

Theodorus of Gadara

Among Arabia's most noteworthy citizens is Theodorus of Gadara, a prominent luminary of the Roman Empire who was from the Greek Decapolis City of Gadara (modern Umm Qays). The ruins are located in north-west Jordan on the edge of the Balqā' plateau some 350 m above sea level, just east of the Jordan rift, about 10 km south-east of the southern end of the Sea of Tiberias, separated from the Golan Heights in the north by the Yarmouk River. The ruins of ancient Gadara are surrounded by the modern town of Umm Qays and a fertile agricultural region. The Greek name Gadara reflects the Semitic origins of the settlement, the name representing Semitic **Gadar* 'wall', with the addition of the locative *-a* ending, typical of many Semitic toponyms preserved in Greek (Mershem and Knauf 1988: 129). Already in the third century BC, Gadara is characterized as the "strongest town in the district" (Polybius 5.71.3), when it was probably a Ptolemaic military colony, without the institutions of a typical Greek civic foundation. According to Stephanus of Byzantium, Gadara later had the titles of 'Antiocheia' and 'Seleukia', suggesting honors it had received under Antiochus III and Seleucus IV in the second century BC (Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v., Gadara = "city of Koile Syria, which was also called Antiocheia and

Seleukeia" = Billerbeck 2006: G9). The visible ruins are primarily from the Late Roman and early Byzantine settlement, including the city walls and gates, the shops along the *decamunus maximus*, two theaters, several temples, a *nymphaeum*, baths and a tunneled aqueduct system beneath the acropolis. German excavations since 1974 have been clarifying the ruins of the ancient settlement (Weber 2002), exposing the earlier Hellenistic and early Roman settlement (third to first centuries BC) to the north-west of the hill, including a large early Roman building with a cistern (Wieweger and Häser 2005: 12-13; 2007:17 and 25; 2010:17). More details about the native city of Theodorus are therefore emerging and the early urban settlement becoming better known.

But there is still much we do not know about Theodorus himself, whose life and career remain rather obscure in spite of his high status in Augustan Rome (see Rawson 1985 in general). He bursts suddenly on the scene in mid-life in a rather oblique reference in Jerome's *Chronicle*, which lists him in the 186th Olympiad as one of several prominent Greek teachers of rhetoric who were operating in 33/32 BC in the Roman world (Granatelli 1991: 13-14, Test. 6). The others named are equally obscure. Nicetes is known only from his pithy

and passionate judgments recorded by Seneca the Elder (*Controversiae* 1.4.12; 1.5.9; 1.7.18; 1.8.13.9.2.28; 9.6.18; 10.5.23), which reflect his passionate and trenchant style (9.2.23) that stood in contrast to that of Theodorus (*Suasoriae* 3.6-7; with Weissenberger 2006: 717). Hybreas of Mylasa in Caria was the greatest orator of Strabo's time (*Geog.* 13.4.15 [630]). He was of humble origins, but managed to study briefly with Diotrophes at Antioch, returning to serve as 'market-clerk' (*agoranomos*) before rising to become the lord of his city and a powerful orator (Weissenberger 2005: 594-5). In 40 BC, he was forced to flee to Rhodes to avoid the Parthian invaders in Syria, and rebuilt his native city of Mylasa (14.2.24 [659-60]). Although a supporter of the Triumvirate, he honorably rejected Mark Antony's demands for excessive tribute as the spokesman for the cities in Asia Minor (Plutarch, *Antony* 24.7-8). The most obscure of the four is Plution, who is mentioned by the Elder Seneca (*Suasoriae* 1.11) and is cited later by Dio Chrysostom (18.12), but nothing is known of his origins or activities (Stegemann 1951: 988). None of these rhetoricians are particularly 'household' names, even among specialists of the early Roman Empire.

