

*THE JEWS IN THE GRAECO-ASIATIC CITIES.*¹

IN a preceding article we attempted to describe the features common to the Greek cities of Asia Minor (and in particular those which were founded or refounded by the Seleucid kings of Syria, during their dominion over part of that land), so far as they conduce to the clearer understanding of the New Testament documents.

I. THE JEWS AS COLONISTS.

Among the motley population of those great and busy cities the most interesting for our purpose are the Jews. The Jews were especially favoured and encouraged by the Seleucid kings. The reason, of course, must have been that they were found to be specially useful as colonists. Not merely, as has been already pointed out, were they one of the two educated races fit to be organizers, and also formed a good counterpoise to the Greek colonists; the very fact that they were highly unpopular in the cities made them all the more useful to the Seleucid monarchs. The Roman principle "to rule by dividing" was not first discovered by the Romans. The Seleucid kings were quite well aware that the more unpopular the Jews were with their neighbours, the more loyal they must be to the interests of the kings, who supported them against popular riot and hostility.

The Jews were too clever for their fellow-townsmen. They regarded with supreme contempt the gross obscene ritual and the vulgar superstitions of their neighbours; but many of them were ready to turn those superstitions to their own profit; and a species of magic and soothsaying, a sort

¹ In the preceding article, *EXPOSITOR*, Dec., 1901, p. 413, l. 26, logical application of critical method will prove that the passage is the work of a second author, who believed that Philippi was a city of Asia. The allusions to Ephesus on pp. 403, 407 are incorrect, and the name should be deleted; it was Seleucid, and had Jewish citizens; see the following article.

of syncretism of Hebrew and Pagan religious ideas, afforded a popular and lucrative occupation to the sons of Sceva in Ephesus and to many another Jew throughout the Asiatic Greek cities. It was probably an art of this kind that was practised in the Chaldaean's holy precinct at Thyatira, as is revealed to us in an inscription of the Roman period.

There were among those Jews, of course, persons of every moral class, from the destined prophet, Saul of Tarsus, whose eyes were fixed on the spiritual future of his people, down to the lowest Jew who traded on the superstitions and vices of those Pagan dogs whom he despised and abhorred while he ministered to the excesses from which in his own person he held aloof. But among them all there was, in contrast to the Pagan population around them, a certain unity of feeling and aspiration bred in them by their religion, their holy books, the Sabbath meetings and the weekly lessons and exhortations. These made an environment which exercised a strong influence even on the most unworthy.

Of their numbers we can form no estimate, but they were very great. In preparing for the final struggle in western Asia Minor about 210 B.C., Antiochus III. moved 2,000 Jewish families from Babylonia into Lydia and Phrygia, and that was a single act of one king, whose predecessors and successors carried out the same policy on a similar scale. The statistics which Cicero gives, when he describes how a Roman Governor in 66 B.C., arrested the half-shekel tribute which the Jews sent to Jerusalem, show a vast Jewish population in Phrygia and a large Jewish population in Lydia.

Except in a few such references history is silent about that great Jewish population of Asia Minor. But inscriptions are now slowly revealing, by here a trace and there a trace, that nobles and officers under the Roman Empire who have all the outward appearance of ordinary Roman provincial

citizens were really part of the Phrygian Jewish population.¹ The original Jews of Asia Minor seem to have perished entirely, for the Turkish Jews of the present day are Spanish-speaking Jews whose ancestors were expelled from Spain by the most famous of Spanish sovereigns and sheltered in Turkey by Mohammedan Sultans. In the dearth of evidence one can only speculate as to their fate. Elsewhere I have tried to show² that a considerable part of that original Jewish population adopted Christianity, and thus lost their isolation and cohesion, and became merged in the Christian Empire of the fourth and following centuries after Christ.

And as to those Jews, very many in number, who clung unflinchingly to their own faith, what was likely to be their fate in the Christian Empire? The Eastern Empire was largely Greek in language and in spirit alike; and any one who has become familiar with the intensity and bitterness of the hatred that separates the Greek from the Jew, will have no difficulty in answering that question. There was no place and no mercy for the Jew in the Greek Christian Empire. The barbarous lands of Europe and the steppes and villages of Russia were a gentler home to them than the most civilized of lands.

