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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).
Contents

S1 Q Bibliography Supplement VI: 1995
David M. Schiefel .................................................................................................................. 1

S20 Abraham and the Promise of the Spirit: Galatians and the Hellenistic-Jewish Mysticism of Philo
Soo-Kar Wan .................................................................................................................................. 6

S20 Becoming God's Body: The KAVOD in Valentinianism
April DeConick ................................................................................................................................ 23

S43 The Gospels and the Mishnah, The Church Fathers and the Talmud: If Christianity Were Written Down by Rabbis
Jacob Neusner ................................................................................................................................... 57

S43 Early Rabbinic Sources and Jesus Research
Craig A. Evans .................................................................................................................................... 53

S43 Reference to the Targumim in the Exegesis of the New Testament
Bruce Chilton ...................................................................................................................................... 77

Robert L. Mowry .............................................................................................................................. 82

S73 The Davidic Messiah and Matthew's Jewish Christianity
Donald J. Verhey ............................................................................................................................... 102

S78 Paul’s Rhetoric of Mutuality: A Rhetorical Reading of Romans
Marty L. Reid ..................................................................................................................................... 117

S78 A Rhetorical Suggestion Concerning Romans 2
Douglas A. Campbell ....................................................................................................................... 140

S81 “Not Counting [the] Women . . .”: A Feminist Reading of Matthew 26–28
Sheila E. McGann ............................................................................................................................. 168

S84 Ethnicity in Persian Yahud: Between Anthropological Analysis and Ideological Criticism
Willa Mathias Johnson ....................................................................................................................... 177

S93 The Impact of the Bethsaida Finds on Our Knowledge of the Historical Jesus
John J. Rousseau ............................................................................................................................... 187
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S97 Judith Prays for Help (Jdt 9:1-14); Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Craven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S97 A Prayer to Sarapis</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert F. Hull, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S97 Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-14: Hymns of the Heavenly Liturgy</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Pierre Ruiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S97 I Clement 59:3-61:3: Epistolary Prayer in Clement of Rome</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara E. Bove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S105 Poststructuralism and/or Afrocentrism</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn Kelley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S110 Apportioning Desolation: Contexts for Interpreting Edom’s Fate and Function in Isaiah</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire R. Mathews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S110 The Servant of YHWH and Daughter Zion: Alternating Visions of YHWH’s Community</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Tull Willey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Scott Bartosy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. H. Talbert and J. H. Hayes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S122 Reflections on 1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randal A. Argall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S122 The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11: Rethinking the Questions</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Elizabeth Johnson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S140 Touched by a God: Aelius Aristides, Religious Healing, and Asclepius Cults</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven C. Mui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S142 The Nuptial Chamber Revisited: The Acts of Thomas and Cultural Intertextuality</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Valantasis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S142 Intertextuality and Intent: John and the Apostolic Mission in the Harris Fragments on Polycarp</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Weidmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S146 Challenging by Confirming, Renewing by Repeating: The Parables of the Reign of the Heavens in Matthew 13 as Embedded Narratives</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Carter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S146 Matthew’s Parables and Roman Politics: The Imperial Setting of Matthew’s Narrative with Special Reference to His Parables</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Andrew Overman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S151 Wisdom, Revelation, and Eschatology in an Early Essene Writing</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortel Elders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S160 The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John R. Levison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S163 The Greek Foundation-Legend: Its Formation and Relation to History</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James C. Hange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S169 Unsearchable Judgments and Inscrutable Ways: Reflections on the Discussion of Romans</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul J. Achtemeier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S170 What Does Philo Mean by “Seeing God”? Some Methodological Considerations</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Birnbaum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S170 Philo and the Restoration of Israel</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James M. Scott</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S170 Alexander the Alabarch: Roman and Jew</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine G. Evans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S170 Recluse or Representative? Philo and Greek-Speaking Judaism Beyond Alexandria</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory E. Sterling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Stanley Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S189 Narrative Outline of the Composition of Luke According to the Two-Gospel Hypothesis</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lornar Cope, David L. Duncan, William R. Farmer, Allan J. McNicol, David B. Penabody, Philip L. Shuler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S205 Pauline Theology: Some Thoughts for a Pause in Its Pursuit</td>
<td>688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul W. Meyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S205 In Quest of Paul’s Theology: Retrospect and Prospect</td>
<td>704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James D. G. Dunn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Reliability of the Sources

We know of Alexander the alabarch directly only through the writings of Josephus (War 5.265; 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 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 Titus was Praetorian Prefect between 71 and 79 CE. An undated papyrus CPJ 418 = 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. 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. It has generally been considered one of Philo’s later works and Terian dates it around 50 CE.

