

# Alexandrian riots under Trajan: papyrology and history

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## Abstract

This paper takes a fresh look at the papyrological evidence on the Graeco-Jewish riots in Alexandria before the Jewish Diaspora Revolt of 116/117. It proposes a new dating under Trajan for the *Acta Pauli et Antonini*, suggesting that the defendant Antoninus was the Alexandrian ἀρχιδικαστής. Besides, it proposes an identification of the Claudius Atilianus in P.Oxy. XLII 3023 as a Roman official, and possibly a friend of Trajan's, who was tried in Antioch for anti-Jewish violence; his trial and execution, possibly in early 116, may have been connected with the Jewish festival called *Yom Tyrianus*.

## Keywords

Trajan, Jewish Diaspora Revolt, *Acta Alexandrinorum*, Alexandria, Antioch, *Yom Tyrianus*

The Jewish revolt under Trajan was a major conflict that involved Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Mesopotamia and Judaea in A.D. 115-117, and ended up with the bloody repression of the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. This revolt put the stability of the Roman empire in danger and only ceased when Hadrian, after the sudden death of Trajan in August 117, ordered the evacuation of the newly-annexed provinces. The historiography on this revolt is scanty. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Cassius Dio talked about this, but we only have an epitomized version of his narrative, written by a 10<sup>th</sup>-century Christian monk, Xiphilinus; the most reliable source we have is a brief passage in the *Ecclesiastical History* (IV c.) by Eusebius of Caesarea, who most probably consulted the (lost) Egyptian books by Appian of Alexandria, a witness of the events. According to Eusebius (*HE* IV 2. 1-5), disorders started off in Egypt as a κίνησις, then there was a στάσις in Alexandria in Year 18 of Trajan, that is, 115. In the following year, a πόλεμος οὐ μικρὸς broke out, when the Jews from Cyrene headed by their king Lucius (or Lucas) invaded Egypt; the Jews of Mesopotamia, Crete and Cyprus joined the revolt soon afterwards.<sup>1</sup> The war that followed in 116/117 has been thoroughly investigated by Miriam Ben

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. adapted from K. Lake, Loeb Classical Library, I, 305-307.

Zeev and, more recently, by William Horbury, in excellent monographs; less attention has been devoted to the the earlier frictions, especially the *stasis* at Alexandria in 115, although there are some important documents which may cast further light on it.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I will reconsider this documentation.

### **The edict of Rutilius Lupus**

The edict of the prefect Marcus Rutilius Lupus of 14<sup>th</sup> October 115, stored in Milan, is an exceptionally important, yet neglected document. In this text the prefect angrily rebukes the Alexandrians for being responsible for a recent riot in the theatre that led to a fire and involved the Jewish community.<sup>3</sup>

«Perhaps he does not know [...] the triumphs [...] since power [...] to Antoninus (Ἄντωνειν[, I.23) ... for force ... (Col. II) [...] adjudicated [...] and no longer [...] how they were tortured. [...]. friendship of the ἄρχων (II 10-11) [...] voted for [...] insult. [...] worthy of him [...] you accused [...] for this reason (you did not) believe [...] honouring [...] of the city [...] fire to the houses [...] a few must [...] applying. [...] Then someone will say that the people who dared this were few [...] to hold the theatre [...] to show [...] (col. III) after fire they are now preparing also weapons (σίδηρον, III 1) against us. I know that they are few, but they are supported by many more and provided for by the powerful, who pay not to be blamed (λοιδορεῖσθαι, III 4) and captured (διαρπάζεσθαι, III 4-5). The wickedness of the few can justly be called a reproach to the whole city. I know that most of them are slaves; that is why their masters are blamed. I therefore bid them all not to simulate anger for the sake of profit. They should recognize that we no longer ignore them. Let them not trust to my indulgence or [...] the days when I was forced to (forgive?) all that I could [...]. If anyone has charges to make, there is a judge (δικαστήν, III 15) sent by Caesar for this purpose. For not even to Emperors (ἡγεμόσι, III 17) is permitted to execute anyone without trial, and there is a proper time for a trial just as there is a proper place and a proper method of punishment. Let there be an end of those who say, some truly, some falsely, that they have been wounded, and demand justice violently and unjustly. For there was no need to be wounded. Some of these errors (ἁμαρτημάτων, III 24-25) could perhaps have an excuse (ἀπολογία, III 25) before (Col. IV) the battle between the Romans and the Jews (πρὸ τῆς Ῥωμαίων

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<sup>2</sup> Pucci Ben Zeev 2005; Horbury 2014.

