "Gaius Julius Alexander." The relevant Greek portion on line 6 reads: [α]πὸ τ[ῶ]ν ὑπαρξόντων Γαίῳ Ιουλίῳ Αλεξάνδρου. Two names in the dative followed by one in the genitive have only one logical translation and it is Gaius Julius son of Alexander. Presumably the son (Gaius Julius) of Alexander had the full name Gaius Julius Alexander if his father was a Roman citizen. It is also possible however that the son, Gaius Julius, received his citizenship after military service or by being the freedman of a Roman in which case his full name may not have been Gaius Julius Alexander. The second papyrus 420b also from Euhemeria and dated 28–29 CE is a petition from a farmer on an *ousia* of Julia Augusta formerly owned by a "Gaius Julius Alexander." The relevant Greek portion from lines 7–8 reads:

οὐσίᾳς τῶν πρότερον [Γαίου
Ιουλί]ου Αλεξάνδρου [ἐδαφῶν.

Note that the name Gaius here has been completely reconstructed without a trace of evidence. The only real evidence is for a [praenomen] Julius Alexander.

²⁷ Edmund Groag and Artur Stein, *Prosopographia Imperii Romanii* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1933–), Saec. I, 85, no. 510. cf. H. Dessau *Prosopographia Imperii Romanii*, 3 vols., 1895–1898, II, 164, no. 92 and Lepape BSAA viii, no. 29 (1934): p. 332.

²⁸ Schwartz, "Note," p. 597.

²⁹ Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), v. 2, p. 200–203, i.e. CPJ no. 420 and 420b.

Although not mentioned in CPJ, there is other evidence for a Gaius Julius Alexander. P. Mil. 9 dated 13/14 CE mentions: Γαίου Ιουλίου Αλεξ(άνδρου) υἱοῦ Ψω(). Possible reconstructions of the father's name may be Psobthis or Psoneos. Here the name Gaius Julius Alexander is finally clearly established but the "son of Pso . . ." only confuses the number of personages involved.

The men mentioned in the papyri may all have been the same person, father and son, master and freedman, or no relation to each other. It is almost certain that the men in CPJ 420b and P. Mil. 9 were associated in some way to Alexander the alabarch because of the name Julius Alexander. The above evidence does not preclude the possibility that there was a Gaius Julius Alexander who was identical to Alexander the alabarch but it is not strong enough to make the identification with any certainty. The praenomen of Alexander must remain unknown.

The Identification of Lysimachus

As noted above in *Ant.* 19.276, a textual variation adding the name Lysimachus to Alexander has caused some confusion over Alexander's full name. Although Alexander is mentioned twice in the passage the Lysimachus variation is only in the first occurrence where Claudius frees Alexander who had been imprisoned by Gaius. Of the eleven manuscripts for the last ten books of the *Antiquities*, three in one family, AMW, and the independent E and Latin all have Lysimachus in some form. Codex Mediceus (M) of the 15th century, Codex Vaticanus gr (V) of 1354 and the Epitome (E) of the 10th or 11th century all have Αλέξανδρον Λυσίμαχον. Codex bibl. Ambrosianae (A) from the 11th century, the primary text of the AMW family, has the marginal note γρ Λυσίμαχον. The Latin version made by order of Cassiodorus in the 5th or 6th century has only *Lysimachum*.

Some scholars have assumed that Alexander had a second name Lysimachus which was used occasionally with or in place of Alexander. It is odd, however, that his second name occurs in only a few textual variants of one place—the passage which mentions that the wealthy, prominent Alexander had been in prison. It is also odd that Lysimachus is not a part of the name of his son Ti. Alexander despite rigid Latin naming protocol. Add to this the fact that we know from Philo's *On Animals* that Alexander probably had a brother named Lysimachus and it seems clear that the reading Lysimachus is incorrect due possibly to a reluctance to believe that Alexander had suffered the scandal of prison and/or confusion over the number and names of Philo's brothers.³⁰

As shown earlier in Philo's *On Animals* Alexander and Lysimachus are two different people, but, the question remains of how they were related. Both the Latin and English translations of the Armenian text of *On Animals* have caused some confusion for scholars the gist of which is that Lysimachus refers to Ti. Alexander as not only his nephew but also his uncle and father-in-law. The following are the passages in question.

