

# The Alexandrian Riots of 356 and George of Cappadocia

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IN LATE JUNE 346, Gregory of Cappadocia died in Alexandria after a long illness. As the imperial appointee to the patriarchate of Alexandria, Gregory had persecuted the followers of Bishop Athanasius and had generously rewarded his fellow Arians within the city during the six years of his tenure on the throne of St Mark. Gregory was not, however, a successful promoter of the Arian cause in Alexandria. Indeed, the growth and viability of the Arian community there was largely the work of Gregory's countryman, Philagrius, a veteran *praefectus Aegypti*, who effectively employed all the powers of patronage and coercion in the hands of the imperial administration.<sup>1</sup>

By mid-October 346, Athanasius returned from exile to a thunderous welcome at Alexandria (*Hist. Aceph.* 1.1). Gregory Nazianzus (*Or.* 21.29) says that Athanasius' restoration was greeted with "universal cheers, the pouring forth of unguents, nightlong festivities, the whole city gleaming with light, and both public and private feasting." This return ushered in the so-called 'Golden Decade' of Athanasius' episcopate, during which he vigorously lobbied for support among eastern bishops, launched a missionary initiative to the southern kingdom of Axum, and undertook a major program of church building in Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> But after the assassination of Athanasius' imperial

<sup>1</sup> The principal sources for Gregory's episcopate and Philagrius' prefecture(s) are: *Festal Index* 11–18; Athan. *Ep. Ency., Apol. c. Ar.* 30, *Hist. Ar.* 10–21, *Fest. Ep.* 10; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.28; Socrates *HE* 2.11, 14; Sozomen *HE* 3.6, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates *HE* 2.24; see also E. R. Hardy, *Christian Egypt* (New York 1952) 61f. For recent surveys of Athanasius' career see the important collection of articles in C. KANNENGIESSER, ed., *Politique et théologie chez Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris 1974; hereafter 'Kannengiesser'); M. Tetz, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (Berlin 1978) 333–49; G. C. Stead, in *Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane* 1 (Rome 1983) 413–32; A. S. Atiya, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 1 (New York 1991; hereafter 'CoptEnc') 298–302; T. D. Barnes,

patron Constans in 350, the Arian emperor Constantius felt he had a free hand to increase pressure on the recalcitrant Athanasius. Imperial *notarii* presented the Alexandrians with a series of admonitions to abandon Athanasius and embrace the theology of the imperial court.<sup>3</sup> One *notarius*, Diogenes, spent four months in late 355 trying in vain to effect Athanasius' removal: "since the people and the judges strongly resisted Diogenes, [he] returned [to Constantinople] without success."<sup>4</sup> Constantius, however, was determined to impose his will on the city. In early January 356, the *dux* Syrianus and yet another *notarius*, Hilary, arrived in Alexandria accompanied by troops gathered from Egypt and Libya.<sup>5</sup> An uneasy stand-off ensued until the night of 8 February. Encouraged by Arian elements within the city, Syrianus and his troops made an armed attack on the Church of St Theonas during a nocturnal vigil. Athanasius had been officiating at the service, and only the intervention of his close attendants secured his narrow escape from the subsequent violence.<sup>6</sup> Within a year Alexandria again had an imperial appointee as bishop, George of Cappadocia, an Arian "who ruled by force rather than by priestly moderation" (Sozom. *HE* 4.10).

This chapter in the tumultuous history of Arian/Homoousian conflict in Alexandria typifies a scenario played out repeatedly in the city's Christian community during the middle decades of the fourth century. Yet, on closer examination, the ongoing violence of 356 and George's subsequent episcopate manifested much broader intercommunal tensions within Late Antique Alexandria.<sup>7</sup> George's turbulent reign marked a watershed in

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*Athanasius of Alexandria: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (forthcoming). A useful bibliographical essay in C. Kannengiesser, "The Athanasian Decade 1974–1984," *TheoSt* 46 (1985) 524–41.

<sup>3</sup> Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 31; *Hist. Aceph.* 1.7f; *Festal Index* 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. Aceph.* 1.9; *populo vero resistente Diogeni vehementer et iudicibus, reversus est Diogenes sine effectu.*

<sup>5</sup> Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 22ff; Sozomen *HE* 4.9.

<sup>6</sup> *Festal Index* 28; *Hist. Aceph.* 1.10f; Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 25, *Apol. de fuga* 24.

<sup>7</sup> The enormous bibliography on Ptolemaic and early Roman Alexandria contrasts with the little on the Late Antique period. See, however, M. Rodziewicz, *Les habitations romaines tardives d'Alexandrie à la lumière des fouilles polonaises à Kôm el-Dikka (=Alexandrie III [Warsaw 1984])*; P. M. Fraser, "Alexandria, Christian and Medieval," in *CoptEnc* 1 (1991) 88–92; H. Heinen, "Alexandria in Late Antiquity," in *CoptEnc* 1 (1991) 95–103; C. J.

the social and religious history of Alexandria. His unexpected campaign against the city's pagan cults galvanized the diffuse pagans into a recognizable community that defended its religious patrimony with bloodshed. His inept renewal of violent persecution against the Athanasians doomed the Arian cause and laid the foundations for unswerving popular support of the Alexandrian patriarchate in its contests with imperial authority over the next three centuries.<sup>8</sup>

Shortly after the followers of Athanasius were expelled from the churches in June 356, a large crowd of pagans looted the newly-renovated "Great Church" in the Caesarion. Deliberate acts of desecration and various sorts of pagan rituals accompanied this pillaging. Although Athanasius (the main source) describes these events in great detail, modern accounts generally ignore them, perhaps because modern commentators tend to exhibit a nearly exclusive preoccupation with ecclesiastical matters during Athanasius' patriarchate.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, modern scholars often gloss over the year-long interlude between Athanasius' exile and the entry of the Arian bishop, George of Cappadocia, in February 357, and some even deny the existence of this hiatus in episcopal tenancy.<sup>10</sup> Far from being an

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Haas, *Late Roman Alexandria* (forthcoming). For the wider Egyptian context of this period see the useful summary of R. S. Bagnall, "Late Roman Egypt," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 10 (New York 1988) 453-56, and his fuller exposition in *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> General treatments of this conflict in Hardy (*supra* n.2) 58-66; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia 1984) 536-43; C. W. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity* (Leiden 1990) 142-46 (largely derivative of Hardy and Frend); fuller analysis in M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana del IV secolo* (Rome 1975) 226-30, 326-33; E. D. Hunt, "Christians and Christianity in Ammianus Marcellinus," *CQ* NS. 35 (1985) 186-200; J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (Baltimore 1989) 441-44; and M. Caltabiano, "L'assassinio di Giorgio di Cappadocia," *QuadCatStCl* 7 (1985) 17-57, who rightly emphasizes how fifth-century church historians reinterpreted the events of 361 as a manifestation of theological conflict, thereby discounting social and political factors. Consequently, the near contemporary sources acquire an even greater importance in understanding George's episcopate.