<sup>3</sup> P.Mil.Vogl. II 47; Musurillo 1954, 59-60, 194-195; CPJ II 435. The prefect M. Rutilius Lupus is also mentioned in SB I 4383.3 of 28 January 113, a dedication of a sanctuary to Isis at Mons Porphyrites; cf. Ben Zeev 2005, 174-175.

πρὸς Ἰουδαίων μάχης, IV 26-27), but now they are mad judgements (μάταια κριτήρια, IV 28), which were not allowed before, as well. The 19<sup>th</sup> year of Trajan, Phaophi 16».<sup>4</sup>

The prefect states that, after the riot, he restored law and order by capturing and imprisoning the guilty, whether they were Alexandrians or Jews; in spite of this, in his absence some Alexandrians, through their slaves, illegally tortured and killed the Jewish prisoners. This was a major breach of the law. In fact, not even Emperors, says the prefect, may condemn without a trial.<sup>5</sup> Lupus is angry at the Alexandrians for their «mad judgements» (μάταια κριτήρια) against the Jews; the unusual phrase suggests that Jews may have been killed in a spectacular way, unacceptable for the Roman authorities. The prefect also alludes to a «battle» (μάχη) where Romans attacked Jews, a landmark after which anti-Jewish violence is no longer justified; he adds that, even before that battle, the behaviour of the Alexandrians would be unacceptable. The most commonly accepted opinion is that this μάχη was the «first engagement» between Rome and the Jews in the Diaspora Revolt; but this is difficult, because the revolt began in 116, while the battle in question must have been earlier than October 115, when Lupus issued the edict. As the term «Romans» is most probably used technically here to indicate the Roman legions, one must look for battles between the Roman army and the Alexandrian Jews before 115: the only instance is an understudied episode that occurred in 66. According to the historian Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* II 489-498, 50.000 Jews were massacred in the outskirts of Alexandria by the legions commanded by the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander after some riots that took place in the theatre at the news of the outbreak of the Jewish revolt against Rome.<sup>6</sup> It is overwhelmingly likely that in 115 Lupus referred back to that traumatic event, evidently a turning point in the Graeco-Jewish relationships at Alexandria. By referring to that battle, Lupus pointed out that the Alexandrian Jews had already been punished: from then on, any further violence would be unacceptable.

In the first fragmentary column of the edict, Lupus mentions Antoninus as an Alexandrian authority involved in the riots. One Antoninus is the central character who is tried before the emperor in the so-called *Acta Pauli et Antonini*. These documents pertain to the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, a genre halfway between history and fiction, which stems from historical trials and thus deserves closer attention.

<sup>4</sup> Translation based on the Greek text in CPJ II 435.

<sup>5</sup> Here the word ἡγεμόσι, l. 17 translates *principes*, that is, «emperors», not «governors» as has been interpreted so far; cf. Cazzaniga 1937, 159-167 and CPJ II 435, p. 232. «Not even» emperors can judge without a regular trial, so *a fortiori* Alexandrians should not dare to do so. The term ἡγεμόν was often used to indicate the *princeps*, from Augustus' *Res Gestae* 7. 9; 16. 7 to the Letter of Claudius (P.Lond. VI 1912. 58); cf. also Josephus *BJ* I 198; *AJ* XVIII 217; XIX 164 with references to Julius Caesar, Tiberius and Claudius, respectively; the term was superseded by αὐτοκράτωρ in the II century, although it is still found in Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* (26 K 29, 39); cf. Mason 1974, 144-146.