- (1) PHILO: You remember the recent arguments, Lysimachus, which Alexander, our nephew (lit. our brother's son), cited in this regard, that not only men but also dumb animals possess reason.

³⁰ Schwartz, "Note," p. 596.

- (2) LYSIMACHUS: Admittedly, honorable Philo, some differing opinions have been amicably brought to the speaker (i.e. Alexander) three times since then, for he is my uncle (lit. mother's brother), and my father-in-law as well. As you are not unaware, his daughter is engaged to be my wife. . . .

(72) LYSIMACHUS: These are the matters, honorable Philo, that Alexander, our nephew (lit. our brother's son), presented and discussed when he came in.

(75) [PHILO] . . . I must not always be impressionable to persuasive argumentation; otherwise what our nephew (lit. our brother's son) has already written, which contrary to sound learning, would be readily believed. . . .

It has been the opinion of previous scholars that it was not possible for Lysimachus to be both uncle and nephew to Ti. Alexander so they assumed a corruption of the original text and have attempted to reconstruct what they thought must have been the original. G. Tappe in a 1912 dissertation emended the Latin translation of section 2 to have Lysimachus saying that "I am his (i.e. Ti. Alexander's) uncle for I have promised my daughter to him for marriage." Tappe thus interprets Lysimachus as the younger brother of Philo and Alexander.³¹ Many scholars have accepted Tappe's emendation through J. Schwartz' biographical "Note" on Philo's family.³² E. G. Turner takes the opposite view, however, considering the claim that Lysimachus was Philo's brother as "a mistaken interpretation of some words in this dialogue."³³ In his opinion Lysimachus was an unrelated young man engaged to Ti. Alexander's daughter. Terian in his 1981 English translation of *On Animals* takes a third point of view; Lysimachus is Ti. Alexander's nephew and future son-in-law but is *not* his uncle or Philo's brother.³⁴

Tappe, Turner, and Terian are assuming that it was not possible for Lysimachus to be both Ti. Alexander's uncle and nephew and therefore there must be a corruption of the text. This is even though Terian, and his predecessors, noted a slavish word for word Armenian rendering of the Greek.³⁵ Perhaps the complicated relationships may be unlikely in the 20th century Western world but it was not at all unlikely in the first century Roman world where there was frequent marriage of persons who were a generation or more apart and divorce and adoption were very common.

Archie C. Bush has done a detailed study of the marriage patterns of Roman citizens and found that Romans, including those living in the provinces, regularly and nearly always for secondary marriages, married someone to whom they were already related.³⁶ Romans did have a few strict marriage guidelines to avoid incest. Bush outlines them below:

³¹ G. Tappe, "De Philonis libro qui inscribitur Alexandros e peri tou logon echein ta aloga zoa: Quaestiones selectae" (Dissertation, Göttingen, 1912), p. 4–5.

³² Schwartz, "Note," p. 594.

³³ Turner, p. 56.

³⁴ Terian, p. 27.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁶ Archie C. Bush, *Studies in Roman Social Structure* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), p. 3.

The jurists, then, provide the parameters of kinship within which the Roman marriage patterns were constrained to function. By the first century of the Christian era these constraints were quite simple. The relations whom a Roman could not marry were a step parent, a step child, a parent-in-law, a child-in-law, an adoptive parent, an adopted child, a blood lineal, and, with the exception of a brother's daughter, any collateral blood kin closer than a cousin.