The Life of the Alabarch

Josephus first referred to Alexander in his earlier work, The Jewish War 5.205 where during an excursion 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 (45–48 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 prior to 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 Cyprus the wife of Agrippa (Ant. 18.159–160). In the events leading up to the loan (Ant. 18.145–150) Agrippa, having had various adventures and incurring 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 Cyprus because he marvelled at her love of her husband and all 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. 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 Claudius in 40/41 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

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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 most elite praetorians were paid 750. A sum of 200,000 drachmas could have funded a large house guard 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. Segoléne Demougin, L’Ordre Équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens. Collection de l’Ecole Francaise de Rome 106 (Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1988), p. 630–639.
Alexander, who was her first husband, Agrippa gave her to his own brother Herod, after asking Claudius to give him the kingdom of Chaldis.

Alexander was an old friend, φίλος ἀρχινομικός, to the Emperor Claudius suggesting that they were taught contemporary in age. J. Schwartz uses this argument to date Alexander's birth between 15 and 10 B.C.E. Since Claudius was born in 10 B.C.E., there is no record of Claudius ever visiting Egypt and his poor health most likely would have prohibited such extensive travel. Alexander, therefore, must have spent some time in Rome probably prior to his son being born in 23 B.C.E. 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 B.C. and the date of his release in 41 C.E.

In Act 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 B.C.E (Act 18:148). 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" (ἐγγγελατότος) for Claudius' mother Antonia Drusia. This translation of the Greek is misleading. The title ἐγγγελατότος can be translated as guardian, steward, administrator, or procurator. The Latin word for a woman's legal guardian under the tutela matricula was tutor. The Greek counterpart was κύριος. It is too great a convenience that a guardian with these or 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 the interests and arrange for the profits to be sent to her in Rome. 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. How far the relationship between Alexander and Antonia extended cannot be known. When Agrippa was imprisoned in Rome, Act 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 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. The other two cases are the marriages of Berenice's sister Mariamne to the Roman Jew Julius Archelaus (Ant. 19.355) of whom nothing more is known and her second marriage to Demetrius of Alexandria, the abarchi 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 abarchi 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 abarchi' is the aorist participle form ἀλαβαρχίστας. 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 ἐγγέλατο 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 been at one time held the title abarchi. It does not require that Alexander was dead.

Once again Alexander's wealth is emphasized with a new addition of his superior ancestry προτευτέων γένους. 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. Whatever 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 descendant of the Hasmonaean. 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 related named Lysimachus, who is clearly not Alexander the abarchi, 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 overbearing bearing that some have nowadays, but with a modest self-reliance that becomes a freeman—even a descendant of freemen. He sat
down partly for his own instruction and partly because of his father’s continuous, insistent urging.

On the surface it appears that what “descendant of freemen” Philo is revealing that Tl. 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 more 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 Tl. 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 tris nomina and could only be held by a Roman citizen. If they inherited their citizenship from their father then all they 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 as 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 themsevles 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 Tl. Alexander’s rank in the Annals 15, 28. 3 as Roman knight of the first rank (inrustatus equester Romanus).19 The exact meaning of inrustatus (also spelled illustrius) is unknown but a study of all illustrius 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 Tl. 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 tenth year of service. This means that after he had reached adulthood in 18-20 CE, Tiberius, of the family 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 is also not the type of background that would have put Alexander on such terms with Claudius and Antonia.

It remains most probable that Alexander or his father received an individual grant of citizenship from Julius Caesar, Marcus Antonius, 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.


17 The name Marcus Julius Alexander has been found on several ostraca. cf. Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fokk, Corpus Papyrologi Judaeorum (Cambridge, Mass.: Magnes Press and Harvard University Press, 1969), vol. 2, p. 197-200. (i.e. CII) 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 Fokk, "Notes from the Archive of Nicomor" 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 cognomina. The creation of this category is curious to the other evidence 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 disagreeing it.


20 Demougin, L’Ordre, p. 594-599.


would be Roman citizens for the next 100 years. 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. 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. 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. 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, 297).

**Alexander's Roman Name**

The question of Alexander's full Roman name involves 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 Antiquitates 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 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.

25 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 Goodenough, p. 97-98.


The earliest prosopographical studies list Alexander's full name as Tiberius Julius Alexander. 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. He assumed that Alexander could not have received citizenship under Tiberius because after 30 BCE one had to 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. 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 CPh 420 ab (= F. Ryd. 156, 126). CPh 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: [δί]ιρεῖ ὑποτασσόμενον Γαίου Γοίλου 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 oikos of Julia Augusta formerly owned by a "Gaius Julius Alexander." The relevant Greek portion from lines 7-8 reads:

οὐδῇ τῶν προτέτων [Γαίου Γοίλου Αλεξάνδρου] ἵδαιμον.

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.


