Flaccus’ rulings against the Jews were only the small beginnings of what was soon to come. The situation in Alexandria suddenly became critical with the arrival of King Agrippa I. After a difficult life spent between Palestine and Rome, Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, found himself, after Gaius’ accession, king of the tetrarchy formerly ruled by his uncle Philip, thanks to the emperor’s friendship and benevolence (Jos., A.J., 18.237; B.J., 2.181; cf. Philo, Flacc., 25). Philo states that when Agrippa asked to leave Rome to return to his kingdom, Gaius recommended that he wait for the etesian winds and travel via Alexandria (Flacc., 26); Josephus informs us that this request was placed in the spring of 38 C.E. (A.J., 18.238). Philo’s words suggest that the reason for Gaius’ recommendation was speedier travel. Agrippa could hardly have refused. Doubts about this account, however, soon surface when we read, on the one hand, both of Agrippa’s almost embarking accidentally from Puteoli on an Alexandrian ship and of his secret landing at night in Alexandria to avoid being seen or recognized (Flacc., 27–28) and, on the other, of his official public meeting with Flaccus, clad in luxurious royal attire and accompanied by bodyguards (Flacc., 30; 32). Agrippa’s role prior to the riots should be observed more closely.

Tiberius incarcerated Agrippa in 36 C.E. on the pretext of offense to his imperial persona. In reality, however, Agrippa was imprisoned because he could not repay a loan from Tiberius and the imperial family (Jos., A.J., 18.143–237). At Tiberius’ death, Gaius, a friend of Agrippa’s, liberated him and named him king of the territories of Panaea, Batanea, Babylonia, and Arabia. Tiberius’ incarceration of Agrippa in 36 C.E. was not the first time Agrippa was imprisoned. Agrippa had been imprisoned before by Tiberius (Jos., A.J., 18.218–219). Tiberius’ incarceration of Agrippa in 36 C.E. was not the first time Agrippa was imprisoned. Agrippa had been imprisoned before by Tiberius (Jos., A.J., 18.218–219).
Gaulanitis and Trachonitis (Jos., A.J., 18.238–239; Flacc., 25). That, however, was not all. Philo adds that the senate bestowed the praetorian insignia upon him (Flacc., 40). The ornamenta praetoria were a distinguished honor giving the honoree improved status and visibility, but no political rights. Wearing the latus clavus, the toga with a broad purple stripe, guaranteed visibility, as did the right to be preceded by the fasces; epigraphical evidence suggests that the honoree likely also received the right to sit on the sella curulis. The ornatus who wore the ornamenta praetoria looked like a praetor of the senatorial order, though he held no imperium and was not on a fast track in his cursus honorum, aimed at a senatorial seat.

Agrippa, by virtue of the Roman citizenship that he possessed by right of descent, was eligible for such honor, the attributes of which he proudly displayed in Alexandria. Philo does not detail Agrippa’s parading in the city, but crafts a conversation between Flaccus and his alleged Alexandrian allies. We learn that Agrippa marched through the city with his bodyguard (Flacc., 30), probably in attire that declared his new royal status openly, but certainly with his new Roman ornamenta, including the six fasces that customarily preceded the praetors in the provinces. A particular sentence of this invented conversation clarifies the meaning of Agrippa’s new apparatus: Agrippa, Philo states, had received greater dignity of honor and prestige than Flaccus. The fasces, which Flaccus too could parade by virtue of his proconsular imperium, did not indicate this difference, but the latus clavus, the senatorial toga that the equestrian Flaccus could not wear, did. Within the Roman

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5 These territories comprise the former tetrarchy of Herod Philip, who died in 34 C.E.; for map Schwartz, Agrippa I, 61.
7 This is what surfaces from the careers of ornati; see Rémy, “Ornati et ornamenta,” 194ff.
8 Agrippa’s tria nomina was probably Marcus Iulius Agrippa; see Schwartz, Agrippa I. The grants Caesar gave to Antipatros, Agrippa’s great-grandfather, are recorded in Jos., B.J., 1.194; see A. Gilboa, “L’octroi de la citoyenneté romaine et de l’immunité à Antipater, père d’Hérode,” RD 50 (1972): 609–614.
9 I am paraphrasing Van der Horst’s translation; Van der Horst, Flaccus, 59. Barclay, Mediterranean Diaspora, 52 accepts Philo’s explanation that there was envy for the Jews and their king; similarly Schäfer, Judeophobia, 139.
10 There was a fundamental distinction in the width of the purple stripe of the latus clavus and of the latus augustus, the equestrian toga; Sue, Tib., 35; Vell. Pat., 2.88,2.