The Career of Theodorus

Theodorus of Gadara's life and career is equally vague. In order to fill in Theodorus' previous life, one must resort cautiously to the Byzantine compilation called the *Suda* (or 'Souda'), which informs us among other things that Theodorus was a "Sophist" who taught the Emperor Tiberius, and was of "servile birth." Since the *Suda* also indicates Theodorus had a descendant named Antonius, it has been suggested that Theodorus may have been a supporter of Mark Antony in Alexandria and later capitulated to Octavian, like another Theodorus who served as the tutor of Antyllus, Antony's son by Cleopatra, who was later crucified for treachery (Plutarch, *Antony* 81; with Bowersock 1965: 35-6). Since the *Suda*

ascribes this senatorial descendant to the time of Hadrian, the compiler may have confused the Gadarene Theodorus with another person of the same name, not uncommon in the *Suda*.

At any rate, there is no reason to doubt his relationship to the Emperor Tiberius, as there are allusions to his instructing the future emperor (Suet. *Tib.* 57), both when he was twelve in 30 BC (Stegeman 1934: 1847) and later, when Tiberius was living in exile on Rhodes between sixth BC to second AD. At this later time, he probably attended Theodorus' lectures. The presence of Theodorus on Rhodes at this time perhaps partially explains Tiberius' reason for his self-imposed exile on the island (Diodorus 55.9. 5 and 8). Tiberius was obviously fond of Theodorus and attracted to his rhetoric style, rather than that of his rival Nicetes (Seneca the Elder, *Suas.*, III.7). While on Rhodes, Tiberius is described as interacting with Greek intellectuals, even adopting their dress (Suetonius, *Tib.* 11 and Tacitus, *Annals* 2.59.2). Later, during Tiberius' reign, he was surrounded by a number of patrons of noted Greek philosophers and literati, displaying the emperor's philhellenic sympathies (Rutledge 2008: 455-64). A Greek inscription from the Agora at Athens may possibly be connected to Theodorus, indicating a statue was erected in his honor in the Agora, preserving his patronym, *Eisidorou*, perhaps better understood as Isidorus (Vanderpool 1959: 366-8). One wishes we knew more about his father and family, but it consists of this one paltry fact: the possible name of his father.

The literary production listed for Theodorus in the *Suda* is primarily rhetorical treatises, but includes some historical works, such as a treatise "On History", which was probably a manual for orators on how to use history in their speeches, and a treatise on *Koile Syria* or 'Coele-Syria', which was also brief, so not a full-fledged history of the region. But since no known fragments survive of this essay, it is difficult to ascertain the precise geographical

focus or contents of this work. In fact, none of Theodorus' writings survive.

It is as a rhetor that Theodorus is primarily known. During the Late Republic and Augustan Age, two rival schools of rhetoric developed, the 'Apollodoreans' and the 'Theodoreans' (Quintilian, *Instit.* 2.11.2; see Schanz 1890). The first related to Apollodoros of Pergamum, who became prominent as early as 64 BC (according to Jerome, *Chronicle*, 179th Olympiad = Granatelli 1991: Apollod. T 4) and was the teacher of the young Octavian (Strabo 13.4.3 [625]) by arrangements of Caesar in 45 BC (Suet. *Aug.* 89). His opponent was his younger contemporary, Theodorus of Gadara, teacher of the future emperor Tiberius. The difference between the two schools seems to have been the former was more rigid with regard to the structure and terminology of the speech, whereas Theodorus was more flexible and practical. The conflict between the two schools of rhetoric and their methodology was fierce, even if the differences from our distant perspective seem to be rather minor and superficial (Quintilian, *Instit.* 5.13.59; cf. Strabo 13.4.3 [625]), a mere splitting of hairs to even a modern scholar of rhetoric (Kennedy 1989: 272). Just what made Theodorus' rhetoric style so popular in Rome remains mystifying, but it may have involved his more charismatic personality as much as his personal rhetorical philosophy.