The ideal pattern for a marriage involved a type of brother-sister exchange where the marriage partners were not related directly by blood but through an elaborate system of equivalencies. For example, a woman's potential or actual husband came from the "brother" group which included her former husband's sister's husband, her brother's wife's brother, her former husband's brother, her sister's former husband, her brother's wife's former husband, her former husband's wife's brother, her husband's wife's former husband or a man related to her through one of these classes.³⁷ A man would have married from the corresponding "sister" group. Below is one example which gives an idea of the complexity of Roman marriage and spouse equivalencies:

That the Romans did tend to marry step siblings is clear from Fig. 1.11. For example, Julia, the daughter of the Emperor Augustus, married as her third husband Tiberius who later became emperor. Tiberius, so we have seen, was already connected to Julia as her HSHB (husband's sister's husband's brother) through her first husband. Yet, since Tiberius was the son of Augustus' last wife, he was also in effect Julia's step brother. Moreover, after the marriage and divorce of Julia and Tiberius, Augustus adopted Tiberius thereby making him his daughter's adoptive brother as well.³⁸

The system of legal equivalencies was established by Roman jurists and integrated into the terminology used by the people. For example, a man's wife's brother's wife was the equivalent of his sister and he therefore referred to her as his sister. Also "In Latin literature any cousin, even a MBc/FSc (mother's brother's cousin/father's sister's cousin), could be referred to by a sibling term." Further a betrothal was enough to establish the equivalency bonds³⁹ as can be seen in *On Animals* 2 where Lysimachus calls Ti. Julius his father-in-law even though the marriage has not yet taken place.

Thus Lysimachus could easily have been both uncle and nephew to Ti. Alexander. Below are two of many possible scenarios for how it could have occurred without violating Roman incest laws.

Scenario 1. Alexander's son Marcus had been married or betrothed prior to his marriage to Berenice. This woman would have been Ti. Alexander's "sister" and would have remained so after the divorce or broken betrothal. Marcus' wife would then have looked for her next husband, a "brother" equivalency, in Marcus' extended family. There was no one available in one of the seven potential spouse categories mentioned above but Alexander's father was

unmarried at the time. Since there was not a blood relation, Alexander's father would have been considered a 'remote' uncle and marriage between them legal. In fact, there would have been a familial obligation to Marcus' wife if a divorce or broken betrothal had occurred for the more prestigious match with a Jewish princess. Alexander's father marries Marcus' former wife or betrothed and they have a child, Lysimachus. As the son of Alexander's father, Lysimachus is the brother of Philo and Alexander and the uncle of Ti. Alexander. Since Lysimachus' mother was the "sister" of Ti. Alexander, Lysimachus was also the nephew of Ti. Alexander. This would make him both the remote uncle and cousin of Ti. Alexander's daughter and their marriage would have been legal.

Scenario 2. Alexander's blood daughter marries and has a son named Lysimachus. Subsequently she is divorced or widowed. When she remarries, her new husband chooses not to raise her son. One of her male relatives, in this case her father's father, then adopts Lysimachus and raises him. As the adopted son of Alexander's father, Lysimachus becomes the brother of Philo and Alexander and therefore the uncle of Ti. Alexander. Since the mother of Lysimachus was Ti. Alexander's blood sister, Lysimachus would be his nephew. The daughter of Ti. Alexander would be Lysimachus' niece and cousin and the marriage would be legal.

Both scenarios are entirely plausible under Roman law and custom, but, Alexander's family was also Jewish. Here the possibilities are less clear since it is not known how Jews and particularly Roman Jews at this time and place would have interpreted or followed the marriage constraints given in Leviticus 18.1-18. For example Lev. 18.15 reads "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife." In scenario 1 above a man marries his son's daughter-in-law which may have been prohibited by an interpretation of Lev. 18.15. Nevertheless, with the Roman use of filial terms for equivalency relationships, it is still possible to have multiple scenarios where Lysimachus is both uncle and nephew without violating either Roman or Jewish law.