<sup>6</sup> Pucci 1983, 101-102; Pucci 2005, 138-139, suspended judgement. For Méléze-Modrzejewski 1995, 201 the battle was certainly not in 115; Horbury 2014, 168 recalled the events of 66, but followed the accepted view.

## The trial of Antoninus

The *Acta Pauli et Antonini* (*AP*) preserve the fictionalised proceedings of the trial of a certain Antoninus, defended by the rhetor Paul of Tyre, before an unnamed emperor; these documents have come down to us on two fragments of a papyrus roll written on both recto and verso, belonging to the early II century, P.Paris 68 + P.Lit.Lond. III 118 (Version A). Another fragment of a different roll, BGU I 341, preserved a shortened version (Version B) of the same story. These fragments were studied by Reinach, Wilcken, Premerstein and Musurillo, whose opinions as regards their relationship differ.<sup>7</sup> Various elements converge to indicate that the emperor in the *AP* is Trajan, not Hadrian as previously assumed. In fact, the only proof that the emperor might be Hadrian derives from a reference in P.Lit.Lond. III 118 verso 3, entirely conjectural and probably wrong, to the vocative 'Ράμ]μ]ε, with reference to Rammius Martialis, *praefectus Aegypti* from the accession of Hadrian in 117. However, this was an integration by Milne;<sup>8</sup> a re-examination of the photograph of the papyrus confirms that 'Ράμ]μ]ε is improbable.

The *AP* report that there was violence in the theatre of Alexandria, when a «king-mime from the stage» provoked a riot, and people set fire to some houses.<sup>9</sup> Scholars argued that an Alexandrian mime was making fun of a Jewish king, that is, the leader of the Diaspora revolt; if this were true, the trial would have taken place around 116.<sup>10</sup> However, this is unlikely, as we have seen that the *AP* deal with the same event mentioned in the edict of Lupus of 14<sup>th</sup> October 115; they must refer to something that happened before the end of 115, when the proper revolt had not yet begun. In my view, the «king-mime» was a parody of Trajan, probably depicted as a drunkard and a philo-Judaic king, a representation which we find in the *Acta Hermaisici*, also to be dated to the years before 115.<sup>11</sup> We shall come back to the reasons of Trajan's tolerance of the Jews later.

From the fragmentary dialogues in the *AP*, we gather that, after the riots in the theatre, both the Jews and the Alexandrians were arrested by the prefect and by the Alexandrian chief-judge; the Jews were put in prison and the slaves beheaded, while the Alexandrian owners of the slaves were exiled,

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<sup>7</sup> Musurillo 1954, 49-60, 179-195. BGU I 341; P.Louvre 2376 *bis* (= P.Paris 68) + P.Lit.Lond. III 118 (CPJ II 158a, TM 58927) are fragments of a roll. The writing was dated by Musurillo between 117 and 157 on palaeographical basis. The reconstruction by Wilcken and Premerstein is presented in CPJ II, p. 88. Wilcken put P.Lit.Lond. III 118 after P.Paris 68: according to Wilcken, the original roll had on the recto Col. I, II and III (Paris) and IV (London); the verso Col. V (London), VI, VII, VIII (Paris). According to Premerstein, followed by Musurillo, the recto started with Col. IV (London) then I, II, III (Paris); the verso started off with Col. VI, VII, VIII (Paris), then V (London). The three fragments were published by Fuks as CPJ II 158 a (following Wilcken's order) and 158 b. Vega Navarrete 2017, 207ff presented first P.Paris. 68 then P.Lit.Lond. III 118. On Rammius Martialis, cf. Bastianini 1975, 283-284; id. 1980, 81; cf. Vega Navarrete 2017, 198-236.

<sup>8</sup> Von Dobschütz 1904, 743 and Schwartz 1984, 132 identified the emperor with Trajan; Perea Yébenes 2010, 160-161 and Vega Navarrete 2017, 203 were in favour of an identification with Hadrian.

<sup>9</sup> Col. IV 11-12; I 1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Harker 2008, 88; a Jewish king for Vega Navarrete 2017, 219-220.