None of his writings are extant, but a few possible fragments of Theodorus' rhetoric or philosophy have been proposed. One is possibly preserved by Suetonius, who says that while teaching the young Tiberius in 30 BC, Theodorus castigated him as being "mud steeped in blood" (*pleonhainatipephuramenon*), which he interpreted as a premonition of his legendary savage nature (Suet. *Tib.* 57). If this is the case, it may be suspected the statement is *post eventu*, rather than a prediction, but it is also possible that Suetonius confused and corrupted Theodorus' original statement on the nature of man from one of the pre-Socratic philosophers,

transforming the pedantic comment into a slander against the future emperor based on his later tyrannical behavior (Heurgon 1985: 401-5). A less compelling case is the suspicion that a lengthy anti-tyrannical diatribe delivered by a Syracusan named 'Theodorus' against the ruler Dionysius I of Sicily in 396 BC and preserved by Diodorus of Sicily (14.64.5-69) was actually derived from a rhetorical treatise of 'Theodorus of Gadara' that Diodorus revised and inserted into his denigrating account of the Syracuse ruler (Caven 1990: 5). In essence, with the exception of these conjectures and speculation, nothing actually survives of Theodorus' literary work to impress us with his rhetorical skill.

In spite of Theodorus of Gadara's opaque background and context, several pressing questions emerge from these brief facts of his life and career that deserve further inquiry. They also have provoked some recent proposals about his origins that deserve further examination. These matters provide the *raison d'être* for this essay.

When was Theodorus Enslaved?

Explaining Theodorus' 'servile origins' has been a problem. Over 125 years ago, Cichorius proposed it took place after the destruction of Gadara by the Hasmonean ruler Alexander Jannaeus, resulting in Theodorus or his parents being taken to Rome as war-prisoners, probably during the Mithridatic Wars, and subsequently freed (Cichorius 1888: 63). During the Roman wars against Mithridates VI of Pontus (88-81 and 73-63 BC), the Decapolis cities of Syria-Palestine were being attacked as part of the expansionistic Hasmonean policies of Alexander Jannaeus in Judea. As a result, the Greek cities of Transjordan were being besieged; many were occupied by the Jews, their citizens being either slaughtered or enslaved. A possible parallel for the Theodorusscenario is found in Pompey's freedman Demetrius, also a native of Gadara, whose city had been "demolished shortly before", which inspired the Roman

legate to have his native city rebuilt in 63 BC (Josephus, *AJ* 14.75; *BJ* 1.155).

The real problem we face is to coordinate Theodorus' enslavement with the expansionistic campaigns of the Hasmonean ruler Alexander Jannaeus. According to Josephus, after forcing the Ptolemaic army of Ptolemy IX Lathyrus and Cleopatra III from Palestine in 102/101 BC, Alexander Jannaeus conducted a ten-month siege of Gadara in 'Coele-Syria', finally capturing the city in ca. 100 BC (*AJ* 13.356). The inference drawn from this language is that 'Gadara of the Decapolis' is meant, and most commentators have followed Josephus' implication in this regard (Schürer 1973: 221; Weber 2002: 64-67; Fitzgerald 2004: 360-363; Cohen 2006: 283). But the details of Josephus' account are inconsistent with this interpretation. His narrative here has been characterized as "confused and incomplete" (as noted by Jones 1971: 455 n. 39). In the same context, Josephus mentions that at the time Jannaeus also took Amathus on the banks of the az-Zarqā' River, "the greatest stronghold beyond the Jordan." This suggests, as Jones surmised (1971: 255), that Jannaeus was interested in subduing and Judaizing the region "beyond the River", later to become known as the Peraia, as the Hasmoneans had earlier subjected and Judaized Iturea and Idumea. Furthermore, as Smallwood acutely observed, Pella remained independent at the time, yet lying vulnerable in the Jordan Valley between Gadara of the Decapolis to the north and Amathus to the south (1981: 15 n. 38). It is then highly likely that another fortified city named Gadara is at stake in Jannaeus' campaign, not Gadara of the Decapolis. The most likely possibility is its 'namesake', the "Gadara of the Peraia" (Piotrkowski 2011: 266-88). This Gadara is identified with modern Salt, 30 km south of Amathus, the major metropolis of Peraia, and a "city of some strength" at the time of the Jewish Revolt in 68 AD (Jos. *BJ* 4.413), as it must have been earlier. The proximity of these fortresses in the Peraia makes them the

likely subject of Alexander Jannaeus' campaign of ca. 100 BC, but there are more compelling reasons why this must be the case.

