

When the Governor is a Subject: The Rhetoric of Misrule in Philo's *In Flaccum* and *De legatione ad Gaium*

1) Excerpt from Philo's description of the riots of AD 38 (*Leg.* 127, 129): μηκέτι οὖν ὑπομένειν τὴν δυσχωρίαν οἰοί τε ὄντες ἐξεχέοντο εἰς ἐρημίας καὶ αἰγιαλοὺς καὶ μνήματα, γλιχόμενοι σπάσαι καθαροῦ καὶ ἀβλαβοῦς ἀέρος. εἰ δέ τινες ἢ προκατελήφθησαν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις μέρεσι τῆς πόλεως ἢ ἀγνοία τῶν κατασκευασάντων κακῶν ἀγρόθεν παρεγένοντο, πολυτρόπων ἀπέλαυον συμφορῶν, ἢ καταλειόμενοι ἢ κεράμω τιτρωσκόμενοι ἢ πρίνου κλάδοις καὶ δρυὸς τὰ καιριώτατα μέρη τοῦ σώματος καὶ μάλιστα κεφαλὴν ἄχρι θανάτου καταγνύμενοι.

[...]

ἕτερος δὲ λόχος ἦν ἐφεδρεύων τοῖς τοῦ ποταμοῦ λιμέσι πρὸς ἀρπαγὴν τῶν καταγομένων Ἰουδαίων καὶ ὧν κατ' ἐμπορίαν ἐκόμιζον· ἐπεισβαίνοντες γὰρ ταῖς ναυσὶ τὸν φόρτον ἐν ὄψει τῶν κυρίων ἐξεφόρουσαν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐξαγκωνίζοντες ἐνεπίμπρασαν, ὕλην χρώμενοι πηδαλίοις, οἶαξι, κοντοῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐπὶ τῶν καταστρωμάτων σανίσιν.

Since they [the Jews] could not endure the confinement, they poured out like water into the wilderness, the sea-shore, and the tombs, striving to breathe clear and wholesome air. If any of them either had been left behind in the other districts of the city or through ignorance of the evils that had befallen, came in from the countryside, they had the benefit of every sort of misfortune, whether they were stoned, wounded with sharp tiles, or beaten on the vital parts of their body, especially the head, with the branches of oak and maple trees—even to the point of death.

[...]

Another band was lying in wait on the banks of the river to catch any Jews who happened to return there, in order to plunder their goods. They boarded the ships and in front of their owners took their cargo, bound the owners, and set them on fire, using the rudders, handles, punting-poles, and rowers' benches as fuel.<sup>1</sup>

2) Philo's ideal hearing before the imperial council (*Leg.* 350): δικαστοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἔργα ταῦτα ἦν· καθίσει μετὰ συνέδρων ἀριστίνδην ἐπιλελεγμένων, ἐξεταζομένης ὑποθέσεως μεγίστης ἐν τετρακοσίοις ἔτεσιν ἡσυχασθείσης καὶ νῦν πρῶτον εἰσαγομένης ἐπὶ μυριάσι πολλαῖς τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων Ἰουδαίων, ἐκατέρωθεν στήναι τοὺς ἀντιδίκους μετὰ τῶν συναγορευσόντων, ἐν μέρει μὲν ἀκοῦσαι τῆς κατηγορίας, ἐν μέρει δὲ τῆς ἀπολογίας πρὸς μεμετρημένον ὕδωρ, ἀναστάντα βουλευσασθαι μετὰ τῶν συνέδρων, τί χρὴ φανερώς ἀποφῆνασθαι γνώμη τῆ δικαιοσύνη

For this was to have been the task of a judge: to sit with counsellors chosen for merit, since the matter before them was of the greatest importance and nothing of it had been heard for four centuries. Moreover, now for the first time, this charge was being brought against the multitude of Alexandrian Jews. He ought to have stood on either side the disputing parties with the advocates who speak for them, to have listened to them in turn, and in turn to have heard their defence according to the water clock, and to have risen to confer with his counsellors regarding what it was necessary to declare in public according to just sentiment.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations my own.