The Lysimachus confusion was given a further twist by the discovery of a Julius Lysimachus in a papyrus dated 63 CE. P. Fouad 21 lists Julius Lysimachus as a member of the consilium of the prefect C. Caecina Tuscus. Balogh and Pflaum published an article in 1952 suggesting that this Lysimachus should be identified with Alexander the alabarch.⁴⁰ As has been demonstrated, the textual reading of Lysimachus for Alexander in *Ant.* 19.276 is a textual corruption and so the identification of the Julius Lysimachus in P. Fouad 21 with Alexander is baseless. An identification with Alexander's brother Lysimachus, however, may be possible.

To conclude, Lysimachus was probably the younger brother of Philo and Alexander although it is very unlikely that he had the same mother (*On Animals* 2: Ti. Alexander is Lysimachus' mother's brother). He may have been considerably younger. He was probably a Roman citizen since it would have been unlikely for Ti. Alexander to marry a child to someone who would have reduced their status. His full name would have depended on his biological or adoptive father and cannot be determined. The daughter of Ti. Alexander who was betrothed to Lysimachus would have been named Julia.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁰ Balogh and Pflaum, *Revue histoire de droit français et étranger* 4e serie, XXX (1952): 123.

The Position of Alabarch

Although the rank of "alabarch" was significant and unique enough that Alexander became known by it, it remains unclear exactly what an alabarch actually was. Besides the alabarch references already given in Josephus there is an additional passage in *Ant.* 20.147 concerning Demetrios the alabarch a Jew of prominent birth and great wealth who was the husband of Agrippa's daughter Mariamme. "Alabarch" also appears in one papyrus PSI 7.776 dated in the 2nd or 3rd century CE for a Kasanes the alabarch and in one undated Christian inscription, Helas Greece 5, for Anastasios the alabarch. Neither of these give any indication of the duties of an alabarch. It also appears as a late textual variant to the word arabarch in Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* II.17.3.

The only actual description of an alabarch appears in the Theodosian Code IV.12.9 (=Cod. Just. IV.61.9) compiled in 438 CE where the alabarch was some type of fiscal functionary charged with levying taxes in the provinces of the lower Empire, particularly on livestock in lower Egypt.⁴¹ The late date of the law code raises questions, however, regarding to what extent it reflects first century practice in Egypt. M. Rostovtzeff and C. Welles have suggested alternately that the position of alabarch was connected with the collection of special taxes paid by Jews in Egypt.⁴² This is unlikely since one of the four known alabarchs was a Christian and another lived in Egypt long after the Jewish revolt in 116–117 CE after which the Jewish population was mostly decimated.

Linguistically the word alabarch is also a mystery. As a Greek word the roots "alab" and "arch" together should mean "head of the alab(s)" but alab is not a Greek or a Latin root. At the time of writing, it is being investigated whether alab may come from an Egyptian root.⁴³ Considerable confusion over the title alabarch occurred earlier in this century when J. Lesquier proposed that alabarch was a variant spelling of arabarch or the "chief of the arabs."⁴⁴ This is highly unlikely since Josephus knew and used both titles (arabarch in *Ant.* 15.167) for different circumstances. Lesquier's theory has been accepted by many however who have used the terms interchangeably causing some confusion.⁴⁵ Hopefully further study being done on the linguistic root(s) of "alab" will yield more information for speculation.

⁴¹ Jean Lesquier, "L'Arabarches d'Egypte," *Revue Archeologique*, 5e serie, tome VI (juil.-dec. 1917): p. 96, n. 1–3, 100.

⁴² M. I. Rostovtzeff and C. B. Welles, "A Parchment Contract of Loan from Dura-Europus on the Euphrates," *Yale Classical Studies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 50.

⁴³ "Alab" is not a common root in the papyri but there is one reference to an alabes, a fish in the Nile, and Alabythis was a Ptolemaic Egyptian city (known to be inhabited by Jews). It may also represent two roots "al" and "ab." "Ab" is used often in Egyptian as the word for priest or purity.