<sup>9</sup> A. Martin's otherwise outstanding analysis of Athanasius' episcopate only briefly notes these events in a section on "Alexandrie la violente": *Histoire "Acéphale" et Index Syriaque des Lettres Festeles d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (= *Sources Chrétiennes* 317 [Paris 1985]) 102f.

<sup>10</sup> *Hist. Aceph.* 2.1f; *Festal Index* 18f; careful reconstruction of the chronology in Martin (*supra* n.9) 89-97; cf. W. Bright, "Georgius of Cappadocia," *DCB* 2 (1880) 637-40.

isolated incident, the rôle of the city's pagans in Alexandrian civic strife only increased during the course of George's ill-fated episcopate. These tensions culminated in the murder of the Cappadocian bishop and two imperial officials in November 361. The scale of this public violence suggests the need for a careful assessment of its significance for the history of the intercommunal relations in Alexandria.

After the defeat of the usurper Magnentius at Mursa in September 351 (and his later suicide in 353), Constantius directed his energies toward eradicating any remaining pockets of dissent that might threaten the unity of the empire.<sup>11</sup> Pagans and Homoousians were singled out as special objects of his wrath. Against the former, Constantius enacted a series of laws in 353–356 that banned nocturnal sacrifices, closed and demolished a number of temples, and forbade sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> During his sojourn in Rome in 357, the emperor also ordered the removal of the altar of Victory from the Senate house, the first salvo in a decades-long struggle over this important symbol of traditional Roman religion.<sup>13</sup> Against the adherents of Nicaea, Constantius convoked councils at Arles (353) and Milan (355), leading to the expulsion of Hilary of Poitiers and Liberius of Rome from their episcopal sees. Their exiles resulted largely from vocal support for the bishop whom Constantius regarded as the villain behind the church's ongoing schism—Athanasius. Serious allegations that Athanasius had “subverted all Egypt and Libya” during the revolt of Magnentius and Decentius fueled Constantius' antipathy for the Alexandrian patriarch (Socrates *HE* 2.26). Such accusations were apparently more than the malicious whisperings of Constantius' courtiers: Magnentius' envoys to negotiate with Constantius had passed through Alexandria on their way to the emperor.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Zos. 2.51f; *Epit. de Caes.* 42.4–8; Eutrop.10.12. On Constantius' relations with Athanasius see K. M. Girardet, “Constance II, Athanase et l'édit d'Arles (353): à propos de la politique religieuse de l'empereur Constance II,” and L. W. Bernard, “Athanase et les empereurs Constantin et Constance,” in *Kannengiesser* 65–91 and 127–43. More generally see R. Klein, *Constantius II. und die christliche Kirche* (Darmstadt 1977); C. Vogler, *Constance II et l'administration impériale* (Strasbourg 1979).

<sup>12</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.2–6; *Liban. Or.* 72.8.

<sup>13</sup> Ambrose *Ep.* 18.22; Symmachus *Relat.* 3.7.

<sup>14</sup> Marcellinus, Magnentius' *magister militum*, and Nunechius, a senator and possibly a Praetorian Prefect, sent to Constantinople via Alexandria: Petr. Pat. fr.16, *FHG* IV 184–91. Athanasius neglects to mention them and speaks only of ecclesiastical envoys: *Apol. ad Constant.* 6–11.

Four months after Athanasius' ouster, the new prefect Cataphronius arrived in Alexandria (10 June 356) with Heraclius as *comes* (*Hist. Aceph.* 2.1f). On hand to assist them was Faustinus, an Arian *catholicus* (*Athan. Hist. Ar.* 55, 58). These hand-picked administrators of Constantius immediately instituted a new regime in Alexandria. Unlike their predecessor Syrianus, who had directed his attention solely to the Christians—on one occasion even setting three thousand soldiers upon a large body of Christians holding prayer services in the cemeteries—the new administrators cast their net much more widely (*Athan. Apol. ad Constant.* 27). The pagans of the city were threatened with the destruction of their cult images if they failed to support the imperial nominee succeeding the exiled patriarch. De facto leaders within the loosely-structured pagan community (pagan magistrates and ordinary keepers of temples) were especially singled out and forced to swear loyalty to whatever nominee the emperor might send.<sup>15</sup> In this same context, Athanasius says that certain urban *collegia* were also coerced into professing loyalty, perhaps indicating their character as cult associations or, less explicitly, as craft associations dedicated to the service of their patron god.<sup>16</sup>

Four days after the new imperial administrators arrived, a pagan crowd attacked the followers of Athanasius worshipping in the Great Church. Not surprisingly, Athanasius (*Hist. Ar.* 55f) ascribes the ensuing riot to the collusion, if not the active encouragement, of the prefect, the *comes*, and the *catholicus*. His account of this riot, however, suggests that, even if the rioters began their violent demonstration at the prompting of the officials, the riot soon took a course that could not have been orchestrated beforehand. The violence began in the agora when groups of young pagans (*τῶν ἀγοραίων* in Athanasius) attacked the most prominent church in the vicinity, the so-called Great Church at the Caesarion.<sup>17</sup> Constantius had handed

<sup>15</sup> *Athan. Hist. Ar.* 54, 760a: βουλευτὰς καὶ δημότας ἔθνικούς νεωκόρους τῶν εἰδώλων.

<sup>16</sup> *Hist. Ar.* 55, 760a: τίνες τῶν ἐργασιῶν.

