

## THE RULERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

THE question has been put to me, What cases can be given in support of my statement in THE EXPOSITOR, March, 1895, pp. 224-5, that in the Bezan Text "we sometimes find ourselves in the second century rather than in the first?" Perhaps the most interesting case, though not the simplest, is Acts xiv. 2, where the Bezan Text reads "the Archisynagogoι of the Jews and the Rulers (ἄρχοντες) of the Synagogue brought upon them persecution against the just ones, and stirred up the souls of the Gentiles against the brethren." We pass over the point (which is urged in the *Church in the Roman Empire*, Ed. III. p. 46<sup>1</sup>) "that persecution against the just" (διωγμὸς κατὰ τῶν δικαίων) is here used as an established phrase denoting a familiar form of action against the Christians as a class, which is the idea of a later time and quite anachronistic here. The point on which attention is at present concentrated is the administration of the synagogue. This is a very obscure subject, discussed already by Dr. E. Schürer, who, in a pamphlet on the organization of the Jews in Rome, has collected and skilfully arranged the evidence.<sup>2</sup> M. S. Reinach and Dr. E. Hula have published Asian and Lycian inscriptions that have an important bearing on the subject. The legal aspect is set forth by Professor Th. Mommsen in his usual complete and conclusive style.<sup>3</sup>

Before A.D. 70, the Jews in any city of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> It is not touched in Ed. I. or II. Some other indications of later character in Bezan readings are mentioned in the same work, pp. 46, etc.

<sup>2</sup> He, however, has hardly paid enough attention to chronological considerations, when he has quoted the facts mentioned in late Roman inscriptions to illustrate the condition of the Jews in the time of Christ; see his *Geschichte d. Jud. Volkes*, II. pp. 516-520.

<sup>3</sup> In the conclusion of his paper on *Religionsfrevel* in the *Histor. Zeitschrift*, vol. xxviii., p. 425f.

Empire formed a separate community, managing their own business according to their own laws by means of their own officers.<sup>1</sup> An unpublished epitaph from Apameia<sup>2</sup> uses the threat against any violator of the tomb, that "he knows the law of the Jews." M. Reinach writes to me that the "law" here appealed to must be a law of the Apamean Jews, since no provision of the kind exists in the Mosaic law; and his argument can hardly be disputed. This law is an example of the way in which Phrygian customs affected the Phrygian Jews. "The baths and wines of Phrygia had separated the Phrygian Jews from their brethren";<sup>3</sup> and they adopted foreign customs and ideas even in regard to the penalties and fines, by which they guarded their sepulchres. The Apamean community was very powerful (see M. Babelon, *Revue de l'Hist. des Religions*, 1891, p. 174). Evidently it had made an agreement with the city as regards penalties to be inflicted for violation, as in the inscription of Tlos (quoted below).

A Jew who gained the Roman citizenship lost this position of mingled isolation and privilege: he passed under the ordinary Roman law, and could not be amenable to the law of another nation. Such was the legal aspect of the case; but in practice there can be no doubt that a Roman citizen of Jewish blood and religion often held office in a Jewish community and acted in many ways as if he were still a member of that community.

The Jewish community was administered by archons. At Tlos in Lycia, there seem to have been two archons, holding office for a definite period (doubtless a year). This follows from Dr. Hula's inscription,—“Ptolemy, son of Lucius, of Tlos, built the sepulchral monument from the

<sup>1</sup> They had a far more favoured position than any other resident foreigners (*metoikoi*).

<sup>2</sup> It will be published in appendix to ch. xi. of my *Local History of Phrygia*.

<sup>3</sup> I quote a passage from Dr. Neubauer's *Geography of the Talmud* by memory, as I have not access to the book.

foundations, on his own behalf and on behalf of his son Ptolemy, on account of the archonship which is being discharged among us Jews, so that the tomb be the property of all the Jews." The tomb was presented to the Jews during the period when the two Ptolemies were archons.<sup>1</sup>

Some authority in the synagogue was also exercised by *archisynagogoi*. This is proved by an inscription of Akmonia,<sup>2</sup> which mentions C. Turronius Klados, ὁ διὰ βίου ἀρχισυναγωγός. If the title archisynagogos had been a purely honorary one, as it became later, Turronius would not have been styled archisynagogos for life: this implies a definite appointment.

During this period, therefore, there were in a Jewish Asian community political officers styled archons, and religious officials of the synagogue styled archisynagogoi. The former could not be termed with any propriety archons of the synagogue: they were archons of the Jewish community.

After the great rebellion and the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews ceased to be a nation; and Jewish communities in cities of the empire necessarily lost the status which they had hitherto enjoyed. Political distinction and isolation had no longer any legal ground to rest on. Only the religious distinction now remained; but that, of course, was quite as strong as it ever had been. The isolation and separation persisted, but it now rested solely on the religious bond that held together the Jewish community. The Jews in any city of the empire were considered by the Roman law as a body of persons who formed a union to maintain a certain religious worship; and, as Mommsen points out, this union was the *συναγωγή*.

<sup>1</sup> In several respects Dr. Hula's interpretation differs from that which I have given; but for brevity's sake I refrain from discussing the points of difference. Dr. Hula writes in *Eranos Vindobonensis*, p. 109 f. The date seems to me to be certainly about A.D. 70. Dr. Hula places it in the end of the first century.