II. THE JEWS AS RESIDENT STRANGERS.

When one realizes the character of the Hellenic cities, one must ask how and on what conditions the Jews were able to live in them.

When the Jews were present in such a city merely as resident aliens, their position is easier to understand. It was quite usual for strangers to reside in a Greek city for purposes of trade, and even to become permanent inhabitants with their families. But, as has been already pointed out, there was no ordinary way by which such inhabitants could attain the citizenship. They and their descendants

¹ *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia II.*, pp. 667 ff., 538, 649 ff. ² *Ibid.* p. 675 f.

continued to rank only as resident aliens. It was easy for them to retain and practise their own religious rites. Such strangers naturally brought their religion with them ; and the regular custom was for a group of such strangers to form an association for the common practice of their own rites. Such religious societies were numerous and recognized by law and custom ; and Jewish residents could carry their religion with them under this legal form.

It was in this way as a rule that foreign religions spread in the Greek cities. The foreign Asiatic rites, by their most impressive and enthusiastic character, attracted devotees, especially among the humbler and less educated Greeks. Thus oriental cults spread in such cities as Corinth, Athens, and other trading centres, in spite of the fact that those Pagan cults were essentially non-proselytizing, apt rather to keep their bounds narrow and to restrict the advantages of their religion to a small number.

Similarly the Jewish association, with its synagogue or place of prayer by seashore or river bank,¹ attracted attention and proselytes, though it repelled and roused the hatred of the majority, because it was "so strange and mysterious and incomprehensible to the ordinary Pagan, with its proud isolation, its lofty morality, its superiority to pagan ideas of life, its unhesitating confidence in its superiority." Thus the Jews became a power even where they ranked only as aliens.

III. THE JEWS AS HELLENIC CITIZENS.

It is much more difficult to understand the position of the Jews in those Hellenic cities where they possessed the rights of citizenship. Now, as a rule, in the cities founded by the Seleucid kings, the Jews were actually citizens.²

¹ Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xiv. 10, 23 (§ 253) ; Acts xvi. 13.

² The statements made in the recognized authorities are different ; but we know that Jews were citizens in the cities founded (or refounded) by Seleucus I. and in the only foundation by Antiochus II., of whose principles any record is

But it was to the ancient mind an outrage and an almost inconceivable thing that people could be fellow citizens without engaging in the worship of the same city gods. The bond of patriotism was really a religious bond. The citizen was encompassed by religious duties from his cradle to his grave. It was practically impossible for the Jew to be a citizen of a Greek city in the ordinary way. Some special provision was needed.

That special provision was made by the Seleucid kings in founding their cities. It was a noteworthy achievement, and a real step in the history of human civilization and institutions, when they succeeded in so widening the essential theory of the Greek city as to enable the Jew to live in it as an integral part of it. The way in which this result was attained must be clearly understood, as it throws much light on the position of the Jews in the Graeco-Asiatic cities.

The Greek city was never simply an aggregation of citizens. The individual citizens were always grouped in bodies, usually called "Tribes" (*φυλαί*), and the "Tribes" made up the city.¹ This was a fundamental principle of Greek city organization, and must form the starting point of all reasoning on the subject. The city was an association of groups, not of individuals. It is certain that the groups were older than the institution of cities, a survival of a more primitive social system.²

preserved (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xii. 3, 2, § 125 f. ; *Apion*, ii. 4), and this may confidently be regarded as proving the ordinary Seleucid policy. It is a mistake to take the examples quoted by Josephus, *c. Apion*, ii. 4, as a complete list, and infer that the Jews had the citizenship only in Alexandria, Antioch, and the Ionian cities. It would also be wrong to infer that the Jews had the citizenship in all Ionic cities.

¹ Various other terms were employed in different cities.

² One uses the term "certain" in the way in which alone it can be used in regard to the history of ancient institutions, where we are dependent on inference and reasoning of a rather elaborate kind. You cannot demonstrate to a determined opponent either that these groups are a survival, or that the earth moves round the sun.