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. Ar.* 55, 760b. Cf. Acts 17:1–9, where a tumult in Thessaloniki occurs after “the Jews ... rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace (*τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροῦς*), formed a mob, and started a riot in the city.” In a near contemporary text, Plutarch describes Scipio Africanus “rushing into the Forum attended by men who were of low birth (*ἀγένειες*) and former slaves, who were frequenters of the Forum (*ἀγοραίους*) and able to gather a mob”: *Plut. Aem.* 38.3. Hence, *ἀγοραῖος* becomes a synonym for

over to the church a portion of this former precinct of the imperial cult during the episcopate of the Arian patriarch Gregory (339–346).<sup>18</sup> Only after Athanasius' return in 346, however, was it generally used as a church.<sup>19</sup> The much-exiled patriarch even risked imperial displeasure by conducting services there before it could be officially consecrated, testimony to the growing needs of the Christian community (Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 14–17). The memory of the building's former status as one of the city's preeminent pagan sanctuaries was fresh in the minds of Alexandrian pagans, and it evidently rankled to see this sacred precinct employed in the worship of a condemned Galilean criminal. It was a natural target of their indignation.

After violently disrupting a prayer service, the crowd of young pagans used the furniture and curtains of the church for a great bonfire in the small forum adjoining the sanctuary—a destructive act with clear religious overtones, as the mob then sprinkled incense on the blaze and sang praises to their gods. For a sacrifice, they seized the heifer that drew water in the gardens of the precinct, and relented only upon the discovery that it was female (Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 56). The significance of the episode is clear: the sacrifice of a sacred bull was associated with the worship of Serapis, the city's great tutelary deity.<sup>20</sup> Another

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'common', 'rowdy', or 'vulgar'. Earlier references include Philo *In Flacc.* 64, 95; *Leg.* 122. This same social grouping, "those of the Dromos," appears in *Acts of Peter*, *BiblHagGr* 1502, 1502a.

Athanasius singles out the *catholicus* Faustinus as the principal agent inciting τῶν ἀγοραίων (*Hist. Ar.* 58): "(The Arians) found that Faustinus, who is the *catholicus* by style, but is an ἀγοραῖος in habits and profligate in heart, was ready to play his part with them in these proceedings and to stir up the heathen."

<sup>18</sup> For the the early history of the Caesarion see the standard discussions with full references in A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano* I.1 (Milan 1935) 118f; A. Adriani, *Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano* SER. C 1 (Palermo 1966) 215–26.

<sup>19</sup> Epiphanius *Haer.* 69.2.3. On the transformation of this shrine into a church see especially A. Martin, "Les premiers siècles du christianisme à Alexandrie: Essai de topographie religieuse (III<sup>e</sup>–IV<sup>e</sup> siècles)," *REAug* 30 (1984) 211–25 at 217f.

<sup>20</sup> On the Serapis cult see J. E. Stambaugh, *Serapis under the Early Ptolemies* (Leiden 1972); H. C. Youtie, "The Kline of Serapis," *HTHR* 41 (1948) 9–30; L. Vidman, *Isis und Serapis bei den Griechen und Römern* (Berlin 1970); P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) I 246–76.

group entered the church shouting religious slogans and waving tree branches, reminiscent of the worship of Dionysus, the one Hellenic god most closely associated with cults of Serapis and Osiris.<sup>21</sup> A coterie of pagan women (maenads in Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 59, 764d) also took part in these demonstrations. Hence, allowing for some hyperbole from the patriarch, further confirmation that the popularity of Dionysus continued beyond the Ptolemaic period, when he appeared as the divine patron of the great religious procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus.<sup>22</sup> The alliance of Dionysus and Serapis is not surprising: well into the Roman era Dionysus and Dionysiac imagery frequently occur in tomb decoration; and in the necropolis at al-Afushi on Pharos, these motifs stand side by side with images culled from the worship of Osiris/Serapis.<sup>23</sup>

Why did this riot break out when it did—only four days after the arrival of the new administrators—and why did the violence assume such a religious complexion? Two complementary explanations may be offered. Despite the installation of a new prefect and military *comes*, no episcopal replacement accompanied the new administrators, even though Athanasius had been ousted from public leadership for over four months. Their only task was to ensure the loyalty of the civil leadership of the city for the soon-expected Arian appointee. Once these oaths of loyalty were extracted, however, considerable time elapsed before the new Arian patriarch appeared. This gap in ecclesiastical leadership had the effect of creating a vacuum in Alexandria's precariously-balanced intercommunal relations.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 57; Fraser (*supra* n.20) 205f.

<sup>22</sup> Callixenus *ap.* Ath. 197c–203B; see also E. E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford 1983).

<sup>23</sup> Adriani (*supra* n.18) 191–97; A. Bernand, *Alexandrie la Grande* (Paris 1966) 206–09.

<sup>24</sup> During their long tenure in the episcopate, most late Roman bishops could develop extensive networks of local patronage and considerable influence in local affairs. This contrasts sharply with the revolving door of imperial appointments. In the five years discussed here (356–361), no fewer than seven prefects and three *strategoi* administered Alexandria. The imperial officials based their authority upon local traditions of deference and upon various forms of coercion at their disposal. On the Late Antique episcopacy see H. Chadwick, "The Role of the Christian Bishop in Ancient Society," in *Protocol, Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies* (Berkeley 1979); E. Ferguson, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York 1990) 150–54 *s.v.* "Bishop."

With no strong hand to guide the Christians, the pagans gave free reign to their animosity towards the growing Christian community. Their resort to mass violence introduced nothing new to Alexandrian power politics. Shortly after Athanasius' expulsion in 339, pagans joined with Arians in violent demonstrations centered on the churches of Quirinus and Dionysius.<sup>25</sup> Alexandrian pagans—from upper-class *boulentai* to paupers in the agora—had received tangible benefits from supporting the Arian party under Gregory and Philagrius.<sup>26</sup> Like the riots of 339, this was yet another opportunity for the pagans to show their allegiance to their imperial patron and to attack with impunity their principal rivals.

At the same time, it would not have taken a very discerning pagan to realize that Constantius' religious policy over the last five years had shifted for the worse. The tide of imperial legislation and pronouncements since the defeat of Magnentius was increasingly anti-pagan: not only new laws banning pagan cultic practices, but also a freer hand to enforce previous legislation after removal of an armed pagan party in the West. Imperial representatives in Alexandria reflected this shift of policy. Although Syrianus had employed armed violence solely against Athanasians and had openly rewarded upper-class Alexandrians with bishoprics (and the attendant exemption from taxation), the new administration installed in early June, 356, offered only threats to the pagans, who had every reason to fear the imposition of a new patriarch.

Thus the rioting at the Caesarion may have taken a form familiar to students of early modern history, that of the 'church and king riot', *i.e.*, a violent demonstration in support of traditional political and religious usages perceived as threatened.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Athan. *Ep. Ency.* 3f, *Apol. c. Ar.* 30, *Hist. Ar.* 10–13.

