

FOUR NOTES ON THE HERODS*

I

In *JRS* (1968), Shelagh Jameson discussed the relative chronology of the campaigns of Aelius Gallus and C. Petronius: her discussion has rightly met with broad acceptance. She argued that Petronius began his first Ethiopian campaign in or by autumn 25 B.C., while Gallus began his Arabian campaign in or by August 26 B.C. and ended it in October or November 25 B.C.¹

As Jameson acknowledged, her chronology makes one source something of a puzzle: namely Jos. *AJ* 15. 317. On the standard reading, Herod is said in this passage to have sent 500 picked bodyguards to take part in Gallus' expedition at about the same time as he appealed to Petronius, as prefect of Egypt, for aid in relieving famine in Judaea. But, as Jameson points out, unless we assume that Gallus did not fight his Arabian campaign as prefect or that Gallus and Petronius were both prefect at once '... the troops would have to have been sent to Gallus at least a year before Herod requested help from Petronius, in view of the time consumed by the Arabian expedition'.² In short, if Jameson's chronology is right, Josephus is in some sense wrong.

However, I suggest that a close reading of the text reveals that Josephus, so far from contradicting Jameson's chronology, actually tends to support it. The text must be quoted in full:

περὶ δὲ τὸν χρόνον ἐκείνον καὶ συμμαχικὸν ἔπεμψε Καίσαρι πεντακοσίους ἐπιλέκτους τῶν σωματοφυλάκων, οὓς Γάλλος Αἴλιος ἐπὶ τῇ Ἐρυθρᾷ θάλασσᾳ ἤγεν, εἰς πολλὰ χρησίμους αὐτῷ γενομένους.

(Jos. *AJ* 15. 317)

The key point to notice is that Josephus does not say that Herod sent these bodyguards to Gallus for his campaign at this time. Rather, he says that Herod sent them to Augustus (*Καίσαρι*). It is this that the king did at about the time of his appeal to Petronius. To this rather bare fact Josephus appends, in a relative clause, the statement that these bodyguards had been led by Gallus on his Arabian expedition and had been most useful to him. The temporal relationship between their part in Gallus' expedition and their being sent to Augustus is not made entirely clear, but Josephus' *γενομένους* must suggest that they had taken part in Gallus' expedition before Herod sent them to Augustus. By this time Gallus had been succeeded by Petronius as prefect of Egypt. Therefore, Josephus and Jameson may both be accepted.

Why Herod sent these men to Augustus is not stated, but we should observe that this act had something of a precedent. Only a few years before Augustus, then Octavian, had given Herod 400 Gauls: these had been bodyguards of Cleopatra (Jos. *BJ*. 1. 397). In sending his own bodyguards to Augustus, Herod was therefore

* Not for the first time I am grateful for the help of Joyce Reynolds; all responsibility of course remains my own.

¹ S. Jameson, 'The chronology of the campaigns of Aelius Gallus and C. Petronius', *JRS* 58 (1968), 71–84. P. A. Brunt, for one, remains unconvinced that Petronius was in office before 24 B.C.: 'The administration of Roman Egypt', *JRS* 65 (1975), 142.

The Arabian side of Gallus' campaign is explored at some length by H. von Wissmann, 'Die Geschichte des Sabäerreichs und der Feldzug des Aelius Gallus', *ANRW* II 9, 1 (1976), 308–544.

² Jameson, pp. 77–8, quoted from p. 78 and followed *i.a.* by E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1976), p. 86 n. 86.

reciprocating. In fact it is quite possible that many of the same men were involved. Cleopatra's ex-bodyguards might well have proved useful to Gallus, particularly in the early, Egyptian stages of the expedition: we know that Herod's men were with him from the first.³

II

When Herod sent his sons Alexander and Aristobulus to Rome in 22 B.C., they stayed at the house of Pollio, one of the king's keenest friends (Jos. *AJ* 15. 342–3). Who was Pollio? The majority favour C. Asinius Pollio, while the better informed also allow that Vedius Pollio must have a claim.⁴ However, it must be stressed that we need not suppose Pollio to be a man of such importance at Rome. Pollio was a name common enough among the Romans. Moreover, it was also a name found among the Jews: Josephus himself tells us of a Pharisee whom he calls Pollio.⁵

In fact, C. Asinius Pollio seems unlikely for two reasons. First, the manner of Josephus' reference to Pollio: his description of the man entirely in terms of his eagerness for the friendship of Herod does not seem to suit the distinguished Asinius. Indeed, if Herod's sons went to stay with a man of Asinius' stature, we might at least expect Josephus to make his identity clear. Second, Josephus' reference to Pollio at *AJ* 15. 343 is noticeably different from definite references to Asinius Pollio in *AJ* 14. When Josephus gives only part of the latter's name at *AJ* 14. 138, he calls him not 'Pollio' but 'Asinius'. Moreover, when Josephus gives Asinius' name in full, using his consulship for dating purposes at *AJ* 14. 389, the MSS have (in the genitive) *Πωλίωνος*. But the host of Herod's sons occurs in the MSS spelt (again in the genitive) *Πολλίωνος*, with the first vowel short and two lambdas. If these spellings go back to Josephus and if they are not themselves simply imported by Josephus from different sources, they must tell against the identification of the host of Herod's sons as C. Asinius Pollio.