The facts just stated are familiar to every scholar, and need no proof; but quotations from two standard works by two excellent authorities may serve to emphasize the principle. Mr. Warde Fowler¹ says "The early City-State, wherever we have anything like a full knowledge of it, invariably appears as subdivided into smaller groups, which look as if they had some historical relation to the original settlements out of which the city was formed." He is speaking of an earlier period than that which we are concerned with; but the same principle continued, and it is expressed with regard to the more developed period by Mr. Greenidge² in the following terms: "Simple membership of a State which was not based on membership of some lower unit was inconceivable to the Graeco-Roman world." In the Seleucid City-States that "lower unit" was generally called the "Tribe."

The "Tribe" was united by a religious bond (as was every union or association of human beings in the Graeco-Roman world): the members met in the worship of a common deity (or deities), and their unity lay in their participation in the same religion. It was, therefore, as utterly impossible for a Jew to belong to an ordinary Tribe, as it was for him to belong to an ordinary Hellenic city.

But, just as it was possible for a group of Jewish aliens to reside in a Greek city and practise their own religious rites in a private association, so it was possible to enrol a body of Jewish citizens in a special "Tribe" (or equivalent aggregation), which was united by the bond of their own Hebrew religion. That this must have been the method followed by the Seleucid kings is obvious; and, though the fact cannot everywhere be demonstrated in the absence of records, yet it may be regarded as practically certain (so far as certainty can exist in that period of history).

¹ *The City State of the Greeks and Romans*, p. 37.

² *Roman Public Life*, p. 66 (published in 1901).

It might seem to be a possible method to treat the body of Jews planted in any Seleucid city as equivalent to a "Tribe" but different from it in constitution: so that a Seleucid City-State consisted of a certain number of Tribes together with a body of Jews, who were possessed of Isopolity but were simply called "the Jews" or "the Nation of the Jews." Corroboration of this might seem to lie in the fact (which is established by clear examples in epigraphy) that the entire body of Jews in a Graeco-Asiatic city was commonly spoken of by these terms.¹ But at Alexandria, where that method of designating the Jews who lived in the city is the ordinary one, Josephus fortunately has recorded incidentally that the "Tribe" of the Jews was called "Macedonians," i.e. all Jews who possessed the citizenship in Alexandria were enrolled in "the Tribe *Makedones*": this "Tribe" consisted of Jews only, as Josephus' words imply,² and as was obviously necessary; for what Greek would or could belong to a Tribe which consisted mainly of the multitude of Alexandrian Jews with whom the rest of the population was almost constantly at war?

The example of Alexandria may be taken as a proof that, by a sort of legal fiction, an appearance of "Hellenism"³ was given to the Jewish citizens in a Greek City-State. It lay in the purpose and essence of both Ptolemaic and Seleucid cities that they were centres of Hellenic civilization and education.

In short, we come back to the assertion from which we started. Citizenship necessarily implied membership of one of the "Tribes," out of which the city was composed:

¹ See *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, ii, pp. 538, 668.

² μέγρι νῦν αὐτῶν ἡ φυλὴ τὴν προσηγορίαν εἶχε "Μακεδόνες," Joseph., *Apion*, ii, 4, giving definition and precision to the words of *Bell. Jud.* ii, 18, 7 (§ 488), χρηματίζειν ἐπέτρεψαν Μακεδόνες.

³ In the period after 300 B.C. the term "Hellenes" implied, not blood, but manners and education.

to "get a Tribe" was equivalent to becoming a citizen, and *vice versa*. The method which is recorded for the Jews of Alexandria was the regular method—in fact the only possible method—for introducing a new national element into a city: the new nationality was enrolled as a special "Tribe," and brought its religion with it as the tribal bond of unity. Many examples are known of this method of enlarging Hellenic cities.

But the other difficulty remained. There was a religious bond uniting the whole city. The entire body of citizens was knit together by their common religion; and the Jews stood apart from this city cultus, abhorring and despising it.