<sup>26</sup> Ordination and tax exemption: Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 28; grain dole: *Ep. Ency.* 4, *Hist. Ar.* 31, 54; gifts of oil and other alms: *Hist. Ar.* 13, 72; unspecified "promises": *Ep. Ency.* 3.

<sup>27</sup> The best discussion of the taxonomy of this phenomenon is E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd," *Past and Present* 50 (Feb. 1971) 76–136; see also N. Z. Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past and Present* 59 (May 1973) 53–91; M. Mollat and P. Wolff, *Ongles bleus, Jacques et Ciompi: Les révolutions populaires en Europe aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris 1970); S. Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (Ithaca 1990) 165–216. More generally on the structure of popular violence see E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (New York 1959); N. J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York 1963); G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History* (New York



Far from revolutionary, these riots are often carried out in the name of a traditional political authority and with the tacit backing of local administrators. The pagan violence at the Caesarion fits this paradigm exactly, and the rioters even chanted such slogans as "Constantius has become a Hellene!" and "The Arians recognize our deeds!" while they ransacked the newly-dedicated church.<sup>28</sup> This aspect of the violence becomes all the more comprehensible, for the Caesarion had been the focus of ruler-cult in the city for nearly four centuries. Clearly, the pagans reacted against the desecration of their revered shrine and the overturning of traditional notions of divine rulership.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, they probably regarded their Christian emperor with suspicion, since he had not only adjured the rôle of god-king but had now sent out representatives to threaten other ancestral cults that had long maintained the divine order. A Syrian visitor during the 350s describes the depth of Alexandrian religious devotion:

I think that in celebrating [this locale], it owes its particular renown to the gods, because there—as I have already said—the gods are especially honored by [artistic] representations. There, one can see every sort of consecrated shrine and lavishly adorned temple; sacristans, priests, attendants, haruspices,

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1963); J. S. McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob from Plato to Canetti* (London 1989).

On popular violence in the Classical and Late Antique periods: A. W. Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome* (Oxford 1968), and *Violence, Civil Strife, and Revolution in the Classical City* (London 1982); P. J. J. Vanderbroeck, *Popular Leadership and Collective Behavior in the Late Roman Republic* (Amsterdam 1987); A. Cameron, *Circus Factions* (Oxford 1976); E. J. Jory, "Early Pantomime Riots," in A. Moffat, ed., *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning* (= *Byzantina Australiensia* 5 [1984]) 57–66; R. Browning, "The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch," *JRS* 42 (1952) 13–20; T. E. Gregory, *Vox Populi* (Columbus 1979).

<sup>28</sup> *Hist. Ar.* 56, 761a: 'Ἕλλην γέγονε Κωνσταντίος, καὶ οἱ Ἀρειανοὶ τὰ ἡμῶν ἐπέγνωσαν."

<sup>29</sup> This form of analysis has been pioneered in the earlier period by W. D. Barry, *Faces of the Crowd: Popular Society and Politics of Roman Alexandria, 30 B.C.–A.D. 215* (diss. University of Michigan, 1988), a ground-breaking study suggesting that the Alexandrians did not have an ingrained predilection to rioting and violence, but instead were far more deferential in their behavior than modern historians commonly depict them. Further explication of this view in Barry's "Alexandrians, Orators, and the 'Mob': Dio Chrysostom and the World of Roman Alexandria," *Historia* (forthcoming).

worshippers, and the best diviners all abound; and everything is performed according to the proper rites. Thus you will find altars constantly ablaze with the fires of sacrifices and heaped with incense, as well as garlands and censers filled with perfumes emitting a divine fragrance.<sup>30</sup>

This reputation for devotion so impressed the author of the *Expositio* that he was moved to exclaim, "Nowhere, in fact, are the mysteries of the gods celebrated as they have been here—from ancient times up till the present day."<sup>31</sup> No wonder that the now-threatened pagans seized the opportunity afforded them by the prefect to restate forcefully their support for traditional usages.<sup>32</sup>

In this atmosphere of heightened intercommunal tension, Constantius' episcopal nominee, George of Cappadocia, entered the city on 30 Mechir (24 February) 357, and took up his post with the backing of imperial troops (*Festal Index* 19). George, one of the most intriguing characters in late Roman politics, had begun his career as a contractor of military supplies in Constantinople, and by the 340s enjoyed a comfortable living in Cappadocia, where he lent volumes from his "very large and complete" library to the future emperor Julian.<sup>33</sup> Unlike his Arian predecessor Gregory, all sources agree that George possessed a forceful personality and was a keen opportunist.<sup>34</sup> Although Athanasius might call him an idolater with an

<sup>30</sup> *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 36.19–27 (J. Rougé, ed. and tr. [Paris 1966]). Although the anonymous author may be referring to the whole of Egypt, it can be argued that he never progressed beyond the confines of Alexandria and its immediate hinterland: Rougé 30f.

<sup>31</sup> 34.7ff: *nusquam enim deorum mysteria sic perficitur quomodo ibi ab antiquo et usque modo.*

<sup>32</sup> A similar incident occurred some fifty years later in the North African town of Calama, when a crowd of pagans celebrating a festival (contrary to a recent law of Honorius) assaulted a church with the tacit support of the local administration: August. *Ep.* 91.

<sup>33</sup> Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 75 (ὑποδέκτην ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ταμιακῶν γενόμενον). Julian *Ep.* 106 (411c) Bidez-Cumont; see also A.-J. Festugière, "Julien à Macellum" *JRS* 47 (1957) 53–58. Transfer from the imperial service to the episcopate was not unusual under Constantius, e.g. Eleusius of Cyzicus (Sozomen *HE* 4.20).

<sup>34</sup> Amm. Marc. 22.11.4; Athan. *De Syn.* 37; Epiph. *Haer.* 76.1.1–8; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.16.

executioner's temperament, George's imperial patron Constantius praised him in a letter to the Alexandrians as "the most perfect of beings as a guide for your conduct, both in word and deed."<sup>35</sup>

Owing his appointment to Constantius and the Arian bishops surrounding the emperor, George immediately sought to implement the policies of his imperial patron. Like his administrative predecessors who initiated Constantius' new regime in the city and oversaw operations against the Homousians, George aimed to break all hints of local opposition—whether Christian or pagan. According to Athanasius' hostile testimony, George instituted a fierce persecution of the followers of the ousted patriarch. Clergy and ascetics were imprisoned, and the grain dole was withheld from the lower-class dependents of the former bishop. Wealthy supporters of Athanasius not only had their property confiscated but, in some cases, even their houses were destroyed (*Athan. Apol. de fuga* 6)—a particularly effective method of quelling dissent, as seen today in Israeli suppression of the *Intifada*. Worse followed. In May 357, soldiers of the *dux* came upon a band of Athanasians praying in one of the extra-mural cemeteries. Those unable to escape were severely beaten and many died. The survivors were banished to the Great Oasis (*Apol. de fuga* 6f).