3) οί δ' – ἐγκότως γὰρ εἶχον – τὸ κατηλλάχθαι δοκεῖν λόγῳ μόνον ἐπιμορφάσαντες, ἔργοις δὲ κατὰ διάνοιαν ἀσύμβατα μνησικακοῦντες καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ καθυποκρινόμενοι γνησίαν φιλίαν ὅλον αὐτὸν συναρπάζουσι· καὶ γίνεται ὁ μὲν ἄρχων ὑπήκοος, οἱ δ' ὑπήκοοι ἡγεμόνες, εἰσηγούμενοι μὲν ἀλυσιτελεστάτας γνώμας, εὐθύς δὲ ταύτας ἐπισφραγίζόμενοι.

But [Flaccus' Alexandrian enemies], because they carried a grudge and only changed their appearance to seem to have reconciled themselves, did so in word only. But in their deeds and their intentions, they bore irreconcilable malice. Just like actors in the theater who pretend a genuine friendship, they captured him utterly. And so the governor became a subject, and the subjects governors. They therefore advanced the most unprofitable propositions, and straightaway ratified them.

4) Isidorus and Lampo's argument to Flaccus (*In Flacc.* 21-23):

συνταξάμενοι πάντες οὗτοι βούλευμα βουλεύουσι κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀργαλεώτατον καὶ τῷ Φλάκκῳ προσελθόντες ἰδίᾳ φασίν· “ἔρρει μὲν σοι τὰ ἀπὸ Τιβερίου Νέρωνος τοῦ παιδός, ἔρρει δὲ καὶ ἡ μετ' ἐκείνων ἐλπίς, ὁ ἑταῖρός σου Μάκρων, αἴσια δ' οὐκ ἔστι σοι τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ κρατοῦντος· δεῖ δὴ παρακλήτον ἡμᾶς εὐρεῖν δυνατώτατον, ὑφ' οὗ Γάιος ἐξευμενισθήσεται. ὁ δὲ παρακλήτος ἡ πόλις Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐστίν, ἣν τετίμηκε μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἅπας ὁ Σεβαστός οἶκος, διαφερόντως δ' ὁ νῦν ἡμῶν δεσπότης. παρακλητεύσει δὲ τυχούσᾳ τινος παρὰ σοῦ δωρεᾶς· μείζον δ' ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲν αὐτῇ παρέξεις ἢ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐκδοὺς καὶ προέμενος.”

These men conspired together and formed an exceedingly grievous plan against the Jews and brought this message to Flaccus in private: “Your hope, the son of Tiberius Nero is fallen, and your other hope alongside him, your friend Macro.<sup>2</sup> Nor is your standing with your master auspicious. Therefore we must find a new advocate, through whom Gaius may be made well disposed, and that advocate is the city of Alexandria, which the household of every Augustus has honored since the beginning, but especially our present lord. The city will now be an advocate, provided it receives a particular gift from you. You will do nothing better than to have given up and abandoned the Jews.”

5) Caligula's dismissal of the Jewish Alexandrians (*Leg.* 367): καὶ ἀνεθείς πρὸς τὸ μαλακώτερον, τοσοῦτον εἰπὼν ‘οὐ πονηροὶ μᾶλλον ἢ δυστυχεῖς εἶναι μοι δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀνόητοι μὴ πιστεύοντες, ὅτι θεοῦ κεκληρωμαὶ φύσιν’, ἀπαλλάττεται προστάξας καὶ ἡμῖν ἀπέρχεσθαι (*Leg.* 367)

And then he [Gaius] took up a softer demeanor and spoke thus: “I think them men unfortunate rather than wicked, and foolish for not believing that I possess the nature of a god,” and having said this, he left and told us to depart also.