⁴⁴ Lesquier, p. 95–103.

⁴⁵ S. Demougin, *L'Ordre*, notes, p. 111–112, that the known alabarchs after Alexander and Demetrios were Roman citizens of the equestrian rank but the references he cites are all for arabarchs.

Alexander's Status as a Jew

A discussion of Alexander's status as a Jew can be focused into three areas: 1) his lineage 2) his relationship with the religious and political institutions of Jerusalem, and 3) his personal piety.

There have been many allusions above to the possibility that Alexander had a blood relation to the Hasmonean dynasty, the Herodian family, or both. This has been a topic for much speculation. M. Rostovtzeff theorized that Alexander was the grandson of Herod the Great and Mariamme but this can be quickly discounted since the former was known to have died in 7–8 BCE.⁴⁶ J. Schwartz suggested that Alexander must have been a Jewish nobleman, i.e. a Hasmonean and this theory fits well with Josephus' comments on his noble ancestry.⁴⁷ Most daring of all is N. Kokkinos' identification of Alexander as the grandson of Herod the Great. Herod and Mariamme's son Alexander was married to the Cappadocian princess Glaphyra and had two sons Alexander and Tigranius. Kokkinos proposes that Alexander the alabarch was in fact this last Alexander who would have had the Roman name Gaius Julius Alexander.⁴⁸ This theory is unlikely because it is inconceivable that Josephus, with all his interest in genealogies, would repeatedly mention Alexander the son of Alexander and Glaphyra and Alexander the alabarch and never state that they were the same person.

Although the specifics about Alexander's lineage cannot be known, it is very possible that he was descended from the Hasmoneans and was related to the ruling class and priesthood of Judea. As Josephus noted in *Life* 1–2 "with us a connection with the priesthood is the hallmark of an illustrious line" and that meant being descended from the Hasmoneans. Perhaps Alexander's "superior ancestry" meant being descended from the Hasmonean priesthood which would offer one explanation of why he chose to gold and silver plate the gates of the Temple. He also may have been related to a High Priest serving in the first century, most of whom were relatives of Herod. Jerome reported that Alexander's brother Philo was descended from priests.⁴⁹ Although this information was recorded centuries later, it may be reliable when one considers the evidence that Alexander's descendants joined the Senatorial class and remained prominent Roman citizens for centuries.⁵⁰ Their distinguished family history may have been common knowledge.

Alexander may also have been related by blood somehow to Herod. This would explain why his son Marcus was deemed a suitable husband for the Judean Princess Berenice. As can be seen from Josephus, Judean royalty who were also Roman citizens had a propensity for marrying someone to whom they were already related. At the very least Alexander was related to royalty after the

⁴⁶ M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. rev. by P. M. Fraser (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1957), v. 2, p. 672, n. VI.44.

⁴⁷ Schwartz, "Egypte," p. 43.

⁴⁸ Kokkinos, p. 73. cf. also N. Kokkinos, "Re-assembling the Inscription of Glaphyra from Athens," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 68, 288–290.

⁴⁹ Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 11; cf. Schwartz, "Note," p. 600.

⁵⁰ See SB 3.6223 (198 CE) and P. Oxy. 10.1264 (272 CE). Further evidence is currently being collected.

marriage of his son Marcus when he would have been considered a father-in-law equivalent to Agrippa II.

Finally the question can be raised whether Alexander's apparent high status as a Roman in some way interfered with his personal identity as a Jew. The evidence suggests that Alexander was able to be both Roman and Jew. Certainly the decoration of the Temple gates would have been considered a pious act. On top of that Josephus mentions Alexander's religious devotion in 20.100 and that Alexander unlike his son Ti. Alexander had continued in the practices of his people. Philo himself told us in *On Animals* 8 of Alexander's "continuous, insistent urging" that his son seek religious counseling from Philo. The overall implication is that the observation of Jewish beliefs and practices was of great importance to Alexander.