<sup>11</sup> P.Oxy. X 1242.3-4; Musurillo 1954, 44-48, 161-178; CPJ II 157; Harker 2008, 85-86.

according to a clause in Greek law, protecting Greek citizens. At a certain point, however, the Alexandrians were recalled back from exile, probably by Antoninus himself, who seems to have been in charge of the city while the prefect was absent. The Alexandrian exiles took the Jews out of prison, and tortured and killed them; at that point, the Jews petitioned Trajan. Lupus responded with the angry edict of 14th October 115, which condemned the Alexandrian violence as unauthorized, and forwarded the trial to the emperor.<sup>12</sup>

In December 115, Trajan was wintering in Antioch after his first campaign against Armenia, thus it is likely that Antoninus was tried before Trajan in that city. Antioch is therefore the probable setting of the *AP*. Antoninus may have been the ἀρχιδικαστής or «chief judge» of Alexandria: this hypothesis finds support in his highly technical speech in col. III 73-75, when he cites the «clause of the tears» in Greek law, in order to explain why he exiled the Alexandrian culprits instead of sentencing them to death. Moreover, the passage in col. VI, when Antoninus declares that he had tried in vain to send letters to Trajan, suggests that he was an important civic magistrate of Alexandria, who could communicate directly with the emperor (especially if the prefect were absent). The texts read as follows:

CPJ II 158 a.

«(col. I) Paulus (spoke) about the king, how they brought him forth and (mocked him?); and Theon read the edict of Lupus ordering them to lead him forth for Lupus to make fun of the king in the stage-mime. After we had thus (testified?), the emperor took occasion to remark to Paulus and our people as follows: “During such disturbances [...] during the Dacian war [...]”.

(col. II). Caesar answered the Jews: “I learned [...]”.

The Jews: “They seized them from the prison and [...] wounded them”.

Caesar: “I have investigated all these matters (?) and not the Alexandrians but only those who are responsible should be prosecuted [...]”

(col. III 5-15). (Antoninus): “So that if some were to be exiled from Alexandria, they were nonetheless not seized by us, as they allege, but by them, and this occasioned a false accusation against us. Now all who had fled to their masters intending to secure complete safety were brought to justice by them and punished”.

The Jews: “Sir, they are lying: they do not know how many men there were”.

(col. VI).

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<sup>12</sup> P.Mich. VII 493.10-14 of the II century mentions the sudden departure of an Alexandrian ἀρχιδικαστής, but lacks a precise date.

Paulus: “My only concern is for the grave in Alexandria which I expect to have. Advancing as I am towards this, I shall have no fear of telling you the truth. Listen to me then, Caesar, as to one who may not live beyond the morrow”».

P.Lit.Lond. III 118 (recto)

«[ca. 15 letters] Caesar: “And [ca. 15] Theon read the edict of Lupus in which he [ordered to surrender] the arms and ... [...] Caesar: “Which excuses did he have to ask you [ca. 15]. You want [ca. 15] soldiers [ca. 15] praetorians and [ca. 13] I will ask whoever [ca. 15] as regard the king-mime from the stage [ca. 15] and Claudianus [traces of two lines]”».

In col. VII of CPJ II 158 a, Antoninus is sentenced to death; the text mentions burning and possibly torture (κολάζειν καὶ κρεμάσασθαι ὑπὸ ξύλον καὶ ὑποκαίειν πυρὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ ὄσῥέα κα<ι> βασανεισον[ , VII 34-37). The fact that in Col. VIII the names of Antoninus (VIII 4) and Paulus (VIII 16) recur suggests that they delivered two final speeches before the actual execution. In BGU I 341, the fragment of the *AP* called by Musurillo «Recension B», the Jews accuse the Alexandrians of having wounded the Jews in prison. Antoninus had already tried the person who was alleged to have been responsible for the disorders, but was accused of having recalled the Alexandrians from exile, allowing them to perpetrate further violence. Antoninus justifies himself by declaring that he had already executed the culprits:

CPJ II 158b.