<sup>2</sup> It is published from my copy in *Rev. Archéol*, 1888, II. p. 225. It can be dated with certainty about 50-60 A.D. In it the Jews who are mentioned seem all to be Roman citizens.

It is certain that archons continued to be elected annually in September in Jewish communities throughout the imperial time. These archons, however, were no longer political officers of a distinct community: they could not have any legal existence except as officers of a religious society, *i.e.* of the synagogue.

Again, we may look at the case thus. In any city where a Jewish community existed after A.D. 70, and was recognised by law as a body of persons uniting in a common worship, it was necessary also that the legally recognised body should have legally recognised officials to represent it before the law and to be responsible for its proper and orderly administration. Who, then, were these officials? To that question only one answer can be given: they were the archons. The archisynagogoi, who might also be suggested, do not suit the conditions, for, as M. Reinach has pointed out, the term archisynagogos, after a time, lost its official sense and became a mere honorary title, which was hereditary in some families, and was given even to women. In this late period *les archisynagogues sont les principes, les notables de la communauté Juive*.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that this change in the position of the archisynagogoi was the result of the change in the position of the archons following on the revolution that occurred in the position of the Jews in A.D. 70. The archons began to encroach on the duties of the archisynagogoi; and the latter title soon became a mere honorary term.

In this period, and in the situation just described, the archons in a Jewish community are strictly and correctly the archons of the synagogue; and thus that title, which could not be used before A.D. 70, might quite fairly be used after that date. No proof, so far as I know, exists that it

<sup>1</sup> *Revue des Études Juives*, vii. p. 161 f.; see also xii. p. 236 f., and *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 1886, p. 328 f., also *Church in Rom. Emp.*, pp. 46, 480.

came into use, except in the single passage Acts xiv. 2 according to the Bezan Text. I confess that I can see no way to avoid the conclusion that the Bezan reading of this passage originated later than A.D. 70; and further, that it did not originate until some time had elapsed. Changes of name of this kind do not occur in a moment; this expression implies that the Jewish community was now naturally and regularly thought of solely in its religious aspect, and its officers were simply officers of the synagogue.

Dr. Blass, indeed, finds a way to avoid this conclusion. He omits the words τῆς συναγωγῆς after ἀρχοῦτες. It must be granted that, by skilful omissions of anachronistic words and terms from the Bezan Text, one can eliminate various second century ideas from it; but my contention is that, as our authorities for the Western Text stand, they mark it as of second century type, whereas our authorities for the Eastern Text have not a trace that is necessarily of second century origin, while they contain many details that could not have originated except in the pre-Flavian period.

The question is here assumed, for the moment, to be between a first and a second century origin for the Bezan reading in xiv. 2, looking on it as an intentional reading, and not as a mere blunder. Another reason also leads to the conclusion that the Bezan reading in xiv. 2 cannot be an original first century one. In the third Gospel viii. 41 and 49, the terms ἀρχισυνάγωγος and ἀρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς are used as synonymous terms, whereas in Acts xiv. 2 there is no rational explanation of the Bezan reading except that the writer considered the two terms to have different senses, and desired to bring out the fact that the feeling against Paul was fomented both by the leading persons in the Jewish community and by the actual officers of the synagogue. The same author cannot be responsible for the two passages. And, further, the writer of Luke viii. 41 and

49 was not acquainted with the term ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς as possessing a strict and definite sense, but used it merely as a rough equivalent of ἀρχισυνάγωγος, more likely to be intelligible to his non-Jewish readers than that rather unfamiliar term.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore fairly conclude that *Luke* viii. 41 and 49 were written before the changed conditions of A.D. 70 had lasted long enough to have caused the formation of a new nomenclature,<sup>2</sup> while the Bezan reading originated after its formation.

Incidentally we notice that Dr. Schürer's explanation of the officer called ὁ διὰ βίου in the Italian synagogues, as "the (archon) appointed for life," can hardly be maintained in view of the Akmonian inscription quoted p. 274. That "officer for life" was an archisynagogos and not an archon. The archons were annual officials, as Dr. Schürer himself recognises. The Gerousiarch was not strictly an official (as Dr. Schürer calls him). Like Boularch *princeps senatus* and Ephebarch *princeps juventutis*, the Gerousiarch was merely "the leading man of the Gerousia." Prof. Mommsen considers that Gerousia denoted the assembly of the whole community (after A.D. 70) and not a Council of selected members.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Schürer points this intention clearly and correctly in his *Gemeinde-verfassung*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> It seems clear from the Roman references that the third Gospel was written in the Flavian period, *i.e.*, later than A.D. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. F. Blass mentions to me that the word Πισιδίας does not occur in the Greek MSS. of Ptolemy V. 5, 4, but only in the Latin (see *Expositor*, Feb., p. 134). This fact was unknown to me, as the edition of Ptolemy which I use gives Πισιδίας with no mark of hesitation (like several other editions). The reader will see that my opinion was not dependent on that passage; but further, the appendix on "Pisidian Phrygia," in my forthcoming *Local History of Phrygia*, I, p. 316f., will make it pretty clear that the epithet is necessary, and that the Latin text is correct; but I cannot here attempt to show that the word is merely displaced in the Greek MSS. by one line. I regret to have stated my case, however, so as to suggest greater authority for the adj. than the MSS. allow.