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*Le Conflit Judéo-Alexandrin de 38–41: L'identité juive  
à l'épreuve (review)*

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value of Heckel's most recent contribution.

The information in the entries is enhanced by sixty pages of notes that include references to sources and more recent studies; fuller information on the particular individual; analysis of textual reading; discussion of varying views; and justification of the version given in the bibliography. Abbreviations of the sources are given in three sections preceding the entries: ancient sources, multi-volume reference works, and modern works. A chronological table extending from 383/2 to 281 and a map of Alexander's campaigns from 334–323 provide the essential temporal and spatial framework within which all these people lived. Stemma of thirteen important lines and an appendix giving three groups of men (e.g. cavalrymen from Orchomenus listed on *IG* 7.3206) impart another sort of order to many of the individuals. A succinct glossary defines Greek terms and names while a concordance equates Greek and variant forms with the form used in this volume. While most would realize that Alketas is Alcestas few would identify Taxiles' name in its Indian form of Ambhi.

In sum, the task was monumental; the production of the book praiseworthy for its quality and concern for usefulness. The statement of its value printed on the inside cover is surely true: "it will open up new perspectives for all interested in Alexander's reign." We know how many have that interest. Thank you, Waldemar and Blackwell.

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KATHERINE BLOUIN. *Le Conflit Judéo-Alexandrin de 38–41: L'identité juive à l'épreuve*. Paris: L' Harmattan, 2005. Pp. 199. \$25. ISBN 2-7475-83487-1.

Katherine Blouin's study of the Judaeo-Alexandrian conflict from AD 38 to 41 offers more than its title indicates. Thus one of its two chapters surveys the history of the Jewish community of Alexandria from Ptolemaic times to the pogrom of 38. The enlarged chronological parameters of the work are, of course, introduced to explain the long-term causes of the conflict. Similarly, consideration of methodological issues and of geographical locales—the synagogue, Jewish quarter, gymnasium and theatre—are included for their bearing upon the central issue of the book. Blouin's work offers two quite distinct explanations for the crisis:

an historical one and a literary, sociological and anthropological analysis.

In presenting her historical appraisal, Blouin assigns blame to Roman policy, specifically Augustus' settlement, following the absorption of Egypt into the Roman Empire after Actium. She argues that under the Lagids, the Jews of Alexandria enjoyed civic rights and flourished socially, economically and culturally. They preserved their religious and cultural identity while partaking fully in Hellenistic cultural life and maintaining, on the whole, good relations with the Greek community of Alexandria. With Rome's entry upon the scene, the situation of the Jewish community deteriorated alarmingly and the seeds of the subsequent conflict were sown.

Roman policy was not deliberately hostile to the Jewish and Greek segments of the population of Alexandria. Rome simply desired to maintain peace and curb disturbance and, with this aim, attempted to satisfy both Jew and Greek. Hence the religious and communal privileges granted the Jewish community by Julius Caesar were confirmed. At the same time, Rome, seeking the support of the Greek community, affirmed Greek civic superiority over the Jews of Alexandria by classifying the Jews with the native Egyptians. Moreover, the promise of easy access to Roman citizenship was dangled alluringly before Alexandrian citizens. The change in civic status had a profound effect upon the economic status of the Jews since it rendered them liable to payment of the poll tax, the *laographia*—a move, of course, of considerable economic benefit to Rome. Both Jew and Greek were deeply dissatisfied with the Roman settlement: the Greeks because of their subjection to Rome, the Jews because of their reduced socio-economic status. Attempts by the Jews to regain their former civic and cultural position were focused upon their discrediting the Greeks and gaining access to the *ephebia* and hence to the gymnasium. These moves were resented by the Greeks, who, in response, launched both intellectual and physical attacks upon the Jews. By doing so, the Greeks were not merely opposing the civic and cultural aspirations of the Jews. They were also indirectly venting their hostility upon Roman rule.

At the same time, Blouin approaches the Judaeo-Alexandrian conflict from a totally different angle, viewing it as a theatrical spectacle with dramatic changes of scene from synagogue and Jewish quarter to gymnasium and theatre, with actors engaged in typical theatrical dialogue and action. The use of the terms *divertimento*, *choréographie dithyrambique* and *dramatique* sustains this image. Above all, the recourse to physical force, as expressed in the pogrom and counter-attack on the gymnasium, is described as a *catharsis*, while Claudius' settlement (CPJ 2.153) reveals the Roman emperor as a veritable *deus ex machina* re-

storing harmony to the Alexandrian community, though it must be emphasized that Blouin does not actually employ this term.

To buttress the dramatic image and flesh out, as it were, the details, Blouin takes a cue from the social sciences and blends the theatrical representation with a modern sociological-anthropological approach, placing the drama of Jews and Greeks within a multi-cultural context. Jews and Greeks are represented as antithetical political, social, and cultural forces, *les nous contre les autres*, each group maintaining and safeguarding its own legitimacy, while, at the same time, denying and destroying the legitimacy of the other group, both in Alexandria and in the presence of the emperors Caligula and Claudius in Rome. The culmination of this process, the ultimate *catharsis*, is the physical violence perpetrated on the other by each side in the conflict, followed by the Claudian settlement that restored harmony between the two communities by imposing upon both a compromise solution. Multi-cultural diversity in the city of Alexandria is thus enforced.