Willrich long ago suggested that Pollio was in fact a Jew resident in Rome. His suggestion is now largely ignored, but it surely remains the most plausible solution of Pollio's identity.⁶ We have already seen that a Jew might bear the name: it is worth noting that the MSS spelling of the name of Herod's sons' host conforms entirely to that of the name of Pollio the Pharisee. Further, if Pollio was a Jew, the manner of Josephus' reference to him would be entirely appropriate. Moreover, it should be noted that when two other sons of Herod went to stay at Rome, they stayed with (if the text is right) 'a certain Jew' (*AJ* 17. 20). The fact that two of Herod's sons stayed with a Jew must support the argument that two others of his sons also did so: a Jew named Pollio.

The argument has a larger implication for C. Asinius Pollio. The current orthodoxy has it that Asinius had 'Jewish interests'.⁷ Perhaps the main pillar of this view is that

³ Strabo 16 p. 780: we should not press the fact that Strabo describes them as Jews, for, being Herod's ex-bodyguards, they were evidently in a sense from Judaea. Some of them were probably Arabs: note Herod's Arab bodyguard at Jos. *BJ* 1. 576–7 and *AJ* 17. 55–7.

On the early stages of Gallus' preparations, see now N. Lewis, 'P. Oxy. 2820: Whose preparations?', *GRBS* 16 (1976), 295–303.

⁴ See Smallwood, p. 89 n. 103, E. Schürer, *HJP* 1², 321 n. 132, H. W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (1972), p. 15, A. B. Bosworth, 'Asinius Pollio and Augustus', *Historia* 21 (1972), 446 n. 33, and the considerable literature they variously cite.

⁵ Jos. *AJ* 15. 3–4, 370.

⁶ H. Willrich, *Das Haus des Herodes* (1929), p. 117, rejected explicitly by Hoehner and ignored by the rest: locc. cit.

⁷ The classic statement of this view is L. H. Feldman, 'Asinius Pollio and his Jewish interests', *TAPA* 84 (1953), 73–80. It is now used as a basis for further hypothesis: see, for example, R. Coleman (ed.), *Vergil: Eclogues* (1977), p. 153. It need hardly be said that *Ecl.* 4 has no bearing on the present argument.

Asinius was the host of Herod's sons and – as Josephus says as much of that host – a keen friend of Herod. But immediately we cease to identify the host as Asinius – the case argued above – this central pillar is removed.

In fact, almost the whole case for Asinius' 'Jewish interests' comes to rest upon the fact that he was consul in 40 B.C., the year in which Herod was recognized as king by Rome with a formal ceremony in which the consuls took part. But it must be stressed that Asinius' part in Herod's recognition was minimal. He did not speak for him in the Senate, though others did, and he took no more part in the subsequent ceremony than his fellow-consul: indeed, all the magistrates took part.⁸ Once this pillar is also removed, the case for Asinius' supposed 'Jewish interests' collapses: there is no reason to suppose Asinius to have had any special Jewish interests over and above what might be expected of any educated Roman. One can readily understand why the standard, full biography of Asinius omits all mention of such interests: it was written before the present orthodoxy grew up.⁹

III

Jos. *AJ* 18. 252 says that the emperor Gaius exiled Antipas to Lugdunum, a city in Gaul. But *BJ* 2. 183 suggests that Gaius sent him to Spain. Which is correct?

Scholars now seem unanimous in confidently accepting a compromise: it is held that Antipas was exiled to Lugdunum Convenarum, situated in Gaul, but on the Spanish border.¹⁰ The compromise has its attractions, but it is not as tidy as it might at first appear to be.

First, the compromise does not 'satisfy both passages' as one scholar has recently suggested.¹¹ Rather the contrary. If we take Antipas to have been consigned to Lugdunum Convenarum, *BJ* 2. 183 would still be in error (though more pardonably), for, though situated near the Spanish border, Lugdunum Convenarum was nevertheless in Gaul, not Spain. Moreover, the compromise would make *AJ* 18. 252 most misleading, for 'Lugdunum a city in Gaul', unless otherwise qualified, can only suggest Lyons.

Further, there is some reason to prefer Lyons as Antipas' place of exile. Most important, Lugdunum Convenarum stands out as rather exceptional when set beside the other places to which royalty was consigned under the Julio-Claudians. Other cities so used were Ravenna, Forum Julii, Alexandria, Syrian Antioch, Cilician Pompeiopolis and Vienne: set beside these, in the time of Gaius at least, Lugdunum Convenarum seems relatively small and insignificant.¹² In addition, there might be a particular reason for consigning Antipas to Lyons. His brother, the ethnarch Archelaus, removed from Judaea by Augustus in A.D. 6, was sent to Vienne, the neighbour and rival of Lyons.¹³ Indeed, it may possibly be relevant that Gaius might well have had Lyons

⁸ *pace* Feldman, pp. 77–8. For the narrative, Jos. *AJ* 14. 379–89; cf. *BJ* 1. 281–5.