Although the brutality of George to the Athanasians simply followed the policy of the prefect and his recently-installed administration, George's carefully orchestrated anti-pagan campaign marked a new stage in the official coercion of religious dissent in Alexandria and highlights the centers of pagan strength in the city. This new anti-pagan policy, which George implemented with enthusiasm, eventually produced his downfall.

George's main targets were the temples of the civic cults. Supported by the garrison, he attempted to prohibit pagan sacrifices and despoil the temples of their votive offerings and decorations.<sup>36</sup> To sap further the financial resources of the pagan

<sup>35</sup> Athan. *De Syn.* 37, *Ad Episcopos* 7; Constantius *ap.* Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* 30.

<sup>36</sup> Julian *Ep.* 60 (379b); Sozomen *HE* 4.30; for the broader context of pagan/Christian conflict over temples see L. Habachi, "The Destruction of Temples in Egypt," in S. Hanna, ed., *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya* (Leiden 1972); G. Fowden, "Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire: A.D. 320–435," *JThS* N.S. 19 (1978) 53–78; L. Kákosy, "Paganism and Christianity in Egypt," in *CoptEnc* 6 (1991) 1865–71.

cults, George suggested to the emperor that the temples should no longer be exempt from taxation, specifically mentioning the long-standing civic cults that had enjoyed immunity since the time of Alexander (Amm. Marc. 22.11.6). George also went out of his way to insult the temple of Tyche, at one point asking the crowd, "How long shall this sepulchre be permitted to stand?"<sup>37</sup> Against Serapis, the city's great divine protector, George incited the *dux* Artemius, a virulent anti-pagan and trusted "friend and companion" of Constantius, to sack the Serapeum.<sup>38</sup> His attack provoked a violent reaction from the devotees of the god, resulting in clashes between the garrison and the populace.<sup>39</sup>

Ammianus Marcellinus relates that during George's tenure, Draconitus, an imperial mint official, tore down an altar—perhaps dedicated to Juno Moneta. Significantly, as the mint was located within the precinct of the Caesarion, this act of sanctioned destruction may have been designed to send a forceful message to the same pagans who had rioted there before George's arrival. And while an associate of Draconitus, the military *comes* Diodorus, was overseeing the construction of a church he arbitrarily cut off the curls of some boys, thinking that the long curls "were an aspect of the worship of the gods."<sup>40</sup> This act of anti-pagan zeal (rows of curls symbolized devotion to Serapis) was yet another aspect of the campaign against the most popular civic cults of Alexandria.<sup>41</sup>

Another equally plausible interpretation of Diodorus' actions, however, would have Yahweh the god unspecified by Ammianus. Thus these Jewish youths maintained unshorn side locks (*pe'ot*) as a token of respect to the God of their fathers.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Amm. Marc. 22.11.7: "*quam diu,*" inquit "*sepulcrum hoc stabit?*"

<sup>38</sup> Artemius was previously commissioned to bring the relics of Andrew and Luke to Constantinople. See Theodoret *HE* 3.14; *Passio Artem.* 4, 8, 18 (ed. J. Bidez, GCS [Leipzig 1913]); on his career: J. Dummer, "F. Artemius dux Aegypti," *ArchPF* 21 (1971) 121–44; *PLRE* I s.v. "Artemius 2."

<sup>39</sup> Julian *Ep.* 60 (378–80). Artemius also employed force to promote the emperor's Arian policies within Alexandria, at one point engaging in a violent house-to-house search to discover the hiding place of Athanasius: *Festal Index* 32.

<sup>40</sup> Amm. Marc. 22.11.9: *id quoque ad deorum cultum existimans pertinere.*

<sup>41</sup> J. G. Davies, "Was the Devotion of Septimius Severus to Serapis the Cause of the Persecution of 202–3?" *JThS* N.S. 5 (1954) 73–76: more convincing for its study of iconography than for its conclusions regarding a Severan persecution.

<sup>42</sup> Although the wearing of *pe'ot* is best known in the modern period from certain Jewish communities of eastern Europe and the United States, there is evidence of the usage from Late Antiquity: Bab. Tal. Mak. 20b, following the injunction found in Lev. 19.27.

Attacks on pagans and non-Arian Christians leave no reason to doubt that imperial coercion encompassed Jews, who had joined with Arians in the rioting of 339 and reappear in the Arian-sponsored violence of 373, but who are conspicuously absent in the conflicts of the episcopate of George.<sup>43</sup> This Jewish quiescence in Alexandria would reflect their tenuous status in the mid-350s. A minor Jewish sedition during Constantius' struggles with Magnentius occurred in Palestine under a certain Patricius and was duly crushed by Gallus in 352.<sup>44</sup> Afterwards, an imperial enactment was directed against both the "sacrilegious gatherings" (*sacrilegis coetibus*) of the Jews and the apostatizing Christians who joined them.<sup>45</sup> Constantius' administration also levied various taxes (later rescinded by Julian) against the Jews.<sup>46</sup> Officially-sanctioned acts of anti-Semitism in Alexandria would fit this wider imperial context, especially when an administration so closely attuned to the imperial will governed Alexandria.

The close connection between religious factionalism and urban topography in late antique Alexandria offers another avenue for understanding the turmoil of this period.<sup>47</sup> All of George's principal enemies had their strongest support in the center of the city. The civic cults that George assailed were all located, except for the Serapeum, in and around the agora or Mesonpedion. Likewise, the most important churches were situated near the Via Canopica, the broad colonnaded boulevard bisecting the city; and some of Athanasius' most ardent supporters could be found among the sailors and dockworkers of the of the city's twin harbors. In addition, from what little is known of the fourth-century Jewish community it appears that

<sup>43</sup> Athan. *Ep. Encyl.* 3f, 7; Theodoret *HE* 4.18.19, quoting a letter of Bishop Peter, Athanasius' successor.