«Emperor, the Alexandrians not [25 letters] many have been punished, sixty [Alexandrians and their] slaves. The Alexandrians have been [exiled, the slaves have been] beheaded. Nobody of the [...] was exiled according to the clause of the tears granted to all men. Thus, if some of the deported from Alexandria has received support, this comes from them not from us, as they say when they falsely accuse us. At present all the slaves who ran away from their masters as they claimed they did not have protection, were taken before the tribunal and punished».

Since the time of Augustus, the ἀρχιδικαστής or «chief-judge» was an important post monopolised by powerful Alexandrian families and nominated by the emperor; he drew ὑπομνηματισμοί, a term that recurs in the *AP*, and was in charge of the archive called καταλογεῖον.<sup>13</sup> The ἀρχιδικαστής could administer justice on behalf of the prefect, and his resolutions were often cited besides the prefectural

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<sup>13</sup> On the ἀρχιδικαστής cf. Jörs 1915, 230-339; Calabi 1952, 406-424; Taubenschlag 1955<sup>2</sup>, 489 n. 63; P.Theon. App. B, 129 ff.; see also Sijpesteijn and Worp 1996, 181-182, supplementing the list in P.Theon. App. B.; Sijpesteijn 1976.

ones.<sup>14</sup> Chief-judges are documented in the *Acta*; the frequent occurrence of the name Hermaiskos as a nickname of III century Alexandrian judges suggests a possible link to the protagonist of the *Acta Hermaisci*.<sup>15</sup> Some Claudii Antonini appear to have been prominent Alexandrians connected with the Mousaion: in P.Hamb. I 37 of the II century, a certain Loreios Kameinas (Lurius Caminius?) writes to Claudius Antoninus calling him ἱερωνίκης and φιλόσοφος, «sacred victor» and «philosopher». A *kleros* of Claudius Antoninus at Herakleia in the Arsinoite is mentioned in 108/109 by BGU I 360, while P.Oxy. II 334 mentions a Claudius Antoninus in the office of the *agoranomos* at the time of Domitian.<sup>16</sup> Most importantly, P.Oxy. XLIX 3466, from the reign of Domitian, is a petition of Theon son of Dionysius to Antoninus, ἱερεὶ καὶ ἀρχιδικαστῆ καὶ πρὸς τῇ ἐπιμελείᾳ τῶν χρηματιστῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κριτηρίων.<sup>17</sup> All this evidence lends support to the view that the Antoninus tried in the *AP* was an Alexandrian ἀρχιδικαστής.

Theon, who reads the documents and defends the Alexandrians, could be identified with the rhetor Aelius Theon, author of *Progymnasmata*, who flourished around 100.<sup>18</sup> Claudianus, who appears in P.Lit.Lond. III 118 recto l. 13, may be another prominent Alexandrian involved in anti-Jewish violence.<sup>19</sup> A Claudius Claudianus prefect of Egypt appears in P.Oxy. L 3563 of the time of Severus Alexander, probably between 225 and 230.<sup>20</sup> However, the most famous Claudius Claudianus from Alexandria was indeed the poet cited by Augustine (*Civ. Dei* V 26) as an «adversary of the name of Christ», and by Orosius (*Adv. Pag. Hist.* VII 55) as *paganus pervicacissimus*. We know that a statue of his was placed in the Roman forum around 400 and that he was an author of poetry.<sup>21</sup> Given the cultural and ideological conservatism of the Alexandrian aristocracy, and the persistence of evocative family names within this group, it seems plausible to hypothesise that the anti-Christian poet from Alexandria was related to the family of anti-Jewish Claudianus who participated in the trial of Antoninus before Trajan.

### The trial of Claudius Atilianus

The Alexandrian riots of 115/116 should be linked to P.Oxy. XLII 3023, a fragment of papyrus roll containing proceedings before an emperor dated palaeographically to the early II century.

<sup>14</sup> Calabi 1952, 423-424.

<sup>15</sup> Musurillo 1954, VII A. 146; VII B. 55.