First, in his earlier account of this episode in the *Jewish War*, which is devoid of his later misleading editorial addition of 'Coele Syria', Josephus makes it clear that the primary objective of Jannaeus' military campaign in ca. 100 BC was to capture the "treasures" of Theodorus, son of Zenon, which he had stored in his fortresses west of Gerasa and Philadelphia (*BJ* 1.86). This Zenon is the son and successor of Zenon Cotylas, the "tyrant" of Philadelphia (*BJ* 1.60; *AJ* 13.235), who probably also controlled Gerasa at the time (*cf.* Gatier and Seigne 2006: 172-179). Amathus and Gadara (modern Salt) were fortified points strategically placed to protect the western flank of Gerasa and Philadelphia. These fortresses provided security for Theodorus' prized possessions. It also explains why Jannaeus' attack triggered Theodorus' rapid response, in which he recaptured his stolen treasure, seized Jannaeus' baggage train and slew over 10,000 Jews in the process (*BJ* 1.87; *AJ* 13.356). A few years later, in ca. 93 BC, Jannaeus managed to conquer the territories of Moab and Galaaditus, imposed tribute on them and at that time "demolished" the fortress at Amathus, unopposed by Theodorus (*BJ* 1.89; *AJ* 13.374). After a six-year conflict with the Nabataean king Obodas II, which followed and in which 50,000 Jews were slain, Jannaeus was forced to relinquish the territories of Moab and Galaaditus back to the Nabataean king (*AJ* 13.375-376 and 382). There is no indication in these early conflicts that any of the Decapolis cities were under attack at the time.

Secondly, there is epigraphic evidence that suggests 'Gadara of the Decapolis' was still in the hands of the Seleucids during this time. An inscription found at Gadara in the southern wall of the acropolis dating to 85/84 BC indicates that a "Philotas and [the polis/community of the] Sele[uk]eians" were in control of the city

at the time (Wörrle 2000: 267-71; *cf.* Mittmann 2006: 24-54 and Weber 2002: 281, IS1). This new inscription militates against any earlier Hasmonean control of the city. In addition, against any earlier major disruption of the city, a temple of Zeus erected in the second century BC remained undamaged and continued to function throughout the Hasmonean era (Hoffmann 1999: 795-831). There are also no signs of destruction in the recently excavated Hellenistic settlement on the north-west part of the *tall* at Gadara (Wieweger and Häser 2010: 1-28, esp. 17-18). However, in the years following the Gadara inscription dated to 85/84 BC, there were major changes in the politics of Transjordan. The pivotal episode was the defeat and death of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus XII Dionysos in 84 BC by the Nabataeans in the battle of Cana/Qanawat in the Syrian Hauran (Jos. BJ 1.99-102; AJ 13.387-91; for the date see Bellinger 1949: 77). Afterwards, the Nabataean king Aretas III gained control of Damascus (BJ 1.103; AJ 13.302). The impact of these developments created the opportunity for Alexander Jannaeus to begin his attacks on the Decapolis cities.

Between *ca.* 83 and 81 BC, Alexander Jannaeus led a campaign into 'Coele-Syria', conquering the Decapolis cities of Pella, Dium and Gerasa; he then swept north across the Jordan valley to the north, overtaking the Golan and taking control of the area as far as the Huleh Valley (*JW* 1.104-5; *AJ* 13.393-4; *cf.* Maoz, 2013: 78-82). His assault on Gerasa is again assigned to his desire to capture the treasures of Theodorus (*BJ* 1.104). Although Gadara is not mentioned in Josephus' account, such an extensive campaign across the Decapolis region by Jannaeus must have included Gadara of the Decapolis, as it appears he made a broad sweep north from Pella into the Golan, including the Decapolis cities on the plateau where Gadara is located. The destruction of the walls of the city must be assigned to this date (*cf.* Hoffman 2000: 175-233 esp. 181-201; 2002: 98-124 esp. 104-5).