⁹ J. André, *La Vie et L'Oeuvre d'Asinius Pollion* (1949), who was criticized by Feldman, p. 73 for his 'omission'. Feldman does all one could to construct links between Pollio and those sympathetic to and/or interested in Judaism, but with these twin pillars removed his case simply does not stand up.

¹⁰ The case is fully presented by H. Crouzel, 'Le Lieu d'Exil d'Hérode Antipas et d'Hérodiade selon Flavius Josèphe', in *Studia Patristica Vol. 10. Papers presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies: Oxford, 1967* (ed. F. L. Cross, 1970), pp. 275–80. Cf. Schürer, p. 352 n. 41, more circumspect than most.

¹¹ So Hoehner p. 262 n.1.

¹² Ravenna: Suet. *Tib.* 20; Ov. *Ex Ponto*, 2. 1. 45–8; Tac. *Ann.* 1. 58. 9; 2. 63. Forum Julii: Tac. *Ann.* 2. 63. 6. Alexandria: Tac. *Ann.* 2. 67. 5. Antioch: Tac. *Ann.* 2. 4. 4; 58. Pompeiopolis: Tac. *Ann.* 2. 58. 3. Vienne: see next note.

¹³ Jos. *BJ* 2. 111; Strabo 16 p. 765.

in mind when he sentenced Antipas to exile in summer A.D. 39: in the following autumn he himself set out for Lyons.¹⁴

Lugdunum Convenarum must remain a possibility, but it must also be allowed that Lyons is at least as likely. If Lyons is correct, *BJ* 2. 183 – if the text is right – would thus contain an error which was rectified in the later and more complete version of the *Jewish Antiquities*, which names not only the province but also the very city to which Antipas was consigned, Lyons. Josephus' erroneous reference to Spain in the earlier work remains a nagging problem: it was not perhaps so great an error for one principally orientated in the distant Eastern Mediterranean as Josephus was.¹⁵

IV

It has long been suspected that L. Iulius Agrippa of Syrian Apamea was related to the Herodian dynasty: that he was the grandson of King Alexander of Cilicia.¹⁶ But this view has now been powerfully challenged by J. P. Rey-Coquais, who has argued that a recently discovered inscription from Apamea, set up in honour of L. Iulius Agrippa, makes it certain that he could claim no Herod as his ancestor.¹⁷ His argument is essentially an argument from silence: his main point is that, although the inscription makes much of Agrippa's ancestry, no king is cited as an ancestor: the ancestor picked out for special mention is one Dexandros – otherwise unknown – whom Rey-Coquais takes to have been a local tetrarch at the time of Augustus. If Agrippa could have claimed a Herod as his ancestor, runs the argument, he would surely have done so.

Arguments from silence are never totally conclusive, but there must now be very great doubt about the supposed connection between Agrippa and the Herods. With these doubts in mind, we may turn to consider a statue-base from Apamea, mentioned by J. and J. Ch. Balty.¹⁸ Only the left side of the text survives: the extant fragment shows that this was a dedication to a *regi magno philocaesari* or *philorhomaeo*. Balty and Balty, apparently unaware of Rey-Coquais, argue that, given the link between L. Iulius Agrippa and the Herods, the recipient of the dedication could only be Agrippa I or II of Judaea. They support this argument with an inscription from Heliopolis, in which Agrippa I or II receives the appropriate titlature.¹⁹

But we have seen that any link between L. Iulius Agrippa and the Herods is now most dubious. Further, it should be stressed that there are other eastern kings with titlature appropriate to the statue-base. Perhaps the most likely is King Sohaemus of Emesa. His kingdom lay far closer to Apamea than any possession of Agrippa I or II; another inscription from Heliopolis shows that he too had the appropriate titlature.²⁰

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¹⁴ Schürer, p. 352 n.41.

¹⁵ Alternatively, one might press the fact that *BJ* 2. 183 says, strictly, that Antipas *died* in Spain: it might be argued that he was at some point transferred from his first place of exile at Lyons to Spain, where he later died. If this is right, Josephus' formulation at *BJ* 2. 183 is most misleading.

¹⁶ *PIR*² i, 130.

¹⁷ J. P. Rey-Coquais, *AAAS* 23 (1973), 39–84, esp. 55.

¹⁸ J. and J. Ch. Balty, *ANRW* ii. 8 (1978), 121. See also their *Apamée de Syrie, 1969–71: Actes du Colloque 1972* (1972), pp. 19–21 and W. van Rengen, *ibid.* pp. 105–6. On C. Iulius Agrippa of Apamea (*CIL* xvi. 8), compare Rey-Coquais loc. cit. with R. D. Sullivan, *ANRW* ii. 8 (1978), 345, who supports a Herodian connection.

¹⁹ *IGLS* 2759 = *ILS* 8957.

²⁰ *IGLS* 2760 = *ILS* 8958. On the extent of Sohaemus' kingdom, see A. A. Barrett, *AJPh* 98 (1977), 153–9; cf. *idem*, *CQ* n.s. 29 (1979), 465–9. For Sohaemus' biography, R. D. Sullivan, *ANRW* ii. 8 (1978), 216–18.