6) Claudius' rescript to the Alexandrians from AD 41 (*PLondon* 6.1912, selections from col 4-5): ἀπλῶς δὲ προσαγορεύω ὅτι ἂν μὴ καταπαύσητε τὴν ὀλέθριον ὀργὴν ταύτην κατ' ἀλλήλων αὐθάδιον ἐγβιασθήσομαι δεῖξαι οἷον ἐστὶν ἡγεμῶν φιλάνθρωπος εἰς ὀργὴν δικαίαν μεταβεβλημένος. διόπερ ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαμαρτύρομαι ἵνα Ἀλεξανδρεῖς μὲν πρᾶεως καὶ φιλάνθρωπως προσφέρωνται Ἰουδαίοις τοῖς τὴν αὐτὴν πόλιν ἐκ πολλῶν χρόνων οἰκοῦσι

καὶ μηδὲν τῶν πρὸς θρησκείαν αὐτοῖς νενομισμένων τοῦ θεοῦ λυμαίνωνται ἀλλὰ ἕως αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἔθεσιν χρῆσθαι οἷς καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, ἅπερ καὶ ἐγὼ διακούσας ἀμφοτέρων ἐβεβαίωσα· καὶ Ἰουδαίοις δὲ ἄντικρυς κελεύω μηδὲν πληῶν ὧν πρότερον ἔσχον περιεργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ὥσπερ ἐν δυσὶ πόλεσιν

<sup>2</sup> Tiberius Nero Gemellus was one of two sons of Drusus, the emperor Tiberius' son. Gaius had Gemellus assassinated in AD 38.

κατοικοῦντας δύο πρεσβείας ἐκπέμπειν τοῦ λοιποῦ, ὃ μὴ πρότερόν ποτε ἐπράχθη, μηδὲ ἐπισπαίρειν γυμνασιαρχικοῖς ἢ κοσμητικοῖς ἀγῶσι, καρπουμένους μὲν τὰ οἰκεία ἀπολαύοντας δὲ ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ πόλει περιουσίας ἀπάντων ἀγαθῶν, μηδὲ ἐπάγεσθαι ἢ προσίεσθαι ἀπὸ Συρίας ἢ Αἰγύπτου καταπλέοντας Ἰουδαίους ἐξ οὗ μείζονας ὑπονοίας ἀναγκασθήσομαι λαμβάνειν· εἰ δὲ μή, πάντα τρόπον αὐτοῦς ἐπεξελεύσομαι καθάπερ κοινήν τινα τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας. ἐὰν τούτων ἀποστάντες ἀμφοτέροι μετὰ πραότητος καὶ φιλανθρωπίας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ζῆν ἐθελήσητε καὶ ἐγὼ πρόνοιαν τῆς πόλεως ποιήσομαι/ τὴν ἀνωτάτω καθάπερ ἐκ προγόνων οἰκείας ἡμῖν ὑπαρχούσης.

I tell you plainly that unless you desist from this destructive hatred against one another I will be compelled to show what a well-disposed emperor can be when turned to wrath. Therefore I earnestly entreat you now that the Alexandrians be peaceful and humane to the Jews who have resided in their city for some time and not to abuse them in respect to the worship of their god, but permit them to enjoy their customs as in the time of the divine Augustus, which I have likewise sanctioned having heard both sides. As for the Jews, I command them directly not to seek anything beyond that which they have possessed previously, nor in the future to send two delegations as if they lived in two cities, a thing which has not been done previously. Nor should they force themselves into the Gymnasiarchic or Cosmetic Games, as they enjoy control of their own affairs, as well as an abundance of good things in another's city. They should neither urge on nor let in Jews sailing from Syria or Egypt, a circumstance from which I will be compelled to have darker suspicions. Otherwise, I will proceed entirely against them, as if they were causing a plague throughout the whole world. If all of you, from both sides, avoid these things and consent to live peaceably and benevolently towards one another, I will show care for a city which has been like one of our own from the time of our forefathers.

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