This is implied by Josephus' language: when Pompey liberated Gadara in 64 BC, the city was in ruins, after having been "demolished *shortly before*" (*BJ* 1.155; *AJ* 14.75; *cf.* Weber 2006: 193-205 for evidence of the rebuilding), suggesting a recent destruction in 83-80 BC, rather than in the much earlier campaign in *ca.* 100 BC. The excavations at Pella confirm that the city was destroyed by Alexander Jannaeus in 83/82 BC (McNicoll, Smith and Hennessy 1982: 67-73 and McNicoll 1992: 114-117; for the numismatic evidence of Jannaeus at Pella see Shachar 2004: 5-33 esp. 7, 20-23). This must be the same campaign in which Gadara (Umm Qays) suffered destruction by Alexander Jannaeus.

If Theodorus was active in Rome in 33 BC, as one of the leading rhetoricians of the city, he was seemingly in middle age at the time and probably not alive at the time of either of these campaigns. The campaign in 83/81 BC would have been a half-century earlier. Since Theodorus was still active apparently into the period of Tiberius' residence on Rhodes in sixth BC to second AD, the capture of Gadara must have happened before his birth. Although it is possible he was a child in 83-80 BC, his career suggests he had probably not yet been born at this time. In this case, it was his parents who were the casualties of Alexander Jannaeus' conquest of Gadara, not Theodorus himself. In all likelihood, Theodorus was born after his parents had been enslaved and when they lived in their master's household (*verna*), as Treggiari has compellingly proposed (1969: 246). A date for the birth of Theodorus sometime between 73 and 70 BC therefore seems likely (Weber 2002: 69; Woerther 2013: 97, T4). This would make him forty years of age when he emerges into prominence at Rome in 33/32 BC.

Just how disruptive Alexander Jannaeus' conquest of Gadara in 83/81 BC was on the Gadarene population (*cf.* Jos. *AJ* 13.397) is indicated by a number of inscriptions in the Aegean. A string of Gadaraenes appear at

Athens and Delos in the mid- /late first century BC, almost all of them women. At Athens, Epikaria, daughter of Eunous (*IG* II² 8449 = *IG* Attica III² 2400), and probably Anassa, daughter of Athenodorus (*IG* II² 8449a, *G[adarē]nē*), are known as Gadarenes and, from Delos, another Gadarene named Ision son of Dineos offered a dedication to Artemis Sosikolonos, “savior of colonies” (*ID* 2377). In addition, there is a mythical charm that refers to a woman from Syrian Gadara in a Hellenistic papyrus (Maas 1942: 33-8). Finally, an undated inscription from Rome mentions a Diodorus Heliodorus from Gadara in the “Syrian Decapolis” (*IGUR* IV 1675 = *SEG* 30: 1801); this can perhaps be assigned to the first century AD. It can be reasonably surmised that the other Gadarenes were probably casualties of the Hasmonean conquest of Gadara, in which the citizens of the Decapolis city were enslaved or driven into exile, including probably the parents of Theodorus (Weber 1996: 10-7).

Was there a Gadarene Hellenic school?

In his *Geography*, Strabo lists a number of notable natives of Gadara, namely: “Philodemus, the Epicurean, and Meleager and Menippus, the satirist, and Theodorus the rhetorician, of my own time” (16.2.29 [759]). This impressive string of noteworthy Gadarenes who are well-known *literati*, some of them his contemporaries like Theodorus (see Potthecary 1997: 235-46), has led to the suggestion that Gadara was an intellectual and philosophical center *par excellence* in the Hellenistic and Roman Near East, a virtual “Athens in Syria” as it has been described (Geiger 1985: 11-12; 1990: 144). However, a closer examination of the list exposes problems with this hypothesis of a local school of high-level Greek culture operating in the Decapolis city of Gadara in the Hellenistic era. First, there is chronological disparity in these individuals: Menippus’ activity dates to the late third century BC, with a *flourit* between 230-200

BC (Diogenes Laertius 6: 99-101). The next notable on the list, Meleager, dates to more than a century later, to the first decade of the first century BC (Athenaeus 11.502c). Philodemus (*ca.* 110-40/35 BC) is slightly later, in the middle of the first century BC, with Theodorus active in the first half of the same century. It is another century before another Gadarene intellectual emerges, Oenomanus the Cynic, but the context is now completely different, with the Decapolis city now fully integrated into the Roman provincial system.