<sup>16</sup> Benaissa 2009, 173-175 nn. 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> Eck 1999, 205.

<sup>18</sup> Heath 2003; Capponi 2017, 193.

<sup>19</sup> Not the legionary Claudianus of Xanthus of TAM ii.282 = IGR iii.615, as hypothesised by Musurillo 1954, 187 n. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Messeri 1986, 60.

<sup>21</sup> Claudius Claudianus, born around 370 in Alexandria (as he states in *Carm.* 39. 20), moved to Rome at the end of the century and became court poet of Honorius and Stilicho. Honoured in 400 with a statue for his panegyric of Stilicho's consulate, in the same year he married a noble African and died in Rome around 404; cf. Cameron 1970.

According to the first editor, Peter Parsons, this is a fragment of *Acta Alexandrinorum*; it was neglected by subsequent historians, perhaps for its brevity, and is absent from the most recent treatments of the genre.<sup>22</sup> In the text, two juxtaposed embassies of Jews *versus* Antiochenes confront each other before an unnamed, and irate, emperor. A certain Claudius Atilianus speaks on behalf of the Antiochenes; the opposing speakers are unnamed. The fragmentary first column alludes to dead people (I 4), to a petition (ὑπόμνημα, I 11, 13) presented by a person or a group called Τυρ- (I 12). In I.9, the letters] αἱκοϛ were interpreted by Parsons as the last part of the word [γυ]γαῖκοϛ. However, it could also be read [ἰου]δαῖκοϛ; however, both conjectures are hypothetical. In column II we find the dialogue between the emperor and the Antiochenes:

«Caesar said: “What do the Antiochenes say (?) in answer to this (?) claim?”

Claudius Atilianus replied: “Most divine of emperors, do you (?) put faith in this claim as if it were a true one and ...».

The identity of Atilianus is unknown. However, a monumental dedication found in a villa by the *via Augusta* in Tarraco, Spain, dated to the first half of the second century, was set up by a Claudia Atiliana, member of an important Spanish family, in honour of her husband, a senator whose name is unfortunately lost, who was quaestor of the province, tribune of the plebs, and *praetor designatus*.<sup>23</sup> As most dedicatees of monuments in II century Tarraco, the Claudii Atiliani may well have been friends of Trajan and Hadrian, who notoriously came from that part of the empire. The Claudius Atilianus tried in Antioch may well have been a magistrate on the staff of Trajan, and possibly also a friend of the emperor, as could be shown by the affectionate way he approaches him.

According to rabbinical sources, two Jewish brothers became martyrs in Laodicea (or Lydda) in Syria under the reign of Trajan. Soon after the martyrdom, their executor, a Roman official called Tyrianus, was executed on the order of Trajan, and the day became celebrated as «the day of Tyrian/Tyrianus» (*Yom Turyanus*), on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Adar (February-March).<sup>24</sup>

«When Tyrianos slew Pappus and Lulianus his brother in Laodicea, he said to them: “If you are of the people of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, your God will come and deliver you from my hands”. They said to him: “Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were upright, and Nebuchednezzar was fit for a sign to be wrought through him; but as for you, you are a wicked king, and not fit for a sign to be

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<sup>22</sup> LDAB 67316; not in Vega Navarrete 2017. Harker 2008, 128-129 does not suggest any date.

<sup>23</sup> *AE* 1974, 0414. «-----quaestori] / [provin]ciae Bae[ticae trib(uno) p]lebis prae[tori] / [des]ignato / [Cla]udia Atil[iana] / [marit]o cariss[imo]». Photo and discussion in D. Gorostidi, R. Mar and J. Ruiz de Arbulo 2018, 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Talmud Yerushalmi Taan.* 2. 13. 66 a; *Meg.* 1. 6. 70 c. The phonetic transcription of Atilius in Tillius may be found in P.Flor. I 68 on M. Tillius (Atilius) Marcellus, chief-judge in Alexandria in 172; a Lucius Atilius Proculus was in the *gerousia* of Apamea on Meander; Capponi 2017, 261.