Although not mentioned in CPJ, there is other evidence for a Gaius Julius Alexander. P. Mil. 9 dated 13/14 CE mentions: Γαίου Ιουλίου Ἀλέξιου (αὐτοῦ) υἱὸς Ψωλός. Possible reconstructions of the father's name may be Poëthus or Poëneus. Here the name Gaius Julius Alexander is finally clearly established but the 'son of Psolos' 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 Antiquitates, 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 (W) of 1354 and the Epitome (E) of the 10th or 11th century all have Λύσιμαχον ἀυτοῦ Λύσιμαχον. Codex bibl. Ambrosianae (A) from the 11th century, the primary family of the AMW family, has the marginal note γρ Λυσιμαχον. The Latin version made by order of Cassiodorus in the 5th or 6th century has only Lysimachus.

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. out brother's son), cited in this regard, that not only men but also dumb animals possess reason.

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.

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

4) 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 different version 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:

30 Schwartz, "Note," p. 596.
31 G. Tappe, De Philonis libro qui inscribitur Alexandros e peri tou logon echein ta alogo zoiq: Quaestiones selectae (Dissertation, Gottingen, 1912), p. 4-5.
33 Turner, p. 56.
34 Turner, p. 27.
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. 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 spousal 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 HSBH (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.

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 M niece/F sister, 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 bond as can be seen in On Animals 2 where Lysimachus calls T. 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 T. 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 T. 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 T. Alexander. Since Lysimachus' mother was the "sister" of T. Alexander, Lysimachus was also the nephew of T. Alexander. This would make him both the remote uncle and cousin of T. 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 T. Alexander. Since the mother of Lysimachus was T. Alexander's blood sister, Lysimachus would be his nephew. The daughter of T. 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 Lev. 18.15 reads "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's 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. Found 21 lists Julius Lysimachus as a member of the consilium of the prefect C. Caecina Tuscanus. Balogh and Pfau published an article in 1952 suggesting that this Lysimachus should be identified with Alexander the alabarch. 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. Found 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: T. 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 T. 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 T. 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 Pfau, Recueil de textes juridiques en grec ancien, étranger et de l'époque hellénistique, XXX (1952): 123.
The Position of Alarbach

Although the rank of "alabarach" was significant and unique enough that Alexander became known by it, it remains unclear exactly what an alabarach actually was. Besides the alabarach references already given in Josephus there is an additional passage in Ant. 20.147 concerning Demetrius the alabarach a Jew of prominent birth and great wealth who was the husband of Agrippa's daughter Mariamme. "Alabarach" also appears in one papyrus PSI 7.776 dated in the 2nd or 3rd century CE for a Kanaane the alabarach and in one undated Christian inscription, Helas Greek 5, for Anastasius the alabarach. Neither of these give any indication of the duties of an alabarach. 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 alabarach appears in the Theodosian Code IV.12.9 (=Cod. Just. IV.61.9) compiled in 438 CE where the alabarach was some type of fiscal functionary charged with levying taxes in the provinces of the lower Egypt, particularly on livestock in lower Egypt.41 The late date of the law code raises questions, however, regarding if it reflects first century practice in Egypt. M. Rostovtzeff and G. Welles have suggested alternately that the position of alabarach was connected with the collection of special taxes paid by Jews in Egypt.42 This is unlikely since one of the four known alabarachs was a Christian and another lived in Egypt long after the Jewish revolt in 116-117 CE, after which the Jewish population was mostly declined.

Linguistically the word alabarach 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 alabarach occurred earlier in this century when J. Lesquier proposed that alabarach 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.

43 "Alab" is not a common root in the papyri but there is one reference to an alaba, fish in the Nile, and Alabymus 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 priestly.
44 Lesquier, p. 90-103.
45 S. Demougin, L'Ordon, notes, p. 111-112, that the known alabarachs after Alexander and Demetrius 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 the possibility that Alexander had a blood relation to the Hasmonaean 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 Hasmonaean 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. Mariamme's son Alexander was married to the Cappadocian princess Glaphrya and had two sons Alexander and Tigran. Kokkinos proposes that Alexander the alabarach was in fact this last Alexander who would have had the Roman name Galus 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 Glaphrya and Alexander the alabarach 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 Hasmonaean 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 Hasmonaean. Perhaps Alexander's "superior ancestry" meant being descended from the Hasmonaean priesthood which would offer one explanation of why he chose to go 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 descendents joined the senatorial class and remained prominent Roman citizens for centuries. 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

49 Jerome, De Viris Illustribus 11; cf. Schwartz, "Note," p. 600.
50 See SB 3.6225 (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 20.160 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, insistently 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. 20.160 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 was also 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


Evans: Alexander the Alabarch / 593

Provedence 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 descendents 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 descendents.

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 Hasmonaeans. 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 [full name]. 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 alabarch 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 Cypria. 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 equesrian. Tiberius' equestrian career seemed to be promising but 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."

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. 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. This leads us back to Philo's relationship to Greek-speaking Judaism in the Diaspora. To what extent may we use his works 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 cristianesimo 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; Milano: 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." SPA 3 (1951) 126-34.