That Gadara, ‘their fatherland’, constituted the ‘progenitor’ of their intellectual careers has other problems. First, their intellectual specialties are rather diverse; Menippus and Meleager are identified as ‘Cynic’ philosophers, Philodemus as an ‘Epicurean’ and Theodorus a Rhetorician. Oenomanus the Cynic is separated by two centuries from his predecessors. Second, the diversity of their intellectual pursuits and occupations makes us suspect that their training was elsewhere and probably abroad, not at Gadara, as we know was the case for most. Third, it is then not surprising to find that Menippus and Meleager spent much of their lives in exile, perhaps because Gadara and the Decapolis were the scene of political turmoil in the struggles between the Ptolemies and Seleucids at the time and later came under the imperialistic thrust of the Hasmoneans. Furthermore, Menippus was a “Phoenician” slave of an aristocrat named Baton of Pontus (Diogenes Laertius 6.99), so was also called “Sinopean” (D.L. 6.95); after he secured his freedom he became a disciple of Crates of Thebes (D.L. 6.95). As for Meleager, he was educated in Tyre and spent his later life in Cos where he died at an advanced age (Branham and Goulet-Cazé 1984: 397). Philodemus was also educated abroad, studying with the Epicurean Zenon of Sidon in Athens; by the mid-70s he was in Italy, finally settling at Herclaneum (Dorandi 2007: 68). There is no indication that any of them ever returned to their ‘fatherland’.

Nevertheless, because Menippus, Melaeger and the later Oenomasare regarded as Cynics, it has been argued that Gadara was the location of a local Cynic tradition (Luz 1992: 46-50), serving as “a crucible for thinkers of a Cynic disposition” (Luz 2003: 102). It is even been suggested that Gadara rivaled Athens as a hotbed for cynicism in the Hellenistic period, its influence extending into Galilee and influencing even Jesus of Nazareth, as reflected in the “Q” gospelsource tradition (Downing 1992: 148). But the Galilee of Jesus’ time was hardly a center of Hellenic urban culture, beingbetter characterized as a region of rural villages, making it difficult to transform the image of Jesus as Jewish peasant from Nazareth into an itinerant Cynic philosopher (as noted by Betz 1994: 453-475). Later, at least in the second century AD, it is evident that the Gadarene Cynic Oenomaus was interacting with Jewish sages at the academy of Tiberius on the south-western edge of the Sea of Galilee, if his identification with the episodes and anecdotes of the *filosofos* named *Abninos ha-Gaderin* in the Talmud are correct (Luz 1986; 1992: 49-80). As these passages about Abnimos make clear, he is “a great heathen philosopher” who was active in the time of Rabi Gamaliel (fl. c. 80-116) and a friend of Rabbi Meir (*ca.* 135 AD), but he cannotbe identifiedas a Jew (*contra* Goule-Cazé 2007: 54). The interactions between Jewish rabbis and pagan philosophers is not surprising, as it appears many rabbis were “open to dialogue” with a wise heathen (Labendz 2013: 146-172, esp.171; see Weber 2007 for the relations of Gadara and Galilee). But connecting him with the activities of Menippus and Melaeger centuries earlier in a chain of intellectual cynics (Geigner 1985: 11-12) is difficult to accept. Furthermore, the nature of ancient Greek cynicism was that it was never attached to any specific urban setting or school. In spite of Sepphoris and Tiberius, Galilee was dominated by small villages and ethnic diversity in the early Roman era. The various

Cynics we know are highly individualistic and do not comprise a cohesive group.

The same problem exists for connecting Theodorus of Gadara with the third century AD rhetorApsines of Gadara (Geiger 1994: 223-224), namely the gapof three centuries between the age of the HasmoneanJanneus and the Severan dynasty of Rome. Theodorus was active at Rome and Rhodes, and Apsines, who also was called a “Phoenician”, was active at Smyrna with deep roots in Athens (Oliver 1941: 260-261; with Bowersock 1969: 5 n. 5). Even if their occupations were similar, they were geographically and chronologically worlds apart.