Regardless of Alexander's exact blood lineage, his superior ancestry, the expensive gift to the Temple, the marriage of Marcus, the procuratorship of Tiberius, and his reputation of personal piety undoubtedly would have made him a very prominent Jew in both Judea and Alexandria.

The Status of Philo

An interesting question that remains is whether and to what extent Philo shared the status, both among Romans and Jews, of his illustrious brother. Josephus described him in *Ant.* 20.100 as a man "held in great honor" but did not allude to his also having superior ancestry. The answer is in many ways contingent upon the exact blood relationship between them. While it is likely that they were in fact blood brothers and not just brother equivalents, it cannot be determined if they had the same two parents. Through which parent, if not both, did Alexander derive his "superior ancestry" and did Philo claim the same lineage? Philo is never described as being part of the Julius Alexander family which suggests that they had the same mother but not the same father. It could also simply mean that Philo was more commonly known by his Greek name and not his official Roman name. It was not unusual in Egypt for provincial Romans to prefer usage of a Greek or even an Egyptian name. If Alexander, as suggested above, inherited his Roman citizenship from his father then Philo would also have been a Roman since Alexander's father would have married only a Roman.

Further evidence for Philo's citizenship is the fact that he served at the head of the Jewish embassy to Gaius. There are indications that Roman Jews were often selected to serve on Jewish embassies to Roman officials, probably because their status would carry more influence. In the famous letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, six of the twelve Jewish ambassadors had Roman names.⁵¹ In a series of decrees from the early first century BCE (*Ant.* 14.219ff.), Jewish envoys who were apparently also Romans are mentioned as seeking special rights for Jews.

Philo also was related to the royal family of Judea. At the very least he became related when his nephew Marcus married Berenice if a stronger blood relationship had not already existed. He also would have gained status among Jews for his brother's "superior ancestry" even if he did not share the exact blood lineage. When Philo made his pilgrimage to Jerusalem as described in *On*

⁵¹ CPJ 153 = P. Lond. 1912; cf. Schwartz, "Note," p. 601.

Providence 2.107, he may have been welcomed as an honored guest by the priests on account of his brother's donation to the Temple, and by the Jewish royalty because of his nephew Tiberius' procuratorship and his other nephew Marcus' marriage.

The possibility that Alexander was connected to the priesthood has been discussed above. If so then this would lend credence to Jerome's claim that Philo was descended from priests. Also as noted above, there is evidence that Alexander's descendants became Roman Senators and thrived in Rome for centuries. Jerome also spent time in Rome and may have acquired his information about Philo from one of Alexander's descendants.

Conclusions

The above evidence can be combined into a general biography of Alexander. He was born around 10 BCE in Alexandria or his parents later settled there. His family was very wealthy and at least one parent was noted for having a distinguished blood line. If the blood line refers, as I believe, to their Jewish ancestry then he may have been descended from the Hasmoneans. Alexander's parents were either born Roman citizens or received citizenship grants from Julius Caesar. If the latter was the case then his father's name would have been Gaius Julius Alexander. Alexander's full name was [praenomen] Julius Alexander with the praenomen possibly being Gaius. He had at least two siblings, Philo and Lysimachus, although they may not have all had the same two parents. Lysimachus almost certainly had a different mother and was much younger.

Alexander probably spent some time in Rome in his youth. There he met and became friends with Claudius and most likely acquainted with Agrippa who was one of Claudius' circle. He would also have met Claudius' mother Antonia. Alexander probably returned to Egypt upon reaching adulthood and would have married between the ages of 17 and 25 according to Roman practice. He no doubt used his connections with the Roman Imperial family and his family's wealth and position to secure a series of Roman magistracies. He was procurator of Antonia's land estates in Egypt and he became the alabarch, a title which he apparently held for some time. The alabarchy may have entailed levying taxes in parts of the Roman empire including Egypt.