The Seleucid practice trampled under foot this religious difficulty by simply making an exception to the general principle. The Jews were simply declared by Seleucus, founder of the dynasty, and his successors to be citizens, and yet free to disregard the common city cultus. They were absolved from the ordinary laws and regulations of the city, if these conflicted with the Jewish religion: especially, they could not be required to appear in court or take any part in public life on the Sabbath. Their fellow citizens were never reconciled to this. It seemed to them an outrage that members of the city should despise and reject the gods of the city. This rankled in their minds, a wound that could not be healed. Time after time, wherever a favourable opportunity seemed to offer itself, they besought their masters—Greek king or Roman emperor—to deprive the Jews of their citizenship, on the ground that fellow citizens ought to reverence the same gods.¹

Therein lay the sting of the case to the Greeks or Hellenes. The Jews never merged themselves in the Hellenic unity. They always remained outside of it, a really alien body. In a time when patriotism was identified with community

¹ Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xii. 3, 2 (§ 126), ἀξιοῦντων, εἰ συγγενεῖς εἰσὶν αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, σέβασθαι τοὺς ἰδίου ἀνῶν θεοὺς: compare xvi, 2, 5 (§ 59).

of religion, it was not possible to attain real unity in those mixed States. A religious revolution was needed, and to be effective it must take the direction of elevating thought. Then one great man, with the true prophet's insight, saw that unity could be introduced only by raising the Gentiles to a higher level through their adoption of the Jewish morality and religion; and to that man's mind this was expressed as the coming of the Messiah, an idea which was very differently conceived by different minds. Elsewhere we have attempted to show the effect upon St. Paul of this idea as it was forced on him in his position at Tarsus, which was pre-eminently the meeting-place of East and West.¹

It follows inevitably from the conditions, that there cannot have been any case of a single and solitary Jewish citizen in a Hellenic city.² It was impossible for a Jew to face the religious difficulty in an ordinary Greek city. He could not become a member of an ordinary "Tribe"; and he could become a member of a Hellenic city only where the act of some superior power had suspended the regular Greek constitution in favour of the Jews as a whole. It may be set aside as impossible, as opposed to all evidence and reasonable inference, either that an ordinary Hellenic city would voluntarily set aside its own fundamental principles in order to welcome its most hated enemies and most dangerous commercial rivals, or that the superior power would or could violate the constitution of the city in favour of a single individual. Where Jews can be proved or believed to have been citizens of a Hellenic city, the origin of their right must lie in a general principle laid down by a superior power, accompanied by the introduction of a body of Jewish

¹ *Contemporary Review*, March 1901, in a paper on "The Statesmanship of Paul."

² Here, again, one might quote from modern New Testament scholars flatly contradictory statements. They assume that Paul's case might be a solitary one in Tarsus. But such a view will not bear scrutiny.

citizens sufficiently strong to support one another and maintain their own unity and religion.

But might not a Jew occasionally desire the Hellenic citizenship for the practical advantages it might offer in trade? He might desire those advantages in some or many cases; but they could not be got without formal admission to a "Tribe," and if he were admitted to an ordinary Hellenic Tribe in some extraordinary mode, he must either participate in its religion or sacrifice the advantages which he aimed at. In fact, it may be doubted whether any person who avoided the meetings and ceremonies of the tribesmen could have retained the membership. The Jew must either abandon his nation and his birthright absolutely, or he must stand outside of the Hellenic citizenship, except in those cities whose constitution had been widened by the creation of a special "Tribe" or similar body for Jews.

The case may be set aside as almost inconceivable that any Jew in the pre-Roman period, except in the rarest cases, absolutely disowned his birthright and was willing to merge himself in the ordinary ranks of Hellenic citizenship. Prof. E. Schürer has emphasized the thoroughly Hebraic character even of the most Hellenized Jews who had settled outside Palestine;¹ and there can be no doubt that he is right. They were a people of higher education and higher thoughts and nobler views than the Gentiles; and they could not descend entirely to the Gentile level. Even the lowest Jew who made his living out of Gentile superstitions or vices usually felt, as we may be sure, that he was of a higher stock, and was not willing to become a Gentile entirely.

Moreover, the race hatred was too strong. The Greeks would not have permitted it, even if a Jew had desired it.

¹ *Gesch. des Jüd. Volkes*, etc., ii. p. 541 f. I quote the second edition, not possessing nor having access to the third.

The Greeks had no desire to assimilate the Jews to themselves ; they only desired to be rid of them.