Was Theodorus Jewish?

On the basis of the Judaizing policies during the conquests of the Hasmonean Jewish kings, it has been proposed that Theodorus was a convert to Judaism (Sider 1977: 5). However, this reads too much into the account of the Hasmonean campaigns in the Decapolis region. The presumedforced conversion of ‘Gadarenes’ to Judaism is never mentioned by Josephus. The city was obviously exposed to the Jewish community; already in the second century BC, Meleager expresses knowledge of Jewish customs (*Anth. Pal.* V.160.3 with Jacobson 1977: 71-72). Nevertheless, there is no evidence for a Jewish community at Gadara in the Seleucid period. Much later, during the Jewish Revolt of 66-70 AD, there are only scant references to Judaism at Gadara (*BJ* 2.478; 3.542; *cf.* Goodman 1992 and Andreade 2010) and even much later the evidence is slim (see Weber 2002: 124-126, and 392, 52G and Tab. 90G for a third/fourth century menorah). If Theodorus’ parents were Jewish, it would be ironic for them to be sold into slavery by the Hasmonean Jewish ruler Jannaeus. Obviously their sympathies were with the Greek city of Gadara.

The only evidence offered to suggest that Theodorus was Jewish is that some other rhetors

operating elsewhere in the Mediterranean were Jewish. There was a Jewish grammarian named Diogenes who lectured only on the Sabbath at Rhodes and refused to lecture on the other days of the week, even when requested by Tiberius (Williams 1995: 625-33). Other evidence for Jewish scholarly presence on the island may be reflected in Herod's frequent benefactions to Rhodes (Jos. *AJ* 14.377-8; cf. *BJ* I. 280; and *AJ* 16.147; cf. *BJ* 1.424). There is also the Jewish scholar who lectured on the Law of Moses to an aristocratic group at Rome that included Fulvia, wife of a friend of Tiberius (Jos. *AJ* 18.81-82), but none of this evidence pertains to Theodorus, or suggests he was Jewish, and the circumstances of 83/81 BC and afterwards defy such a suggestion.

During the first century BC, Gadara was adamantly in opposition to the emerging Hasmonean state. After Jannaeus' brief occupation of Gadara, its citizens remained defiant against the Jewish rulers. Although Augustus added Gadara to Herod's administration in 30 BC (*BJ* I.396), the opposition of the Gadarenes to the decision was registered swiftly. As early as 23-20 BC, Gadarenes were lodging protests against the rule of Herod to Marcus Agrippa in Mytilene (*AJ* 15.351), and again in 20 BC to Augustus during his visit to Syria (15.354-359). Although unsuccessful in gaining independence from Herod's rule, the reactions indicate that their dissatisfaction with Herodian administration and their complaints must have continued. At Herod's death, Gadara and Hippus were detached from Herod's son Archelaus and annexed to the province of Syria (*AJ* 17.320; *BJ* 2.57). The anti-Jewish sympathies of Pella also provide a parallel. Like Gadara, Pella was demolished and occupied by Alexander Jannaeus in 83/80 BC, because they would not adopt "Jewish customs" (Jos. *AJ* 13.397). After Pompey's settlement of the Jewish crisis in 63 BC, Pella was detached from Hasmonean territory and restored to its original citizens, and

then annexed to Syria along with Gadara and other Decapolis cities (*BJ* I. 156).

As a consequence, after Pompey's expedition, both cities regarded the Roman legate as their "liberator" (cf. Spijkerman 1978: 15). The lingering discontent of the Gadarenes about the previous Jewish Hasmonean destruction of their city seems to preclude any genuine conversion of the citizens of Gadara to Judaism, including Theodorus' parents. Moreover, any patriotism by Theodorus to his native city (cf. Geiger. 1990: 143-144; 1994: 224; cf. 2014) conflicts with his preference to be called a "Rhodian", rather than a Gadarene (Quintillan, *Instit.* 3.1.17). Like other notable Gadarenes before him, Theodorus never seemed to look back on his native city with any favor, much less darken its gates and streets.

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