<sup>44</sup> Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 42.11; Hieron. *Chron. s.a.* 352; Socrates *HE* 2.23; Sozomen *HE* 4.7; see also H. Tränkle, "Der Caesar Gallus bei Ammian," *MusHelv* 33 (1976) 162–79 at 167ff; M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine: A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (New York 1976) 176–81.

<sup>45</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.7; text and extensive discussion in A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit 1987) 151–54.

<sup>46</sup> Julian *Ep.* 204 (396–98); Linder (*supra* n.45) 154–60.

<sup>47</sup> A similar analysis is applied to factionalism in Alexandria during the 480s in C. Haas, "Patriarch and People: Peter Mongus of Alexandria and Episcopal Leadership in the Late Fifth Century," *ByzSt* n.s. 1 (1991, forthcoming).

Jewish habitation was clustered near the Eastern (or Great) Harbor.<sup>48</sup>

By contrast, Arianism had for decades found its strongest support in Alexandria's extra-mural regions. Arius' parish church in a suburban district attracted ascetics and shepherds among his early followers.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Gregory and Philagrius had recruited a mob of shepherds to attack Athanasius' supporters in 339 (Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 10). This topographical connection was not lost on George, who had spent his early career in Constantinople as ὑποδέκτης ταμιακῶν acquiring business acumen and a reputation for ruthlessness.<sup>50</sup> George apparently understood that the topographical differentiation of Alexandria did not permit a favorable 'business climate' in a region dominated by his urban opponents, largely concerned with maritime trade and workshop manufacture. Consequently, George gained monopolies on papyrus production and reed cutting and a special tax on the extraction of nitre—economic activities concentrated in the suburbs.<sup>51</sup> George's control over the *collegium* of grave-diggers and coffin-bearers, "keeping them in his own hands, not for humanity, but for profit," confirms this reliance on the peripheral areas (Epiph. *Haer.* 76.1.5ff). Such a shrewd businessman probably also took advantage of Constantius' grant of immunity from taxation to grave-diggers (*Cod. Theod.* 16.2.15.1). In addition, George not only profited from these concerns and became a patron of the suburban inhabitants, but also kept a close eye on the extra-mural districts—regions where dissent tended to flourish in late Roman cities.

After antagonizing Alexandria's two most influential communal groups (and perhaps also the Jews), George came to rely increasingly on military force to maintain his position. Yet even the spears of the prefect could not secure George in his see. In

<sup>48</sup> Socrates *HE* 1.35; Athanasius, *Apol. c. Ar.* 9, *Ep. Ency.* 5; Haas (*supra* n.7) ch. 4, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* 69.3.1f; on Arius' church of Baucalis, the nearby martyrion of St Mark, and the surrounding region of Boucolia, see B. A. Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations," in B. Pearson and J. Goehring, ed., *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia 1986) 132–59.

<sup>50</sup> Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.16; Athanasius, *De Syn.* 12, *Ad Episcopos* 7, *Hist. Ar.* 75.

<sup>51</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* 76.5; papyrus: *Expositio tot. mund.* 36.1–9; Strab. 17.1.15; *BGU* IV 1121 (*P.Select.* 41: lease on a papyrus marsh, 5 B.C.); Plin. *HN* 13.76; nitre and other quarried materials: *P.Sakaon* 24f (*P.Theod.* 35f); see also Haas (*supra* n.7) ch. 2.

late August, 358, the plebs attacked him in the church of St Dionysius and he barely escaped with his life.<sup>52</sup> By early October he realized how untenable his position had become and he left the city, "being driven away by the multitude" (*Festal Index* 30). The Arian patriarch spent the next three years taking an active rôle in the synods and councils that occupied the imperial church.<sup>53</sup> As frequently happens, a newly-dominant ideology soon shows fissures within a once solid phalanx of opposition. So too, ascendant Arianism in the 350s evolved into several competing theologies, each of which was opposed to the Council of Nicaea.<sup>54</sup> George, very much involved in these debates, tended to follow the lead of Acacius of Caesarea, but his brutal conduct in Alexandria haunted him even in Arian circles, as he had to defend himself at the Council of Ariminum (359) against accusations of "plundering and violence"—an echo of similar allegations brought against Athanasius at the Synod of Tyre (339).<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile in Alexandria, control of the churches passed back and forth between the two main parties. Though Athanasius remained securely in hiding, his partisans took possession of the churches nine days after George's departure and retained them for little more than two months, when the *dux* Sebastianus, reinforced by new troops from Egypt, expelled the Athanasians (late December, 358) and restored the churches to George's followers.<sup>56</sup>

The following June, the infamous *notarius* Paul (nicknamed "Catena") arrived from court with an edict renewing persecution of George's opponents (*Hist. Aceph.* 2.5). Paul conducted investigations under a mandate from Constantius to root out

<sup>52</sup> *Hist. Aceph.* 2.3. The anonymous author's simple use of *plebs* does not allow speculation on composition of the crowd and its specific sympathies, whether Homoousian or pagan.

<sup>53</sup> Sozomen *HE* 4.6.16; Theodoret *HE* 2.23f.

<sup>54</sup> A balanced, recent treatment in R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh 1988) 348–86, 557–637.

<sup>55</sup> Socrates *HE* 2.39f; Sozomen *HE* 4.17 (ἀρπαγῶν καὶ ὑβρεῶν), cf. 2.23ff; on this aspect of Athanasius' episcopate see T. D. Barnes, "The Career of Athanasius"—a depiction to be viewed in light of D. W. H. Arnold, "Sir Harold Idris Bell and Athanasius: A Reconsideration of *London Papyrus* 1914," both in E. A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Patristica* 21 (= *Papers presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, 1987* [Leuven 1989]) 390–401 and 377–83. See also Hanson (*supra* n.54) 239–46.