wrought through you, and we are worthy of death in the eyes of Heaven. If you do not slay us, the Omnipresent has many destroyers, many bears, many lions, many leopards, many serpents, many scorpions that will attack us, but in the end the Omnipresent will avenge our blood from you.” It is said that Tyrianos had not moved from there before a dispatch came from Rome, and they knocked out his brain with clubs». <sup>25</sup>

The name Tyrianus has often been associated to Trajan, and the whole story ascribed to Trajan’s reign partly because of its conflation with the story of Pappus and Julianus, two prominent men who were in charge of the reconstruction of the temple of Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup> In my view, however, the Tyrianus of the rabbinical story might be the Atilianus who was tried for anti-Jewish violence in Antioch around 113-115 according to the papyrus document examined above. The name Atilianus could be spelt Tillianus or even Tyrianus in Greek and Hebrew sources. This hypothesis would enrich the picture of the situation in the Diaspora around 113-115; Trajan was still trying to maintain public order and avoid anti-Jewish violence even at the cost of sentencing to death his magistrates and friends.

## Conclusion

The documents examined above show that the trial of Antoninus, depicted in the *Acta Pauli et Antonini*, can be linked to the historical events of 115 mentioned in the edict of Rutilius Lupus (CPJ II 435). Even if the extant copies of the *Acta Pauli et Antonini* were written when the Diaspora revolt was concluded and the Greek faction had won, and even if the speeches may have been manipulated or invented, the events or the persons cited in those texts are not a fairy-tale, as often assumed. P.Oxy. XLII 3023 may well also preserve a fragment of a historical trial that took place before Trajan at Antioch around 115, involving Claudius Atilianus, a friend of Trajan’s; apparently Atilianus was sentenced to death after the Jews petitioned the emperor on some attacks. This document proves that the genre of the *Acta* existed outside Egypt, as well. The presence of Paul of Tyre as advocate of the Alexandrian Antoninus, and the mention of Antiochenes show that civic struggles took place in many Diaspora cities. In 115, the conflict between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria, far from being only a local question, was seen by Greeks and Jews as a common cause in a worldwide conflict. <sup>27</sup> In the

<sup>25</sup> *Sifra*, *Emor*, *Pereq* 9. 5, on *Lev.* 22: 32. Text and translation in Pucci Ben Zeev 2005, 104-105 n. 75; cf. Horbury 1999, I, 294. The legend may also be found in *Megillat Ta’anit* 31 = Pucci Ben Zeev 2005, 99-100 n. 70; *Ta’anit* 18 a-b = Pucci Ben Zeev 2005, 111-113 n. 81; *Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes* 3. 15 = Pucci Ben Zeev 2005, 114-115 n. 83; *Semahot* 8. 15 (47 b) = Pucci Ben Zeev 2005, 118-119 n. 86.

<sup>26</sup> Horbury 2014, 264-269, esp. 265 n. 378.

<sup>27</sup> On Sopater of Antioch cf. *Suda* 848; he was the author of *epitomes* and a collection of *historiai*. A philosopher pupil of Iamblichus was executed under Constantine; Photius *Bibl. Cod.* 161. A family of philosophers called Sopater from Apamea is contemporary of Libanius and must be placed in the IV century; cf. Criore 2007, 50, 58.

years up to 115, Trajan is often documented as a defender of the Jews against Greek attacks; however, from 116, he repressed the Diaspora revolt in blood. This apparent contradiction puzzled scholars, who dismissed the *Acta* as absolute fiction. Trajan's initial tolerance (that the *Acta* depicted as philo-Judaism) has been explained as a strategical move that aimed to facilitate the Parthian campaigns by gaining the support of the Jewish communities of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The neutrality of these Jewish communities allowed Trajan to gain a relatively easy victory over the Parthians. However, after the capture of Ctesiphon on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 116, the relationship between Rome and the Jews deteriorated: perhaps in the triumphal celebrations throughout the empire that followed the conquest of Parthia in 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February 116, further deaths occurred and new riots broke out, this time escalating into open war.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Capponi 2018.

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