IV. THE JEWS IN TARSUS.

Now let us apply these considerations to the case of Paul's family. His father was a citizen of Tarsus, yet a strict observer of the Jewish religion.¹ As a citizen of Tarsus he was necessarily a member of one of the "Tribes" (or whatever other name was applied to the groups) out of which the city of Tarsus was composed. This group or "Tribe" must have been united in the ceremonial of the Hebrew religion, and consisted of Jews. Those Jews must have been granted the privilege of citizenship and a "Tribe" by some higher authority, which interfered with the normal course of a Hellenic city. As the Jews received the citizenship of several Ionian cities, of Alexandria, of Antioch and all the new cities founded by Seleucus I., so they received the citizenship of Tarsus.

A passage in the Second Book of Maccabees enables us to fix the precise year in which the Jewish element was introduced into Tarsus ; and the circumstances which led to this introduction are very instructive as to the character and purpose of the Seleucid foundations of Jewish colonies.

In 189 B.C. a new period began in Cilician history. For more than a century previously Cilicia had been near the middle of the Seleucid empire, and was therefore in helpless subjection ; and its cities were treated accordingly. But in 189 B.C. the Seleucid empire lost all its western provinces ; Cilicia became a frontier land ; and its cities began to feel the approach and the inspiration of freedom. The Seleucid rulers had now to look carefully to their hold on Cilicia, and

¹ We pass over the "arguments" of those scholars who consider that there is no sufficient evidence to prove that Paul was a citizen of Tarsus : they are not really "arguments," but merely demonstrate that the scholars who have used them are ignorant of the fundamental principles of historical criticism. Further, Paul had inherited the citizenship : see EXPOSITOR, Nov. 1901, p. 334.

as usual they did so by new foundations or refoundations. Within the next twenty years many of the cities were renamed Seleuceia, or Antioch, or Epiphaneia, and began to strike coins as self-governing cities (whereas previously they had been enslaved, without the right of coinage).

In 170 B.C. "they of Tarsus and Mallus made insurrection, because they were to be given as a present to Antiochis, the king's concubine. The king (Antiochus IV.) therefore came to Cilicia in all haste to settle matters."¹ The disturbance arose because the king was treating those cities as slaves. It was settled without war by peaceful arrangement; and immediately Tarsus began to strike coins as an ordinary Greek city, but its name was changed to Antiocheia.² The course of events, therefore, is quite clear. A compromise was made. Antiochus granted constitutional government and sovereign rights to Tarsus, but refounded it as Antiocheia, which implied some addition of inhabitants, whom he might rely on as faithful to himself, counterbalancing the too democratic and rebellious spirit of the Greek part of the population.

It follows from the principles stated in the preceding and the present article that those added colonists were, at least in part, Jews. The constitution of Tarsus was thus settled on a wise and sound balance of western and eastern elements, of Greek and Semitic population; and it remained in this state until the latter part of the reign of Augustus, when the philosopher and statesman Athenodorus, offended by the insubordinate and ill-regulated spirit growing among the democracy, made an oligarchic revolution, narrowing the circle of citizenship on a timocratic principle.³ As it

¹ 2 Macc. iv. 30 f. The importance of this passage in the history of Tarsus seems to have escaped the notice of modern scholars.

² The port of Mallus, too, was refounded as Antiocheia.

³ See Dion. Chrys. *Or. ad Tars.* p. 321 (ed. Von Arnim), Kühn, *Städteverw. im rom. Kaiserreiche*, pp. 250, 470. The date when Athenodorus flourished in Tarsus (he returned there from Rome in old age) is given by Eusebius *Chron.* as 7 A.D.; modern authorities on his life have not observed this date.

cannot have been at this time that a Jewish body of citizens was introduced, they must have been brought to Tarsus in 170 B.C. (as we have already inferred from the circumstances of that time).

Incidentally we observe that the confining of the Tarsian citizenship to a small number of richer citizens confirms what we have said as to the rank of Paul's family in the *EXPOSITOR*, November 1901, p. 328 ff.