<sup>56</sup> *Hist. Aceph.* 2.4; Sozomen *HE* 4.10.

treasonous activity throughout Egypt, after Constantius had received stolen petitions directed to an oracle of Bes at the hallowed shrine of Abydos (Amm. Marc. 19.12.3–16). Petitions to oracles (especially from persons of rank) were deemed treasonous, and consequently numerous high-ranking pagans were dragged before the *notarius*' tribunal at both Alexandria and Scythopolis in Palestine. Parnasius, a pagan *praefectus Aegypti* at the time of George's expulsion from Alexandria, was tried and exiled.<sup>57</sup> Andronicus, a town councillor from Her-mopolis and former student of Themistius, was likewise hailed before Paul.<sup>58</sup> An aged Alexandrian philosopher named Demetrius confessed on the rack only to sacrificing at the shrine and denied ever consulting the oracle (Amm. Marc. 19.12.12). Although Ammianus implies that numerous persons were tried, tortured, and convicted, the harvest from Paul's inquisition was meager: Parnasius is the only named individual not eventually acquitted.<sup>59</sup>

This hardened imperial policy, however, set the stage in Alexandria for ongoing persecutions by Faustinus, the new prefect—an experienced hand in violent coercion of Alexandrians, for he had stirred up the τῶν ἀγοραίων in June 356 before the assault on the Caesarion (Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 55, 58). His new assistant, the *dux* Artemius, eventually became the principal agent of George's policies during the Cappadocian's absence. The sources depict Artemius ruthlessly harrassing Athanasians and continuing a vigorous campaign against urban pagan cults.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> His prefecture (357–359) followed that of Cataphronius, the initiator of Constantius' hard-line policies in 356. It may be conjectured that a pagan had been chosen, in part, to mollify the pagan crowds that rioted in the summer of 356. If so, Parnasius' rapid fall from imperial favor suggests that Constantius considered his softened policy to have gone too far—especially when his hand-picked bishop had been thrown out of the city, and the prefect had failed to support the bishop with sufficient force. Indeed, the vindictive George may have had some hand in targeting Parnasius for trial. The *Hist. Aceph.* (2.5) goes so far as to claim that Paul's activities in Alexandria were motivated solely by a policy to exact vengeance on George's enemies: *Paulus ... proposuit imperiale preceptum pro Georgio et domuit multos ob eius vindicta*. On Parnasius: Amm. Marc. 19.12.10; Liban. *Ep.* 29, *Or.* 14.15f.

<sup>58</sup> Amm. Marc. 19.12.11; Liban. *Ep.* 77.

<sup>59</sup> A recent discussion of the context of these trials in Matthews (*supra* n.8) 217f; an exhaustive treatment, rightly emphasizing the religious dimensions of the episode, in R. von Haehling, "Ammianus Marcellinus und der Prozess von Scythopolis," *JAC* 21 (1978) 74–101; see also H. Funke, "Majestäts- und Magieprozesse bei Ammianus Marcellinus," *JAC* 10 (1967) 145–75.

<sup>60</sup> *Festal Index* 32; Julian *Ep.* 60 (379b); Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.20.



Alexandrians saw Artemius as the mere instrument of George, and hence also of Constantius. All the more reason, then, that George “was regarded with greater aversion than before” when he returned to the city accompanied by imperial troops on 26 November 361 (Sozom. *HE* 4.10). He immediately “commenced a cruel persecution against the pagans” (*HE* 4.30), who “had more cause to hate him than any other body of men, especially on account of the insults he offered their images and temples; and having, moreover, prohibited them from sacrificing, or performing the ancestral rites” (5.7). George felt so confident in his newly-restored position that he ignored long-standing Alexandrian protocol, insulted the city magistrates, exiled noted pagans, and imperiously gave orders to both civil and military officials.<sup>61</sup>

To George’s misfortune, events elsewhere led to the radical alteration of his status: at a post station in western Cilicia, Constantius died of a fever on 3 November—three weeks before George returned to Alexandria.<sup>62</sup> The emperor had been moving his forces west to face his second-cousin Julian, elevated to the purple by his troops the previous year. News of Constantius’ death finally reached Alexandria at the end of November. When the Prefect Gerontius announced the transfer of power to the assembled magistrates and people, a crowd quickly formed and “attacked George with shouts and reproaches as if they would kill him at once” (Sozom. *HE* 5.7). The authorities were able to extricate him from the mob, and he was placed in prison, doubtless to await his extradition to Constantinople for trial (*Hist. Aceph.* 2.9).

Although George had clearly alienated virtually the entire urban population, rendering himself “exceedingly obnoxious to all classes,” the driving force behind the riot apparently came from elements within the pagan community (Socrates *HE* 3.3). Other anti-pagan officials in Constantius’ local administration were likewise under detention, including Dracontius, the director of the imperial mint who had overturned an altar in the sacred precinct of the Caesarion, and Diodorus, the *comes* who

<sup>61</sup> Sozomen *HE* 4.30. The celebrated pagan physician and teacher Zeno was exiled from Alexandria during this period, later restored by Julian: Julian *Ep.* 58 (426); Liban. *Ep.* 171.

<sup>62</sup> Amm. Marc. 21.15.1–6; *Consul. Const. s.a.* 361; Hieron. *Chron. s.a.* 361—testimony to the slowness of communications within the empire.

had shorn the locks of Alexandrian boys.<sup>63</sup> George's principal military supporter Artemius, although unmolested in his post as *dux*, could not render any aid to the Arian bishop. Within a year Julian recalled Artemius and executed him at Antioch in his presence.<sup>64</sup>

On 24 December, less than a month after the imprisonment of George and his companions, a mob broke in, murdered them, and dragged their bodies through the streets with ropes tied to their feet. Their mutilated corpses were then placed on camels and paraded the length of Alexandria to the shore, where their bodies were burned and the ashes cast into the sea.<sup>65</sup> Cremation prevented veneration of their relics as martyrs to the faith (as happened when Artemius' bones were transferred to Constantinople). Moreover, in a land where the careful preservation of corpses had attained the level of a highly-developed science, burning their bodies served as a special insult with unmistakably religious overtones. The entire process (execution or flogging, ceremonial parade and/or dragging of body, cremation) was a long Alexandrian tradition, and constituted a carefully structured ritual of civic purgation.<sup>66</sup> Julian reacted to this outburst in a sharply-worded letter to the Alexandrians, deploring their extra-

<sup>63</sup> Amm. Marc. 22.11.9; M. Peachin, "*Praepositus* or *Procurator*?" *Historia* 36 (1987) 248f, argues that Ammianus mistakenly identifies Dracontius' office as that of a *praepositus*, instead of the more widely-attested *procurator*.

<sup>64</sup> *Passio Artem.* Anh. 3, 167–75 (ed. Bidez). Ammianus claims that the Alexandrian pagans rioted upon hearing that Artemius was dead (22.11.8), but the *Passio Artem.* states that Artemius was beheaded in Daphne, the luxurious suburb of Antioch. Julian, who presided over his trial, did not arrive in Antioch until July 362.