Blouin's historical thesis in itself is not novel. It seems particularly influenced by the work of J. Méléze Modrzejewski. It is well-argued and certainly more convincing than alternative theories, offered by V. Tcherikover<sup>1</sup> and A. Kasher,<sup>2</sup> to the effect that the Jews aimed at attaining full citizenship or were struggling for self determination in their own *politeuma*. At the same time, the prominent role assumed by native Egyptians in the disturbance (Philo, *In Flacc.* 29, 92–94, *Leg.* 170; Joseph. *Ap.* 2.69)<sup>3</sup> obliges us to question whether the issue of the civic status of both Greeks and Jews in Alexandria alone underlies the conflict and whether longer term causation, specifically native Egyptian anti-Semitism, did not play a prominent role in the conflict. It remains, of course, an open question, given the problematic date of Manetho's alleged hostility to Jews, whether the seeds of later Egyptian anti-Semitism are to be traced back to the Ptolemaic period.<sup>4</sup>

Blouin's presentation of the conflict as a theatrical display obviously derives, to a considerable extent, from Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, which have a distinctly literary, as opposed to historical, flavour. With their stark contrast of noble Jews against ignoble Alexandrians, particularly the Greek leaders Isidorus, Lampon and Dionysius, culminating in the theologically appropriate and deserved demise of the

<sup>1</sup> V. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum [CPJ]* I (Cambridge, MA 1957) 61.

<sup>2</sup> *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Tübingen 1985) 322–323, 356–357.

<sup>3</sup> P. Schäfer, *Xenophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA/London 1997) 145, 159–160.

<sup>4</sup> Tcherikover, *CPJ* I.25.

arch foes of the Jews, Flaccus and Caligula, they certainly conjure up the world of the Greek theatre.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly the case with the *In Flaccum*, whose resemblance to a moral didactic text containing a warning to future administrators to avoid Flaccus' fate is most apparent. Moreover, as Blouin demonstrates, theatrical imagery permeates both works. The other main source for the Judaeo-Alexandrian conflict, the *Acta Isidori*, presents an equally fictionalized theatrical document, though one obviously written from the opposite angle, extolling the virtues of the Alexandrian martyrs against the vices of the Jews, in whose number Claudius himself, as the offspring of the Jewess Salome, is included. This also is an obvious source of Blouin's theatrical reconstruction.

Where Blouin scores in originality is in her application of the socio-logical-anthropological approach to the course of events. By doing so, she provides her readers, in a sound and subtle psychologically nuanced manner, with a vivid depiction of the emotional stance assumed by both groups involved in the conflict.

At the same time, a caveat is in order. What Blouin is presenting is a highly abstract, static, stylized view of events, which tends on occasion to be oblivious to highly pertinent historical considerations. Three examples illustrate what I perceive as limitations of her literary-sociological-anthropological approach. First, as I have already noted, native Egyptians appear to have played a considerable role in the disturbances. Accordingly, Blouin's stark contrast of Greeks and Jews, each facing the other as *les nous contre les autres* is, to say the least, simplistic. Secondly, I note how Blouin emphasizes the theatrical character of Philo's description of the Carabas incident, designed by the Greeks to humiliate Agrippa I during his visit to Alexandria (*In Flacc.* 38). Yet, as Louis Feldman points out, *marin*, the Aramaic epithet accorded the mock king, suggests that more than mere theatricality was at stake.<sup>6</sup> Philo's depiction of the incident suggests that we are dealing with a charge against the Jews of dual loyalty, as well as with Greek fear of the creation of an autonomous Jewish entity within Alexandria. Finally, the image which Blouin projects of Claudius as a restorer of balance or harmony is questionable for two reasons. First, Claudius most certainly did not solve the problem between Jew and Greek at Alexandria, whence the explosions under Nero in AD 66 and under Trajan

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<sup>5</sup> She herself cites C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore 1997) 14–15. See also Schäfer (above, n. 3) 138 on "elements of a novel" in the *In Flaccum*.

<sup>6</sup> L.H. Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World* (New Jersey 1995) 115.

from 115 to 117, culminating in the destruction of the Alexandrian Jewish community. Secondly, I question whether for the Jews, even within the context of the events of AD 43, Claudius' settlement can be termed a resolution. After all, the inferior socio-economic status of the Jews was by no means alleviated and, therefore, the settlement could scarcely be perceived as a compromise from the Jewish point of view.<sup>7</sup>

A final consideration: Blouin's use of the term *catharsis* is, in my view, problematical. She seems to be applying it to the experiences of the participants in the drama, the Jews and Greeks of Alexandria. This is most certainly not the conventional interpretation of the term *catharsis* in a dramatic context, which is applied to the viewer of the drama and not to the actors in it.

However, notwithstanding some reservations which I have with Blouin's argument, I must emphasize that I regard her book as an important contribution to scholarship. Her thesis is well presented, respectful of the sources, innovative and certainly likely to provoke lively debate. My only regret is that an *index nominum et locorum* was not included.

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DAVID S. POTTER. *The Roman Empire at Bay: A.D. 180-395*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004. Pp. xxii + 762. ISBN 0-415-10058-5.

This big book is the "Late Empire" volume, the seventh of the eight-volume *Routledge History of the Ancient World*. It begins with Commodus (as Gibbon did) and ends with Theodosius the Great. Potter begins by saying that "at the height of its power the Roman Empire was an *ad hoc* collection of acquisitions that ... were governed in ways that suited them. The geographical diversity was mirrored in its administrative diversity."

The early decentralization of the empire "strengthened the hands of emperors who were able to negotiate between different interest groups,

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<sup>7</sup> Tcherikover, *CPJ* 1.73