It is noteworthy that the Tarsian Jewish colony belongs to the period immediately preceding the rebellion of the Maccabees. At that time even in Palestine the Hellenization of the Jews was making rapid progress. As the writer of First Maccabees says, i. 11 ff., "there came forth out of Israel transgressors of the law, and persuaded many . . . and went to the king, and he gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the Gentiles. And they built a place of exercise (a gymnasium and palaesta) in Jerusalem . . . and many of Israel consented to his worship, and sacrificed to the idols, and profaned the Sabbath." From Second Maccabees iv. 9 ff. we learn that a body of young men trained in the gymnasium, and wore the Greek cap. This change was slowly coming over the Jews in their own land through the quiet force of favourable conditions. It was interrupted by the haste of King Antiochus to anticipate nature and force on the change too rapidly. He was eager to see Jerusalem take its place as another "Antioch"¹ among the ordinary Hellenic cities of his realm; and his haste caused a reaction. Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabaeus, killed with his own hand a Jew who was offering sacrifice at one of the new altars; and the revolt began. The rising Hellenism of Palestine gave place to a strong revival of Hebrew feeling, which grew only the stronger as force and persecution were called in to destroy it.

¹ 2 Macc. iv. 11.

The Jews had come, or been brought, into Asia Minor during the time when Palestine was growing Hellenized in the warmth of Seleucid favour. In their new homes they were even more kindly treated, and all the conditions of their life were calculated to strengthen their good feeling to the kings, and foster the Hellenizing tendency among them, at least in externals. They necessarily used the Greek language; they became accustomed to Greek surroundings; they learned to appreciate Greek science and education; and doubtless they did not think gymnastic exercises and sports such an abomination as the authors of First and Second Maccabees did.

But, as Prof. E. Schürer and others have rightly observed, there is not the slightest reason to think that the Jews of Asia Minor ceased to be true to their religion and their nation in their own way: they really commanded a wider outlook over the world and a more sane and balanced judgment on truth and right than their brethren in Palestine. They looked to Jerusalem as their centre and the home of their religion. They contributed to maintain the Temple with unflinching regularity. They went on pilgrimage in great numbers, and the pilgrim ships sailed regularly every spring from the Aegean harbours for Caesarea.¹ They were in patriotism as truly Jews as the strictest Pharisee in Jerusalem. Doubtless Paul was far from being the only Jew of Asia Minor who could boast that he was "a Pharisee sprung from Pharisees."² Yet they were looked at with disfavour by their more strait-laced Palestinian brethren, and regarded as little better than backsliders and Sadducees. They had often, we may be sure, to assert their true Pharisaism and

¹ *St. Paul the Trav.* pp. 264, 287.

² *Ibid.* p. 32. It is strange that this translation, which the language of Asia Minor inscriptions makes quite certain, has not suggested itself to the commentators.

spirituality, like Paul, in answer to the reproach of being mere Sadducees with their Greek speech and Greek ways.

And there was, it is certain, great danger lest they should forget the essence of their Hebrew faith. Many of them undoubtedly did so, though they still remained Jews in name and profession, and in contempt for the Gentiles, even while they learned from them and cheated them and made money by pandering to their superstitions. Many such Jews were, in very truth, only "a Synagogue of Satan" (as at Smyrna and Philadelphia), but still they continued to be "a Synagogue." The national feeling was sound, though the religious feeling was blunted and degraded.

In such surroundings was Saul of Tarsus brought up, a member of a family which moved both in the narrow and exclusive circle of rich Tarsian citizenship and in the still more proud and aristocratic circle of Roman citizenship. In his writings we see how familiar he was with the Graeco-Asiatic city life, and how readily illustrations from Greek games and Roman soldiers and triumphs suggest themselves to him. In him are brought to a focus all the experiences of the Jews of Asia Minor. He saw clearly from childhood that the Maccabaeian reaction had not saved Palestine, that the Pharisaic policy of excluding Gentile civilization and manners had failed, and that the only possible salvation for his nation was to include the Gentiles by raising them to the Jewish level in morality and religion. Judaism, he saw, must gradually lose its vigour amid the sunshine of prosperity in Asia Minor and gradually die, or it must conquer the Gentiles by assimilating them. The issue was, however, certain. The promise of God had been given and could not fail. This new prophet saw that the time of the Messiah and His conquest of the Gentiles had come.

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