<sup>65</sup> The events are described with slight variation in Amm. Marc. 22.11.8–11; Sozomen *HE* 5.7; Socrates *HE* 3.2f; *Hist. Aceph.* 2.8ff; *Chron. Pasch.* p.546 Dindorf. Sozomen and Socrates attribute George's murder to insults that he offered to pagan cult objects discovered during the construction of a church, but the same story is repeated for the pagan-Christian clashes of 391, where the sequence of events fits far better. The announcement of Constantius' death provided more than sufficient motivation for an Alexandrian crowd to rise up against the hated patriarch, finding legitimation for their actions in the acquiescence of the imperial authorities.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. Jewish victims in 38, Christians in 250, Homoousian Christians in 373, Hypatia in 415, Proterius in 457; a full analysis of this ritual in C. Haas, "Alexandria's *Via Canopica*: Political Expression and Urban Topography from Augustus to 'Amr ibn al-'As," in N. Swelim, ed., *Alexandrian Studies in Memory of Daoud Abdu Daoud* (Cairo 1992); comparative material from elsewhere in the empire in K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Events," *JRS* 80 (1990) 44–73.

legal violence and calling upon the law-sanctioning authority of Serapis, while denouncing George, “the enemy of the gods” (τῷ θεοῖς ἐχθρῷ: *Ep.* 60 [379c]).

The pagan emperor took no punitive measures against the Alexandrians and merely instructed the new prefect Ecdicius to send him George’s huge library, which the book-loving emperor had coveted for many years.<sup>67</sup> Several Christian historians attempt to quash the rumor of Athanasian responsibility for the murders. Although the sources do not state explicitly that a primarily pagan mob murdered George and his companions, Julian’s letter, in conjunction with pagan violence against George at the time of his arrest, permits ascribing the Cappadocian bishop’s death with some certainty to the pagans. Yet both the Athanasians and the Jewish community had ample reason to rejoice.

The ultimate failure of George’s episcopate demonstrates that administrators sent from Constantinople to the great Egyptian port squandered their effectiveness by attempting to conduct with equal vigor the emperor’s anti-pagan and anti-Homousian policies. In the end neither Alexandrian group was sufficiently weakened to ensure long-term conformity to Constantius’ wishes. Since the emperor alienated both groups, it proved impossible to co-opt one party and tip the scales against the other in favor of imperial policy. Furthermore, Constantius’ enmity ensured that the Jewish community sat on the sidelines during this tumultuous struggle for hegemony within the city.

Even though he lacked the crucial backing of the Alexandrian Christian community, George was the first Christian leader to wage a concerted campaign against paganism in the city. He proved to be an extraordinarily potent antagonist with the emperor’s active support through imperial edicts and the troops to enforce them. For contemporaries, George directed imperial policy in Alexandria, denouncing various Alexandrians to the emperor. In Ammianus’ colorful words (22.11.5, tr. Rolfe), “George poured into the ready ears of Constantius charges against many, alleging that they were rebellious against his authority; and forgetful of his calling, which counselled only justice and mildness, he descended to the informer’s deadly practices.” Since he had (in Julian’s words) “exasperated Constantius against [the Alexandrians],” Constantius gave George a free

<sup>67</sup> Julian *Ep.* 106 (411), 107 (377f).

hand, so much so that military authorities like Artemius and Sebastianus were placed under his control.<sup>68</sup> Once his imperial patron was dead, George's authority inevitably collapsed and he became easy prey for the embittered crowd.

Athanasius' supporters once again seized the churches and expelled the Arians, but the bishop remained hidden among the ascetic communities for another month or so, until an edict from Julian restored him to his see. In late January or early February 362, Athanasius entered Alexandria in triumph.<sup>69</sup> Though he found it politic, owing to Julian's hostility, to withdraw discretely eight months later, his brief, self-imposed exile ceased with the death of the pagan emperor.<sup>70</sup> Athanasius' place in Alexandria was secure.<sup>71</sup> George's disastrous episcopate spelled an end to the Arian community. When the Arian bishop Lucius was installed with military force a decade later, he found no viable group of Arians to welcome him.<sup>72</sup> Mindful of George's example, Lucius stayed close to the protection of the soldiers.<sup>73</sup>

Activist pagan elements, however, realized that imperial patronage could also work in their favor, especially with a co-religionist on the throne. Julian's letters to the Alexandrians addressed the pagans as a recognizable community—perhaps ascribing to them more communal consciousness than warranted at the time. Nonetheless, the gap in ecclesiastical leadership, followed by George's anti-pagan persecution, galvanized the pagans into a distinct community that could stoutly resist external threats. The urban pagans demonstrated that they were still an influential factor in the dynamics of Alexandrian power politics. George's episcopate, however, presaged the future course of intercommunal relations in the Late Antique city. It remained to be seen whether the scales would tip in favor of the

<sup>68</sup> Julian *Ep.* 60 (379a)—a concentration of powers that prefigured the combined prefecture/patriarchate of the hated Melkite appointee Cyrus (630–642): *History of the Patriarchs* 1.14 (ed. Evetts, p.489 [225]).

<sup>69</sup> *Festal Index* 34; Socrates *HE* 3.7; Sozomen *HE* 5.6; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.27.

<sup>70</sup> *Festal Index* 35; *Hist. Aceph.* 3.5f, 4.3f.

<sup>71</sup> So secure that the Arian emperor Valens was unable to install a bishop to his liking until after Athanasius' death: *Hist. Aceph.* 5.1–7; *Festal Index* 37; Socrates *HE* 4.20.

<sup>72</sup> Lucius had made an abortive attempt to take up the episcopate of the city in September 367: *Festal Index* 39; *Hist. Aceph.* 5.11ff.

<sup>73</sup> Socrates *HE* 4.20f; Theodoret *HE* 4.18f; Sozomen *HE* 6.19f.

Christians, if a virulent anti-pagan, enjoying both the unquestioned support of his urban congregation and the all-important patronage of a distant, yet potent, imperial power occupied the throne of St Mark.<sup>74</sup>

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY  
*January, 1992*

<sup>74</sup> Portions of this paper were delivered at the 1991 meetings of the Byzantine Studies Conference and the American Historical Association. I am indebted to the kind comments of Alan Cameron, John Fine, Bill Barry, Mieczyslaw Rodziewicz, Gary Johnson, Marie Gingras, and David Evans.