In 35 CE Alexander made a large loan to Agrippa's wife Cypros. Sometime after that he was imprisoned by Gaius but may have had the succor of Claudius and Antonia during this time. The imprisonment may have been in connection with his brother Philo's embassy to Gaius in 39/40 CE. Claudius freed Alexander in 41 CE.

Alexander had two sons. Marcus Julius Alexander was involved in commerce in the Thebaid area, married the Jewish princess Berenice, and died prematurely. Tiberius Julius Alexander he groomed for Roman public office financing his position as an equestrian. Tiberius' equestrian career soared as he became epistrategos, procurator of Judea, prefect of Egypt, and Praetorian Prefect. Apparently though he soon became a concern to his father over Jewish religious practice and Alexander urged Tiberius to seek the counsel of Philo. It is unknown whether he lived to see Tiberius act as a Roman general in the attack and destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

Alexander remained a practicing Jew known for his pious acts. He had the gates of the Jerusalem Temple plated with gold and silver. This would have established close connections with the Temple High Priest. He was also related to the Judean royal family by his son Marcus' marriage if not before that. These two acts plus Tiberius' procuratorship would have made Alexander well known in Judea.

The above evidence has demonstrated that Alexander was both a very prominent Roman and very prominent Jew. These two aspects of his life were intertwined and determined many conditions of his life and that of his family. This dual status would have seemed unremarkable to him since Alexander knew of other upper-class Jews who were also Roman citizens. It is only remarkable to us as we observe the ease with which a first century Jew moved within both Roman and Jewish circles.

Recluse or Representative? Philo and Greek-Speaking Judaism Beyond Alexandria

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In his description of events under Caligula, Eusebius introduces his readers to Philo: "In his time Philo became widely known as a remarkable man of culture not only among our own people but also among those originating from the outside. He was a Hebrew by race, inferior to none of the distinguished people in office in Alexandria." He then mentions the basis for his reputation: "The quantity and quality of his work on the theological and ancestral branches of learning is evident to all." The same is true of his expertise in Hellenistic thought: "it is not necessary to say anything about his ability in philosophy and the liberal learning of the outside world since he, especially in his zealous studies of Plato and Pythagoras, is reported to have excelled all in his generation."¹ While the encomiastic nature of Eusebius' statements forces us to take them *cum grano salis*, they do raise the issue of Philo's relationship to the larger world.

Philo is significant for three different worlds: Judaism, Christianity, and Hellenistic philosophy. The Caesarean's suggestion that Philo was a significant philosopher has been echoed in the twentieth century by Harry Wolfson and, more recently in a more limited but nonetheless significant way, by Roberto Radice.² The *communis opinio*, however, is that Philo is much more important as a *witness* to rather than as a *formulator* of Middle Platonic thought. Philo's relationship to Christianity is better known. David Runia has recently traced the extent of Christianity's direct indebtedness to Philo and suggested that there may be an indirect debt as well through "Philonism," i.e., the form of Judaism attested by Philo but not directly connected with his treatises.³ This leads us back to Philo's relationship to Greek-speaking Judaism in the Diaspora. To what extent may we use his *œuvre* to reconstruct Diaspora Judaism? The issue is not whether Philo is representative of Judaism socially and intellectually. He is not: he was a

¹ Eusebius, *HE* 2.4.2-3. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

² H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University, 1947) and R. Radice, *Platonismo e creazionismo in Filone di Alessandria* (Pubblicazioni del Centro di Ricerche di Metafisica: Sezione di Metafisica del Platonismo nel suo sviluppo storico, e nella filosofia patristica; Studi e testi 7; Milan: Rusconi, 1989), who argues that Philo originated the concept that the ideas are the thoughts of God. For an English summary see his "Observations on the Theory of the Ideas as the Thoughts of God in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhA* 3 (1991) 126-34.

³ D. T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (CRINT 3.3; Assen: Van Gorcum/Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), esp. 340-42.